

Perpetua 20: A Roar Across Cenn 02

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Recap

Austin: You know, Caoimhe, that the Hexcloak HQ would be up in Groundbreak, the kind of district where the old mayor's office is.

[Variation on "[Perpetua](#)" by Jack de Quidt begins playing]

Sylvia: I should probably go do this myself, because, Antistrophe, I was sent to, like, arrest or kill you.

Austin: Commander is here because of the recent earthquakes. There is suspicion that the earthquakes are tied in some way to Castine. Those rumors come from people who have been interrogated after meeting with Castine and reporting that Castine is in a sort of downbeat feeling right now.

Austin (as **Johnny Cakes**): Get out of the net! You're making us look like schmucks.

Austin: Antistrophe, you pull into the lead here. You are up 5-2 against the Dessert Brothers. It seemed impossible when the game began, but here we are. [Janine

chuckles]

Keith: The crowd goes wild.

Austin: The crowd goes wild.

Sylvia (as **crowd**): WOO!

Austin (as **crowd**): Let's go, hot guys!

Sylvia (as **crowd**): [rhythmically] Let's go, hot guys!

Sylvia (as **crowd**): [rhythmically] Hot guys suck!

Austin (as **referee**): Game: visitors. Game: hot guys.

Austin: Crowd goes wild.

Sylvia (as **crowd**): WOO!

Austin (as **Johnny Cakes**): By the way, I don't know if you heard, but my name's Johnny Cakes, and this is my brother, Jimmy Cone.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): The Dessert Brothers.

Austin (as **Johnny Cakes**): You've heard of us?

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Yeah, from today.

Austin (as **Johnny Cakes**): Wow. Well, it's good to meet you, outsiders.

Janine (as **Brontë**): You played fantastically. It was an honor.

Sylvia (as **Caomhe**): I hope I'm not missing any exciting sporting events.

[song plays out]

Meeting With Therius Aegir

Austin: All right. You head up the stairs, and this is the sort of, like, city hall stairwell that goes up and then has, like, the wraparound balcony looking down on the lobby. You know what I mean?

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Austin: But straight ahead of you is a hallway, and at the end of the hallway is what is obviously the mayor's office, which is, you know, a big door with a sort of...what sort of...? Is there a buzzer? Is it like a mechanical...? I don't want it to be a bell. I want it to feel like an old...

Janine: Oh! Oh! Oh!

Austin: Thank you.

Janine: Do you know those—

Austin: I knew you'd have this. I know you would.

Janine: You know those, like, mechanical noisemakers from, like, midcentury, that it's like a metal box with like a little crank in it, and you spin it, and it goes like, *raaaa*?

Austin: Yes. I totally do. Yeah. I do know these.

Janine: How about it's one of those?

Austin: I love it.

Janine: It's like a crank you spin, and it just makes a horrible, like, plastic hitting—

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: Well, not plastic, but like, metal— [Sylvia laughs] You know, something hitting, like, a piece of tin or something.

Austin: Love it. Perfect. You make that. It's, like, attached to the wall next to the mayor's office. And a voice comes out and says:

(as **Aegir**): Come in.

Sylvia: Deep breath, and then I go in.

Austin: And there he is, your commander, Commander Aegir.

Sylvia: Of the entire Hexcloaks.

Austin: That is right. Seated behind the mayor's big desk, you get the impression...first of all, it's very bright in here. The windows are all the way, like, the curtains are all the way drawn, and it feels like there is more light in here than even that should let in. You know, it's one of those things where, like, [**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.] it's early in the day, and...I guess you're on the eastern coast, so maybe it's not. Maybe it's, like, midday by now. The sun should be above you mostly, but it feels like it's beaming in from the windows. And the room is sparser than it looks like it should be. You know, there is a deep red carpet, and there are places on the walls that you can see are, like, there used to be things framed hanging here, you know? You can see that the wall [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] has the sort of, like, sun...the difference where the frames had been hanging and blocking the sun from sort of damaging the wall, and that's all just, like, gone now. There is a flag on a banner or on a pole that is the Elevana flag and then another one on the other side of the desk that is the Hexcloak flag, and in the middle is Therius Aegir, who I have— unless, do you have a strong, like, visual description of this guy?

Sylvia: No, I kind of wanted to leave it up to you. You've been crushing it with the villains so far.

Austin: Yeah. So, I think that— which, by the way, everyone take a Fabula Point.

Sylvia: I was literally about to ask. Does this count as a Villain making an entrance?

Austin: This counts as a Villain entering, 100% does. He is wearing an all white kind of dress uniform for the Hexcloaks with a shimmering cloak that is kind of catching all of

the colors of the rainbow as the light comes in and kind of flickers off of it; on the inside of it, that is. And then I think is, like, broad chest, broad, you know, chin. Big, you know, could have been a wrestler. You know what I mean? Vibes-wise, physically.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: Piercing green eyes, light features. I don't know if it's like, I don't think it's like platinum blond hair, but like, dirty blond hair in a crewcut. Probably in his 50s, I would say? And sees you and says:

(as **Aegir**): Ah.

Austin: Probably uses your last name here.

(as **Aegir**): Justiciar Wake. Please take a seat.

Sylvia (as **Caomhe**): Good to see you, Commander. I see you've made yourself at home.

Austin: Are you taking a seat?

Sylvia: I am taking a seat, while making my snippy little comment.

Austin (as **Aegir**): [sighs] [sarcastic] Yes, an honor to see me, I'm sure. You know, we've heard about your activities. You're not so clandestine as you might think.

Sylvia (as **Caomhe**): I'm just trying to help people out. I don't understand what the problem is. We avoided an entire town burning down.

Austin (as **Aegir**): Yes, I heard about that.

Sylvia (as **Caomhe**): I'm sure Aisling told you about that.

Austin (as **Aegir**): We were informed. And I thank you for that service, and in fact, I want to thank you so much that I'm here to offer you an opportunity.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): [wary] Uh huh.

Austin (as **Aegir**): [sighs] You've heard about the recent problems here in Cenn.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): The earthquakes, yeah?

Austin: Nods.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Yeah, a little bit.

Austin (as **Aegir**): We are curious about their point of origin, and we worry that they may be coming from the center of the city, from Castine's moon itself.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Ah. I can see why that would be a concern for the organization.

Austin: He nods.

(as **Aegir**): We want you to find out if that's where these rumblings are coming from and if Castine himself has any doing with them.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): And if he does?

Austin (as **Aegir**): You'll report it back to us, and we will take action. It's simple.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): [dubious] Sure.

Austin (as **Aegir**): Now, I believe firmly in the power of the ultimatum, the binary. [Sylvia chuckles] See, if I told you that in succeeding you would be in our good graces; if you failed, you would come under greater scrutiny; there would be ambiguity, and ambiguity breeds indecision, and indecision breeds inaction. And inaction is the domain of the civilian, the root of failure. So I'll be clear: if you can determine the cause of this, be it divine or otherwise, we will forgive all past indiscretions, and I will even deputize your little friends.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): They're not that little, but sure.

Austin (as **Aegir**): If you fail, you will be stripped of your cloak, and I will give you a day.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): A day.

Austin (as **Aegir**): A day to leave.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Ohh.

Austin (as **Aegir**): Before you are made wanted.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): I'm assuming this isn't really up for negotiation. I feel like nuance is also the domain of those pesky civilians.

Austin (as **Aegir**): It is. I'm glad we can see each other clearly.

Austin: And when he says that, something changes in the room. The light in the room shifts in a way where you realize that the light is not being projected by the windows.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Austin: You can catch that, like, it's like he's cloaked the space in a special light. You also realize there's nothing made of metal in here, so that Castine cannot see in.

Sylvia: Did they make me get rid of my sword before I came up?

Austin: Give me a roll, actually.

Sylvia: Okay. What would this be? Just a random...?

Austin: This is like a Study. This is an Insight + Insight.

Sylvia: Okay, cool. Um...that's a 7.

Austin: 7 is enough to notice in this moment that the make of your blade has changed. It weighs differently on you, as if it's been changed in material when you stepped in the room.

Sylvia: Oh no. I'm the only one who's supposed to be able to change its properties!

Austin: Uh huh. But the Commander of the Hexcloaks maybe can do some stuff that regular Hexcloaks cannot. Aisling could never do this to you, you know?

Sylvia: [knowingly] What, this guy's some sort of major boss or something? What are you talking about?

Austin: Might be. Yeah.

Sylvia: Okay.

(as **Caoimhe**): Yeah, okay. I'll get to the bottom of this. Just don't blame me if the answers you get aren't ones you like.

Austin (as **Aegir**): I only care about the purity of truth.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Totally. Of course.

Austin (as **Aegir**): That's all, Justiciar Wake.

Sylvia: I don't know if there's anything else she's going to do here. I'm just thinking really quick. No, 'cause I already did the Insight roll and everything. Yeah, I think I'm good.

Austin: Yeah, you...I don't know...

Sylvia: I think she's going to leave. I've gotten everything that I can out of...

Austin: Yeah, you could try to interrogate more or something, but like, yeah. But I don't think that would go great!

Sylvia: That might be...

Austin: Yeah, exactly. I'm just letting you know, not...yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah, but that might be something where it'd be like, well, has anyone done any

preliminary looking into this, or am I just starting from scratch?

Austin: Sure, and yeah, I don't think you need to roll for that. I think he says:

(as **Aegir**): We're putting you on this because of our preliminary investigations. You are something of a radical, I think, which is useful, because we suspect Castine may open up to you in a way that he wouldn't for someone more outwardly loyal to the League.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): [chuckles]

Sylvia: She laughs a little at that.

(as **Caoimhe**): Yeah, I think we're in agreement for once.

Austin (as **Aegir**): Any other questions, Wake?

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): No. No, I think that about covers it. I've really got a good picture of what's going on here.

Austin (as **Aegir**): One that will only become more clear in time, [menacingly] I hope.

Sylvia: Gets up, does the goofy salute, leaves.

Austin: As you're leaving, I think he says to you:

(as **Aegir**): You know, Wake. You remind me of me when I was your age. Disagreements with the Cloaks. A difference in opinion on how things were going across the League. Do you know what I did?

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): [sighs] You're going to tell me anyway.

Austin (as **Aegir**): I changed things until they were more like what I imagined. I haven't stopped changing things. So.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): That makes two of us.

Austin (as **Aegir**): I hope you carry your ambition well.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): I think I'm doing all right.

Austin (as **Aegir**): Good luck.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Uh huh. Same to you.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: And then I'm going to leave.

Austin: You know, as you're leaving, the mayor says, you know...

Austin (as **Mayor Delt**): That was a quick one! That was a pretty quick one. Everything go okay there with the Commander?

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Eh, about what I expected, yeah.

Austin (as **Mayor Delt**): Real...

Austin: Makes a fist and shakes it.

(as **Mayor Delt**): Real strong commander. I respect it.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Yeah. That's one way to put it.

Austin: And then just, you know.

(as **Mayor Delt**): All right.

Austin: And gets back to looking at various pieces of paperwork that don't mean anything.

Sylvia: I don't know if there's much I can get out of this guy, so I don't...

Austin: This guy doesn't know shit, yeah. Eh, maybe he does, but, you know, I don't...

Sylvia: Yeah, I'm not going to bother.

Austin: You know. Seems like whatever he would have known, he would have known it months ago or weeks ago, before he was displaced here, you know?

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: As you leave, I would love for you to do maybe a Study. Is Study Insight + Insight? I think that that's what I need.

Sylvia: Yep.

Austin: There's not another thing that feels more like...

Sylvia: [scoffs] Okay, well...

Austin: Yeah, you don't notice fucking shit. I want to make sure that that's the right roll. I think it is. That's the closest thing to, like, "notice something," right?

Sylvia: Can I Fabula to reroll this?

Austin: Yes, 100% you could.

Sylvia: Okay. So let me just declare and spend this to make sure. Okay.

Austin: That's an 8.

Sylvia: Is an 8 any better?

Austin: With a 7, you know someone was watching you from a rooftop nearby. You see someone's head duck behind the edge of the rooftop and disappear from sight.

Sylvia: All right. That's good to know.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: That is very good to know.

Austin: It is.

Snack Time! [0:15:18]

Sylvia: I gotta go find my friends having their lovely beach day.

Austin: Yeah. Where do y'all meet back up? Did you make, like, lunch plans or dinner plans? You know what I mean?

Janine: I was going to suggest that I buy something for Caoimhe at the beach and bring it.

Austin: Oh, that's fun. That's cute.

Janine: Like an ice cream.

Sylvia: Oh my god.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: Lobster roll.

Janine: Or like one of those little paper cones full of fries.

Austin: Oh, do you mean you're going to get a Cone and Cream brand Cone Cream? Cream Cone?

Janine: What the fuck are you talking about?

Austin: Cream Cone. [Keith laughs]

Sylvia: Cream Cone?

Keith: Cone and Cream brand Cone Cream. [Janine laughs]

Austin: Yeah, uh huh. Oh, sorry, it's Cake.

Janine: Cone and Cream brand Cream Cone, Keith. [Keith laughs]

Austin: It's Cake and Cone. Fuck. Fuck.

Sylvia: Cone and Cake.

Janine: [laughing] Cake cream? Cake cone cream.

Austin: A Cake and Cone brand Cone Cake?

Janine: They're businesspeople also?

Sylvia: Austin, are you having a stroke?

Austin: Well, I decided—

Janine: What's happening?

Keith: Cake cones are a thing. You know about cake cones, right?

Austin: I decided a while ago that they come from families of, like, dessert barons in the city. [Sylvia laughs]

Janine: Oh.

Keith: There's absolutely a kind of dessert. They're wildly overrated. Well, I guess I don't know if they're overrated, but they're not good.

Austin: Uh huh.

Keith: It's like the sugar cone, it's like the flat-bottom cone.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: I worked in an ice cream place, and everyone will call every kind of cone everything, so there's no way to know what anybody means when they say any kind of cone.

Austin: But there's one called a cake—

Janine: Do you mean like a cupcake that's put in a—? Oh my god, I hate to look at this.

Keith: It's a cupcake in— yes, it's a cupcake inside the flat bottom cones.

Austin: Oh, this is gross!

Janine: I found a picture of this. Awful! Ugh!

Keith: So this is what it is. It's a cake cone.

Austin: These are gross.

Sylvia: Oh.

Janine: I found a cross section. [laughs] It's fucking...

Sylvia: That is so upsetting to me.

Austin: The cross section is wild. Yeah, I'm looking at "Neapolitan Ice Cream Cone Cupcakes Recipe." I don't like it. This is what they make.

Janine: This reminds me of when you see one of those, like, kind of "haha grossout" posters of, like, Kirby cut in half, and it's like anatomical but it's, like, mush?

Austin: Oh, it does.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: Right. Yeah.

Janine: There's just going to be, like, a spine in there, and that's it.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: I really hate the duplicitous person who would give me this and I expect ice cream, and I get a cake.

Austin: Oh, that's evil.

Janine: Yeah, I would not get this for Caoimhe. I would not. That's so...

Sylvia: I prefer ice cream.

Austin: What if you got them for free from Jimmy and Johnny?

Janine: Um...I mean, mm...yes, but only if we each get one so that [**Austin:** Oh, yeah.] we can be eating it before Caoimhe gets it, so that it's like a shared sent— it's not like this is a thing we're doing to you.

Austin: Yes.

Janine: This is a thing we're all participating in.

Austin: Yes. I think that makes perfect sense, yes.

Sylvia: Okay.

Austin: I love it.

Janine: And there's like a warning in advance of, like, it's not ice cream.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah. What flavor did you get?

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Surprisingly good, though.

Janine: Hang on. [typing] Random flavor combo generator.

Austin: Oh boy.

Sylvia: Oh boy!

Keith: Sorry, what is it that we actually got?

Austin: These. You got these.

Keith: We did get these? Okay.

Austin: You did get these. Yeah.

Janine: Flavor idea generator.

Keith: I'll have a banana cream.

Austin: So you got a banana cream. Great.

Janine: Okay, that's not the choice. [laughs] There's choices.

Austin: Oh. You have...?

Sylvia: Wait, all of us should pick a flavor.

Austin: Yeah. But do you have a list here?

Janine: I have— well, okay. It's maybe unfair for me to be like, "Only pick from these," but I do have a list of randomly generated flavors.

Sylvia: I like the list.

Austin: Drop 'em. Drop 'em in the chat.

Keith: Okay.

Janine: And some of these sound pretty fucking good to me, actually, and some of them don't. But you know, that's how it goes. Okay, let's put these in Roll20. We've got beetroot ginger swirl.

Austin: Uh huh.

Janine: We've got mango habanero.

Austin: Mmm.

Sylvia: Oh.

Janine: We've got lavender lemonade, which is a normal-ass flavor.

Austin: Uh huh.

Janine: We've got lemon basil sorbet, which, eh, could be okay.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Janine: Pineapple basil.

Austin: Uh huh.

Janine: Black sesame coconut, which I think would be great.

Keith: Yeah, that sounds good.

