

Realis 25: The Wound Way 01

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Opening Narration

[[“Sapryc”](#) by Jack de Quidt begins playing]

Austin: It is common amongst novice learners—acting in both anxious pretension to wisdom and self-serving search for status—to adopt pretty adages about the dangers of superficiality. You have heard them: warnings against judging the depths of a volume by the contents of its dust jacket. Admonishments for those seeking beauty, since such petty physical attributes are only epidermal and not innate.

Mmm. Well. The conundrum of these old saws is that they too are shallow summaries of more complex ideas. And yet, it is in their simple brevity (and in their shiny reflection of something true resting in the deep), that they grow powerful; that they last long enough to become real.

And so, let me ask you directly. What is more important: the surface or the core? The skin or the heart? The expressions worn into the face or the subtle shapes of the soul?

There, on the shattered, pockmarked, blazed, twisted, desperate, ugly catastrophe-moon of Sapryc, perhaps you would understand that like Root and Trunk, surface and center are one. That they are doubled emanations of a shared history, as blood out the open wound once pulsed through the chest, as spew lingering on the lips came to form in sickly guts.

There is nothing pure inside. There is only more.

Down the Lift [0:02:46]

Austin: Alright, so...quick recap. How'd the last session go?

Sylvi: Oh you know, normal.

Darcy: Great.

Austin: How's everybody doing?

Jack: Well we played Name of the Rose in the worm monastery.

Austin: Yeah yeah yeah, [laughs] that's right.

Jack: Cause, of course, Umberto Eco's "Name of the Rose" is about collecting five tokens so you can [Austin: laughs] travel through the wound bored through a planet by a *either*—people differ in their interpretation. I think some people say the worm is dead—

Austin: Yeah yeah yeah.

Jack: And some people say the worm is gone.

Austin: Yeah.

Darcy: Mm.

Jack: We learned a little bit about our guide, Mirador Cantata, and their donkey, Scrundle. Mirador is a weird little critter.

Sylvi: [laughs]

Jack: He—he lived the life of an adventurer and has moved on to something. Whether that is a period of retirement and then being called back in for something he really believes in, or you know, Mirador's figuring it out and we're figuring it out alongside him.

We have learned that the travel that Mirador promised for us was passage down through the center of the world in this tunnel carved by a worm. With the implication, and this hasn't necessarily been confirmed yet, that we have been hired to break through a kind of combination physical and magical barricade that will allow us to travel right down to the south pole. And I think that as we left it, a variety of strange things had happened.

Austin: Mm.

Jack: On seeing the—

Austin: The Wound Way.

Jack: We started to—the Wound Way, yes.

Austin: The entrance to it.

Jack: We started to descend in this big mechanical lift into the Wound Way. On seeing it, everybody who wasn't prepared got very frightened and this created a bizarre magical response in Gaje. They were sort of struck by blue, pale blue lightning. And in acknowledgment of that lightning, the Empest—which is a sort of bug army that is currently fighting with the Suzerainty on this planet—began to zero in on the Cloister of the Hollow Heart.

Austin: That is correct. I think that they're actually not fighting the Suzerainty because the Suzerainty's basically abandoned this place.

Jack: Oh, they're fighting the See! Right?

Austin: They're fighting the Holy See, the Venerant See. Yeah. The Holy See is the Vatican. They are not fighting the Vatican, [**Darcy:** laughs] they're fighting the Space Vatican. It's very— [laughs]

Sylvi: [laughs] They're fighting our Vatican.

Jack: [laughs]

Austin: Yeah, right. Uh huh, exactly.

Jack: Ohh, yeah.

Austin: And then yeah, the kind of gesture at the end there as you'd gotten on to this big—this big lift that's going down into the center of the earth, the center of this moon, Sapryc. You know, moons are a bunch of different sizes. You might know this about the world. That our solar system has moons that are like, 2,000 miles in diameter, 3,000 miles in diameter, but also has moons that are like, 12 miles in diameter. That is the reality of the world of astronomy and the astronomic bodies all around us. I think Sapryc is somewhere in the middle. [chuckles]

Jack: [laughs]

Austin: This lift will take you down halfway through in about a day's travel. It's a long day, you know? And I think as we kind of kick things off it's dark and quiet. The elevator itself, or the lift itself—which is fairly big, right? It's big enough to—it's gilded. It is wide, it has a flat, slightly—it's like it's made of wood with gold fittings. And then it has some cushioning around to sit or lay. But it doesn't have proper chairs or anything like that.

And one of its—I'm imagining it as almost octagonal in shape—and one eighth of it does not have the cushioning. It is kind of bare. And it is clearly where heavy things are placed to bring up and down. Like, oh we're gonna bring up a cart of—in fact, let's go more than one eighth of it. Let's say two or three of these sections is kind of—these, you know, pie-shaped cut outs have metal laid down for you to bring up—or not you, but others—to bring up stuff.

Presumably when this thing was first built it was all the way like this and they were using the lift to dig. They were going down to dig it out and make sure it was smooth enough to continue going down the worm hole, because the worm hole itself was not originally perfectly even. The worm was, you know, biting its way through the core of the planet, or the moon, and not doing it in a perfectly straight line. So there was times where you had to go down like, alright we have to mine out this little extra edge or whatever so the lift can keep going down as best as it can.

It is—it does not take up the whole of the hole, to be clear. It doesn't hit the edges, at this point especially. But it—the worm hole is bigger than the lift. It's almost like it's tapered to the entrance when you got into the lift, and then it kind of, that's because it's built on top of the big hole that the worm chewed through the thing.

So you can kind of look out and if you cast out lantern light, or produce some sort of other magical light, you can see the walls in the distance. The walls of this tunnel. But you can't necessarily always reach out and touch it. There are times when it gets close enough because of the way the worm chewed down this direction and wiggled left and right as it did so. That you could reach out and touch the wall. But generally speaking, it is too far away to touch. It is 20 to 30 feet away, if not more in some places. You know, I have not decided exactly how big this worm is, but sometimes it's as if you're in the middle of a chasm that is just stretching onwards downwards for miles and miles and miles.

What are you doing on the lift? What's hang out time? This is the quietest it's been. I think that you probably hear the sounds of echoing battle above at some point, but it's far away at this point. So it's—you're able to just kind of sit as your group in this big lift. How's that going?

Jack: Oh...

Austin: How is the quiet being broken, if at all?

Darcy: Hmm.

Jack: I'm curious about if we've been sent down here with—cause there's only one lift, right?

Austin: There's only the one lift.

Jack: So have—are there other monks coming down?

Austin: No.

Jack: Is the lift being used for additional business today? Mirador's been given full use of—

Austin: You are doing—you are using this in—

Darcy: Is there just the one lift?

Austin: There is just the one lift.

Jack: Yeah.

Darcy: Okay.

Austin: And you're using it in the middle of the night.

Jack: Mhm. Yeah. [sighing] Ooookay.

Austin: And you know, I think maybe some of the stuff that you see as you first start descending the lift, the earliest things that you see is like: there are stairs and catwalks either carved into the side of the Wound Way at first or built on top of it, built out to the sides of it. To—and that is where all of the worm—heh. That is part of where the worm stuff is happening. You saw the big tanks above, that—where they're being turned into soap and turned into soup. Soap and soup are the two big worm exports here. But there is some worm agriculture happening, and cultivation and stuff happening in these highest levels of the rock underneath the monastery.

And maybe a few other things, right? I'm sure that there is a monk here who is a geologist and who is studying the history of Sapryc via geology. And I'm sure someone lives down here as part of their monastic practice. But that's all way above you now. That's—you're going to the center of the moon. They don't go down to the center of the moon often. This is not a thing that they use regularly at this point. So.

On Mirador's Secrets [0:11:25]

Jack: Hmm. I wanna chat with Flemming.

Darcy: Oh! Sure.

Jack: I think I'm gonna sorta pull Flemming to one side, next to some sort of stack of, big thing of corrugated metal, further away from the group.

(as **Jud**): Ah so, I dunno what you were doing in the library, but you didn't make any of the meals.

Darcy (as **Flemming**): Nope.

Jack (as **Jud**): That was valuable time, Flemming. We had a good chat, the rest of us.

Darcy (as **Flemming**): Oh! What did you talk about?

Jack (as **Jud**): Yeah so... [sighs] Here's the thing, we've been talking and we're not a hundred percent sure Mirador's on the up and up.

Darcy (as **Flemming**): Oh, absolutely.

Jack (as **Jud**): So we sort of wanted to take a moment, you know, as we descend a little further to have a chat with him, but I keep thinking about what he says about—he keeps saying all that bullshit about “I can't give you the information otherwise a bad thing will,” you know. “You'll know the information when you know, otherwise they'll find out,” you know, all that shit.

