

## Perpetua 21: A Roar Across Cenn 03

Transcriber: robotchangeling

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### Recap

**Austin:** 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.

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

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Hey, I'm here on Hexcloak business. I need an audience with Castine when possible.

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

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

Austin (as **Athen**): [resigned] If Commander Aegir has sent you, then we will make do.

Austin (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.

Austin (as **guard**): 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.

**Austin**: 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.

**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.

(as **Castine**): Next time, just wait.

[song plays out]

## Temple of the Summit

**Austin**: All right. So, as I recall, you were all in the private garden of Castine, the sort of god of iron here in Perpetua. Castine, Living Metal, who is now walking into that garden with you. I described this as being a zen-like garden, which is to say a kind of garden of sand. Though, as Castine moves in, you actually realize that it's not sand like sand; it's little metallic bits, because, as Castine moves through it, you can see that, like, he's not stepping. He's, like, gliding through the metal. Like, being part of the metal.

And I have not done a great job of summarizing what Castine looks like, because we've only kind of seen him in flashes, but I've been picturing him as— there's a type of, like,

iron sculpture, a human figure that has, like— and I don't know what it's based on. I don't know where this comes from. But it has, like, thin, almost down to a needle point on the end of the legs, no feet, no extension to the foot. Just, like, it comes to a little nub, and then it widens out as it goes up towards, like, the hip, and then it kind of zips back in and then comes back up, almost like an elongated— not a stick figure, because it's a 3D being, and he has more bulk than that, but these kind of very large, almost— not quite pauldron-like, because they're not additional shapes, but you know, around the shoulders and around the hips and the top of the leg. And, unlike many of our previous metallic beings in this show, is not made up of different parts. Like, this is not a robot guy, you know? in the traditional sense. This is not, like, oh, there's little, you know, servos moving around. This is a being made of metal.

And while he walks around outside, he has, like, a robe on. Here, I think that maybe he still has that robe, but it's not the— he has a house robe on. You know, it's different. He's comfortable here. He's not, like, in his religious gear. He's in just, like, something soft to walk around in. But you can tell by the way he moves across the sand that he's kind of gliding.

Let me see if I can remember everything from last time we played. [sighs] And please correct me if I get anything wrong. Caoimhe, you were told to come here and see if this motherfucker was causing earthquakes nearby.

**Sylvia:** Yes. And I did so in a way that my friend loved.

**Austin:** Oh, right! Yes, of course.

**Sylvia:** Kley.

**Austin:** Yeah, Kley Kaina was not happy with you trying to cut the line. Is that correct?

**Sylvia:** Yeah. So—

**Keith:** Or even trying to be involved at all.

**Austin:** Right, yeah. "What are you doing here? I don't want to—"

**Keith:** Yeah, they were mad even before. When we showed up to lunch, they were already like, “Can you go away?”

**Austin:** Yes.

**Sylvia:** [quietly] I don't really blame them.

**Austin:** And just fundamentally anti-Hexcloak, and here you are, a Hexcloak, right?

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** You did try to cut in line, and then you walked that back, and instead said, “We'll wait. We'll wait in the fancy waiting room.” And then you refused to wait in the fancy waiting room.

**Sylvia:** Well, yeah, of course.

**Keith:** Walked that back.

**Austin:** Walked that back. Walked that back. Right, exactly. Brontë and Antistrophe played distraction, slash got escorted out of the building, slash got answers about...Antistrophe, I forget what type of questions you were even asking.

**Keith:** I was asking how old the temple was [**Austin:** Right.] and then how old the moon was.

**Austin:** Right. Right, yeah.

**Keith:** And they were like, “Well, we could never know such a thing,” and then I was like, “But he's right there. Go ask him.”

**Austin:** Yeah. “Go ask him.” Yeah.

**Keith:** And then they were like, “No, it doesn't work like that.”

**Austin:** That's right.

**Keith:** And I'm like, "Well, lots of people talk to the god. Why don't you get someone— why don't you, like, do research by proxy? Ask everyone, like, 'Hey, if you wouldn't mind, can you ask about this?'"

**Austin:** Yeah. And while you're doing that, Caoimhe, you are sneaking around.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** You're sneaking around on the rooftop. You're sneaking around into the, like, meeting room. You're sneaking onto the balcony. And eventually, you find your way to a chamber you should not be trying to get into, which seems to be a chamber from which Castine can talk to the other members of the Ennead, and you almost get trapped by him, and then you kind of, like, make your case known.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And everything kind of settles, and you're allowed to wait in the waiting garden, in his personal garden.

**Sylvia:** And now we're just chilling.

**Austin:** Am I forgetting anything big?

**Sylvia:** Not that I— oh! I did see the, like, potentially what he uses to communicate with the Ennead. Did we mention that?

**Austin:** That's right.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** In that other room, there's a sort of, like, set of altars that have, like, bits of the material that each of the gods can embody or communicate through or see through, allowing— and that room is, like, totally sealed off in such a way that— you didn't get a perfect on the roll, but, you know.