Janine: Mango chili chutney.

Austin: Uh huh.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Janine: Coconut lime sorbet. Again, it's a normal flavor.

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: Spicy mango chutney and matcha sesame brittle, which I think would also be amazing.

Austin: Oh, the brittle. Yeah, the brittle sounds good.

Sylvia: Oh.

Keith: That sounds really good.

Janine: Yeah.

Sylvia: Mango habanero is also just a normal flavor, [**Janine:** That's true.] but it's like for a marinade, less so for ice cream.

Janine: Yeah, you put your pork in that.

Keith: Or for a bad salsa.

Sylvia: Yeah. Whoa.

Janine: Or in the pineapple basil, honestly.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Do you say “ba-zil” in Canada? This is insane to me that you're saying “ba-zil.”

Austin: I think of “ba-zil” as the name and “bay-zil” as the herb or the plant.

Keith: That’s also what I think.

Janine: Okay, well, it’s—

Sylvia: It’s the same.

Keith: But it’s only because I think it’s because British people are called Basil and say it “ba-zil.”

Sylvia: Basils is the same.

Austin: Well, I say it “ba-zil” for the name, if someone’s name is that. Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah, name is “ba-zil.”

Keith: Do you know someone named Basil?

Janine: Basil Rathbone.

Austin: Yeah, Basil Rathbone. Yeah, there's actors and characters.

Sylvia: Basil Brush.

Austin: Rathbone is Sherlock Holmes, famously, right?

Sylvia: Oh, yeah, Sherlock Holmes, not the guy that I was thinking of, which I will put in our Discord chat.

Keith: British characters who other British people say “ba-zil” because they just say

“ba-zil.”

Austin: That’s what I’m wondering.

Keith: Yeah. That’s what I’m wondering.

Austin: It seems like yes, maybe.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah. Anyway.

Janine: I’m getting the black sesame coconut.

Austin: Mm.

Keith: I’m getting beetroot ginger swirl.

Sylvia: Okay, then I’ll get the lemon *bay-zil* sorbet.

Janine: Are you forcing it, or do you really say it that way?

Sylvia: No, I say “ba-zil.”

Austin: Okay, so it is a Canadian thing.

Janine: Yeah, yeah.

Keith: So it is Canadian. It is a Canadian thing.

Sylvia: I don’t know. I don’t think about it that much.

Janine: Yeah, if I don’t think about it, I’d say “ba-zil.”

Keith: You’d know.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah, I think you would just know. I do.

Keith: I think you'd know that you— yeah. 'Cause, to me, hearing “ba-zil” sounds so outrageously strange.

Austin: Sorry, can I get a, real quick...

Sylvia: I got a lot of Europeans in my family.

Austin: Can you all re-say slowly which ones you took?

Sylvia: Okay.

Janine: [cross] [slowly] Black. Sesame.

Keith: [cross] Beetroot ginger swirl.

Austin: No, one at a time.

Keith: You mean all at the same time, right? [laughs]

Sylvia: One at a time! [Janine laughs]

Austin: I'm trying to see if something happens here. So, go ahead and read me yours again.

Janine: Black. Sesame. Coconut.

Austin: Uh huh. Okay. That potentially hits. We'll see.

Janine: Ooh.

Austin: Next one?

Keith: [intrigued] That potentially hits.

Austin: You'll see.

Janine: [laughing] What the fuck does...?

Austin: You'll see!

Keith: Is there someone playing *Battleship*? [Janine laughs]

Sylvia: No, I'm so here for this. Let him cook.

Keith: Beetroot ginger swirl.

Austin: I don't think that...I don't...mm, okay.

Keith: [quietly] Yes! It's a miss.

Austin: And Caoimhe.

Sylvia: Lemon. Basil. Sorbet.

Austin: Mm, I think only one of those is either salty and sour or sweet and umami, and I think, Janine, yours was maybe sweet and umami.

Sylvia: Ohhh.

Austin: I think black sesame coconut feels like it could be sweet and umami. Does that sound true?

Janine: Yeah, I think the coconut would be sweet, and then the black sesame, maybe you get a little bit of a toasty nuttiness, you know?

Austin: That's what I was thinking, exactly.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah, get 40 Mind Points back.

Janine: Oh my god, right. [laughs quietly] I forgot about...

Austin: "Uncle Nicky" Nikolas "Niko Da Shark" Dashiell has certain...

Janine: Oh my god.

Austin: We know about the combinations of flavors when cooked by whatever this

fucking class is called.

Janine: Well, I had spent no Mind Points, so it does nothing for me.

Austin: Okay. It's Gourmet.

Sylvia: Gourmet?

Austin: And the only ones that Nicky has found so far are salty-and-sour and sweet-and-umami. So, I was checking to see if you had triggered any of those.

Sylvia: That's really funny.

Janine: That's very funny.

Austin: Uh huh.

Janine: A+. A+ GM'ing, IMO.

Austin: Thank you.

Sylvia: Yeah, I agree.

Keith: Mine might— I don't have any Mind Points to get back, but I think that...

Austin: But you could, yeah, okay.

Keith: I think that beetroot/ginger might be sweet and umami.

Austin: It might be. It's right on the edge, for me. Beetroot, I don't know that flavor well enough. I've had beet.

Janine: I feel like it's what you're doing with the beetroot, you know?

Austin: This is true. This is true. Yeah. Anyway. Just for the record, the other thing that—

Keith: Beetroot is just beet, 'cause the beet is the root.

Austin: Is the root. Okay, then, yeah. Yeah, then maybe that is sweet and umami.

Keith: Right, which is sweet.

Austin: Yeah, totally.

Keith: Yeah, and then ginger is, I guess, kind of umami.

Austin: That's the part that's like, yeah, I guess so. If I had to pick something. It's not sweet or sour, for sure.

Keith: Right.

Austin: I don't think it's bitter, you know? Sweet and—

Keith: It's a little bitter.

Austin: Salty and sour is: until your next turn, every source that deals damage of a certain type does extra. That was not going to come into use anyway, but it would have been funny if it had hit, so it was important I checked. You all get this food. You all take some snacks. What's next for y'all? We might be at calling it, but.

Sylvia: I mean, I've gotta tell them that, yeah, I've gotta interview a god, or else I'm going to lose my job.

Keith: And then your life.

Janine: That's a fun thing to talk about over cake cone...cakes?

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): I just feel like you guys should know.

Keith: Cream and Cone Cream Cones. [quiet laughter]

Austin: I wish it had been cream! Why didn't I name one of them Jimmy Cream?
[Janine laughs] Or Johnny Cream!

Janine: That would be a gross name.

Sylvia: Yeah, I don't like...

Keith: They were named because johnnycake is a kind of cake [**Austin:** Right.] and then Jimmy because jimmies is like sprinkles.

Austin: Is like sprinkles. Obviously, yes.

Janine: Mm-hmm.

Austin: You're totally right. That's definitely what I had in mind.

Keith: Well, I picked the names.

Austin: Did you name the names? Okay, well then, you did!

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Okay, then you're good.

Janine (as **Brontë**): Caoimhe, you don't want to lose your job, right?

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): It'd be a big hassle, is kind of more of it.

Janine (as **Brontë**): Okay. I'm just checking. 'Cause if I was you, I would want to lose it, and we could do that.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Yeah.

Janine (as **Brontë**): But if you don't want to, then we should work the other way.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): It's hard, you know?

Janine (as **Brontë**): Mm-hmm.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): You want to be something your whole life, and then it turns out it sucks. You're still kind of attached to it.

Janine (as **Brontë**): You wanted to be that?

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): I mean, I wanted to help people.

Janine (as **Brontë**): Oh. Yeah.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): I don't know. When I was a kid, the Hexcloaks were basically superheroes, and I wanted to be one real bad, and then I became one, and it turned out I mostly just cover up massive magical catastrophes.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Didn't your friend on the train hate the Hexcloaks?

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Yeah, we did not agree on it, but, you know. At the time, it seemed like a great idea, but at the time, I was also, like, 12.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Sure.

Janine (as **Brontë**): Mm. A lot of terrible things seem like great ideas when you're 12.

Keith: Austin, what is the status of the Hexcloaks in the Hundred Burroughs? Is that, like...?

Austin: Not allowed.

Keith: Not allowed. That's sort of what I...

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah. I mean, it's a different country, effectively, right? A different nation.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: They definitely have operatives there. I think that, in general, the Elevana League thinks of the Hundred Burroughs as, especially now, especially post the arrival of the news about Perpetua... They've always seen them as, like, an unthreatening bunch of academic weirdos, you know? who don't live up to their own potential. They could all— you know, I think, to some degree, what we have is two—

Keith: They could be ruling the world.

Austin: They could be ruling the world. The reason the Elevana League isn't ruling the world is that, like, each city-state is kind of self-interested, right? They're not unified. And they all have this dream of, like, if we could really unify the League into not nine city-states but one nation, we could fix the world, right? They would never say we want to *rule* the world, but, you know, [**Keith:** Right.] our influence would expand tenfold. We can't do that because of those fuckers over in whatever city, over in Billough or over in Salix, whatever it is.

Sylvia: They would be saying, they'd be talking shit about Billough today, if I'm around.

Austin: They would. That's right. True. Whereas they see the Hundred Burroughs, and like, all these people... You know, the Hundred Burroughs are also, in a sense, a hundred little city-states, sort of, right? It's a hundred communes. But they are more unified in their...there's not, like, rivalry in the same way. Maybe there's, like, sports rivalry or math quiz rivalry or whatever.

Keith: Right, a lot of the—

Sylvia: Oh no, mathlete rivals.

Keith: A lot of the conflict is solved simply by them not being the same thing.

Austin: That's right. And also, but having the sort of throughline of an established baseline that they've all agreed upon, in terms of things like human rights or whatever, you know?

Keith: Right.

Austin: There is nowhere where...you know, slavery is abolished across the Hundred Burroughs, obviously, you know?

Keith: Sorry, there's nowhere where slavery is abolished?

Austin: I said it is across the Hundred Burroughs, yeah.

Keith: Oh. Sorry.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. I said “you know, like,” not “nowhere.”

Keith: Oh.

Austin: [laughs] [sarcastic] They're unified. It's basically a utopia down there, except for...

Keith: [laughs] Except...

Austin: The slavery. [Janine laughs]

Sylvia: [sarcastic] There's a lot of slavery.

Keith: Universally, they have slaves.

Austin: That's right. But they're universal, so everyone gets along. No. So, like, you know, I think there's a baseline of agreement, but there's a lot of room for...you know, I've described them before as being a sort of, like, network of anarchist communes, right? But also run by wizards, like, leveraged by the fact that they are powerful wizards, and also some of those wizards are experts at, you know, foresight, seeing the future, which gives them a lot of advantage and a lot of stability, basically.

Keith: Right.

Austin: But in the last hundred years especially, as they begun to spiral about hitting the problem they can't solve, which is the impending end of the world, I think the Elevana League has gotten very haughty about it, you know? I think there are Hexcloaks who are undercover down there and who are constantly reporting back about, like, how various Hundred Burroughs leaders and academics are wasting their time, you know? “Oh yeah, wow, they tried to pursue another route to investigate this thing that we don't believe is even real, and guess what? They hit another dead end.”

Keith: Right.

Austin: In a real way, the fact the Hundred Burroughs cannot solve the Perpetuan Cycle problem gives the Hexcloaks more reason to believe that it's fake. It's like, they've invented a problem down there that isn't even fucking real, and they're, like, bashing their heads against it, and they can't solve it. Yeah, 'cause like, it's not a... It's like trying to solve an algebraic equation that is, like, **[Keith: Right.]** not valid to begin with, you know?

Keith: To them, it's like watching flat earthers.

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

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: Now, are there some people in the Hexcloaks high up enough that understand what's really happening? Probably. So, yeah. That's sort of the situation. I think you know this about them about that too. I don't think that you're, like, unaware of what they think of you.

Keith: Right. Yeah.

Ruinbringer [0:29:20]

Austin: Speaking of characters who have their own things going on, Antistrophe.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: We've been forgetting something.

Keith: Yes. We have been forgetting something.

Austin: You have a little, you have a Quirk. Everybody has a Quirk. You might remember everybody started with a special Quirk.

Keith: Yeah, everyone maybe on Earth has a little bit of a quirk, I would say. Probably all on equal level, about.

Austin: Yeah, it's basically all the same. Like, for instance, if I remember right, Caoimhe, your Quirk is that you are repentant. You're a cop, but you don't want to be a cop anymore, right?

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: And Brontë, your Quirk is you have two bodyguards, Efta and Zolfta, who we love.

Janine: And money.

Austin: Also money. I forgot you also have money.

Janine: [laughs quietly] A lot of money.

Austin: [feigning] So, what was yours again, Antistrophe? Was it similar to those?

Keith: I might manifest into the world a Supreme Villain.

Austin: Oh, interesting. What was the name of your Quirk, again?

Keith: Ruinbringer.

Austin: Ruinbringer.

Sylvia: Huh.

Austin: Ruinbringer. Can you read that to us, just from the top once, since it's been so long since we've remembered to roll it?

Keith: Sure, yeah. "You possess almost limitless power, but there is a price to it."

Austin: Huh.

Keith: "You shall bring doom to this world. How do you know this? Strange visions, markings that appear on your body, or something else? What gives you the hope to stop what's coming? When you acquire this Quirk, say which Ruin you are supposed to bring

into the world. That Ruin immediately becomes one of your world's threats. Examples: the demon queen, the great comet, the god of bloodshed. [Austin chuckles] Until your Ruin comes true, you cannot sacrifice yourself. In fact, servants of the Ruin might even lend a hand and free you from any imprisonments that would prevent you from fulfilling your role in their plans. When a rule or ability requires you to spend Hit Points, Mind Points, or Fabula Points, you may instead let your Ruin advance [**Austin:** Mm.] to completely ignore the cost. You describe what dark omens manifest, and the GM receives an Opportunity that can be used to add complications after the current scene has ended. At the end of each session, before assigning XP, [**Austin:** Ah.] roll 2d20."

Austin: Mm.

Keith: "If you roll equal or lower to that of your current level, your Ruin advances. It will always advance if you are level 40 or higher. When your Ruin advances for the ninth time, you lose this Quirk and your Ruin comes true, manifesting into the world as a Supreme Villain with 15 Ultima Points. However, you immediately—" Oh, no, worth 15? Is that what 15 Ultima Points means?"

Austin: It has 15. They will have 15 Ultima Points.

Keith: It has, okay. It will have.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: I remember different levels of Villain have different...

Austin: Villains have different— that's right, yes.

Keith: But I couldn't remember what those points did.

Austin: Lots of cool things. Don't worry about it.

Sylvia: I don't like when you say that, Austin.

Keith: "However, you immediately gain a Heroic Skill from those available for your classes."

Austin: Hmm.

Keith: “You may even choose a Heroic Skill whose requirements you do not satisfy, unless they include a Skill you don't have. Steel yourself and face your destiny.”

Austin: Yeah. Well, it feels like we might have some dice rolls to do.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: I think we've done this twice, Keith.

Keith: Yes, and I don't think we've advanced at all.

Austin: I don't think we've advanced at all.

Keith: Right.

Austin: And I think that that means we have a number to do, and I'm going to—

Keith: We started at level 5, and we've done it twice at 7, so we have at least two to do, but it's feeling like maybe we have three to do.

Austin: Well, the thing is that we do them at the end of sessions, not at the end of levels, right?

Keith: Oh, yeah. Good point.

Austin: So, and you're level 9 now?

Keith: Level 9.

Austin: And this is our eighth recording?

Keith: Yeah. Yeah.

Austin: Is that correct?

Keith: Yes.

Austin: Seventh recording.

Keith: Seventh recording, okay.

Austin: I'm checking. I'm checking. I don't...

Janine: I want to say we had one recording with double levels or something, but I might be misremembering.

Austin: We might.

Keith: I think the levels only apply to the roll.

Austin: They're only about— that's right. So...

Keith: Not to the frequency.

Austin: And I don't remember which ones we did, so what if we just do, like, an increasing... I guess what it means is, one, if this is the seventh recording, right, and we've done two, that means we have four to do catch up on, and we have to make sure we do one at the end of this. The reason I'm saying catch up on is I think you should roll one of these right now and over the rest—

Keith: What is this, a hot dog?

Austin: Huh?

Keith: Ketchup on?

Austin: [wearily] Oh my god. [Keith cackles]

Sylvia: Mods, crush his skull.

Austin: Mods. Mods. One year ban, mods.

Sylvia: Mute that guy. Mute that guy.

Austin: Mute that guy. Exactly. [Keith and Austin laugh] Mute that guy, mods. Yeah, so I

think we're going to do four of these rolls, and we'll do a progressive level increase on them.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: So it'll be 7. I guess it'll be 6, 7, 8, 9 on each one.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: Will be the thing you're trying to roll under. And you're rolling, what, 2d20? That seems hard to do.

Keith: Yeah, 2d20. It does.