Darcy (as **Flemming**): Mm.

Jack (as **Jud**): And y'know, you know a few tricks. I wanted to see if that was true. If there was a—cause we could get the information out of him one way or another, but if we could be protected from—

Darcy (as **Flemming**): Mm.

Jack (as **Jud**): Do you catch my drift?

Darcy (as **Flemming**): [sighs] Yeah, I suppose the first step is to even see if that is—if that's the case.

Jack (as **Jud**): Cause if it's those fuckers in the masks, we didn't have too much trouble with them before.

Darcy (as **Flemming**): Ah well...I think we could handle some of them, I would rather we didn't have to. I think we—

Jack (as **Jud**): I just—

Darcy (as **Flemming**): We got particularly lucky.

Jack (as **Jud**): Yeah, but is it worth—is it worth—is it worth him, y'know, not tell—y'know, cause [mocking] “oh you're here for a reason, you're here for your expertise,” stuff like that, “but I'm not gonna tell you anything.” It sort of leaves a bad taste in my mouth.

Darcy (as **Flemming**): Sure. It's incredibly frustrating. What are you worried about, Jud?

Jack (as **Jud**): Well y'know, if we— [sighs] if we—

Darcy (as **Flemming**): How could I help put your mind at ease?

Jack (as **Jud**): Is there any sort of like, way that we could...I mean, is he telling the truth? Are you able to see if there's anything sort of waiting for us on the periphery, ready to jump if he says a certain combination of words.

Darcy (as **Flemming**): Mm. You don't know that already? Hm.

Jack (as **Jud**): Well I mean, obviously we're pursued. We've always been pursued. But I...I want to know what's going on.

Darcy (as **Flemming**): You—Jud, you may want to consider a different line of work.

Jack (as **Jud**): [weakly] Well, y'know.

Darcy (as **Flemming**): Listen, I agree with you. Mirador has been shifty and evasive. I do not think he has lied.

Jack (as **Jud**): Yeah...

Jack: [laughing] Sort of shifting around uncomfortably.

Darcy (as **Flemming**): [sighs] Hm, there's—

Jack: Is there sort of a way—and this is me thinking now—you know how sometimes when you're worried that you're installing a thing that has a virus on it [**Darcy**: Oh sure.] and you can install it in like a little bottle. In like a—

Sylvi: [laughs]

Darcy: Yeah.

Jack: Like you've got to isolate. Is there a—

Darcy: You've downloaded Mirador's repack, and now... [laughs]

Austin: [chuckles]

Jack: Yeah, exactly. Ah, I mean if people are repacking they're on the level for the most part. It's the—it's the low-end scene groups that you want to be wary of.

Darcy: [laughs]

Jack: I'm thinking, is there some—

Darcy: Yeah, fuck scene kids. Can't trust 'em.

Sylvi: [laughs]

Jack: [laughs] Is there some way we can like...do you know a spell?

Darcy: Oh, I mean obviously.

Jack: That can isolate Mirador from— [laughs] Mirador seems to think, this is me trying to talk it out—

Darcy: Yeah yeah yeah.

Jack: That if he speaks something into the world, there will be, we will put ourselves in danger. If he speaks it into truth.

Darcy: Yeah, it's like the act—if he speaks it, it's like the activation code or something.

Jack: Yeah. Whether, I don't think he's doing that deliberately, I think he's—

Austin: That is not what he said.

Darcy: Mm. Well, it's if we—

Jack: What did he say?

Austin: That is not what he said. I'm wanna just—

Darcy: If they know that we know, they'll come after us until we're dead.

Austin: Meh. If you know the words, [**Darcy:** Mm.] they will be able to track you.

Darcy: Okay, yeah.

Jack: Okay so is there any way you could put us in a little insul— [laughs]

Darcy: Yeah, I think it would have to be all the above in a little bubble. Potentially.

Jack: If you know the words they will be able to track you...they've been able to track us! Well, hm. They've been able to track us in particular ways. They sent the collared—

Austin: He's saying that they can track him. That's his point.

Darcy: Because he knows the words.

Austin: His point is that if he dies, then they can't track you anymore.

Darcy: Right.

Austin: I'm just trying to reemphasize what he said so that you're clear and not like following a wild goose chase misunderstanding.

Darcy: Yeah.

Austin: His argument was, right now if something happens to him, if they come and get him or if he—if you kill him, then you're safe for the rest of your life from this particular group. They can't track you. They don't have you in the same way that they have him, broadly. [**Darcy:** Mhm.] But if you know what is in Mirador's head, then it doesn't matter what happens to them, the group that's been pursuing Mirador will then be able to pursue you. Broadly. Whatever that means. Right?

Darcy: Yeah.

Jack: Having the knowledge puts a flag on you.

Austin: That seems to be the case. That's the argument being made.

Darcy: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: Whether that's true or not is a different question, [**Jack:** No.] or if it's true in the way Mirador understands it, et cetera.

Darcy: Yeah yeah yeah.

Jack: And I am looking to a thaumaturge who can respond to a mundane problem [**Austin:** Mhm.] I don't have the workable information to be able to, with magical means.

Darcy: Yeah. [sighs] Okay.

Jack: I mean—

Darcy (as **Flemming**): Hey, Mirador.

Austin (as **Mirador**): Yeah.

Darcy (as **Flemming**): We need to figure out a way that you can share your knowledge.

Austin (as **Mirador**): [wearily] Oh my...this again? We're doing this?

Darcy (as **Flemming**): Yes. This again. The stakes are too high. We need to be on the same page. I believe you when you say that you are doing this to protect us, but I think at this point we're reaching a tipping point.

Austin (as **Mirador**): No.

Darcy (as **Flemming**): [sighs] How would they know? Can you—do you know how? Can you explain it to me so I can try to counteract it?

Austin (as **Mirador**): [laughs in disbelief] We're on our way to counteract it. Do you know how our world works?

Darcy (as **Flemming**): [sighs]

Austin (as **Mirador**): We've talked about this before. You and I are generally in agreement that all things fundamentally are all other things. We've had that part of the conversation. How do you think that all things then differentiate themselves from all other things?

Darcy (as **Flemming**): Mirador, if you're getting to a point please get to it, otherwise you're evading the question.

Austin (as **Mirador**): You're being a child.

Darcy (as **Flemming**): No.

Austin (as **Mirador**): I'm not evading the question, I'm talking to you about how the thousand moons work!

Darcy (as **Flemming**): And I'm asking you specifically how one phenomenon amongst the thousand moons works. One that you are terrified of. If you do not know the answer there is no shame.

Austin (as **Mirador**): All of us are moved by the words that we are composed of. That will us, and that we will, into reality. And most people don't know what they're composed of. They're like a run-on sentence, they just keep going. But, ah, [chuckles] some people get mastery over themselves. They learn what they're good at. They learn who they are, they even change who they are.

Imagine a person was a book, most of us don't get to crack it open and read inside of it. Now imagine you're someone who not only knows how to read your own book, but knows how to read everybody else. And you have—you have access to the card catalogue. That's them. They don't necessarily know I'm in the lift right now, but they know I'm on Sapryc. They know where to file, or where I'm filed. You see? And they know what I'm good at. And right now, when they look at you they know what you're good at. They know what you're capable of, but they don't know where you're filed.

Where we're going is a place that'll confuse their library a little bit. And give you a chance to...mm.

Austin: Wavering now.

(as **Mirador**): It's all I can say.

Darcy (as **Flemming**): When will you tell us?

Austin (as **Mirador**): When we get there!

Darcy (as **Flemming**): When?

Sylvi: [laughs]

Austin (as **Mirador**): What do you mean when? You're being a child!

Darcy (as **Flemming**): No. I'm—

Austin (as **Mirador**): [furious] You keep responding the way a child does! I hired a thaumaturge! We are so close. We are so close! And now?! You're giving up patience. You're acting like a novice. How long did it take you to get here? Because there's only an infinitesimal percent left on the journey! Were there not spells your masters would not teach you when you began learning? Or if you taught yourself, were there not things you knew would burn your fingers if you tried them again too soon? Jud I expect this from, but I'm disappointed, Fleming.

Darcy (as **Flemming**): Would you care to take a breath and take back any of your childish frustrated words?

Austin (as **Mirador**): No!

Darcy (as **Flemming**): They have you this afraid?

Austin (as **Mirador**): [laughs wearily] They're fear.

Jack: [sighs]

(as **Jud**): [under his breath] Jud I expected this from...