**Sylvia:** I got a peek.

**Austin:** You saw that it was another room, you know? You got, like, a 13 or something, right?

**Sylvia:** Something like that.

**Austin:** Yeah. But, so yeah, it's all in the other room. You know, I'll say, for clarity's sake, maybe you don't know this in character, but, you know, that room probably looks different for different members of the Ennead, right? This one was sealed behind a big metal door, right? And you didn't get to inspect the room, but this is a place that the Ennead all go to talk to one another, and that is the designated place where that happens, you know? So, yeah. Any other things? Or should we just jump back into the garden? Any level up questions, anything like that? I don't know that y'all actually leveled. You're close, right?

**Keith:** We did not. We got halfway.

**Austin:** Yeah, okay. Cool. And so, yeah, so I think, each of you, hanging out in the big rock garden, which we decorated last time, as you may remember.

**Keith:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** We all added different things to it. Castine says, I think, probably to...maybe to no one at all. Not just to Caoimhe, but says...

(as **Castine**): I would enjoy a walk with you. And questions, as is my habit. Would you prefer to remain here in the garden or to move across the moon?

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): I'm happy to go for a walk if everybody is.

**Sylvia:** I'm looking at my buddies. You guys good with that?

**Keith:** Uh, yeah.

**Janine:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Okay.

Janine (as **Brontë**): Yeah, that's better than lingering around.

Austin (as **Castine**): Then follow me.

**Austin:** As he turns and, again, kind of glides through the kind of metal sand. Eventually, he steps up into the hallway and, you know, without stopping for a moment to give you any sort of tour to talk about the place. Just kind of moves down towards the base of the temple. We get a lot of shots here of various attendants and servants and folks looking, you know, around the hallway corner, to be like, [whispering] "What's going on? [mumbles]"

**Keith:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** [whispering] "Oh, wow! This hasn't happened in so long!" You know, and at the bottom of the final staircase is Athen, the cleric who you first talked to, who, I think, approaches your group, kind of not wedging himself but finding his way between you and Castine. Like, not stopping you, but walking with you, you know?

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And leans over and says:

(as **Athen**): I see our Lord has deigned to speak with you, as is his will. You will find that there is a certain rhythm to conversations with the Living Metal. You will each be asked a question. Answer honestly and respond with one of your own. This process will continue until you circle the moon and return to the temple. You and Castine each can guide the timeline of such a journey. Some move more quickly than others, but he determines the final pace. You understand?

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

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Mm-hmm.

## Walk With Castine [0:11:14]

**Austin:** And you are then, you know, he separates from you, and you are able to walk, you know, alongside or behind, or wherever you want to in relation to Castine, who, at this point, has sort of, you now see, the robe that he was wearing before has shifted and turned into something else, right? Has turned into this more holy robe with, you know, some sort of beautiful golden inlay. He had not changed robes. He simply changed the robe. And yeah, begins to, you know, walk at a steady but not rushed pace, in a sort of motion out from the center of the temple towards the kind of middle of, like, the midway point of the diameter or the— not the diameter. What's the one from the middle? Is that the—?

**Keith:** The radius?

**Sylvia:** Radius is probably it.

**Austin:** Circum— the radius, the radius.

**Keith:** Circumference goes around.

**Austin:** Goes around, yeah, yeah. The radius. Like, the midway point of the radius to the edge of the moon, and then begins to walk clockwise. And, god, who does he ask a question first? Oh. I think before even talking to you, Caoimhe, he says:

(as **Castine**): Antistrophe.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Hmm?

Austin (as **Castine**): What happened to your power?

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

**Keith:** Shocked look, you know? Shrugs shoulders.

(as **Antistrophe**): I don't know!

**Austin:** He's, like, leaving the space open here, either for you to continue. Like, hard to read. Does he want more? You know, like, when someone doesn't respond quickly?

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

**Austin:** And you're like, "Do you want more from me, or what's up?"

**Keith:** Then I think that Antistrophe, I think, is the kind of guy who would sort of anxiously fill the space with more information.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Keith:** So I sort of go on about how, like,

(as **Antistrophe**): Everything was fine, then and there was a couple little hiccups, and I was looking into it, and then, all of a sudden, it was gone. It was like it was never there. It's not— I don't feel anything. It doesn't feel, you know, it doesn't feel missing. It just feels gone. I don't know.

Austin (as **Castine**): Mm.

**Austin:** And again, there's space here.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): [anxiously continuing] It's a big part of what I think we're doing here. I mean, not me, not me specifically, but the whole thing of it, the whole thing of: where's it going? It's not just me, right?

Janine (as **Brontë**): Might be.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): [quietly] That's mean.

Janine (as **Brontë**): That's not mean. We don't know.

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

Janine (as **Brontë**): It might just be. I don't know.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Well, there's magic that's going.

Janine (as **Brontë**): Yeah.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): I've looked into it. I've been studying it.

Janine (as **Brontë**): That could be different. That could be for a different reason. It could just be a coincidence.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): It certainly could be. We haven't figured out enough even to say whether it is or it isn't.

Janine (as **Brontë**): Well, that's weird.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): I strongly suspect that it's connected.