Austin: 2d20. Yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: So, let's give us...so, while you're here eating your ice cream, give me [Keith: Uh huh.] the first of these 2d20s. That's a 30. That's fine.

Keith: 30. Yeah.

Austin: 'Cause you have to roll under, at this point, again, a 6. It was 6, 7, 8, 9. So.

Keith: Right. I have to roll pretty bad to advance.

Austin: You have to roll pretty bad to advance.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: I will say: you feel the slightest rumble.

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Austin: And that's it, and it stops. But I think everyone kind of stops to see if it's going to be a bad one.

Janine: That's lactose intolerance.

Austin: [laughing] That's all it is. That's right, it's the ice cream.

Janine: Yeah. Yeah.

Austin: I think, you know, everyone stops to see: is this going to be another big earthquake? But it doesn't seem to be. It just kind of stops, so.

Keith: That's good.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Keith: And surely there'll be no more.

Austin: Probably. Well.

Keith: It stopped already.

Austin: That's right, it stopped already. That's right. There's a little rumble, which is maybe about as clear of a reminder of what Caoimhe was just telling you about. You need to investigate these earthquakes. And potentially interrogate a god. What do you do? What's going on? What's the headspace like in the group?

Sylvia: [sighs] My gut— like, I think even if I'm not— let me be clear. I think Caoimhe's probably like, "It's gotta be the big-ass mole." I think she's a mole truther. But talking to Castine does kind of seem like the top of her priority list.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Keith: And definitely—

Sylvia: Especially if she knows she's being watched, 'cause like, presumptively, that's a Hexcloak person spying on her, right? We don't know for sure.

Austin: We don't have a clue.

Sylvia: Yeah, we don't have a clue, but like, in my gut.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: Playing the character, et cetera.

Austin: Yeah. Right, right, right, yes.

Sylvia: Anyway, sorry, Keith. I think you had something, and then...

Keith: Yeah, I was going to say, you know, the upset god is a great other second suspect to the giant mole.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: I would say maybe even, like, a more plausible suspect than the mole, [**Sylvia:** Probably.] the mole that is only a myth.

Sylvia: But they...listen. They're keeping secrets from us.

Keith: Damn.

Janine (as **Brontë**): Moles are sometimes used for warfare, so I wouldn't disbelieve moles.

Keith: Can you say, Sylvi, "They're keeping secrets from us," again?

Sylvia: They're keeping secrets from us!

Keith: [whistles *X-Files* theme]

Austin: Okay.

Sylvia: Thank you.

Sylvia (as **Caomhe**): Wow, that's a weird— why'd you whistle that, Antistrophe? I've never heard that before.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): It just got stuck in my head.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Weird.

Sylvia: Do we— if I'm remembering correctly, it was just, “Go talk to Castine.” There wasn't any, like, “You're going to be able to talk to Castine,” situation, right?

Austin: No, no, no. No. There was no, “We're giving you a little, [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] you know, skip to the front of the line pass.”

Keith: Right.

Austin: There was no...you were just... You know, you're a Hexcloak. You're expected to be able to make that.

Keith: Yeah. Do the legwork.

Austin: Yeah, yourself.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: And you have some authority, because you're a Hexcloak, but like, where that authority ends is always up to, you know, up to a situation. The situation can always be weird.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: *Friends at the Table* guarantee.

Austin: [laughs quietly] The situation can always be weird!

Sylvia: Damn. That's so true.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Joining the Kainas [0:37:13]

Sylvia: I'm wondering if talking to the Kainas might be a way in here, 'cause they were

going to meet...

Austin: They were.

Sylvia: Castine. I keep forgetting. I keep wanting to say Castille, and I'm like, "That's wrong."

Austin: That's our other person made of [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] a very strong mineral, yeah. Uh huh.

Sylvia: Yeah. I don't know. How hard is it to find them?

Austin: I think that they gave you info on, like, where they were staying.

Sylvia: I think they gave me contact info. Yeah.

Austin: Yeah. And I would say that you probably know that they are...you know, they're staying in the Pilgrims' Quarter, which is this kind of western area where the train came in, and are probably spending some time— I guess this is probably past the morning. It's probably, like, afternoon, right? Y'all had to go play that whole Beachminton game. I don't know what time you got up this morning, blah blah blah. Lets say that they're getting, like, a late lunch, probably, somewhere in Digsite West, which is the non-actual digsite that's turned into a big marketplace basically, west of the big moon, which you have to walk all the way around. [chuckles] And again, it's not the whole moon. It's just this kind of polar cap of this small moon.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: But still, big long walk around the whole thing. Very annoying. But yeah, I think you can probably try to find them there. I think that's probably a roll to try to find them.

Sylvia: All right.

Austin: And yeah. Give me probably Insight + Insight.

Sylvia: Happily.

Austin: That feels like the sort of investigation type roll we've been doing.

Sylvia: Yeah, I'm just clicking on the Recall macro here.

Austin: That makes sense.

Sylvia: 11.

Austin: Yeah, an 11, absolutely. And, you know, with an 11, I think you see...you know, as you approach— or I guess you see them at a table somewhere.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: I think there's, like, a set of...we talked before about this being a place where there's lots of meat cooked on hot metal or on, like, hot spits and stuff.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: Very open air barbecue type vibe. And I think that there's, like, a bunch of stands, you know, around the place that sell vegetables and meat and other, you know, fixins' that you then bring to your own, like, hot stone table, basically, to cook it on. It's almost like cooking it on a big metal orb, not unlike the moon, you know? It's kind of like the top half of a sphere that gets super hot. And they're at one of those and are currently, you know, laying some food out on the hot orb. And I think that you see that, like, you get the impression with the 11 that, of course, you're catching Kley seeming annoyed, right? Not surprising.

Sylvia: That does not shock me.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: That does not shock me at all.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Hey, I was hoping we'd run into you two!

Austin (as **Delani**): Oh, look who it is! Take a seat, take a seat!

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): You sure we're not intruding?

Austin: This is Delani.

(as **Delani**): Not at all, not at all. Pull up some chairs. How are you liking Cenn?

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Pretty nice so far.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Great beach.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Yeah, I was going to say. These two have been enjoying the sights a little more than I've been able to.

Austin (as **Delani**): Well, this one won't take me to the beach. Says we don't have time before our meeting.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Oh, no? When is that?

Austin (as **Delani**): About an hour or two. We're supposed to go get in line.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Mm.

Austin (as **Delani**): But I have the ticket, so why do you have to get in line at all?

Austin (as **Kley**): Mother...

Sylvia: Going to give a sympathetic look to Kley real quick.

Austin: Give me another, like, a Study roll or a...

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: I want to see if there's something...hmm, it's not really Persuade. Yeah, just give me Insight + Insight again. Study or Recall.

Sylvia: That's a critical fumble.

Austin: Yeah, it's two 1s.

Sylvia: That's two 1s. Wow!

Austin: Ohh boy. Well, take an Ultima Point.

Sylvia: Man, we have grown apart. [Keith laughs]

Austin: Oh, if only you knew. Take an Ultima Point, or a Fabula Point, rather.

Sylvia: No!

Austin: Take a Fabula Point. No, no, no, take a Fabula Point because it's a fumble. When you fumble, you take a Fabula Point.

Sylvia: No, I know.

Austin: Oh. Okay.

Sylvia: I'm just saying, like, you saying— okay. So, Kley isn't a Villain.

Austin: No, Kley is not a Villain.

Sylvia: Okay. [laughs quietly] I thought you were implying...

Austin: Well, I mean, people can change. You know what I mean?

Sylvia: No!

Austin: [chuckles] I don't think Kley is a Villain. I am not considering Kley a Villain.

Sylvia: Okay...

Austin: However, I do have to look at the Opportunity chart and decide what your fumble was here.

Sylvia: Agh... [laughs quietly] Does she—? Delani sees me going, "Yeesh."

Austin: [laughs] And just gets mad! "Oh, I see how it is."

Keith: While this is...while you're looking at the Opportunity sheet, is this something that I could also have insight into, as an observer? Or is this a fumble and leave it?

Austin: No. This is a personal...

Keith: Okay.

Austin: Um, you could...yeah, you know what? Go ahead and do it. I'm not going to say you can't roll to notice this.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: But I have to— let me finish whatever this is first. Yeah, at a 10—you rolled a 10—actually, I can just tell you straight up.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: There is...there is something missing here that you don't quite— there's some sort of subtext that you're not putting together.

Keith: Got it.

Austin: I guess you catch...at a 10, you catch something like, "I wish you wouldn't get involved in my personal business," you know what I mean? It's a little like, you know, your friend is over at your house while someone in your family is going through something, and you don't want them to be there.

Sylvia: Okay, yeah.

Austin: That's what Antistrophe is picking up.

Keith: Right.

Austin: I'm not saying that that is true.

Sylvia: I'm not picking that up.

Austin: You are not picking— well, no.

Keith: No.

Austin: And, in fact, on a fumble...again, let me look at this stuff here.

Sylvia: I'm not picking up shit.

Keith: And, in fact, were you picking it up, you have to ignore it, basically.

Sylvia: Yes.

Keith: I mean, you don't *have* to ignore it.

Austin: No, 'cause you could pick it up and— I could say you pick it up but maybe it makes you react in some big way. You know, let me look at the Opportunities list and see what it is that is happening here.

Keith: That's true. I just mean, like, it is now your job to get into this place or else. There's a very "or else" vibe to it.

Austin: [chuckles] That's right.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: Uh huh.

Keith: And so, if your friend is like, "I'd really prefer you not be here," it's kind of like, "Sorry."

Sylvia: Sorry, man. They hit me with the "or else."

Austin: They did hit you with the "or else."

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Ohh. I... [chuckles] Okay. You... I'm trying to be soft here, because what I want to do is give you an Affliction, but I called for the roll. You didn't say, "I want to roll to see

what is going on.”

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: But you did take the action, which was trying to lock eyes with them to communicate something to them, and that failed, so.

Sylvia: That did fail.

Austin: It was a failure. This is not really a “make a move as hard as you want” game. There are some hard limits on what I'm supposed to be able to do. Opportunities obviously are a space where I can do a lot, because it is kind of as open-ended as possible, but, you know, trying to use their Opportunity sheet, their Opportunity list as guidance here. I think...I think that they make you slip up and say something you shouldn't here. Not a faux pas in the “I'm sorry your mom is so mean” way, but a revelation of some sort about your job or your role or something like that, because you give them, like, a reassuring look, and then they just immediately shoot back, like, with daggers. Not just a dagger look, but also, like:

(as **Kley**): Yes, and what is it you're doing here, Caoimhe?

Austin: In a way that, like, you just blurt something out. What do you blurt out? This is them getting something like Faux Pas or something like Information, “You spot a useful clue or detail.”

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: So I'm asking: what useful clue or detail about your own mission do you let loose here?

Sylvia: Well, I think it has to be that we're trying to see Castine as well, right?

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: That's kind of my first instinct, is her just being like...

(as **Caoimhe**): Well, we're headed to the...

Sylvia: It's the Temple of the Summit that Castine is at, correct?

Austin: Yeah. Yeah.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): We're headed to the Temple of the Summit as well, and I thought...well, I just thought that saying hello and maybe going over together could be, uh, an idea?

Austin (as **Delani**): Of course, of course, of course! We'll walk over together. It'll be a nice little walk.

Austin: And Kley looks down and says:

(as **Kley**): [quietly] Mother, I don't think that's a good idea.

Austin: Delani is like:

(as **Delani**): No, no. We can all walk together. We eat lunch. We'll all walk over together. We can take our time. There's a lot of us. We can do a little shopping on the way.

Austin: And Kley kind of, like, you know, shrinks a little back from that.

Sylvia: Agh... Sylvi the player feels awful about this. Like, I'm like crumbling inside.

Austin: [laughs sympathetically] Oh. It'll all shake out. Speaking of shaking, can I get a Ruinbringer roll?

Keith: Yeah, of course.

Sylvia: Oh my god! Do not summon the antichrist at my...

Keith: It's okay. I'd have to— it would be impossible for it to happen this session.

Sylvia: Okay.

Austin: Yeah, it would be really hard. And again, it would actually be— [chuckles] Okay. That's very—

Keith: Oh my god. By the skin of our teeth.

Austin: That's very close. It was a 7 this time. You rolled an 8.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Even getting 1 wouldn't summon the true Ruin.

Keith: Right. We're only rolling how many times, five times?

Austin: Four times plus the one at the end, so five total, yeah. Right? 'Cause you're level—

Keith: Five, yeah. So we're rolling...

Austin: Or 'cause this is the seventh recording, so.

Keith: Yeah. So I would need to fail all of them and then fail four more times in a row.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah.

Keith: On separate sessions. So it would be impossible to get it this time.

Austin: Yes. I think we're now safe from that happening, yeah. Nevertheless, there is, again, a little rumble here, which it stops, and then people hear the train whistle, and so I think people go, [relieved] “Oh, that was just the train showing up to the west. Okay, okay. Cool.”

Keith: I would like to say that we're at the second rumble, and I think Antistrophe is feeling a little different about if it's an earthquake caused by something else. I think I'm feeling something. I'm feeling connected to the rumbling in a way that is odd.

Sylvia: Caoimhe's writing in a notebook. “Mole,” question mark, “not nocturnal?” question mark. [Austin chuckles]

Austin: Do you bring this up, Antistrophe? Are you saying this to the group? Or are you just voicing it to us, the listener?

Keith: I'm voicing it to us, the listener.

Austin: Or the player, yeah.

Keith: This is now...I'm now being like... You know, you ever have, like, a pain in your hand, and you're like, "I gotta make sure that that's not happening more often."

Austin: Yeah, uh huh. I sure do.

Sylvia: One of those things where, like, in the PS1 or Dreamcast version of this that we're imagining, our character models don't react that much, but Antistrophe's is, like, looking around.

Austin: [chuckles] Uh huh.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Yes. Exactly. All right. What do y'all have to eat here? What's lunch look like for the group?

Keith: Orb meal.

Austin: Yeah, what's orb meal?

Keith: Well, it's something round.

Austin: Who cares about fourthmeal? I'm talking about orb meal.

Keith: I was...I debated making a quick fourthmeal thing and posting it. [laughs quietly]

Austin: I appreciate it. Yeah.

Keith: Because that's why I said "orb meal." I was thinking of fourthmeal.

Austin: Good.

Keith: I'm just going to have steak and a nice sauce. They have a house sauce.

Austin: Oh, they have a house sauce. Yum.

Janine: I think Brontë... [chuckles] gets whatever the equivalent of a chicken caesar salad is in this situation.

Austin: Mm.

Janine: I imagine maybe you could, like, you could grill the chicken and then, like, [Austin: Yeah.] you know, toss that in some lettuce.

Keith: You could char the lettuce.

Austin: Yes. There are definitely stands around with lettuce and, like, salad stuff. You know.

Janine: I also...

Keith: Have a caesar salad with charred lettuce? That's good.

Janine: I also want to put forth that, for some reason, this image has tickled me, that Brontë has acquired some candy from a stand, [Austin: Oh.] and I think it has to be... There's a specific, I have to see if I can find what it's called. [typing] Uh, it's that candy that's like goop in a tube, and you squeeze it out on the chopsticks, and then you work it into, like, taffy?

Austin: I think I've seen this, but I'm not certain.

Janine: I love when the call goes completely quiet. [laughs quietly]

Austin: Well, I was thinking...I was like, "Do I want to type and try to find this? No, that would be loud," and then I didn't do it.

Janine: I was trying to find a GIF of it, but it's just people using chopsticks. It's just GIFs of people using chopsticks, which is not helpful.

Keith: Yeah, I've never heard of this.

Austin: Is this...? Okay, wow, I found it immediately. Emmymade did this 15 years ago?

Janine: Yeah, emmymadeinjapan did a video, like, 15 years ago, I think.

Austin: Yeah, here it is. I got it.

Keith: Oh, I *have* seen this. Yeah, I saw this forever ago.

Austin: I did a search for “chopsticks candy goo,” and it was the first hit, so.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: Oh, right.

Janine: You're basically pulling taffy. It's fundamentally what it is. But it's like a really good, like, make your kid sit down and do something while everyone's hanging out kind of candy, which, to me...

Sylvia: Aww, he's got a fidget toy.

Janine: Yeah, made me think, like, oh, this is... Like, I'm sitting here thinking, “What is Brontë doing in this conversation?” and it had to be, [**Austin:** Yeah.] like, pulling a little taffy thing and chewing it occasionally.

Austin: Yeah. I would have this. I would try this.

Janine: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Austin: Hell yeah. All right.

Janine: Neri ame. Yeah.

Austin: Neri ame. Yeah. Yeah, there you go.

Janine: Which is “something candy,” but yeah.

Austin: What are your bodyguards eating? Or do they not eat with the group in this sort of situation? Do they stay on guard?

Janine: They're not eating with the group. I think they're off to one side. I think...I am picturing them not eating, but I am picturing one of them with, like, a lemonade. You know?

Austin: That's good.