Sylvi: [laughs]

Darcy: [chuckles]

Jack: On the other side of the corrugated metal, [**Austin**: Mhm.] stewing.

Janine: Well you are an actual child, so.

Austin: [chuckles]

Jack: Yeah, but I mean, but— [laughs]

Darcy (as **Flemming**): [cross] Mirador—

Jack: [cross] What child has—oh sorry, go on.

Sylvi: [laughs] That conversation's happening in the background.

Austin: Mhm.

Jack: Yeah. [laughs]

Darcy (as **Flemming**): You are losing us, Mirador.

Austin (as **Mirador**): Wh—

Janine: [uncertainly] Mmm.

Darcy (as **Flemming**): The stakes get higher and higher and your answers become more evasive.

Austin (as **Mirador**): Who am I losing? Am I—oh sorry, am I losing you and Jud? Gaje, Sacea, have I lost you? Scrundle is here.

Sylvi: I— [laughs] Gaje just kind of shrugs. I think—actually no, he has an actual response.

(as **Gaje**): I've spent a lot of my life following around small men who need an axe to swing. I'm happy to be it. Just if you say you'll tell me when it's time, you better.

Austin (as **Mirador**): [firmly] I will tell you when it's time.

Sylvi: And then he nods and is like,

(as **Gaje**): Can we keep walking?

Austin: We're not walking. We're on, this is what makes this so frustrating.

Darcy: Yeah, the lift's moving.

Sylvi: Oh right! We're in the elevator, my bad. Sorry.

Austin: We're just all sitting in a fucking elevator. A 24 hour elevator.

Sylvi: I thought we were back in the tunnel for some reason.

Austin: Oh no, we are in the tunnel but the tunnel is downwards. [**Sylvi:** Yeah, yeah.]
It's a downwards tunnel the elevator is going down. Yeah.

Sylvi: We're in Metal Gear Solid and there's gonna be guys in the—yeah yeah yeah, I get it.

Austin: Correct. Yeah yeah yeah.

Sylvi: Cloaking devices.

Jack: We're in Metal Gear Solid except instead of singing the ladder song, a 15 year old has incited a wizard to fight with— [laughs]

Austin: [laughs] Another wizard who's—

Jack: [laughing] Another wizard.

Austin: Or retired wizard or something.

Darcy: Mm.

Janine: Yeah I think Sacea's in a similar place. I don't even think that she has to say it. I think she says something to the effect of like,

(as **Sacea**): I'm happy to learn what I need to know through the journey. I don't need people to tell me.

Jack: [laughs in disbelief] This is not the conversation that we had over food.

Austin: [laughs]

Jack: [laughing] I wanna say. I had a conversation with y'all where it's like, when—we're gonna have a little chat with Mirador and now all these fuckers.

Sylvi: Well he said we'd have the chat when it's time to chat! And listen, [**Jack:** Ehh.] I just got zapped by magic lightning.

Jack: That's true, you are very afraid.

Austin: Mhm.

Sylvi: I was very afraid! I'm big and strong again.

Austin: [laughs]

Sylvi: And Gaje says it in that exact voice.

Austin: [laughs fondly]

Jack: Ah man...

Austin (as **Mirador**): Listen, does anybody want some jerky?

Sylvi (as **Gaje**): Yes please.

Austin (as **Mirador**): Alright.

Austin: Walks over to Scrundle and gets out the jerky bag and begins to pass it around.

Jack: Sulking. Y'know, very clear that I am impatient. Frustrated. Is the Cicatrix Knight hungry? No, right? Cause he's undead.

Austin: That's, we went over—yeah, we kind of talked around this a little bit, right? Which was like, I don't know if it eats anymore. I don't know. Certainly it doesn't have a st—it—hm. From mouth to tummy gone now. [laughs] Right?

Sylvi: [laughs]

Jack: Yes, yes.

Austin: Cause of big hole. So eating...but, but also just woke up from a sarcophagus a few days ago. You know, a week or two ago.

Jack: Yeah yeah yeah.

Austin: So who knows. In life the Cicatrix Knight was very hungry.

Darcy: [chuckles]

Jack: Oh yeah.

Austin: So I don't know what type of unlife this is necessarily. You know? Which is interesting. Any other conversations here in the—on the way down?

Sylvi: There has to be some sort of idle chit chat, but it's like, I don't know what, like any heavy subjects or anything substantial that Gaje would be bringing up, you know?

Darcy: Mm.

Janine: I wonder if... [laughs] I don't know that Sacea would try and pull Flemming aside to say this? But I think she probably would with Jud and might say it loud enough for Flemming to overhear.

(as **Sacea**): You know, we're on the—

Janine: Would we call this an elevator? It's an elevator right?

Austin: A lift, an elevator, yeah.

Jack: Yeah.

Janine (as **Sacea**): We're on the lift. If we heard something we didn't like, we would still be moving.

Jack (as **Jud**): Yeah, but just—

Janine (as **Sacea**): You got on the lift. And now we're—

Jack (as **Jud**): [furtively] Yeah I got on the lift, cause I thought we were—

Janine (as **Sacea**): This is the ride.

Darcy (as **Flemming**): She does have a point.

Jack (as **Jud**): Yeah, but— [splutters] Fuckin' butt out of it.

Sylvi: [laughs]

Janine: [laughs quietly]

Darcy (as **Flemming**): Jud, he has given us a deadline.

Jack (as **Jud**): A deadline. A dead—he's given us a deadline. What, his deadline is when we get there.

Darcy (as **Flemming**): Yeah.

Jack (as **Jud**): When we get to the barricade he's gonna say, "open this up."

Darcy (as **Flemming**): Sure, and we will. And we will, and if we still don't get the answers that we need, we'll cross that bridge when we come to it.

Jack (as **Jud**): Fucking useless magician!

Sylvi: [laughs, delighted]

Jack (as **Jud**): Useless magician!

Sylvi: [holding back laughter]

Darcy (as **Flemming**): Jud, what do you want us to do, kill him?

Jack (as **Jud**): [frustrated] No I don't want you to—we've just been travelling for so long! I'm so hungry! I've been carrying this fucking donkey all the way across the continent. We got so cold!

Darcy (as **Flemming**): I hate to agree with Mirador, but this is how it goes sometimes.

Jack (as **Jud**): I'm gonna go and talk to Scrundle.

Sylvi: You just dissed Scrundle!

Austin: Scrundle— [laughs] you did just diss Scrundle.

Jack: Yeah, I'm not—

Darcy: Yeah.

Jack: I'm not consistent in my—I'm angry!

Darcy: Okay, sure. And hungry!

Janine: [laughs]

Jack: [laughing] And hungry!

Sylvi: Ohh hangry Jud.

Jack: But I can't any of the—

Austin: Hangry Jud...

Jack: I can't eat any of the jerky cause that would give Mirador a W.

Janine: Ahh.

Austin: So you're not gonna eat. Yeah, mhm.

Darcy: Sure. I'm gonna eat the jerky.

Sylvi: Mister "I'm not a child" over here.

Austin: Mhm!

Jack: [sighs]

Austin: Oh it's funny...it's really funny, to me.

Sylvi: [laughs]

A Noise in the Dark [0:28:07]

Austin: So yeah, the first, let's say the first 12 hours goes as such.

Jack: [laughs] It's just miserable.

Austin: Yeah, uh huh. And maybe there are other moments of that—

Darcy: That's a lot of time.

Austin: It's a lot of time. It is.

Sylvi: I started playing a game, Gaje has, where he's throwing, he's trying to bounce a rock off the bottom of the elevator and hit the moving wall to see how it bounces.

[laughs]

Austin: Ohh.

Darcy: Ooh! Sounds fun.

Sylvi: And just does that for like an hour at least.

Austin: Mhm. I love that. Well then that's a good moment for you to hear between those bounces, something buzzing in the dark.

Sylvi: Oh and then I'm getting up to my feet the second I hear that.

Austin: Oh yeah. You're pretty sure...actually, something else I'll reveal I think maybe, is a sentence. Let's reveal a sentence first, there's a moon sentence here. Which is, da da da, "The elevator of the Wound Way always fails under external pressure." **[Darcy: Mm.]** It's a thing maybe you picked up as you were bouncing rocks. You were like, this thing, this elevator's fine when you put stuff in it, but the rock bounces weird once and like—

Sylvi: [laughs nervously] Uh oh.

Austin: Or maybe it knocks a little extra, when it bounced up and hit part of the outside wall, maybe a little chunk of the rock fell, [**Sylvi:** Uh huh.] like a bigger wall rock, fell and hit the lift and it shook more than you thought it would.