Janine: You know, like a lemonade and a straw?

Austin: Yes. Yeah, uh huh. Yeah, I'm drinking one. I know. [Sylvia laughs]

Janine: Yeah. That's, to me, the anime thing here, is the two bodyguards off to one side and, like, probably Efta, I think, the one with the pants.

Austin: That's good. That makes perfect sense. Great. Unless someone wants to drag the conversation into new places, I think, you know, Delani is happy to sort of monologue about other trips she's taken, about other times that she has had food like this, about her favorite statue of Castine that she's seen in the place so far. As a reminder, there are these statues of Castine kind of spread around the city where he's able to, like, take the form of the iron statue. They have to be, like, perfectly pure iron, but he can kind of become the statue or put his presence in them, if that's the case.

Keith: Does he make the statue out of the raw material, or does it have to be crafted, and then...?

Austin: He can put his mind into any...

Keith: Into any iron, any pure...

Austin: Any pure iron thing.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: But as a sort of, you know, a sort of symbol of respect, people have built these

places that are sort of like, you know, some of them are like other places Castine can go meet with someone or talk to someone, you know, in other parts of— you know, the mayor's office maybe once had one of these. Did not now, importantly, maybe.

Keith: Right.

Austin: But also, like, Castine could project himself into a well-made wrench or a well—you know, actually, probably not a well-made one of those things, because those things are probably made of, like, good alloy, you know? [chuckles]

Keith: Right, exactly. Yeah, totally.

Austin: But one that's made of—

Keith: A pan.

Austin: Right, yeah. Something that's like a cast iron skillet, for sure, you know? Or.

Sylvia: Mom, Hephaestus is in our cast iron pan again. [Austin laughs]

Keith: Could you pull him into something that is iron?

Austin: Who is “you”? The answer “you” is...

Keith: Could one?

Austin: It would have to be a— you would have to be one to do it, you know what I mean? You'd have to, like...

Keith: Be one what?

Austin: You gotta...one. You know, one of one. You'd have to be *him*.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: [chuckles] You know what I mean?

Keith: Okay.

Austin: Like, you couldn't...

Keith: So, not me.

Austin: Well, not you now.

Keith: Not me now.

Austin: You before losing all of your magical power [**Keith:** Yeah.] with a year of research and ritual? Yes. You know?

Keith: Yeah. But someone could have a perfect iron cube...

Austin: Yeah. But then—

Keith: And just carry it with them, and Castine could theoretically cast himself into it, or you could, like, force Castine into talking with you.

Austin: It's unclear. It's unclear if such a...if Castine would be...Castine probably wouldn't be trapped in that cube, by default.

Keith: No, no.

Austin: You know what I mean?

Keith: But you might be able to get his ear.

Austin: Sure. And I mean—

Janine: Keith's pocket god agenda continues. [Austin and Keith crack up]

Austin: Oh my god. Yeah, uh huh.

Keith: I'm theorizing about other people. This isn't—

Austin: Every season, we gotta get someone who has a little god that follows them around. Oh, speaking of little guys following you around, how's Riant?

Keith: Riant's good. Riant's bumbling around, you know, like...oh, reheating steaks.

Austin: Yeah. [laughs]

Keith: You know, the globe is not quite hot enough. You put him on the globe, and it heats right back up.

Austin: Love it. Great.

Keith: He's an excellent friend to have around for orb meal.

Austin: Yeah, seems like it. You know, give me...if you'd like to, you can give me a Recall, actually, because you're asking some questions, and I think there's some more here that you specifically could know, given your expertise, right? You're playing a character who understands magic, just doesn't do it. So give me a...

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah. I think you have those Traits. Yeah, an 11. Okay.

Keith: That's an 11.

Austin: You know, all the stuff I said before is true, and another detail that I didn't just give you but now that you've rolled. "Can the god become the thing?" and "Can the god see through the thing or sense through the thing?" are different questions. And so, you know, you could have, for instance, a little metal cube—one that isn't even perfectly iron—that Castine could potentially, for instance, see and hear through.

Keith: Right.

Austin: Something that alloyed, Castine can probably sense through, if that's where he puts his...

Keith: Not pure enough to become, but...

Austin: That's right.

Keith: But pure enough to be a cell phone.

Austin: Yes. In the same way that, for instance, if you took someone like Caliginia, the goddess of shadow, or of dark. Sorry, I should say her full name. Caliginia, Fated Darkness, probably cannot become the shadow of a coin held in the air. You know what I mean? If you hold up a coin, she can't become that little shadow.

Keith: Right.

Austin: But she could probably still see through it, you know?

Keith: Right.

Austin: And so...

Keith: Not enough shadow.

Austin: Not enough shadow. Not enough shadow. You know, maybe if it was like—

Sylvia: Me watching the new Sonic movie. [Keith laughs] Go ahead. [Austin laughs]

Austin: You know, maybe there...maybe it's not just about amount. Maybe it's about quality also, right? Maybe in the perfect desert, you know, [**Keith:** Yeah.] with the sun directly above you, if you had the darkest shadow possible or something, there could—you know, there's a sort of sliding scale of different qualities here to create something where the god can start affecting the world and then, on the far end, becoming present in that way, you know?

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: And, you know, importantly, you're right next to a huge version of this, which is the whole moon is, like, perfect iron, constantly expelling any sort of externalities. You know, if someone's dropping ashes on it, they slowly are pushed aside, down the edge of the mountain, you know, and off into the digsites, and also—

Keith: Is there a dome sweeper?

Austin: There's also people maintaining it, yeah. Yeah, exactly. Yeah.

Keith: Okay. Cool.

Austin: Yeah. Any other thoughts here?

Sylvia: I am happy to let Delani just sort of go on, honestly.

Austin: Yeah. Okay. Well, that's what she does, and then, soon enough, the conversation comes to an end, and you are able to start heading towards the moon.

Sylvia: Could I...could I check to see if I'm still being followed?

Austin: Yeah, go for it.

Sylvia: Is this...what am I rolling here?

Austin: Same. Insight + Insight.

Sylvia: Insight + Insight?

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: 10.

Austin: That's a 10. You catch that you are being followed but in a different way than you were being followed or than you were being spied on coming out of the mayor's office.

Sylvia: Oh, okay.

Austin: You know, the mayor's office...someone was spying on you from a place where they did not want to be seen at all. These people are following you through the street, and they're kind of, like, bouncing from, like, group to group. You know, they're doing social stealth. They're doing *Assassin's Creed* social stealth.

Keith: *Assassin's Creed*, yeah.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: Oh no.

Keith: They're walking like a monk.

Austin: Right, yes.

Sylvia: They're holding A.

Austin: They're walking from, like, group of six people to group of six people. No, the person who was spying on you before was hiding in the hay. You know, different *Assassin's Creed* stealth style.

Sylvia: Oh, no, I said "holding A," because that's the thing that...

Austin: Oh, *holding* A. I thought you said, "hiding in the hay."

Sylvia: No. [Keith laughs] That's what makes Altair put his hands together, and then you can't see him if he's with priests.

Austin: If he's with priests, yeah.

Sylvia: Or monks or whatever.

Austin: Or monks. Yeah, yeah, yeah, exactly. Yeah. So, you catch that, yeah, there are two Hexcloaks that are following you through the streets, presumably to make sure that you're doing the thing you're supposed to be doing. But this doesn't feel like the eyes that were on you before.

Sylvia: Okay. Good to know.

Austin: Mm-hmm. Soon, you come to a...you know, there's sort of, I think around the moon, around this sort of polar cap, there's like a gap and then the digsite. So there's like, it's kind of, you know, you walk to the edge of it, and you can look down, and there's just like a hole that goes down.

Shopping [0:59:47]

Janine: I'm sorry. I was promised shopping?

Austin: Oh, I'm sorry.

Keith: Yeah, that's what the Gap is for. [Janine groans]

Austin: I apologize. We can go shopping.

Sylvia: Shut the fuck up, Keith! [Keith cackles]

Austin: Oh my god. I even have things to buy prepared, so we can go shopping.

Keith: Sick.

Austin: Are you looking for something in particular?

Janine: No.

Austin: Okay.

Janine: I just was promised shopping.

Austin: You were.

Janine: It doesn't have to be a whole big thing, I just...

Austin: No. I'd forgotten. I'm sorry, I was so focused on god questions that I was getting us to the god space.

Sylvia: Forgot about the other [inaudible 1:00:16]

Janine: I wonder if even, like, Delani's, like, talking and walking and they almost, like, pass the shop area.

Austin: Uh huh?

Janine: And Brontë, like, lightly catches her sleeve.

Austin: I love it. I love it.

Janine: Just like...

Austin: "But we're supposed to go shopping!"

Janine: Not that pathetic, but... [laughs]

Keith: I'm still poor.

Austin: [chuckles] Yeah, can we get an asta check, really quick?

Sylvia: Four hundo.

Keith: Oh, maybe I'm owed some asta.

Austin: I don't think that's true.

Keith: 'Cause I haven't spent anything, and I'm at 250.

Austin: I think you spent a little and were not at...

Sylvia: I think you probably refilled your IP more than I have.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Keith: I did, but a few times, Brontë spotted me IP.

Austin: Brontë, how much money do you have?

Janine: I have 1441.

Austin: Yeah. Keith, I don't think you're that far behind. This is what I'm saying, is I think that... where are you at, Keith? You're at 2-something?

Keith: 250.

Austin: 250 to 450 or whatever is not that big of a gap.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: You know?

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: I'm also—

Keith: But this isn't "upgrade my weapon or armor" money.

Austin: It is not. You know, you gotta make some money.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: You gotta make some decisions around that. All right. Here is what is on offer here in Cenn, City of Iron Chains. One. I'm going to put these out one at a time.

Janine: Mm.

Austin: Digsite Helmet: 700 asta. Resistance to physical damage. Three uses. Not a permanent upgrade.

Janine: Hmmm...

Austin: But resistance to physical damage three times.

Two, Archeologist's Boots: 900 asta. When your group makes a discovery while traveling, you may immediately gain 1 Fabula Point.

Strange Device: 2500 asta. Recovered from the digsite. Has a keyboard like a typewriter, and it's attached to a darkened mirror.

Janine: It's a Macbook!

Sylvia: My eyes are massive right now. [Austin chuckles]

Austin: Siegebreaker: a martial weapon. 750 asta. DEX + Insight. HR + 12 physical damage. Two-handed weapon, ranged, and damage dealt by this weapon ignores resistances. Those W's—this one is just from the book—let me turn those into little line breaks. [typing] There we go. This is a giant two-handed, like, greatbow, basically. And they ignore resistances outright. 750 asta.

This next one is a melee weapon. It is a...I believe that this is a...it's been months since I made this. I believe that this is a sword. It's called the Spellsever. DEX + Insight + 1 to hit, so it has a +1 to hit. HR + 4 damage, dark damage. One-handed, melee. When you hit a creature with this weapon, if the attack had a single target, you may choose a single spell with a duration of scene affecting the target and end its effects on that creature. So it's like a de-spelling sword.

And finally, there is SecuraBot Armor, so some sort of, like, security bot armor that is 1250 asta. It is martial armor. It is 11 Physical Defense. [typing] I'm updating the way I've written this. Physical Defense and Insight + die + 1 Magic Defense. It is -3 Initiative, and you have immunity to earth and poison damage but vulnerability to bolt damage. You've never seen anything— mm, I don't know that this is true. Most people have never seen anything like the security bot armor or the Strange Device ever in their lives, I will just say. So.

Keith: What the fuck?

Sylvia: Yeah, no, this Strange Device is blowing my fucking mind right now.

Keith: Immunity to earth and poison is huge.

Austin: Mm-hmm. But vulnerability to bolt damage.

Keith: It's true, but that would be...even if it was resistance to earth and poison [**Austin:** Yeah.] and vulnerability to bolt, that would be a fair trade.

Sylvia: Fuck! We should have gambled more. [Austin chuckles]

Keith: We should have gambled more.

Austin: You could stay here and do some side quests, you know? If you succeed, you could always kind of grind it out.

Keith: We did get paid for that thing that we did at the casino.

Janine: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Maybe I didn't add that.

Janine: Didn't you buy something?

Keith: I never bought anything besides IP.

Janine: At the store? Oh.

Keith: Because weapons, I can't buy weapons, [**Janine:** Right.] because I'm specced into dual shield.

Austin: Yeah, the only thing I can think of is the IP, but also, I don't know that we...

Keith: It's probably just IP.

Austin: The IP costs 10 a pop, right?

Keith: Right.

Austin: And you use IP more than anybody else in the group because of that.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: And I don't— you only got paid that one time. It's not like everybody got a lot of money, you know?

Keith: That's true.

Austin: And I think y'all split that equal ways, and also, you get money at the top to buy stuff, and you could have bought different stuff?

Keith: I did spend [**Austin:** Mm-hmm.] almost my entire starting thing on my equipment.

Janine: Okay.

Austin: Yeah. I believe that that's...

Keith: So I did spend a ton there. That probably accounts for it.

Austin: Yeah. That is my guess.

Keith: Also I already have immune to poison because of my palm leaf cape.

Austin: See, there we go.

Janine: Oh, wow.

Keith: Which we found in the desert.

Austin: You did find that in the desert. You found that in the Celestial Echo that you visited there, which actually, [**Keith:** Yeah.] I believe I have a name for that I didn't have for you that I didn't have at the time. [typing] I should change it on the map, now that I think about it. Let me find it. That was Springsong. That was the name of that Celestial Echo. So, yeah. There's your shopping options. Feel free to spend money or not.

Sylvia: While people are looking around, would I be able to, like, talk to Kley for a sec, like, to the side for a second?

Austin: Absolutely. Yeah, for sure.

Sylvia: Caoimhe's going to start with, like...

(as **Caoimhe**): Hey, I'm sorry for, like, crashing you and your mom's time. If I had other options, I would have gone with them, but I gotta get in.

Austin (as **Kley**): What do you want with Castine?

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): [sighs] It's more to just keep some people off my back right

now, but people are, you know. You felt the rumbling earlier, right?

Austin (as **Kley**): Uh huh.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): It's got to do with that.

Austin (as **Kley**): I see.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Yeah. And...

Austin (as **Kley**): You think Castine is involved with the quakes.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): *People* think Castine is involved with the quakes. I, you know, I'm checking every possibility here.

Austin (as **Kley**): People you work for think that Castine's the cause of the quakes.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): [sighs] Yeah. Yeah. Look, I'm sorry. I know how you feel about...all of that.

Austin (as **Kley**): [sighs] It has been a long time, Caoimhe Wake. I would be careful about what you think you know about me.

Sylvia: Okay. Damn. I'm trying to think of what she'd say after that.

(as **Caoimhe**): I mean, I can't be 100% wrong about everything, can I? Wait, don't answer that.

Austin (as **Kley**): [sighs]

Sylvia: Trying to get a smile out of them.

Austin: None.

Sylvia: Fuck.

(as **Caoimhe**): Damn, okay. Maybe you are right.

Austin (as **Kley**): I think it's best if we both just attend to our purposes today.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Yeah. Once we get to the temple, I'll get out of your hair. I'm sorry again. And despite all this, it is good to see you.

Austin (as **Kley**): I wish the circumstances were different.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Yeah, that makes two of us.

Austin (as **Kley**): Caoimhe, what's he like?

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Who?

Austin (as **Kley**): Aegir.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): [exhales] I mean, you didn't hear this from me, but he's... [sighs] I think nasty business is probably the best way to describe it. Yeah. I don't know. Slimy. I don't trust him, but I don't know anybody— I don't know who's going to keep him in check, so here I am.

Austin (as **Kley**): [dismissively] You're going to change it from the inside. Yeah.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Come on. Don't— you know what I mean. Yeah, why can't I?

Austin (as **Kley**): [dismissively] Well, good luck. I'm going to go see how my mother's doing.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Yeah, good idea.

Austin: She's trying on capes is what their mother is doing.

Sylvia: That's great.

Janine: I'm giving feedback.

Austin: Yeah.

(as **Delani**): Purple? Or green? I know they're both big.

Janine (as **Brontë**): It's a very warm purple. If it was cooler, I would say the purple, but the green is cooler, so I think the green might compliment your complexion a little better.

Austin (as **Delani**): The green is cooler. Oh, I love it. I love it. Thank you, honey. I'll take the green! And I'll take the purple too, but I'll wear the green out!

Austin: And with new green cape on, begins to walk towards the Temple of the Summit, unless people have more shopping to do.

Janine: I'm trying to figure out if I have martial. I feel like I do, but I didn't...

Austin: You do, I think from...oh, you have martial for ranged weapons, I think, specifically. I think that that's what your...

Janine: I'm trying to remember where it says that.

Austin: It says it, like, at the beginning of the Class description. That's Sharpshooter, right?

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: Sharpshooter says, "Gain the ability to equip martial ranged weapons and martial shields," is what it says.

Janine: Okay.

Austin: Whereas, like, Guardian has, "You gain the ability to equip martial armor and martial shields," so.