Sylvi: Oh Jesus.

Austin: So that's a thing you just know is true. And that's a plus one sentence.

Sylvi: Okay.

Austin: And then you hear the buzzing a little later. You're more careful with the rock throwing, you don't—

Sylvi: Oh I stop, I think I stop after that.

Austin: Okay.

Sylvi: Yeah no, that's the type of thing where I'm not fucking around. [laughs]

Austin: Sure, sure. Well I'm just gonna give you that, but then yeah, you hear the buzzing. It is the sound, which you've heard before, of Empest drones nearing. You know that drones, a thing that you—let's find out what you know about drones. I think we've written a drone sentence down, maybe we haven't. Ba ba buh...well yeah, you know that "Empest worker drones always work, day and night." You don't know if it's day or night, but they're out here working. And they seem to be exploring this vast tunnel system themselves.

Again, the Empest are a sort of humanoid bug people. I think of them as being very beetle-like, I think of them as having—or the worker drones as being kind of beetle-like. Having exoskeletons, having bug wings, having bulbous shapes to their armor or their bodies. It's hard to tell where body begins and armor ends. There's a kind of blending or organic and inorganic material there, if there even is anything inorganic there. They are a former human empire of some sort, which seems like it was completely transformed. I don't know how popul—I don't know how widely known that is, maybe there's like the

fairy tale of them. **[Darcy: Mm.]** Is sort of like, if you're a bad child you'll grow up to be a bug. You know?

Darcy: [laughs]

Austin: And that's what happened to them, effectively. You don't want to grow up to be an Empest, do you? Broadly, they're like what if the Roman Empire, instead of falling in the way it did, fell into eternal bug corruption. You know?

Jack: [laughs]

Austin: And instead of that power being kind of like, consumed by other rising powers throughout Europe, became an un—they're not literally undead, but the power is sort of undead. They're no longer a civil culture in the sense of like, engaging in trade with other—they and the Suzerainty don't have, they're not on terms. You know what I mean? They're a locustal swarm at this point. The vast military arm of the once great empire, took over the empire and became its heart instead of a limb.

So that's the gist on who they are, and here come a few of them! They are buzzing downwards in search of who knows what. But [laughs] you are under the search light. So what do you do? Or actually I guess I will simply try to use a sentence and see if you can react to it, because that is how this game works. And you have the grateful position of being the status quo. You've just been riding an elevator, **[Sylvi: laughs]** they're the ones trying to change the situation.

Darcy: Mhm!

Austin: So does anyone have a...[laughs] does anyone have a sentence or a way to counter the sentence, "When flying, I can mark prey for other Empest to find." My intention is to draw attention to you and let the rest of the Empest know where you are. I think a few of these drones spot the elevator, hear the sound of it maybe in the dark. Or hear some chatter and begin to buzz down toward you to investigate what's going on over here. So again that sentence is, "When flying, I can mark prey for other Empest to find."

Darcy: Hm.

Austin: And they are flying.

Janine: Does that sound like a plus one or a plus two to folks?

Darcy: Can you read the sentence again, Austin?

Austin: I sure can. "When flying, I can mark prey for other Empest to find." Or "I always mark prey."

Jack: That sounds—

Austin: "I can mark prey." Jesus, Austin, what were you doing? [typing sounds] I always mark prey...

Jack: It's a plus one right?

Darcy: It sounds like it.

Jack: Cause the original sentence would be, or could be, "I always mark prey for others to find."

Janine: Yeah, cause "I always mark prey" doesn't really mean much. On its own.

Jack: No, this is plus one.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Darcy: Hm.

Janine: I can— [cross] I can foil this then.

Jack: [cross] Although the—

Darcy: Yeah, go ahead!

Janine: Cause I have my plus one, "I always exert my will over the senses of others."

Austin: Ooh.

Darcy: Nice.

Janine: “With my perfumes.”

Austin: Love that.

Janine: So I want to have the moment of, as usual, like plonk: a little censer, a little pomander thing drops to the end of its chain out of Sacea's sleeve. [laughs] You know, she lifts it up, pops it open, puts something inside. You get the thick, incensey smoke coming out of the openings. I think the smell is something like...hmm. I want something that drones would—something that feels droney. Something that feels like relevant to—

Jack: Is it sweet? Is it like there's sort of insectile, you know.

Janine: Maybe, yeah.

Austin: Are you trying to distract them or draw them away? Or make them not come over here?

Janine: I'm trying to make a smell that's, to them, like “oh this thing isn't anything new or special.”

Austin: Okay. This is normal. Yeah.

Janine: This is some sort of normal thing. Or like, something that even smells like them or something in that way, you know.

Austin: Yeah, I was thinking, I wonder if it's like [**Darcy:** Ohh.] a smell of a sort of Empest that's higher up on the chain. In a way that's like, they don't—

Jack: Mm.

Austin: Okay, that's not ours to deal with.

Janine: Mhm.

Austin: Someone else is already—you know what I mean?

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: That's not—we're not allowed to go to that part of the tunnel. [laughs]

Janine: Mhm.

Sylvi: It smells like special forces in here.

Austin: That's exactly it. Yes, exactly.

Janine and Jack: [laugh]

Austin: It smells like the soldier ants over here. That's not what we—we are drones. You know?

Janine: Mhm. Yeah. So there is probably a weird sweetness to it, but also an underlying—I wonder if it kind of smells like gas station.

Jack: Mm!

Austin: Ohh, it smells like gas station.

Darcy: Ohh.

Janine: It smells like gas station.

Austin: Oh that's— [laughs] that's gonna change the mood of this.

Darcy: Inside or outside of gas station?

Janine: Outside.

Austin: The gas part of the gas station.

Darcy: Okay.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah okay.

Darcy: Just make sure. It might smell like a roller hot dog.

Austin: Ohh.

Sylvi: With Mirador's jerky we've got a real road trip vibe now.

Austin: [laughs]

Janine: Yeah, yeah.

Jack: [laughs]

Austin: It's true, it's true.

Jack: Yeah, complete with [cross] sulking person...yeah. [laughs]

Janine: [cross] Jud's tantrum. Yeah. [laughs]

Austin: [chuckles]

Sylvi: Play your—play on your Gameboy, Jud. Just stop complaining.

Jack: [laughs]

Janine: And the sort of ambivalent promise of, eh when we get there.

Jack: When we get there I'll tell you!

Janine: Da da da, when we get there.

Sylvi: You think we're going to Disneyland, but we're visiting Grandma instead.

Jack: That's the classic road trip parent to child thing. I'll tell you when we get there and if I tell you beforehand, you will be hunted until eternity by people who can read class sentences.

Sylvi: That sounds like my dad.

Austin: [laughs quietly] Mhm!

Janine: Mm, mhm.

Jack: Oh sure!

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: Incredible. Alright, well they—that scares them away, or it keeps them from coming to investigate and keeps you safe from the Empest for now, who head back up or go around you, ignore you as you continue down. They're gonna keep looking for whatever it is they're looking for elsewhere. And you get another number of hours here without it being—without coming under any threat. Which is good because all they had to do was fuck up that elevator a little bit and the whole thing would've really come apart on you. Bad place for that to happen.

Jack: Yeah, is it a mechanical or magical elevator?

Austin: I think it's both. I think it's both.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: I think there's, the fundamentals of it are mechanical, but the only way it sustains itself as you get deeper down into the moon is some sort of magic.

Jack: Oh sure.

Austin: And then especially—

Jack: Does it have a counterweight? Or is that magic?

Into the Tunnel [0:38:39]

Austin: I think it does literally have a counterweight. But then there's something else magical happening when, there's a moment—we can just get there now actually, unless there's anything else anyone wants to do while still in this part of the lift, the liftyness of

it. Where you turn, where the elevator goes from going straight down to going perpendicular to the direction you're going. Right? It starts going straight down, and then the entire tunnel begins to feel like it's slowly rotating so that **[Jack: Huh.]** instead of going up down, it's going left right. Or it's going east, it feels like it's going east west or something. Or it feels like you're coming downward, almost like the elevator is—the lift is landing on the side of the tunnel. But it doesn't feel unnatural, and that has to be some sort of magic. You think.

Jack: Yes.

Austin: Right? And it—

Jack: Yes, and god help the poor guy who had to go down here first, before the large-scale lift construction.

Austin: I mean that was the book that **[Jack: Yeah.]** Flemming read was about the person who did that and then founded the Cloister of the Hollow Heart because of whatever it was that he saw on the other end.

Jack: Some holy experience.

Austin: Yeah, some holy experience. And then the pilgrimage back up across the entire—through the damn thing. So yeah, the lift comes to a halt and in this part of the area there are like, there's a sort of landing area. There are no monks here, but there are—there is a sort of, carved into the deep mantle of the moon or built onto it or whatever. Or maybe just here, built into natural alcoves left behind by the worm, are a little rest area. There's like beds, there's a little, ah, what is the...not a barracks, a—what do you call it, like a dormitory? Like six beds laid out, you know what I mean? Do you know the word for that, like a room with six beds in it? Is it just a bedroom, just like a—

Darcy: Yeah, I think a bedroom.

Janine: Like a bunkhouse?

Jack: Yeah, a hostel.

Darcy: Or a hostel, or a dorm.

Austin: A bunkhouse, something like that. Yeah, bunkhouse. And then like an area for cooking, and some torches to be lit. But it's weird cause it's not— [laughs] it's just a long tunnel. Do you know what I mean? Like, it's not—it's not like the tunnel is...it's not like you've gone down a side tunnel and it comes to a halt and you're in a little building or something. You're just in this tunnel that seems to stretch from, for you, from front to back, forever. [**Jack:** Huh.] And the elevator or the lift is still here next to you, but you know that it's going to get lifted upwards and then turn and go up the hallway, the long tunnel that you can now see left to right. When it gets brought back up, whenever that is.

Jack: Huh.

Austin: You don't know if that's—Mirador doesn't like, hit a switch and it starts going away, you know? [**Darcy:** laughs] It's still here at this point. And then yeah, it's sort of like imagine yourself in a long tunnel and there's just a bedroom off to the side, in the long tunnel. And it's, again, it's a wide tunnel. It was wide enough for the sort of being that eats out the center of a moon, that chews its way through a moon to, you know. That's how big it is. This is a large thing. But it's still weird for it to be like, in the middle of this empty space, up against the wall is some beds.

Jack: Huh.

Austin: But Mirador is like,

(as **Mirador**): What do you think? You wanna keep moving? Feel like we sat around enough in the damn lift?

Jack (as **Jud**): Yeah alright, let's go.

Sylvi (as **Gaje**): I'm happy to keep moving.

Darcy (as **Flemming**): Yeah, we should keep moving.

Austin (as **Mirador**): Alright.

Austin: Pets Scrundle a few times and then the travel continues. And it is only, I'd say, a few hours of travel here before you begin to see what might be the problem.
[chuckles]

Jack: [laughs]

Darcy: [laughs]

Austin: What might be the thing that prevents the journey forward. At a certain point the wall that you're traveling next to—cause the tunnel, again, is very wide. And you can kind of see the opposite side of the wall, the opposite side of the tunnel, across a number of football fields away, but you're not—you're staying close to this side. The side that you descended next to. And that side has torches every—you're going through someone's Minecraft tunnels, right? [**Darcy:** Yeah.] And they have torches up every 30 feet or so. Not as often as you might want, I do think creepers could spawn—

Darcy: Oh no!

Austin: In the darkness between, so be careful.

Sylvi: I've still got a charge of the violet blaster, we'll be fine.

Austin: Okay, that's good. [laughs] In fact, as you're going down this way—let me finish saying the thing that you see first. Which is: there seems to be a sheet of liquid silver in the distance that's like a waterfall of something. You can't make out too much of it, but there's a—it's almost as if the tunnel comes to a cave opening, like the opening of a cave, and there is—you're seeing liquid silver waterfall. Who the fuck knows what is going on there.

Jack: This is a fog gate! [laughs quietly]

Darcy: [laughs]

Austin: Maybe! I mean it opens a little bit first, to where there's like a chamber or something. But I mean you're not, I'm looking at my prep. Yeah, it's a fog gate. It's sort of a fog gate. It's a fog gate mixed with something else, we'll get there. Because—

Jack: Okay. [laughs]

Austin: Before we get there, [laughs] I do have to know if anyone here can counter the most important sentence I've ever read: "I always get up to hijinks with my friends."

Jack: [laughing] Oh no!

Sylvi: What?

Darcy: Ohh...

Jack: "I always get up to hijinks with my friends!" Now this could be an extremely funny plus one sentence where the plus zero sentence is "I always get up to hijinks."

Sylvi: I bet it is!

Jack: [laughs]

Sylvi: Hm.

Darcy: I'm trying to remember, is it—what happens if you meet a plus one with a plus one?

Sylvi: Defender wins.

Austin: Counter wins. Yeah, the counter wins. If you try to counter a sentence, you counter it if you equal it.

Darcy: Yeah.

Sylvi: [laughing] What have you got, Flemming? Cause I think you're—I don't want to do what I've got.

Darcy: Yeah. Well so, I have my currently zero sentence of “I always project an image of unerring wisdom,” is primed—

Austin: Yeah. Mhm.

Darcy: And I could turn it plus one.

Austin: Sure. Also what’s our token situation? Who has what—who has tokens?

Darcy: I know Gaje and I have tokens.

Sylvi: Yes.

Austin: Right, cause you did the token getting thing...or did you—

Darcy: Uh huh.

Jack: I do not have my token.

Austin: Okay.

Janine: I also don’t have mine. I spent it last time.

Darcy: Ooh.

Austin: Just checking.

Darcy: Gotcha. I think I might change this sentence to “I always project an image of...” I know I want to change wisdom to authority.

Austin: Mm. So maybe just author—it’s not unerring authority. It’s just authority.

Darcy: Sure.

Austin: Right? You lose unerring. Or is there a quali—is there a...cause again, you’re not just—

Darcy: That’s why I’m thinking, is there another adjective?

Austin: You don't need another—I mean the thing here, remember, is it's getting more restricted as it realizes.

Darcy: Yeah yeah yeah.

Austin: It's not getting better and it's not getting different, it's getting restricted.

Darcy: Mhm.

Austin: So I think it's probably fair to say going from unerring wisdom to simply authority is a restriction. It's also a pretty big change, so it might be—I don't know. There's—part of me wants to push back and say that you're just changing to a different sentence, [**Darcy:** Mm, sure.] you're not actually realizing that sentence, but I think that if you get rid of unerring then that gives us room to play with the absence of unerring. You know?

Darcy: Yeah. Yeah, cause I think doing—hold on. So unerring is always right or accurate. I googled it just to make sure.

Austin: Yeah, yeah someone who's unerring is, you're like confident in them.

Darcy: Yeah. So previously, Flemming's wisdom, even if it has been annoying, it's been like, well he probably knows what he's talking about.

Austin: Exactly.

Darcy: Whereas authority is now more powerful but also more open for question.

Austin: Correct. Yeah, yeah. And it's not wisdom, necessarily. [**Darcy:** Yeah.] Authority can be read other ways. Authority doesn't have to be—like you can be an authority on a subject, or you can be an authority because of your position or title or rank, [**Darcy:** Mhm.] and those two things are not the same. You know?

Darcy: Yeah, yeah. [pause] Yeah, let's do it.

Austin: Alright, let's realize it. So then— [laughs] the—I think the thing that happens here is...what—describe to me what you're carrying with you, Flemming.

Darcy: Mm. Like just in general?

Austin: What's your backpack or your, yeah. What's your travel gear situation?

Darcy: Um...

Austin: We haven't really gotten character descriptions in months, probably as listeners, so.

Darcy: Yeah sure. I do probably have a small rucksack. My book of hand curated terrible spells is—ohh, I know what it looks like. It is a very big book and its binding is attached to a chain that is clipped to me. Yes, I have a wallet chain for my book of terrible spells.

Sylvi: Let's go!

Austin: Uh huh.

Darcy: Because I need that at a moment's notice and I carry it in like a chest holster.

Austin: Mhm. [quietly] Chest holster, that's fun.

Darcy: But yeah, so I have a small sack. I have a, you know, my quick pull book in my holster.

Austin: Mhm.

Darcy: Yeah. I probably have a couple of wands in like a hip holster.

Troublesome Creatures [0:49:04]

Austin: Okay. So I think the thing that happens here, and I will reveal these creatures at this moment. And I will counter "I always get up to hijinks with my friends." Which is a shame cause that means they're not gonna get up to hijinks anymore.

Darcy: [laughs]

Austin: There is a sound of laughing? Of—what if a little pile of stones could laugh?

Sylvi: Ohh!

Austin: What would that sound like? I wish we had Keith here.

Darcy: Sure.

Austin: Like a little, like a chortle, like a—

Jack: Sounds like ice cubes being shaken in a glass, right?

Sylvi: Yeah! That's—

Austin: That's a great—that's exactly, yeah. That's fantastic.

Darcy: Mmm. Sounds like HD rumble.

Austin: [laughs]

Jack: Oho!