Janine: I might get that bow.

Austin: Bow's good.

Janine: I'd been sort of waffling on it, because it's DEX + Insight, and my Insight's 8

instead of 10, but I feel like the math is still favorable when you consider the HR + 12.

Austin: Yeah. That damage is just really good. And the resistance ignoring is, like, extremely good, so.

Janine: Yeah. Yeah.

Keith: The martial weapons thing for Guardian is one of the reasons why the dual shield is so tempting.

Austin: Right, of course. Of course. Which we—

Keith: I think a lot of people would be taking, like, Guardian and Weaponmaster.

Austin: That's right. That makes sense.

Keith: Or something else that gives them martial.

Austin: Yeah. That makes sense. Yeah.

Janine: Can I barter a little bit? Is there bartering?

Austin: You know, you could try to roll Persuade. It just could go bad. Let's see. Yeah, you know?

Janine: Mm...

Austin: I think it's always possible. What's your...? Or, wait, when you say "barter"—sorry. I was reading "barter" as haggle. Are you talking about bartering, like...?

Janine: Yeah. No, like haggling.

Austin: Oh, haggling. Not trade. You're not trying to do trade plus money, like you're at a card game show, and you're, like, trying to get a special Pikachu.

Janine: I mean, I could swap. I wonder if there's, like, a trade-in value on my longbow.

Austin: There is. Everything is worth half of whatever its original cost was. So.

Janine: Okay. So that's— it was like a 300— I wrote it down somewhere.

Austin: Yeah, where—? What's the—? What was that bow?

Janine: It was 300 asta as a purchase initially.

Austin: There you go. 150.

Janine: So, 150.

Austin: I'll take 150. Yeah, I'll give you 150 for that.

Janine: Yeah, okay. And that brings the bow down to...

Austin: So that'll take the price down to 500, right? No, 600, right?

Janine: 600, 600, yeah.

Austin: Yeah, 600.

Janine: All right. You got a deal.

Austin: Boom. Done. Enjoy your new Siegebrieker. Anything else before we move forward?

Janine: Sorry. I want to rename the bow.

Austin: Of course. Please.

Janine: I think it has "Siegebrieker," like, embossed on it somewhere.

Austin: Uh huh.

Janine: And I think, at the booth, Brontë requests for the embossing to be redone to say "Heartbreaker." [Keith laughs]

Austin: [chuckles] That's very good.

Temple of the Summit [1:12:07]

Austin: All right. Heartbreaker in tow, y'all begin to head towards the moon. And the moon, again, is a little offset from the digsite. There is, like, a gap between the two. It's not a particularly thick gap, but it's enough that you can, like— it's not enough that a person can fall down there, right? But it's enough that it's like...

Keith: Sort of a baby gap.

Austin: Sort of a baby gap. Right, exactly. [Sylvia groans] Yeah, uh huh. Step into the baby gap. Please don't put a baby into the gap. There's signs. [Keith laughs] It says, "Please don't do that. It's not cool." There is a...so, there is that little gap, and then there's not, like, gates around it though, but there is a particular bridge that connects over and a little further up, so that you're not, like, stepping onto the roundest edge of the thing. And that does have guards kind of there, but these guards aren't, like, checking for tickets or anything. You can, you know, walk onto the moon at will, as long as no one has, like, decreed that you can't do it.

And I will say, even as you approach it, there is a sense of...you know, I don't know what the emotional sense is—I don't know if it's solemnity or awe or something else—but there is something in the air that changes. You know, you feel quite literally the gravity of this moon as you step onto it, right? You kind of shift onto the moon. The camera would kind of turn just a little bit. There's a sense almost of, like, a magnetic draw between you and the moon under your feet. The moon itself is this, you know, kind of— if no one had ever built any structures on it, it would be a sort of plain, flat, you know, simple orb, in a kind of weird way.

But there are structures on it, most importantly the Temple of the Summit, but then, like, you know, all around it, there are little stations that some people are praying at. There are places that are set up to have, like, temporary displays about various members of Cenn's history. There's all sorts of, like, you know, it's almost like being in a public park that has, like, important cultural or historical significance and has a bunch of, like, oh look, someone has put up a plaque that you can read about the first day of the digsite,

you know? Stuff like that all over the place. And I think Delani is like...you know, as a reminder, Kley is pushing Delani in the wheelchair. You know, or, I guess, Delani is rolling herself in the wheelchair, but most of the time we see Kley pushing. Is, like, directing Kley, to be like:

(as **Delani**): Hey, can you move me over there to—? I want to read that one next. Let me read that one.

Austin: You know? And, you know, I will say I think even Delani shifts here a little bit. You know, the attention she is paying to this place is, you know, real awe. She was joking about, like, seducing Castine, but she really, you know, feels some connection to this place and is really, like, soaking it in, you know? Hey, I'm going to need another roll for Ruinbringer.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: 8 is now the difficulty or the thing you don't want to roll under. Or equal to or under, I guess is what it is. It's 2d20. That's fine. That's a 27.

Sylvia: Whoa!

Austin: That's a 27. This time, you see the world shake around you, but the orb doesn't. Castine's moon is completely still, but you can see the buildings shaking. You can hear a little rumble.

Keith: I sort of, I grab myself sort of as it's happening a little bit.

Austin: And you're fine. You're there. Nothing's happened.

Keith: I'm fine. I'm good.

Austin: Yeah. You're not vibrating. I mean, could there be a connection? I don't know.

Keith: I don't know.

Janine: Brontë looks over.

(as **Brontë**): Antistrophe, why are you grabbing yourself? [Austin and Sylvia chuckle]

Sylvia: Ayo?

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): There was an earthquake. I thought...

Janine: Okay. [quietly] Suspicious.

Austin: [laughs] Mm-hmm.

Janine: [laughs] I think Brontë just raises an eyebrow. Just like, hmm...vibes are off.

Keith: Look, we're still at level 1 on the death march.

Janine: Yeah, yeah. I just, you know, vibes are off. That's all. Shrug.

Austin: All right. We get to the Temple of the Summit eventually. Delani and Kley are in front of you. Kley produces a sort of a ticket from some sort of inner pocket inside of their chest, their coat, their inner pocket of their jacket, and prepares to like...is in line, at this point, you know? And in the distance, you can see that Castine is, like, on his way back from a walk with someone else and is probably about 15 minutes away.

Sylvia: Who is... are there people, like, who's handling the...

Austin: Great question.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: There is a trio of people here. There are two armed guards and then someone who you would identify as, like, a cleric of the faith, basically.

Sylvia: Okay.

Austin: Which, again, the religion here is a little... I mean, it's all fantasy religion. It's all a little weird, right? The actual religion worshipping the Ennead in the Elevana League is called the House of Natural Benediction, which colloquially is called the House or

Benediction, generally. And it adopted the Ennead as its central and only real set of gods after, you know, millennia of having all of those other spirits. We went over that with our first arc, basically, right? But it does still have the kind of character of the previous version of the church, or the previous version of the House, I guess. So there are, like, still stories about that old vast pantheon that have, like, become a story about someone else. You know, in Burzin, we would know that, for instance, there were stories that historically had been told about Calsi that then were told instead about Cinner, the Soldier of Ash and Fire.

And also, the other half of this is the kind of Elevana focus on individual elemental blessings—and the kind of each of the city-states has an element, all of that—means that there tends to be, like, “I am blessed by this one god,” right? Whereas the western version, the western continent version of this same religion—or the same pantheon, different religion, kind of—is generally more like, oh yeah, the Protectorate worships all of them. You might have one that you specialize in, you know, if you’re a theologian or a priest or something. You might have a shrine to a particular god. That still happens, but there’s never, like, “And this is the one who I kind of am rooting for,” [chuckles] and that is here a little bit, in the same way that the Elevana League is filled with city-states that are all sort of like, “Well, I care about lightning elves,” you know?

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Entering the Temple [1:20:13]

Austin: So. So, yeah. That kind of is the vibe here, and so there are three people here. One of them is very clearly the kind of, like, cleric in charge who is in the front waiting on—you know, I think welcomes Delani and Kley and says, you know,

(as **cleric**): Your time with Castine is approaching. Please prepare yourselves.

Austin: And then kind of gives you all a look. Like, “What are you here for?” you know?

Sylvia: Yeah. I think that Caoimhe’s instinct is to, once again, try and pull a:

(as **Caoimhe**): Hey, I'm here on Hexcloak business. I need an audience with Castine when possible. I understand that there are a lot of prior commitments and that this is extremely important. It shouldn't take too long, but we just need to talk about the quakes that have been happening around the city for the past—

Sylvia: Do we know? How long has this been going on, Austin?

Austin: I think we said fairly recently. I think we said [**Sylvia:** Okay.] weeks, *maybe* months, but not that long.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): During the past month.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: I guess is what she'll say. And is that a Check that I have to roll?

Austin: You should roll a Check. Yeah. It's a pretty high one, but that's a Persuade or that's an Insight + Willpower.

Sylvia: Is that Willpower?

Austin: Yep. Oh, no. Not an 8.

Sylvia: I'm spending a Fabula Point on that 1.

Austin: Okay. You rolled a 7 and a 1. Okay, so you're going to keep the 7.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah. Okay.

Sylvia: 'Cause the— wait, is the 7 on my Insight die? Yeah, 'cause the highest I can get on my Insight die is an 8.

Austin: Right.

Sylvia: So I'm not rerolling that one.

Austin: Gotcha.

Sylvia: I'm just rerolling the d10. So, let me...

Austin: Yeah, 'cause you got a 7. Right, yeah, I see. I should say this, before you spend that point, even.

Sylvia: Yep.

Austin: You're looking for a 13 here.

Sylvia: Okay. I think if I get— that's anything higher than a 6.

Austin: Yep, mm-hmm. Just making sure you know the numbers. Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah, thank you. Okay, so, that's...

Austin: Because you rolled. I should have told you what the difficulty was, for sure, which I think I'm supposed to do basically all the time anyway, and sometimes we just roll too quick for me to do it.

Sylvia: I forget that that's, like, how this works.

Austin: It's not a problem. Yeah. All right.

Sylvia: So here's the 1d10.

Austin: [sighs] That's a 3.

Sylvia: That's a 3. We're doing it again!

Austin: I don't...is that...

Sylvia: Can I not?

Austin: I thought...maybe I'm wrong. One second. I think you can only do that type of reroll once.

Sylvia: Once per Check. Fuck!

Austin: Once per Check. Yeah. You can do a +1 per Bond Fabula Point spend, but you can only reroll a die once per turn, yeah, once per Check.

Keith: What were we looking for with this roll?

Austin: You're trying to convince Athen, the Cleric of Castine, [**Keith:** Yeah.] to let you go meet with Castine. And what's your—? You said your speech here, your little intro.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: And Athens shakes his head and says:

(as Athen): Unfortunately, Lady Hexcloak, unless you have an official appointment, I can do no such thing.

Sylvia: Sorry, really quick, are we sure that I can't? Because once per Check is for invoke a Bond, and this would be invoking a Trait.

Austin: Oh, maybe you're right. Let me see. One second. Let me check the main book.

Sylvia: Yeah. Just before we move on.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Sylvia: Because I will stubbornly reroll this one more time.

Austin: Reroll it, yeah. That's the Ultima Points. One second.

Keith: If you can't reroll it, I could try to Intimidate them.

Sylvia: [laughs] What a phrase! Sorry I'm I'm rules-lawyering or I powergame too much.

Austin: No, I'm always, like, you know, I would love for you to...

Sylvia: She's just taking so many L's, you know?

Austin: I get it. And also, you level up for spending this.

Keith: Yeah, if you're allowed to reroll, then you should be allowed to reroll.

Austin: Yeah, 100%. Here we go. Gaining Fabula Points. Spending Fabula Points. Uh... can be spent in a variety of ways. Altering the current situation, some powerful, da-da-da-da-da...look like this. This is Invoke Bond. See page 47. Okay. Why is it all the way back there? I'm here now. Uh...back to 47. Okay.

Sylvia: 'Cause again, this is me invoking Disgruntled Hexcloak, I think.

Austin: Yeah, I think that makes perfect sense.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: All right, here we go. Invoking a Bond to Improve Your Check. “Just like how a character's Traits can be used to reroll, Bonds—which is to say, the feelings they harbor towards others—allows them to increase...” Sorry, that’s Bond. Fuck. Where’s Trait? Trait. “Player Characters can attempt to turn the tide in their favor by calling upon one of their core Traits: their Identity, Origin, or Theme. After performing a Check, a Player Character may spend 1 Fabula Point and invoke one of their Traits to immediately pick up one or both dice and roll them again, replacing the old roll with the new one. They may do so any number of times as part of the same invocation, but each new reroll (of one or both dice) will cost another Fabula Point.” So, yeah, go for it.

Sylvia: I'm so glad.

Austin: Fabula Point number two. And this is...

Sylvia: Let me just declare this..

Austin: Again, your Disgruntled Hexcloak, right?

Sylvia: Yeah. I feel like whenever she’s using her Hexcloak authority, it has to be invoking that.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: 'Cause, like, it does not speak to Doubt. [chuckles]

Austin: Mm.

Sylvia: Or the Windy City of Billough, you know?

Austin: Yeah, not so much.

Sylvia: That's a 7!

Austin: There you go. 8 plus 7 is 13.

Keith: Nice.

Austin: What is your— you know, you get denied at first, so show me what this Fabula Point spend looks like. Show me the Disgruntled Hexcloak in you.

Sylvia: I think it's like, I think I do the shitty thing here, which is like, they start telling me I can't, and I'll be like:

(as **Caoimhe**): All right. I'll go talk to Therius Aegir about this, and we can figure it out.

Austin (as Athen): Oh. Aegir.

Sylvia: I'm namedropping my boss.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: You know, one, Kley looks at you with incredible disdain, the second you do that.

Sylvia: Fair enough! I am not earning points with Kley today.

Austin: And then, two, Athens says:

(as Athen): [resigned] Of course. If Commander Aegir has sent you, then we will make do. Lady Delani, Master Kley, I'm sorry. You'll have to wait to see Castine. Right this way, Lady Hexcloak.

Sylvia: Oops.

(as **Caoimhe**): [hushed] Sorry!

Austin: Delani doesn't even know what to say, at this point. You know, y'all have been spending time together.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: I think Kley voices— Kley is like:

(as **Kley**): You can't do this. My mother has waited her whole life for this!

Sylvia: [quietly] Hmm. Can they go first?

Austin (as Athen): Yes, but the wait will be quite some time.

Sylvia: Fuck! Uh...oh no! Oh no!

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Well, what's "some time"? How much time is "some time"?

Austin (as Athen): As long as the walk takes.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): What does that mean?

Sylvia: Wait, though. Okay. I have an idea now. We can wait. This is not Caoimhe saying this out loud.

Austin: Mm, mm-hmm.

Sylvia: But if we wait inside the temple, we can poke around a little bit and be nose

snoops while they're out on the walk.

Austin: Mm, mm-hmm.

Sylvia: So, maybe that's the angle, is like,

(as **Caoimhe**): We don't mind waiting within the temple, as long as that's fine with everybody else.

Austin (as **Kley**): [bitterly] Yes, I think that would be best.

Austin: Says Kley. And Delani says:

(as **Delani**): I'd really appreciate it, sweetheart.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Of course.

Austin (as **Delani**): It's just, we've traveled so far.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): I don't want to ruin this for either of you.

Sylvia: She says, after having ruined this for Kley multiple times. [laughs quietly]

Keith: Kley doesn't even care about this stuff.

Sylvia: Kley is having a bad time. Kley is with their dying mother. Like...

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: You know.

Austin: Yeah. You know, Kley seemed genuine just there, about taking this from their mother.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: It was the first time we've seen Kley loud, and that was genuine, you know?

Sylvia: And I think, like, I...

Austin: They've been mean, but not like, yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah. And that happening is definitely a bit of a wake up call to Caoimhe that she is being a shithead.

Austin: Mm, mm-hmm.

(as Athen): Then, yes, I will allow you and your...*attendants* to wait inside the temple. Right this way.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Thank you.

Austin (as Athen): [sighs] It'll be a number of hours, probably, given Lady Delani's devotion.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): That's fine. We'll find a way to entertain ourselves. We learned this cool game a little while back where you think about words.

Austin (as Athen): You'll sit in the waiting room, and I'll bring you tea.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): We can still talk though, yes?

Austin (as Athen): Quietly. As appropriate.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): That's all you need.

Janine (as **Brontë**): I would just like to clarify, me and Caoimhe. I am not Caoimhe's intended. Just to clarify.

Austin: Did you say "intended"?

Janine: Yes. [Austin laughs quietly] He believed that what was said was that these were her intendeds. [Austin laughs] And Brontë is clarifying.

Austin: I see. Yeah, mm-hmm.

Janine: That that is not the case, at least for him. He's not going to speak for other

people, but.

Sylvia: It's like, you know when a character in an anime or something sighs and you see the, like, thing come out, the little puff of air come out of them? [Janine laughs]

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: I just did that. Caoimhe just did that.