Austin: And a little guy rolls up in front of you! And is like

(as **Little Guy**): [cutely, high-pitched] Mehh mreh mah!

Austin: But like rockier than that.

(as **Little Guy**): [grumbley] Gweh gwreh gwroh gwra gwa.

Sylvi: [delighted laugh]

Darcy: Sure.

Austin: It's a little pile of rocks with arms and legs. You don't see any eyes. It's not as smooth as one of the little baby stone taluses from—from—

Sylvi: Elden Ring?

Jack: Oh, Tears of the Kingdom.

Austin: Breath of the Wild or Tears of the Kingdom. Yeah. It's not that—

Sylvi: Oh wait. That's—I'm thinking of a different guys.

Austin: What were you thinking of?

Sylvi: I'm thinking of the jars, I think.

Austin: What are the jars?

Jack: Oh, from Elden Ring. The jar men.

Sylvi: From Elden Ring, the jar guys from Elden Ring.

Darcy: Ohh yeah yeah yeah!

Jack: Alexander the jar.

Austin: That's not so off either, in terms of scale wise—

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: The like, Alexander the little one, the nephew. You know? Is close in size.

Darcy: Yeah.

Austin: But it is stone talus size, the little baby stone talus size from Zelda. But they're like, they're—I mean, these are called Cobblings, they're like stone [**Darcy:** Awe.] that has hewed itself together into a little guy. And one of them rolls in front of you. Rolls up in a ball, I guess like a Goron from Zelda, but then stops.

And the thing that's interesting is that while it's rolling around, the cobble is a little loose. It's adhering to itself and it kind of snaps together when it comes to a stop. You know what I mean? It's as if you took a big bowl of stones and they were a little magnetic or

something. Not super magnetic, not where they're completely locked together, but they stayed generally in the same ball shape as they rolled. And when it stood up, it turned back into this little stone, very rotund, round stone gremlin. You know? Not so much—no head. The whole torso is the head, sort of. Or like—it's not just a ball, but it's kind of like a clump. A clump of stones.

And it is supposed—what it's supposed to do, is turn around and turn into a ball and lead you away. Like trick you into leading you away. But your sense of authority instead has it stuck in its—in place. And the thing is, while it's doing this your shoes are being tied—your shoelaces are being tied together. [laughs]

Jack and Darcy: [laugh]

Austin: And the whole thing was gonna be, you're gonna get—you're gonna trip and run. So you look at it, it freezes in place having sensed your sense of authority, and then you look down and just see that your shoelaces are being tied to each other, or they're attempted to be, by a second Cobbling.

Darcy: Mm.

Austin: Who then makes, I guess, stone to eye contact to you and goes,

(as **Cobbling**): [high-pitched] Bweh!

Sylvi: [laughs]

Austin: And then rolls away backwards. And then they're rolling all around you at this point. They are not sure what to do now that they've been spotted and scared. Scared might be worse, is a thing I wanna say. [**Darcy:** Oh sure.] There are worse sentences here than "I always get up to hijinks with my friends." So yeah, they're rolling around you, not sure what to do. What's your take on them? What do y'all do?

Jack: My take on them firstly, is that I love that the sentence "I always get up to hijinks with my friends" tells us, even before we met these little freaks, that they have friends.

Darcy: [laughs]

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: That we have a little culture of guys hanging out.

Darcy: Mhm.

Austin: Oh yeah. Big time.

Jack: [laughs quietly] I mean—

Austin: I've added the plus one sentence, Cobblings, "I always get up to hijinks with my friends," [**Darcy:** Yeah.] in the, one of the NPC things. So yeah, they're rolling all around you, they haven't—it seems like they haven't quite decided—ball's in your court, travelers.

Darcy: Yeah. Is the one still kind of like frozen in front of me?

Austin: Yeah, totally.

Darcy: Okay.

(as **Flemming**): Hey!

Austin (as **Cobbling**): [high-pitched] Wrah!

Darcy: Boy. Would I—can I—

Jack: [laughs] Boy!

Darcy: Boy. Could I—well okay.

Austin: [commanding] Boy!

Darcy: [laughs] [bellowing] Boy...

Austin: [gravelly] Boy.

Darcy: [laughs]

Austin: That's him. Kratos is here.

Darcy: I—ugh, I hate playing Flemming right now, cause I just wanna—me, Darcy,¹ just wants to hang out with these cool little bros. [laughs]

Austin: Uh huh.

Darcy: [laughing] And that is not what Flemming wants to do.

Austin: Mhm!

Sylvi: Yeah...

Janine: Are they in a book you've read?

Darcy: Oh yeah. Sure.

Austin: Oh for sure.

Darcy: Yeah, I know these little fucks.

Janine: Could you have an academic interest in them? [laughs]

Austin: I would love, Darcy, if both you and Mirador as a point of nerd sympathy, or sympathetic nerdism, you know what I mean?

Darcy: Mhm.

Austin: Were both like,

(as **Mirador**): Cobblings!

Austin: At the same time. You know?

Darcy: Yeah.

¹ The name in the audio recording is no longer in use, hence the audio/transcript discrepancies.

Austin: There's—we're not getting along right now, but we are both big nerds about monsters.

Sylvi: [chuckles]

Darcy: I mean he's the one who threw a fit, so.

Austin: Okay.

Sylvi: Okay...

Darcy: I'm not mad, he's mad.

Austin: [laughs] Ohh. Turning into a Cobbling. A corn-cobbling.

Jack: [laughs]

Darcy: [laughs] I'm not owned.

Austin: Yeah, do you have a little interest in them? What's your next—

Darcy: Oh sure. Yeah, I—can I—is it fair for me to say that I can communicate with them? Or is that a sentence that I need to find out?

Austin: I—we'll find out what happens.

Darcy: Okay.

Austin: You can try to do whatever you wanna do.

Darcy: Yeah, sure. But yeah, I want to build on this image of authority and just being like, hey I caught your hand in the cookie jar. Let's see...what can I make up that I know about Cobblings?

Austin: Great question.

Darcy: They seem kind of, like the vibe so far is kind of fae-like.

Austin: Mm, mhm.

Darcy: Kind of trickstery creature thing.

Austin: Yeah!

Darcy: So there must be a way, no, there is a way. Flemming knows a way that you can get them to stop fucking around and actually help you out.

Austin: Oh interesting.

Jack: Oh, it's like a—it's like a proactive version of the vampire has to count the rice that you've scattered. You know, like—

Sylvi: Yeah yeah yeah.

Jack: Those old folk methods for deterring witches and shit?

Darcy: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: What?

Darcy: Mhm.

Janine: Sorry, the vampire has to do what to the rice?

Sylvi: It's a thing where you—

Darcy: They have to count 'em!

Sylvi: Spill rice in front of a vampire in some old folk tales, they'll have to stop and count every single one of them.

Austin: Mhm.

Darcy: Yeah. But then they went to therapy and they kind of dealt with their OCD and it's fine now.

Jack: Good for the vampires.

Janine: Mm. Yeah.

Austin: Shoutouts. Yeah.

Jack: They do still keep killing people and sucking their blood, which is, you know.

Austin: They do, they do.

Darcy: Well that's just a biological urge.

Janine: That's their natural state, that's healthy for them.

Darcy: Yeah yeah yeah.

Jack: Oh I see, I see.

Sylvi: Don't kinkshame.

Darcy: [laughs]

Jack: [laughing] The vampires.

Austin: [laughs] Darcy, it actually sounds like, and here's a thing we haven't done a great job of differentiating in play. There's a thing you can do with a token that I don't think we've done once, maybe we've done it once—

Darcy: Oh, let's do it!

Austin: On your side, which is that you can establish a moon sentence and use it. And the line between—what is a moon sentence? A moon sentence is anything that's on a moon sheet, but it's also; moon sentences—okay, so there's moon sentences, there's player character sentences, right? Obviously. And then there's kind of like GM

sentences. Those used to be called faction sentences is what they used to be called. **[Darcy: Mm.]** Because it was tied to key factions who are bigger than a single moon is kind of the way that the rules were written. That like, the Empest don't exist only on Sapryc. The Suzerainty don't just exist on Sapryc. But the Cloister of the Hollow Heart is just a Sapryc thing. There's not another **[Darcy: Sure.]** place where that's part of the world. And so you could, for instance let's say that we were in the Cloister of the Hollow Heart, spend a token to add a sentence to reality, right?

Darcy: Ooh!