Janine: Yay! [laughs quietly]

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: Lord.

Austin: I think confusion on Athens's face, and he says:

(as Athen): Noted. Well, you just sit here and wait.

Austin: And leaves, and then, you know, three minutes later, a guard comes in with some tea and some literature on the moon and on Castine.

(as **Guard**): To keep you occupied.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Uh huh. I think it'll work.

Janine (as **Brontë**): Is there a wordsearch in here, or...?

Austin: [laughs quietly] That would be very— yeah, maybe. This is the type of town that maybe there would be, you know?

Sylvia: [laughs quietly] They gave us the kids menu with all the puzzles on it.

Austin: That's right!

Sylvia: There's a maze. [Keith chuckles] Crossword.

Austin: It's all different types of metal, you know, in the word search.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Janine: “Help Castine find the way to the moon!”

Austin: [laughs] That’s right.

Sylvia: Yes, literally. One end of the maze is, like, the statues of people who have turned to stone.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: It’s metal, not stone, right?

Austin: Metal. Yeah, it’s cast iron, yeah.

Sylvia: And then the other end is a little drawing of the temple.

Austin: Yeah. [sighs]

Janine: Held together with the most beautiful staples you’ve ever seen.

Austin: Ah, god.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): I found “fluorite” in the word search.

Janine (as **Brontë**): Oh.

Sylvia: They claim that Castine can be in the pure metal staples, but it’s not. It’s an alloy.

Austin: That’s very funny.

Sylvia: It’s purely marketing.

Janine: Every page has a little arrow that’s like, “Castine could be here!” smiley face.

Austin: Yeah. [sighs] Incredible.

Sylvia: Yeah. [Janine laughs]

Austin: I should note, by the way: I know that cast iron is not pure iron. I know that it has some other shit in there too.

Sylvia: Shit, I didn't.

Austin: Yeah. But it's, you know, it looks cool, and we're in a fantasy world.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: Here, that's just what iron looks like.

Keith: Well, if you were motivated religiously to make things out of pure iron, then you would.

Austin: Right. Right! Totally. I mean, I just, I suspect it probably doesn't look like cast iron in our world, but in this world, it does.

Sylvia: 800 page forum debate about this.

Austin: [chuckles] For sure.

Sylvia: There you go. There's your description for one of these episodes.

Austin: Thank you. I appreciate it, yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: For people who have not been reading the descriptions.

Janine: Yeah, write 800 pages real quick. [Austin laughs]

Sylvia: Yeah. Just an excerpt.

Austin: There was a forum debate in one of them a little earlier, so.

Janine: Sure was.

Sylvia: There was. It was great.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah. Oh, it's good. They're fun to write, is what I will say, so. Yeah. All right. They leave you to your tea and your literature and your word searches and your mazes.

Keith: I'm looking at it. Pure iron pans do look basically the same as cast iron pans.

Austin: Okay.

Keith: Images show them looking different, but that's just because they don't polish cast iron anymore.

Austin: Oh, I see. I see.

Keith: They just let it be kind of rough on the outside.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: If you were to polish cast iron, it would look exactly the same as iron.

Austin: Interesting. Cool. As you requested, Sylvi, you're here in the temple.

Sylvia: All right. Now, time to... So, how many guards are here keeping an eye on us?

Austin: There's no one in the room with you. You're in a small room with wooden benches. I think that there is a...I'm just going to steal a thing from the real world here. I think it's in— yeah, it's in MoMA PS1, which is a museum here in— it's actually not that far from me. It's, like, a little far from me, but it's not that far from me. There is a piece on the top floor that is a room. It's a James Turrell room that is a room with wooden benches all around the sides and kind of, like, white or tan walls. I was there during the day. Apparently they might light up. And at the very top is just a huge skylight with nothing, right? It's just open air.

Sylvia: Oh.

Austin: So you can hear outside. You can hear the trains and stuff. You can hear the people who are walking around the courtyard outside. And the thing that's happening is

that when you're in there there is a bit of the sunlight in this kind of, you know, square form is slowly moving around the room, and so you end up sitting in it, and like, it's one of those things that makes really noticeable the passage of time, in a way, because like, this big, like, trapezoid of...it's not a trapezoid, is it? You know what I mean. This big shape of— maybe it is a trapezoid.

Sylvia: I think it's a rectangle.

Austin: Is it a rectangle? What's a rectangle with angles? What's that called? [typing]

Sylvia: Uh, is it just a polyhedron?

Austin: Maybe.

Janine: Parallelogram?

Austin: A parallelogram. There we go. Thank you.

Sylvia: Parallelogram, yeah.

Austin: I knew I was wrong.

Janine: Trapezoid is when it's not parallel, when the lines that intersect, I think.

Austin: I see. Right. Right, that makes sense. Then yes, it is a parallelogram. This kind of parallelogram of light slowly moves around the room, because it's just the sun. You know, it's the earth moving and the sunlight moving, you know? And I think it's in a room kind of like this, with these sorts of high wooden slat benches. You know, a similar sort of— you know, maybe instead of the kind of parallelogram or the square in the ceiling with the parallelogram light, it is just a circle. It is just a circle cut out, and so there is, certain times of the day, this kind of orb of light coming through, and then that stretches into various, you know, oval shapes. That one I know. I know what an oval is, so you don't have to write in.

Sylvia: Hey, well done.

Austin: Mm-hmm. And also, let me tell you something: by the time you turn 40, you're going to forget some shit too. Get ready.

Sylvia: Buddy, I'm 31, and I'm forgetting everything.

Austin: Yeah. Uh huh.

Sylvia: Like, it's happening.

Austin: I'm just telling the listener who is like, "How could he forget what a parallelogram was?" you know? I got a lot of dumb shit up in my head.

Janine: I think you're more likely to get a comment about how earlier you described the orb as being flat. I knew what you meant, but.

Austin: You know what I mean.

Janine: I know.

Austin: You know what I mean.

Keith: Smooth?

Austin: Smooth. Yeah.

Keith: Right.

Austin: Yeah, smooth. Yeah.

Janine: I'm just saying.

Austin: Uh huh. I think I— listen.

Sylvia: Smoother [inaudible 1:35:37]

Keith: What is an orb but a bent flat?

Austin: Yeah, uh huh. Also, I was writing a—

Janine: Wow. [Keith laughs]

Austin: This is *Realis* breaking in, which is one of the moons that's not in the ashcan that I was writing yesterday is an orb that is flat on— it is a half sphere. The whole moon is, like, cut in half perfectly.

Sylvia: Oh, snowglobe.

Janine: Spoon. Spoon moon! Okay, sorry.

Sylvia: Oh, spoon moon.

Austin: It's not like that. Yeah.

Janine: Oh.

Austin: But it's like, yeah. Spoon moon—

Janine: Oh, it's, like, solid.

Austin: Yeah, it's solid. Correct.

Janine: It's like one of those spoons that you get that's prefilled with chocolate to stir into your coffee.

Austin: It's just like that, except the people on it have to live, and then they die, and then they get reborn on the other side of the moon [Keith: Wow.] and they, like, vaguely remember their previous life.

Keith: By the way, not for nothing, but, from my perspective, the orb that we live on is flat. [Austin laughs quietly]

Sylvia: I knew it.

Janine: People are going to believe you if you say that, just so you know. You have to be careful.

Keith: Sorry, I'm not being a flat earther.

Janine: Oh.

Keith: I'm just saying, perspectively, our orb is flat to me.

Austin: Mm, I see.

Keith: It's flat to me!

Janine: Okay. Okay.

Austin: Ahhh. All right.

Sylvia: Okay.

Investigating [1:36:42]

Austin: So, you're in that room. They're not in there with you. So I'd say that you saw the two guards out front, who were, like, with the cleric. You assume there are other working clerics here and presumably another handful of guards inside of this place. It's fairly large, right? It takes up a whole square on this map of the city, which is not to scale, but, you know. It is to scale in the sense that I decided it shouldn't be a little dot on the moon, it should be a whole square of the moon, you know? So it's a sizable structure. I'd say it's much bigger than that mayor's office that you went to, or the city hall.

Sylvia: Yeah. All right, it's time to do some snooping. We gotta... How many doors out of the room are there? Is it just—?

Austin: There is one door out.

Sylvia: And one door, like— oh. This is, like, a separate waiting room. It's not connected to the rest of the temple, or...?

Austin: It's inside the temple.

Sylvia: Okay.

Austin: You're inside a building that is the temple, and there is a waiting room in the temple that you're in, and there is one door in, and there is one door out.

Sylvia: Okay.

Keith: I could serve as a distraction.

Austin: And there's the hole in the ceiling, also. You could serve as a distraction.

Sylvia: [intrigued] There's the hole in the ceiling.

Keith: I could go talk to the front desk people or the attendants or the intendeds.

Austin: Or the intendeds, yeah. [Austin and Keith laugh]

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: I could go talk to the intendeds and distract them.

Sylvia: And I can climb through the hole in the ceiling and drop down into another room.

Austin: [laughs quietly] On our *Assassin's Creed* shit today.

Sylvia: Yeah, I don't know. For some reason, I woke up on the wacky side of the...

Janine: Kind of boldly presuming there's holes in all of the rooms you want to go in.
[Austin laughs]

Sylvia: I can make 'em. [Janine laughs]

Keith: Video games have taught me this is true.

Janine: Mm, mm-hmm.

Keith: Any plot critical room has a hole that leads to it.

Sylvia: Or an open window, you know.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Keith: What is an open window but a hole?

Austin: Wow.

Keith: A hole with an official name.

Austin: The official name: window.

Sylvia: [laughing quietly] You know what they say: when god closes a door, he opens a hole.

Austin: [laughs quietly] Agh! So, are you doing this? Are you going to...?

Keith: Just house jargon. Door, window. These are all kinds of holes.

Sylvia: Yeah. Sorry, what was that, Austin?

Austin: Are you going to distract the front desk, Antistrophe?

Keith: Yeah, yeah, totally.

Austin: As soon as you head out the door—and like, you close the door, you're out in the hallway—someone is like:

(as **guard**): Excuse me. You need to remain in the waiting room.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Hi, yeah. I really wanted to stay in the waiting room, but there was no one there to answer my questions about the temple.

(as **guard**): Well, you'll have...I'll have to see if someone's available. Can you, uh...come with me, please.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Okay, yeah, sure.

Austin: And begins to lead you towards the front desk.

Sylvia: Let's go.

Austin: Yeah. You hear Antistrophe walking away.

Sylvia: Yeah. I guess I could just do this normal style and go out the door now.

Janine: I don't entirely believe that someone else wouldn't be waiting.

Sylvia: That's a good point.

Janine: Does Caoimhe, like, go for the door, and Brontë just kind of gets an itch and is just like:

(as **Brontë**): Mm, why don't you let me go first? [Austin laughs]

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Yeah, you know what? After you.

Austin: You head out the door?

Janine: Mm-hmm.

Austin: And another guard turns the corner and says...

Janine: Mm, mm-hmm.

Austin (as **guard**): I'm sorry. Sir, you need to wait in the waiting room.

Austin: This is a different guard. Different guard happened to be walking by.

Keith: Right.

Austin (as **guard**): Sorry, you need to wait in the waiting room. We have orders to make sure you don't, you know, leave and damage anything important here. By mistake.

Janine (as **Brontë**): You think I would damage something? By *mistake*?

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

Keith: Clearly not aware of your grace.

Janine (as **Brontë**): I grew up around things much more fragile than this with much greater consequences if I broke them. I'm not going to break anything here.

Austin (as **guard**): I understand your confidence. I'm going to ask you to remain in the waiting room.

Janine (as **Brontë**): I'm finding the air in there a little problematic. [Keith laughs]

Austin (as **guard**): The room with the hole in the ceiling that lets fresh air in.

Janine (as **Brontë**): Yes, it's too...there's too much.

Austin (as **guard**): Okay.

Janine (as **Brontë**): The circulating air in the closed room is very drafty.

Austin (as **guard**): You come with me. I'll bring you to a better place with better air.

Janine: Mm...okay.

Austin: Inside, Caoimhe, you hear Brontë walk away.

Sylvia: Here is my thinking. I could try and be sneaky. I am playing a character who, for once, is good at being sneaky.

Austin: Uh huh.

Sylvia: We've done that.

Keith: And you also established your intent to be sneaky.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: And, yeah. My other thought is that the roof idea is really funny.

Austin: Uh huh. [laughs quietly]

Keith: Oh, I thought that was the sneaky thing.

Sylvia: I think it is.

Austin: That is sneaky.

Keith: That is sneaky.

Sylvia: It is sneaky.

Keith: Breaking and entering is sneaky.

Sylvia: I think that there's a... She's thinking about it and is like, "Well, if the guards are— if that's how quickly they're rotating through," and Sylvi the player is like, "Rule of threes is always pretty funny, so there's probably a third guard." I think, yeah, she's doing it. She's climbing out that fucking rectangle. [laughs quietly]

Austin: Incredible. And then what? I think you're able to— are you able to, like, just jump up there? It's pretty high up. Or are you climbing? You're, like, clambering up the side of the wall.

Sylvia: I'm climbing.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: Like, if I gotta, maybe I use some, like, wind magic to...

Austin: You do, like, a little wind push jump? Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah.

Sylvia: Caoimhe's got a double jump.

Austin: Yeah, you get up there, and you can kind of see that the temple complex that

you're in, I think it's probably three floors tall. This one is on the— you've been led to a second floor waiting room, basically.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: And there's the whole first floor down below. There are parts of it that go up all three floors. There are parts that only go— like, the place that you are now is only on the second floor. And you're able to see out across the city here too, you know, out to the ocean to the east. This is, like, one of the high points in the city, effectively, [**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.] because you're on top of the moon and you're near the center of the top of the moon, right? So you're at one of the highest points here, and you can even see, at this point, I'll say that this room is on the western side of the temple summit, and they go kind of clockwise around it in the walk. You can see Delani and Kley and Castine, who you see for the first time, you know, from pretty— you know, you saw the figure walking before, but now you see Castine in front of you. Or not in front of you, but, you know, close enough, and they're beginning their walk around the temple, or really around the moon, but yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah. Like, I think I want to head closer to the main structure, right? Like, I want to...

Austin: Yeah, you're on top of...

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: You know, if you think about the whole little red thing, it's kind of like that's the whole structure. It's just parts of it are one floor, parts of it are two floors, et cetera.

Sylvia: Yeah. But, yeah. So I'm on the third floor?

Austin: You're on the second floor.

Sylvia: Or the second floor.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: I want to get up to the third floor.

Austin: The top, the highest level. Yeah, okay.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: I think that that's a doable thing. I guess the question is do you get seen while doing it, so I think that's where we're going to need some sort of roll here.

Sylvia: Yeah. I can do a Sneak.

Austin: I think this is a Sneak. [Sylvia sighs] I think that this is...ooh, I think this is a 10. I think this is pretty straightforward so far. There's no one up here looking for you on this level.

Sylvia: And that's exactly what I rolled.

Austin: That's exactly a 10. So, yes. You're able to get up to, like, a third floor balcony is what you're able to get up to.

Sylvia: Mm, is there a pile of hay I can jump in?

Austin: Just below you, yeah. Yeah.

Sylvia: Wonderful.

Austin: Give me your best eagle cry.

Sylvia: Caw, caw!

Austin: Yeah, uh huh. [Austin and Keith laugh]

Sylvia: Ca-caw!

Austin: Yeah. But yeah, you're up on a balcony that looks like it's looking into—

Sylvia: Go birds! That's my best Eagle cry. [Austin chuckles]

Austin: It looks like it's looking into some sort of meeting room.

Sylvia: Is there anything going on in there, or no?

Austin: Not right now, no.

Sylvia: I'm going to go in there.

Austin: All right.

Sylvia: If I can, and snoop around.

Austin: What is the—? Yeah, I guess this is probably a— I think there are, like, locked wooden doors on this thing.

Sylvia: Okay.

Austin: So, not too..

Sylvia: How— yeah.

Austin: Not too hard, in terms of, you know, it's not— actually, they're probably not wooden at all. They're probably just made of iron, actually.

Sylvia: Probably, yeah.

Austin: Yeah, mm-hmm. Do you have any experience picking locks?

Sylvia: [doubtfully] Mm, you know, there's always time to start.

Austin: It's true.

Keith: You don't think a Hexcloak would know how to pick a lock?

Sylvia: Maybe.

Austin: You might.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Thanks, Keith. Yeah, she does.

Austin: Yeah, I was asking you. You know.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: Sometimes I ask stuff to get the...

Sylvia: I mean, I guess I do also have stuff that makes it so she has some sort of, like, tinkering skill, not necessarily in the same way that that's used in the actual book for the Tinkerer Class, but like, her downtime stuff and everything.

Austin: Yeah, yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah, how do I pick—? Do I just do that, or do I have to roll for this, or...?

Austin: I think you're going to roll for it, I think, again. Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah. And what am I rolling?