Austin: Adding a sentence to the moon about the cloistered monks. You could spend your token, I'll just read from the book here. Let's see here...ba ba ba, where's the best place here. I guess two things. One is: moon sentences differ from other GM sentences in two key ways. First, moon sentences tend to be more descriptive and less pointed than GM sentences. They capture general environmental and cultural aspects of any given moon and often—and as such, often require a little extra creativity to use them as means. They can sometimes just refer to a specific place or time on the moon rather than the entire world. Such as, "Yazerin afternoons always stretch too long," but they should never be used in place of a collection of NPC sentences for a developed character.

So again, the leader of the cloister whose name I—Ketero, should not have, should not be a moon sentence. **[Darcy: Sure.]** Ketero has his own sentences. But monks of the Cloister of the Hollow Heart is totally fine to have a moon sentence for them. The Cobbings of Sapryc or Sapryc Cobbings are something you could create a moon sentence for, for instance.

Darcy: Yeah!

Austin: Second, a player can discharge their tokens to either use a moon sentence as a means or add and use a new one. The moons of Realis and the people, creatures, and environs thereon have their own motives and priorities. Their loyalties wax and wane and they are often caught up in what can only be called kismet situations. When

a player spends their token in this way, they may reflect—that may reflect a temporary alliance between the moon’s residents and the band, a clever use of environmental knowledge, or a stroke of total luck; but it does not mean that the PC has taken control of the moon or an aspect of it. Instead, using tokens in this way is an act of the player as author, taking hold of the narrative and directing it in new unexpected ways.

So in other words, you know, the example that I end up giving in the book is that, let’s say you’re being pursued through a town on the moon of Daniley. You could hide in a bar and then use—create the sentence, “Daniley parents always tell you about their children” to then interrupt the bounty hunter that’s on your tail as the bounty hunter gets caught up by Daniley parents being like,

(as **Daniley Parent**): Ah you gotta see my kid! Look at this picture of my kid!

Sylvi: [laughs]

Austin: And that’s not the player character doing that, that would be you the player.

Darcy: Mm.

Austin: So if you wanna spend your token this way, you could totally spend your token by telling me something about Cobblings I didn’t know, [**Darcy**: Yeah!] and then using that sentence, effectively, for positive ends. Not to counter anything, but just to like—to clarify uncertainty, right?

Darcy: Mm.

Austin: So, what do you want to tell me that’s true about Cobblings?

Darcy: Sure, “the Cobblings of Sapryc always assist those with a song to share.”

Jack: [laughs] Ohoho!

Austin: Ohhh okay! Love this.

Sylvi: Is Flemming about to bust out his Tom Bombadil? Like is this where we find out you've got a whimsical—

Austin: I think that—

Darcy: Yeah.

Sylvi: You've got a whimsical little tune?

Darcy: Sure!

Austin: Then they go from looking like—they're still scared at this point, I guess actually. Wait until you start singing before they change what they look like, I guess. I've added this, this is a plus zero sentence. Which, even though it has a "with a song to share," that to me is like, that is the basics of the sentence. [**Darcy:** Mhm.] And when you spend a token, you get to make a plus zero sentence, so. So what's—how do you use this? What's the actual—what do you sing?

Darcy: I sing a song that is in their language.

Austin: You sing a Cobbling song!

Darcy: Mhm.

Austin: So it is—what is it about?

Darcy: Oh, it is about the famous Cobbling who...boy, what is the goofiest prank a Cobbling has ever pulled off?

Austin: Oh, that's great. They became a moon once.

Jack: [laughs]

Darcy: Oh, okay.

Austin: Yeah, mhm. Because another thing that they can do, which I'm just gonna tell you since you have this dang book. I mean, I'm just gonna give you the Cobbling

sentences and we can play with them as we want here [**Darcy:** Mhm.] as they—they have the sentence, “I can always piece myself back together.” And then they—which is plus zero. And then they have the sentence, “With enough runway and material, I always roll myself into a troublesome boulder.” Which is a plus one.

Darcy: Ooh!

Austin: And the song you know is about them basically having enough of them that they rolled themselves together onto a ramp around an entire moon and launched themselves into space and became a new moon. Now, is it true? I don’t know.

Darcy: Who knows!

Austin: Who knows. But they—that’s the story. That they—and you know, they got that, the process of rolling around a whole moon in order to get enough speed to launch yourself and to gather all the other Cobblings around? Is, yeah. Cobbling Katamari, exactly Darcy, yes.

Janine: I was gonna say, yeah. Cobbling Katamari. [chuckles]

Austin: Cobbling Katamari is a big prank, I think.

Jack: [laughs]

Austin: So yeah, what’s—so you’re singing in this kind of [high pitched, garbled] mramawmralma. This, that sort of—

Darcy: Mhm.

Austin: Is there rhythm to it? What’s their— [laughs] what’s Cobbling musical theory like?

Darcy: Oh boy. It—

Sylvi: [laughs] Pretty percussive, I imagine.

Austin: I imagine.

Darcy: Sure, yeah. I'm sure there is a rhythm to it and it probably does not sound like that to someone who doesn't speak Cobbling.

Austin: Right, yeah.

Darcy: It probably just sounds like you're throwing rocks down a well.

Austin: That's very fun. And it's like they're clinking around, [**Darcy:** Mhm.] and bouncing around.

Darcy: They're weirdly echoing against each other.

Janine: Or scraping. Scrape-based music.

Darcy: Yeah.

Austin: Oh scraping! Ooh, scraping based music like washboard type stuff.

Darcy: Oh! While I'm singing I'm like scraping my feet against the ground.

Sylvi: [laughs]

Austin: What's everybody else doing while Flemming is singing?

Sylvi: Watching in awe. [laughs]

Jack: [laughs]

Janine: Laughing.

Jack: Yeah!

Austin: [laughs]

(as **Mirador**): Aw, this is good!

Jack: I mean, this is—it's good, it's exciting. It is like a...I'm very impatient right now and there's a bit of me that's like, we're so close to this moment! But—and now we're having a little song and dance? With the rock creatures?

Austin: Mhm.

Jack: But at the same time! It is fun to see 'em dance around!

Austin: It is, it is fun.

Darcy: [chuckles]

Austin: It is fun. And as they, as you sing and dance, all of these other Cobblings begin to roll out from the dark. Impressed by the song, some of them join in on the song. They are not—there are more of them than you thought there would be. Right? You'd seen the two, the one who was trying to tie your shoelaces together and the one who got scared. But there's like fifteen of these guys. And they roll out towards the one who was scared and they're like clapping, some of them are jumping. Some of them are singing along and dancing together, but other ones are just like,

(as **Cobbling**): Woo!

Austin: You know? Just excited by the song. Which is—which is—

Jack and Sylvi: [laugh]

Austin: And then they like, you know, the one that was tying—trying to untie and retie your shoelaces, has fixed that work. Has re—rolls up and while you're singing, begins to tie your shoes properly.

Darcy: [laughs]

Austin: And then the group of them, when you're done the song, they all do a jump jump jump jump. You know like at the end of like a Halo match—

Sylvi: [laughs]

Jack: Yes.

Austin: When you want to communicate you had a good time, you just jump a bunch.

Darcy: [laughs]

Austin: And then they like, they all roll over towards you to be like, alright where are we going?

Jack: What a team we've assembled!

Darcy: Yeah!

Austin: And I think this is, Mirador's like,

(as **Mirador**): Now that's thaumaturge work.

Darcy: I'm ignoring that.

Austin: Uh huh!

The Silver Waterfall [1:05:34]

Darcy: It's all thaumaturge work, baby. Yeah, I wanna ask them—what can they tell us about this weird waterfall we're approaching?

Austin: Speaking back to you in their Cobbling language, they are—they say that it's very scary. They say that it hurts to go through or to touch. They don't go through it, they've never gone through it, don't go there.

Darcy: Mm.

Austin: They tell you, no no no, don't go there. Don't go there. You know? They tell you that there is a...that it has a guardian. And then one of them says,

(as **Cobbling**): [high pitched, warbling] Two! Two guardians!

Austin: I don't know why they're now just speaking. I guess I'm translating.

(as **Cobbling**): [high pitched] Two guardians!

Darcy: Sure, yeah yeah yeah.

Austin (as **Cobbling**): The knight and the—the knight and the—

Austin: Uh, I guess actually they—they actually don't know about the second guardian. They only know about the knight. So yeah, it has a guardian is what they tell you.

Darcy: Hm.

Austin: Sorry, they haven't been through the fog gate, you know.

Darcy: Sure, yeah yeah yeah yeah.

Jack: [laughs]

Darcy: Gosh, when is the last time someone went through the fog gate? Do any of them know?

Austin: Oh, great question. They only know through—

(as **Cobbling**): My great grandfather's great grandfather saw one go through!