Austin: This is probably, again, DEX + DEX. I feel like that's, like, the classic, you know, pickpocketing combo here.

Sylvia: Yeah. Well, that's a 6, so.

Austin: Which is lower than a 7, the minimum success here. Do you want to spend—?

Sylvia: It sure is.

Austin: Do you have any Fabula Points left?

Sylvia: I have 1 Fabula Point left.

Keith: Hey, let's get that extra XP.

Austin: You could get the extra XP. What did you actually roll? You rolled a 1 and a 5. Okay.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: And your DEX is a...?

Sylvia: 10.

Austin: Is a 10, yeah.

Sylvia: DEX is my high dice, yeah.

Austin: Do you want to reroll both? Do you want to reroll one?

Sylvia: Well, if it's a 7, I'd keep the 5, [**Austin:** Okay.] and then it's a 1 in 10 chance that I don't do it, which I shouldn't have said.

Keith: I always try to think about what Art would say about what to reroll.

Austin: Uh huh.

Sylvia: Yeah. That's a good...

Keith: And I think Art would say to keep the 5.

Austin: I will say that I think I understand how Art does this.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Which is: if it's on the lower side of the die, then you should reroll it.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: If it's on the higher side of the die...

Keith: Which obviously 5 is on the lower side, but it's right on the border.

Austin: It's right on the edge, and I think you'd be a more conservative Art by saying that, to keep it. It is good. I don't want to...

Sylvia: I'm doing it.

Austin: You know, I'm not saying you need to do it, but. Which Trait are you using? Are you doing Disgruntled Hexcloak again?

Sylvia: I think I'm using Doubt this time.

Austin: You're using Doubt.

Keith: Because the roll is— you only need to get a 7 or higher, right? So we only need to not roll a 1.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: What? No, no, no, no.

Sylvia: The Theme we're using is Doubt.

Austin: A 7 is the minimum success. I did not say what the thing was here.

Keith: Oh. Sorry, I understand.

Sylvia: Ohh.

Keith: I misinterpreted thinking 7 was what you actively needed to reroll it.

Austin: I see. 7 is always, like, the baseline success level for something, if it's an open-ended thing. I think this is—

Keith: Okay.

Austin: I think lockpicking your way into the temple of the god, even on the top floor, is probably the 10, which is what they recommend for most rolls. You know, 7 is like an easy roll, is like an easy thing that you still have to roll for. 10 is the average. 13 is hard. 16 is, like, extremely hard.

Keith: Got it.

Austin: I think someone could be like, "You're being generous by letting it be 10." Yeah.

I understand why you're now saying, "Just reroll the 1," though.

Keith: "Just reroll the 1," yeah.

Austin: Sorry, what I really want to zoom in though is, Caoimhe, tell me why this is a Doubt, why you're being driven by Doubt here.

Sylvia: I think this is just her...she's paranoid, is kind of her whole thing, is she is untrusting of authority in general, weirdly enough. You know how it is. And I think that, like...something about the way that they were so strict about wanting to keep them in the waiting room made her think that there is something being hidden here.

Austin: Sure.

Sylvia: That, like...I don't know.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: And there's a part of her that's like, well, if this— maybe this is what— maybe there's something here that I'm trying to find for the Hexcloaks so they can, like, disappear it, and I'm going to find it and do the opposite.

Austin: I see.

Sylvia: I'm going to hang onto it.

Austin: Yeah. Give me that roll. So, yeah, which are you going to reroll here? Given that it's a 10 is the difficulty, I think.

Sylvia: So, 10 is the difficulty?

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: Should I just reroll the whole thing?

Keith: I'm going to let Austin being surprised that you wouldn't reroll both of them [Austin scoffs] inform me that probably you should.

Austin: I'm not the numbers guy.

Sylvia: Okay. Sorry, my handler is telling me I should do the two of them.

Austin: [chuckles] Okay. There's a 14.

Sylvia: 14!

Austin: There you go. This is, yeah, uh huh.

Sylvia: Thanks, Keith!

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: You're welcome.

Austin: Mm-hmm. You know, 10 is the average on two dice, so you rolling a 6 is, yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: All right. Yes. You just have, like, a little lockpick that you bust out to do this?

Sylvia: I think it's even more classic than that. It's, like, a hairpin situation.

Austin: Love it. Perfect.

Sylvia: It's gotta be.

Austin: Hairpin open. Door opens. No creak, no sound, no guard walking by. You're in the top floor of Castine's temple. Whoa. I moved the moon by mistake. That was not an earthquake. In the— go ahead?

Sylvia: No, I was going to— you go ahead.

Austin: I was going to move us back briefly to the ground floor.

Sylvia: Oh. Then, yeah, go for it. I can snoop after.

Austin: Yeah, okay.

Back Downstairs [1:50:19]

Austin: You are at the front desk, Antistrophe.

Keith: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

Austin: Presumably asking questions about the temple?

Keith: It's true, yes.

Austin: Okay. While you're doing that, you see Brontë being led down the stairs towards the front entrance, where there is better air for him to breathe.

Keith: And who doesn't like better air?

Austin: That's right.

Keith: This doesn't concern me, 'cause I feel like this could be part of the plan. [Austin chuckles] You know, being led away. That doesn't seem like something Brontë would do unless it was, you know, relevant.

Austin: Yes.

Keith: So, I'm going to keep chatting.

Sylvia: [laughs quietly] Lot of trust in him.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): [fascinated] How old is it?

Austin (as **cleric**): The temple or the moon?

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): The— well, both.

Austin (as **cleric**): We have no idea about the moon. I suspect Castine knows. Presumably the creation of this very world, perhaps older.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Wow.

Austin (as **cleric**): The temple we built for Castine as a gift, just a little under a hundred years ago.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Is it interesting to not know how old the moon is with access to Castine?

Austin (as **cleric**): Well, access is debatable. We work for—

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): And hasn't everyone who comes through here gone to meet Castine?

Austin (as **cleric**): No. Why would we skip ahead? Many of us are—

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): No, sorry, not the intendeds of the temple. [muffled laughter] The pilgrims who come. You know.

Austin (as **cleric**): Yes, but the conversations between pilgrims and Castine, those are holy things. They're not to be written down and...those are private conversations.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): I guess that's fair. It would be difficult for me to resist asking a pilgrim, "By the way, could you ask Castine how old the moon is and then report back?" And nothing else. Everything else is privileged, but [**Cleric**: Well—] we would love to get, you know, some research by proxy.

Austin (as **cleric**): This is perhaps why you do not work at the Temple of the Summit.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Well, I'm also not from here.

Austin (as **cleric**): Also part of it, though we do have some attendants who have emigrated here.

Austin: Brontë, you have been led to the front door. Your guard says:

(as **guard**): You can wait outside, and if you decide you want a chair again, you

can let us know, and we'll bring you back to the smelly chair room. [Keith laughs]

Janine (as **Brontë**): I didn't say it was smelly.

Austin (as **guard**): We'll bring you back to the oppressive air room.

Janine (as **Brontë**): I didn't say it was oppressive. [Keith laughs]

Austin (as **guard**): I'll bring you back to the room you don't like.

Janine (as **Brontë**): You're escorting me out, and you don't even...you don't even care to know what my actual complaints were. You don't care to learn of them, to be able to make this experience more comfortable for the devoted that might follow. It's quite galling.

Austin (as **guard**): I'm sorry you've been galled.

Janine (as **Brontë**): Is this how you practice your religion here?

Austin: Are you trying to provoke something here? Do you want a reaction? Is there a reaction you're gunning for?

Janine: You're asking that as the GM, right, not as the—?

Austin: Yes, as the GM. [laughter]

Janine: Okay.

Keith: That would be really funny in character! "Sorry, I can't tell."

Austin (as **guard**): So what do you want? What is it you're trying to get from me here? [Janine laughs]

Sylvia: Is this, like, a brat thing, or what's going on here? [Austin laughs]

Janine: I think the thing that's happening here is— hmm. I think Brontë's genuinely bothered, actually. [laughs quietly]

Austin: Okay, yeah. This is just in character. Yeah, okay. There's no game. There's no maneuver.

Janine: Yeah, I think this is like— yeah, I think this is like, you're not even pretending to take this seriously? Like, you're really that— like, why do you work here if you're that fucking—? You know, I think there is a sense of **[Austin: Mm-hmm.]** Brontë being like, “Well, now, wait a minute. I was going to respect your faith, but like, what the fuck?”

Sylvia: “And then you were rude to me, so...”

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: Well, just...

Austin (as **guard**): [angrily] You cut in line. You don't get to tell any of us here that we're doing the job wrong. Do you know how many people wait years, decades, to meet with Castine, and you showed up with— you're not even the Hexcloak! The Hexcloak's the one who's still waiting in the room! Because she, maybe, actually respects our Lord Castine. [Sylvia and Keith laugh]

Sylvia: Smash cut to her being like, “This fucking lock. Goddamn.” [Austin and Janine laugh]

Austin: Yeah, exactly. Hard cut. Jump cut.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah.

(as **guard**): So, no. I'm not being polite to you. You have not earned that. Enjoy the air. I'm back on patrol.

Austin: And walks away.

Janine: Wow.

Austin (as **cleric**): So, yeah, it's pretty old.

Janine: And Brontë, like, shakes his fucking head, just like...

Austin: Uh huh. [laughs]

Janine (as **Brontë**): These people.

Janine: Efta and Zolfta, standing in the distance, make eye contact with him.

Austin: [laughs] That's right.

Janine: Shrugs. Like, [ambivalent noise]

Austin: Lemonade sip.

Janine: Uh huh.

Austin: Uh huh. You can bring lemonade onto the moon. You can't bring it into the temple.

Janine: Mm.

Austin: God. Yeah. The tea is getting cold in the room, the tea they brought you.
[laughs]

Janine: I bet they make it in an iron pot and it tastes weird, so fuck it.

Austin: Probably.

Janine: Fuck their tea.

Austin: But maybe it tastes weird interesting, you know?

Janine: Hmm...

Caoimhe's Ritual [1:55:29]

Austin: Up in the meeting room, Caoimhe.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: What are you looking for? Yeah, you now have access to, I think, this top floor, which is, like, meeting room, some sort of totally open air, like, top floor garden, I think, probably. That is, like, enclosed by other walls, you know? Like, there's— you know, I think what it probably is— so, up here. Meeting room. Castine's personal room. There's a room that I will get into if you go into it that's, like, a firmly locked door. There is, from Castine's room, a sort of garden of, like, a rock garden with some trees and some big stones. And, you know, probably a bathroom, some personal quarters and stuff. Yeah. [amused sound] Castine's personal mole shrine. Right. That's in the locked room.

Sylvia: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: And then there is probably also, I would suspect, the sort of, like, chief cleric's office, you know?

Sylvia: Okay.

Austin: So that there's access between him and Castine.

Sylvia: I gotta try and get in that locked room, right?

Austin: Maybe.

Sylvia: A part of me wants to first, like, root around in the meeting room, if they left anything in here. Like, anything a little more interesting [**Austin:** Totally.] than just, like, the notes about the fundraising drive or whatever.

Austin: Give me the Study. Give me the Study Check. And this is open-ended, so 7 will get you something, et cetera.

Sylvia: That's a 5, so I got shit.

Austin: You got shit. If there was something here, you don't understand what it is.

Sylvia: This is all more of the kids menu. [Austin chuckles]

Austin: I think that what's there is probably...yeah, there's just nothing important. It is

exactly the sort of, like, [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] it is fundraising drives. It is how is the digsite going. You know, you see some mentions.

Sylvia: Who's coming for the walk.

Austin: Yeah, who's coming for the walk. Some details about who they are, but light details. It's not a heavy—

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: It's not like here's the dossier on Delani, you know?

Sylvia: No.

Austin: And I think that you probably see some, like, shorthand notes about the recent earthquakes, but there's nothing you don't already know there, you know?

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Austin: There's no new information there, but of course they were discussing it. But, you know, there's nothing, "Yes, our mole plan is going well." [laughs quietly]

Sylvia: I know. That's what she's saying.

Austin: Yeah.

(as **Caomhe**): [disappointed sigh] Nothing on the mole. [Austin chuckles]

Sylvia: Okay, well, then, yeah. Then I'm going to go try and get into this locked room.

Austin: Okay.

Sylvia: Do I have to keep being sneaky to get there without being spotted, or...?

Austin: I'm going to call this one big roll. I'm not going to make you roll to pick the lock and be sneaky.

Sylvia: Okay.

Austin: I'm going to make you— or I say pick the lock, but actually, it's strange. You get there, and it is a...it is an iron door. It's where a door would go, but it's been filled in with just iron.

Sylvia: Oh.

Austin: But it's clearly not a wall. You know what I mean? It's different.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: It's as if you took an iron slab and put it in a doorway. No hinges.

Sylvia: Would, like, a Ritual spell be something that could get me into this?

Austin: Ah, maybe. Oh, did you happen to take some Ritual magic?

Sylvia: Did I? Well, I did happen to learn Ritual Elementalism quite recently.

Austin: Can you read that for us?

Sylvia: "You may perform Rituals whose effects fall within the Elementalism discipline."

Austin: Okay.

Sylvia: "Elementalism Rituals use Insight + Willpower for the Magic Check."

Austin: And if you take a look on the Elementalism discipline thing, [**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.] it says, "Elementalists can control the stream of souls that binds the four core elements of creation: air, earth, fire, and water. They can also influence any of their combinations and manifestations, such as magma, blizzards, deserts, or clouds. Elementalism features both spells and Rituals." And then, in the Ritual page, which is on page 118, it says you could, "walk on water, shape rock, snuff out fires, cause a rainstorm, or summon powerful cyclones," as examples of Elementalism things. So, yeah, I think an Elemental Ritual could do something here. What are you looking to do?

Sylvia: Yeah. I do also have Ritualism, just straight Ritualism, which is, "Extract magic from an object, activate a soul circuit, sense the presence of magic." So.

Austin: Yes. Yes, you could do either of those. I think if what you're trying to do is change the thing, that's Elementalism.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: They're both Insight + Willpower.

Sylvia: I think it is too. Yeah. I'm trying to either get this to open or create a gap that I can slip through.

Austin: Totally. So, if you take a look at the next page, there is a three step process for how Rituals work.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Austin: One: You describe what you want to accomplish with your Ritual and declare which area or creatures you want to affect.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: The GM will have final say on whether a given effect can be accomplished, as well as which Ritual discipline it falls under.

Sylvia: Okay. So, we've done that, aside from the difficulty stuff.

Austin: Yeah. Well, I think that that's— well, that's number one, so I think [**Sylvia:** Okay.] it sounds like what you want to do is open it? Make a gap for yourself?

Sylvia: Yeah, I want to— make a gap [**Austin:** Okay.] for myself seems like the more realistic thing here. I don't think the steel stuff falls under Elementalism, unless it does.

Austin: I think it does.

Sylvia: Does it?

Austin: I think, in our world, right, iron is one of the core elements in the way that, you know, so.

Sylvia: Yeah. Okay.

Austin: So, yeah. I think that is shape rock, effectively, right?

Sylvia: Okay, cool. I think that's more what she's going for than, like, trying to burn through it or something, 'cause...

Austin: Yeah, that makes sense. Then you consult the area and potency tables below, and we determine the things. So, I think it's probably not minor, which is shatter a glass, create a flash of light, block a passage. Medium: create an illusion, treat an illness, locate someone or something, sense emotion, provide short-term energy. I think it's probably medium. It's either medium or minor.

Sylvia: Okay.

Austin: I guess if minor is block a passage, unblock a passage could be minor, right?

Sylvia: Yeah. That'd be... [leading] I would agree.

Austin: [chuckles] Uh huh. Yeah, you would agree that it should cost less MP and be a lower difficulty?

Sylvia: I would agree that it's— listen, it could cost as much MP as you want. It's the difficulty level that I'm jittery about.

Austin: Yeah, yeah. Yeah. Sense thoughts, influence emotions, dispel a curse. You know what? What I actually think here is, you know, in some ways, this is “weaken a divine entity.” In other ways, it's “unblock a passage.”

Sylvia: Motherfucker.

Austin: I think it's medium. I think it's DL 10.

Sylvia: Okay.

Austin: And then, you just decide the area. This is individual, 1. A human-sized creature, a door, a tree, a weapon.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: So it's only going to cost you 30 MP to try this Ritual.

Sylvia: Okay. So, I'm going to mark the 30 MP first, just so I remember.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: Minus 30 MP. And that is Insight + Willpower.

Austin: Mm-hmm. And then—

Sylvia: And I better get it.

Austin: I just want to go over some stuff here. You could, if you had [**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm?] an especially rare or powerful ingredient, cut the MP cost in half. Something to think about, going forward.

Sylvia: Let me look in my backpack.

Austin: And then, yeah, you're just going to do the...it's Insight + Willpower, right? Is that what we decided it was?

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: All right, so, Insight + Willpower. Difficulty 10.

Sylvia: Yeah, yeah, I was just looking. I'm not using my magical reagent for this.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: I don't want to use that up, you know?