Darcy: Mm.

Austin: They have gender down here. These little rock guys.

Darcy: Sure. Yeah, why not?

Janine: And also age?

Austin: Yeah, also age.

Janine: Do they live, cause they're rock people, do they live like millions of years or do they still have the lifespan of like, a dog?

Austin: I think it's in—okay well that's, not even a person.

Sylvi: Huh?

Darcy: Wow.

Austin: I think in between. I think that they live like, 200 years.

Janine: Okay, so it's like a shark or something.

Jack: [laughs] 200 is of course between 20 and one million.

Austin: And one million. Right in the middle

Darcy: Sure, yeah yeah yeah.

Sylvi: [laughs]

Jack: [laughs]

Austin: 200's the biggest number. [laughs]

Jack: Yeah, confidently.

Sylvi: You said "right in the middle" in your Mirador voice, which really feels like him saying it.

[All laugh]

Austin: Yeah he—that's what he said, yeah.

Darcy: Mm.

Jack: Oh, Mirador is the person who really phenomenally good at English and literature and absolutely dogshit in the math and science classes. I don't know, science maybe.

Austin: Ah, truly if only you knew. If only you knew, Jack!

Jack: [laughs]

Darcy: God.

Jack: Oh man.

Darcy (as **Flemming**): Can we get around?

Austin (as **Cobbling**): Mm mm!

Darcy (as **Flemming**): Okay. Hm. Well, they say there's something big and bad. They also say that going through whatever that is up ahead; the word they used was painful.

Jack (as **Jud**): Do you know what it is, Mirador?

Austin (as **Mirador**): I think I do.

Jack (as **Jud**): Well?

Austin (as **Mirador**): Eh, it's a sheet of liquid metal. Or a—I'm hoping it's a sheet. It might be in a whole cube of the stuff.

Jack (as **Jud**): You knew this would be here?

Austin (as **Mirador**): Yes!

Jack (as **Jud**): And so, and so what? We just—we just have to go through it?

Austin (as **Mirador**): Yes.

Jack (as **Jud**): Okay. No further prep.

Darcy: Oh, I'm trying to remember what I learned about this.

Austin: This did not come up.

Darcy: I thought—

Austin: Maybe what I said, broadly, was there is a—I did. I said there was like a, you would need to have an incredible amount of magical power in order to pass through here, right?

Darcy: Yeah. Well I think, wasn't there also something of like; passing through here is not great for the state of the monastery?

Austin: Mmm, they don't want people to pass through here. [**Darcy:** Okay.] And they helped erect this in order to prevent things from passing through the other way.

Darcy: Yeah.

Austin: Right? That is what was expl—you know, they don't want—they don't want you to be able to go down from here or to come up the other way.

Darcy: Sure, okay. Right.

(as **Flemming**): Yeah, Jud, did you not know about this?

Jack (as **Jud**): Well you know, I'm just saying that—you know. If Mirador has been anticipating this for a while, I was hoping that he might be able to offer some guidance other than "go through it."

Austin (as **Mirador**): This is why I brought the people I brought.

Jack (as **Jud**): Uh huh.

Austin (as **Mirador**): You're here to solve it.

Darcy (as **Flemming**): From what I've read it might be why he brought me, specifically.

Austin (as **Mirador**): You or Sacea, I think. No offense to the others but there's some mystical ways that I suspect can get us through here.

Darcy (as **Flemming**): And then you all can help with what comes after.

Austin (as **Mirador**): Exactly. Which, I don't know what that is. I have suspicions, I suspect—

Darcy (as **Flemming**): They said a knight.

Austin (as **Mirador**): Well...I think we might run into the knight before we get to the metal.

Darcy (as **Flemming**): Mm.

Austin (as **Mirador**): After the metal is where I kind of get fuzzy. But there's a—the monastery put a guardian down here, I've never met them.

Darcy: Hm. [sighs] Well do the Cobblings want to help us?

Austin: Yeah, they are here to help.

Darcy: Yeah. Yeah I wonder, would it be helpful—would things improve for them if we could either get rid of or help them be able to traverse this magical seal?

Austin: Ah, their concerns are so different. You know?

Darcy: Sure, yeah yeah yeah.

Austin: They don't care that much about it. They're not like, if only we could get across to the other side!

Darcy: Well I don't know, maybe there's a really good food on the other side that they want.

Austin: There could be! Maybe! They're curious about it.

Darcy: Yeah.

Austin: But it's so beyond the—it's like asking a regular human, would it be a help to you if you could go to the moon?

Darcy and Jack: [laugh]

Austin: You know?

Darcy: Yeah fair.

Austin: I don't know! I think—

Darcy: It might be cool! I don't know!

Austin: It might be cool, but it's not in my daily planner. My daily planner is not like, damn if only I could get to the moon, this whole thing would be easier. You know?

Darcy: Sure. Yeah.

Austin: Cause it's been forever since you could go to the other side.

Darcy: Yeah.

Austin: Alright, do y'all get moving to see it closer and take a look at this?

Jack: Yeah.

Darcy: Yeah!

Austin: What's your, you know. At a certain point you do see that there is, and you kind of get a sense of the geometry of the place. One, the tunnel opens up to a sort of orb shaped pit that goes between this side and the other side. There is no walkway around the pit, it is just a pit. And in the middle of it, is in fact a giant orb made of liquid metal. And there is a sort of—it's an orb, but it's a constantly waterfalling, spilling liquid. It's like it's a waterfall all the way around. And then you don't know where the liquid goes. The liquid metal hits the bottom of this orb—and it's gigantic. This is a huge, takes up the whole width of this tunnel, so it's hundreds and hundreds of yards across. It's probably a kilometer across in both directions. And this is, of course, the Globate Cataract. And it is just constantly churning.

Now in front of it and still on this side of the—on this side of it, is a knight in glistening armor. Helm guard, face guard down, standing effectively in attention with a broadsword down at their feet almost in perfect statue—in a perfect statue's form. Just waiting. And you're far off enough to tell me what you want to do. No one has issued challenge to

you, there's no immediate threat. There are fifteen Cobblings behind or around you.
[laughs]

Jack: [laughs]

Austin: There's an undead tree scar knight. You know, you got the whole clique.
Scrundle's here.

Darcy: [laughs]

Austin: Ain't nobody fucking with my clique. You know?

Darcy: Yeah.

Jack: [laughs] Yeah we really assembled the second party—

Austin: Uh huh!

Darcy: Uh huh.

Jack: In addition to our own.

Sylvi: [laughs]

Jack: The second unit has shown up and it might be us.

Austin: What if I was like, alright uhh now I'm gonna need the rest of Friends at the Table to get on the call to reveal that the whole time they've been waiting to play the Cobblings, the Cicatrix Knight and Scrundle.

Darcy and Jack: [laugh]

Sylvi: That would be great! Are you kidding?

Darcy: That would be great.

Austin: That would be fantastic.

Darcy: I just don't know who I want Keith to play.

Austin: Oh, Keith—

Sylvi: Cobblings.

Austin: All the Cobblings?

Darcy: Yeah.

Austin: All fifteen Cobblings?

Darcy: But I don't—I think Scrundle could be an underrated choice.

Austin: Mm, mhm.

Sylvi: That's true.

Darcy: Maybe Art's more of a Scrundle though.

Austin: Mm, damn.

Jack: Art would make a good Scrundle.

Austin: Art would make a good Scrundle.

Jack: Does the Cicatrix Knight respond at all to this knight?

Austin: Interesting. Like in any sort of—

Darcy: Ooh, great question.

Austin: Yeah yeah yeah, I see what you're saying. To be like, oh I've—

Darcy: I know that guy!

Austin: Yeah. Are you asking like, a specific "I know" or—I guess you're asking how does the Cicatrix Knight respond.

Jack: Yes.

Austin: Only like they're seeing another knight, not like they're seeing someone they know.

Jack: Okay. Not kin.

Austin: Not kin.

Sylvi: [giggles]

Jack: Oh man...

Sylvi: Um...part—unless someone's gonna stop me, part of me—cause this feels like it's like, oh this is what I got brought here for.

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvi: Was to deal with whatever this is.

Austin: Mm, interesting.

Sylvi: And maybe there's even a direct asking of Mirador, like,

(as **Gaje**): Is this what—should I handle this one? Is this—

Austin (as **Mirador**): Ah, not necessarily. Ideally we just walk by. Or get permission to walk by. Would love not to do any more damage to the Hollow Heart.

Sylvi (as **Gaje**): Alright, then let's go talk to the statue.

[“[Sapryc](#)” by Jack de Quidt plays]