Austin: Fair.

Sylvia: Okay. Insight + Willpower, door Ritual roll. What the fuck?

Austin: Do you have any...?

Sylvia: I am rolling terrible today!

Austin: Do you have any Fabula Points left?

Sylvia: No, Austin! I used them all!

Austin: Oh no.

Keith: Yeah, she used all 3.

Sylvia: I used all 3.

Austin: Yeah. Oh.

Sylvia: Do they find me?

Austin: No, I can tell you exactly what happens. Outside, Brontë, you can see, in the distance—maybe beyond Efta and Zolfta—Delani, Kley, and Castine walking, and Castine stops for a moment and leans down and seems to whisper something and then stands back up and stands perfectly still.

Sylvia: Oh no.

Austin: The wall in front of you takes on the shape of a face.

Sylvia: Oh no!

Keith: Wait, this is great news.

Sylvia: Is it?!

Austin (as **Castine**): Lady Hexcloak.

Keith: This is who you wanted to talk to.

Austin: This is who you wanted to talk to, sure.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Ah!

Keith: I'm taking lemons and drinking lemonade that's not allowed in the temple.

Austin: [laughing] Just biting into lemons. "Mmm, I love this lemonade!" [Keith laughs]

(as **Castine**): Lady Hexcloak. I'll ask you to remove yourself from my quarters.

Austin: Says Castine.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Oh, these are— these are your quarters? My apologies. I didn't realize that these were your quarters. I was...looking for something else.

Austin (as **Castine**): [frustrated sigh] You have my attention.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Uh...is this a good time to talk then, or...?

Austin: I think...oh. [chuckles] From the metal, from the kind of metal door, little drips of metal begin to, like, you know, roll down the hallway to behind you, like passing you, almost like quicksilver, you know? Like liquid metal.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: And then they begin to rise. They, like, connect to one another and then, almost like a sheet of metal, begin to rise behind you, as if to lock you in between the door on one side and then this new sheet that's being formed behind you. It's like he's melting part of the door to then reform it behind you to block you in.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): I can just go. I can go back to the waiting room, if that's...

Austin (as **Castine**): You'll wait.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Yeah, in the wait— [quietly] in the waiting room?

Austin: You can try to leave, at this point, you know? But, you know, he's forming this wall. you can try to just, like, run past it?

Sylvia: [laughs] Oh my god.

Janine: So should we, like, go pack our suitcase, or like...? [Austin laughs]

Sylvia: Real comedy of errors. Wow. God, I've rolled so many 1s today!

Austin: You've rolled a lot of 1s today. You've rolled a lot.

Keith: You've rolled a 1 with almost every roll.

Sylvia: Yeah, I know, Keith! I've noticed!

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: That's a lot. Wow, I'm counting them up.

Sylvia: Yeah, dude! I rolled two of them at once!

Austin: Antistrophe, can you give me your last mid-session roll?

Keith: Yeah, sure. Roll 2d20...14.

Austin: Okay, 14. You're safe. But there is another shaking of the world, in this moment. Again, inside of— on the moon, you don't feel it, but you can see it beyond.

Keith: Right, the outside world is shaking?

Austin: Actually, you know what? In this moment, it does shake the moon too, because Castine is distracted by an intruder and cannot hold the—

Sylvia: Can I pick up on that, though?

Austin: Yeah, sure, totally. The whole world is shaking in this moment, yeah.

Sylvia: Caoimhe does not run. She just stops instead and points and is like:

(as **Caoimhe**): So it *isn't* you!

Austin: Okay, yeah. You now have his attention, and he stops building this— or

actually, he keeps building the wall behind you, but it, like, pushes down the hallway so that, like, you know what I mean?

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: There's, like, more space for the two of you. There's space for you to walk back. But then he steps out of the pure iron wall, the pure iron door and, like, is now in the room with you, effectively. The iron Castine on the moon, that's walking, is just completely— is basically a statue now. And says:

(as **Castine**): I knew it. They sent you to investigate me.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Yeah. Honestly, I was going to lead with that, but you seemed to have figured it out pretty early. Between you and me, I was kinda... I was not really 100% on board with the whole "Castine is ruining the city that Castine lives in" idea. [awkwardly] But, you know, orders are orders, am I right? You don't know. You've never taken an order. You're a god. So, yeah. I was just trying to figure out, you know, if there was something here causing that, but clearly it's the opposite. You've been holding this place together.

Austin (as **Castine**): Will you let me finish my walk?

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Yeah. And I'm sorry for the intrusion.

Austin (as **Castine**): Next time, just wait.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): I get that a lot.

Austin (as **Castine**): This is perhaps the safest place you will find in all the Elevana League. You need not be anxious. You need not move with haste.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): [quietly] All right. Should I wait here or the waiting room? And again—

Austin (as **Castine**): I will send words. You and your friends can wait in my garden.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Thank you. And, like I said, sorry for interrupting the walk, and I'm glad we could solve this amicably without the prisoning me. Thank you.

Austin (as **Castine**): Do not attempt to enter this room.

Austin: And, you know, from the cutout where, you know, he had to gather the metal to build this new body, right?

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Austin: You can see behind him is a— it is not his, like, sleeping chamber. It is a collection of kind of small, like— I don't know what the word for this is, but not quite an altar. Like, a pillar that comes up to above your waist. [typing] Is it a plinth? Is that the word I'm looking for?

Janine: Yes. I think so.

Keith: Yeah, plinth.

Sylvia: Probably, yeah.

Austin: Yeah, plinth. It's a plinth. There is a set of plinths in the room, and kind of on those plinths, each of those plinths has some amount of an element associated with it, right? So there is, like, a plinth that has an eternal fire burning. There is a plinth with unmelting ice on it. There is a plinth cast in beautiful light and one in shadow. One for each of the Ennead. And then behind those plinths is another sort of, like, inlaid doorway or inlaid archway, and there is, like, more of that material there, of whatever that is, and I guess you can give me a Study roll really quick to kind of put this together.

Sylvia: Sure, I would love to.

Austin: But you can probably already kind of get this, but go ahead and give me. It's open-ended. I don't think you can fumble this sort of roll. Okay, yeah, a 13. That's really high, yeah.

Sylvia: 13! Don't say that to me, Austin. [Austin laughs] Don't say, "I don't think you can

fumble this type of roll,” 'cause...

Austin: Yeah, uh huh. You'll figure it out.

Sylvia: Never tell me the odds.

Austin: Yeah. At a 13, this is some sort of room that lets the Ennead communicate with one another and have meetings, effectively, right? The amount of material that's on the plinths is, like, what you need to produce the other member of the Ennead in the room, right? And so. Some of these are a little weirder than others, I admit. I think maybe the shadow one is, like, some way of breaking light so that more shadow can come into the little archway, but you know, there is, like, enough ice to add to the kind of collection of ice in the archway so that there would be enough for the ice goddess to show up, for instance, right? So it's almost like a meeting room to meet with other members of the different— the other Ennead members, basically.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Which seems like a thing that— I was going to say “could be better guarded,” but I guess it didn't turn out great for you, so. Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Castine's Garden [2:11:40]

Austin: And then you're escorted to the garden, and then, you know, guards are sent to come— actually, I think clerics are probably sent to come gather up Brontë and Antistrophe. It's not the same guards who led you away. And if you'll join them, they will lead you to the rooftop garden of Castine in the Temple of the Summit.

Janine: How does the cleric behave when they come?

Sylvia: [laughs quietly] What's the tone?

Austin: I think the cleric has no idea about what happened with you and the other guard and so is just kind of like—

Janine: Okay. I'll be normal, then.

Austin: Yeah, is just like:

(as **cleric**): Sir Adelvys, you've been invited to our Lord's garden.

Janine (as **Brontë**): Oh, lovely. Please show me the way.

Austin: [laughs quietly] In fact, you have to wonder if, in Brontë's mind, like...

Janine: It's connected.

Austin: It's connected. [laughs]

Janine: Like, yeah, someone heard what happened.

Austin: That's right!

Janine: And they were like, "Oh, we have to rectify this immediately." [Austin and Keith laugh]

Austin: Now, wait. Is that the sixth in line to the throne on the other continent? [Janine laughs]

Keith: To a different throne?

Austin: To a different throne?

Janine: Unimpressed by our religious practices and graces? Oh my god.

Austin: Exactly. We can't let this get back to Grande Sonnerie!

Janine: I think when Brontë shows up, there is definitely a look of, like, "You're welcome," [Austin laughs] to Antistrophe and Caoimhe. Just like, finally, you know?

(as **Brontë**): I'm glad I spoke up, because the treatment was appalling.

Sylvia: Of course there's an equal "What the fuck are you talking about?" look.

Austin: And yeah, you're all gathered here. More tea is brought, and I'm going to say: it's better tea this time. This is top floor tea, you know?

Keith: Wow.

Austin: Yeah. And the time passes. The light begins to dim. The day grows long. And finally, eventually, you know, I think it's probably been five hours of waiting. What do you do for the five hours?

Keith: I drink tea.

Austin: You drink tea. Oh. Lot of tea.

Keith: Yeah.

Janine: I mean, what else is happening in the—? What kind of garden? Like, what's the spread?

Austin: Again, it's kind of like a rock garden. There's, like, a nice— it is a rock garden. It has some small bushes and trees. It has some benches.

Janine: Is it like the garden courtyard at Galaxy's Edge?

Austin: Like the garden courtyard—? No, not like a rock garden where you stack rocks.

Janine: Okay, okay.

Austin: Like a zen garden. Like, you know.

Janine: Okay. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: Yeah, yeah. You know. [laughs] That one—

Janine: Is there anything, like, neat? Or is it just, like, rocks?

Austin: I think it's just— well, depends on what you want. What is neat, you know?

Janine: You know, like a windchime or like a suncatcher.

Austin: Yeah, I think there's probably some chimes.

Janine: Or like a little fountain or something, fish, anything.

Austin: Um, I don't think that— uh, you know what? There would be a fountain. Yeah, sure. There's a fountain. Let's all add a detail to the god's garden here.

Janine: Ooh.

Sylvia: Ooh.

Austin: What do we got? I like chimes. I'm adding the chimes. They're beautiful. They make, like, a deep sonorous calling, you know?

Keith: You know, in the mall, they have that thing where you can put in a quarter for some charity and it goes around and around and around and around?

Austin: Excuse me?

Janine: What? Oh, yeah. Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah. I do. I do know what you mean.

Janine: Yes.

Austin: You put what? You put a quarter?

Janine: It's like a big funnel.

Keith: You put a quarter in— it's a big funnel.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: Oh, yeah.

Keith: You put a quarter in it, and the quarter goes around and around and around, until it eventually falls into the charity bowl.

Austin: Yeah. Oh, the charity. I thought you said the cherry, and I was like, "What are you talking about?"

Keith: Oh, no, charity.

Austin: Yeah, charity. Yes. I know exactly what you're talking about.

Keith: There's something like that but with, like, extremely polished, you know, iron marbles.

Austin: That's sick. Yeah, I love that.

Janine: Ooh.

Austin: That's cool.

Keith: And it makes almost like a hum as it goes around and around, this sort of, you know, it echoes in the sort of bowl of iron.

Austin: Yeah, I want one of these for real.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: These are great. Good detail.

Janine: I was, like, looking for a cool fountain, just to expand on the fountain idea.

Austin: Yeah, tell me about the cool fountain.

Janine: I found one. All I know is it's an Italian fountain. So I think my real answer of what the fountain actually looks like is sort of like a rocky slab kind of thing.

Austin: Ooh. That's cool.

Janine: With a little spout coming out the middle, and sort of the water is, like, pooling on the rocky slab. Like, there's an indentation in the rocky slab to sort of collect a little bit of water.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Janine: And then it flows out into sort of a leafy pond. I feel like that'd be a good thing for, like, an iron guy to be into.

Austin: I love this. This is great.

Janine: However...oh no. Pinterest linked it. I have to find it. However, I also found this, which is, I believe, a fountain you can get drinking water out of somewhere. [Keith laughs]

Austin: Oh, this is just a guy.

Sylvia: Hell yeah.

Janine: It's a man.

Keith: This fucking guy's thirsty!

Austin: It's coming out of his nose!

Janine: And the side of his head has other faces in it, yeah, and then the water comes out of his nose.

Austin: Oh, I see.

Janine: Yeah.

Sylvia: This is what Castine looked like when they were talking to me.

Janine: Yeah, I found a lot of, like, weird face-based fountains that were kind of confusing.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: I like that otherwise it kind of looks like Spongebob. He kind of has the shape of

Spongebob.

Austin: Oh, the squared off. I see what you're saying.

Keith: Yeah.

Janine: There's also this one.

Sylvia: Sure.

Austin: Yeah, other than the nose water and the huge mouth.

Keith: Well, I could imagine them making Spongebob make this face for three seconds.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah, I know what you're saying. Did you know— so, these are fountains. I'm not saying that they're not.

Janine: Mm-hmm.

Austin: But did you know that gargoyles are only— it's only a gargoyle if it's outputting water.

Janine: Oh, I didn't know that.

Sylvia: What?

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: What does it become when it's no longer outputting water?

Austin: A grotesque.

Janine: Oh! Right, okay. I've heard the word grotesque.

Keith: Oh.

Janine: I didn't realize the distinction was that.

Austin: Yeah. That's right.

Janine: I thought, like, a grotesque was a blanket term for— I thought gargoyle was, like, a phylum or whatever, like a type of animal. [laughs quietly]

Austin: It explicitly has— right, I understand. It's explicitly it has a spout to move water off the roof and off the side of the building, [**Janine:** Huh.] preventing it from running down the walls and, like, getting rid of the mortar.

Keith: Oh, so it's not a fountain.

Austin: That's what I'm saying. That's right.

Keith: It's water pools into it and it spits it out. Got it.

Austin: It gargles it out. Exactly.

Janine: Ew.

Austin: That's why it's called a gargoyle.

Keith: Gargle-oyle.

Austin: Yeah, uh huh.

Janine: Huh.

Austin: Yeah, gargouille? The Old French gargouille. [laughs]

Janine: Oh, sure, okay.

Austin: From 1294, conduit—

Keith: Grabbed by the gargouilles.

Austin: The gargouilles, exactly.

Sylvia: Oh no.

Austin: Yeah, mm-hmm. Anyway. Yeah, it's from the onomatopoeic root garg-, [laughs]

which is very funny to me. Or like “gullet.” Gullet is, like, where “goule” gets to in English.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: Like a throat. Anyway.

Janine: Or gurgle.

Austin: A gurgle. A gurgle, exactly. You guys like my new gurgles? They're bats.

Janine: I have one more fountain, other than the one where the guy is shooting water out of his eyes at the sheep.

Austin: Ew!

Janine: There's some sort of horrible red fountain.

Sylvia: Yoo!

Austin: That's some Sangfielle shit.

Sylvia: Nah, I fuck with this.

Austin: That's some Virtue Mondegreen fountain shit, IMO.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: This first fountain that you've sent seems to be from the Villa Monastero in Italy. So, people can look that up. But don't do it the way I just did it, because that gets you a much less interesting fountain. I don't know how to find the one that you've sent, 'cause it's way cooler than any of the fountains that this is coming up with now. Anyway, people just look around. Look around until you find the one that looks cool.

Janine: Yeah. I literally just did an image search for “strange fountain,” so I can't really be more helpful than that.

Austin: Mm. Well, you can do that search, you know? People at home can do that search, that is. All right. Time passes, and I think, given our time constraints, we should probably end with Castine arriving after the walk, and, I think, taking a seat across from you, Caoimhe.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Austin: You know, some big stone benches here in the garden. And saying:

(as **Castine**): Now we can talk.

Austin: And Keith, I need you to make one more roll before we're done. This is the end of session roll.

Keith: Yep, I would love to. This is my...do I owe two?

Austin: We've done...how many have we done?

Keith: I think we've done three.

Austin: Oh, maybe we've done three. One, two...

Keith: I think I might owe two.

Austin: Oh, maybe you're right. Maybe we owe two. Or maybe we— wait. One, two...

Keith: 'Cause one of these doesn't count. 16 doesn't count.

Austin: Oh, that's what I've been miscounting. Right, I forgot about that.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: All right. Well, give me two, then. Fuck it. Let's catch up.

Keith: 26.

Austin: Safe. and this last one is a 9. Is that right? Is that what you're trying to get under?

Keith: Yes.

Austin: All right. Okay. 36.

Sylvia: Whoa!

Austin: 36, you're safe. You're good. You can see, as you level up, it'll start to get harder and harder, but.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah. Again, I think, as Castine sits down, the world outside shakes, and this time you can feel that the moon does not. And in fact, you know, now not in conversation with anyone, just sitting down, even parts of, like, the digsite seem more stable than the world beyond, you know?

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Austin: So, yeah. You will have Castine's attention. You can have a little conversation, first thing next session.

Sylvia: I'm so excited to see how many 1s I roll.

[Variation on "[Perpetua](#)" by Jack de Quidt plays]