Janine (as **Brontë**): [ambivalent noise]

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Then what are you doing here!? [Sylvia and Janine laugh quietly]

Janine (as **Brontë**): I told someone I would do stuff. Don't worry about it.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): You told someone you would do stuff.

Janine (as **Brontë**): Yeah.

**Sylvia**: Wow, we're learning about each other too. [Janine chuckles]

**Austin**: Quietly listening.

**Sylvia**: That last thing was just Sylvi saying that, to be clear.

**Austin**: Okay. Okay. [Janine chuckles] You sure?

**Sylvia**: Yeah.

**Austin:** Okay.

**Sylvia:** I like playing Caoimhe as a little sillier than I did the first session, [**Austin:** Yeah.] but I also think that she does recognize the gravity of the situation.

**Austin:** Yeah. Remains silent.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): [anxiously continuing] And they want to arrest me for it. It's crazy. I mean, it's just, it all happened very quickly, and—

**Sylvia:** Also— go ahead.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Well, I mean, well, that's when Caoimhe showed up and was going to arrest me, and I made a good case, because of course I made a good case, because it's so obvious what's happening, and you can't arrest someone for not having magic anymore, and you certainly can't arrest them for saying, you know, "Isn't it funny that there's a lot of magic not happening anymore?" and looking into it.

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

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): That's not me. That's not on me.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Honestly, it was a refreshing conversation. Most of the time, everyone thinks I'm...

**Janine:** We're going to need to walk slower if this is how this is going. [Austin laughs]

**Sylvia:** [hushed] I think you get— out of character, Keith, I think you can ask a question, right? Or at least that's how the...Athen? Was that his name?

**Austin:** Athen. Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. That's how Athen phrased it, at the very least.

**Austin:** Yep.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): [choked uncertain sound]

**Keith:** That's in character. [laughter]

(as **Antistrophe**): Do you know why I don't have magic or whatever?

Austin (as **Castine**): I fear it is tied to the rot consuming the land, but I don't know for sure. That is why I asked you. I was hoping you could provide new perspective.

Janine (as **Brontë**): Well, bad news on that.

Austin (as **Castine**): Hmm.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Yeah, bad news on that.

Austin (as **Castine**): Brontë Adelvys.

Janine (as **Brontë**): Mm-hmm?

Austin (as **Castine**): Why do people have kings?

Janine (as **Brontë**): It's easier.

Austin (as **Castine**): Hmm.

Janine (as **Brontë**): Uh, what's the deal with the earthquakes?

Austin (as **Castine**): I believe we are under attack.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): [hushed] The mole.

**Sylvia:** I looked at— when you said, “the mole,” I looked at you and nodded. One second. [Keith and Austin laugh]

Austin (as **Castine**): There is a being unhappy with the Perpetuan arrangement who gathers strength to her and corrupts weak and strong alike.

Janine (as **Brontë**): Caoimhe, are you going to ask if it's a mole?

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): [defensively] No.

Janine (as **Brontë**): All right, your turn.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): But is it? [Janine laughs]

**Austin:** He says:

(as **Castine**): Caoimhe Wake.

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

Austin (as **Castine**): What is the nature of loyalty?

**Sylvia:** [overwhelmed exhale] Damn. I... Sorry, you've triggered a crisis in Sylvi the player now, as I'm like, "Huh, what would I even say to this?" I think what she says is:

(as **Caoimhe**): It's, to me, the belief that you...it's a trust that you have in someone that they are worth your effort and your help and, I don't know. It's believing in something, I guess, typic— yeah. Yeah.

**Sylvia:** She doesn't look 100% sure about that, but that is what she'd say. [laughs quietly]

**Austin:** Without stating a new— or no, I guess it's on you, so yeah, quiet.

**Janine:** Brontë is looking at Caoimhe expectantly.

**Sylvia:** I'm not going to ask about the mole. [Austin chuckles]

**Janine:** Yet.

**Sylvia:** Here's the thing. I was going to ask what Brontë asked, so now I'm like...

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Janine:** Yeah, that was why I asked. [laughs] I figured Brontë would be like, “Uh, I don't know, whatever. I don't need to fuck around.”

**Sylvia:** Uh...

**Janine:** I could ask him what his favorite wine is or whatever, but...

**Sylvia:** God.

**Janine:** Do I care? No.

**Sylvia:** I guess after having just learned that there's someone behind this, right, that there is a figure [**Austin:** Hmm.] who is unhappy. I guess, actually, Perpetuan Cycle: new phrase to us, yeah? No?

**Austin:** No...

**Sylvia:** Okay.

**Austin:** No, because this is the thing that the Hexcloaks are crushing. I think, especially for Brontë, Brontë absolutely under— well, Brontë knows the world is supposed to end in—

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** You know, grows up in the place where that's taught openly.

**Janine:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Whether or not it's cyclical, we have not...whether or not people there talk about as—

**Sylvia:** Okay.

**Austin:** No, sorry, they definitely do, because Grande Sonnerie talks about root magic.

**Janine:** Yeah, yeah.

**Austin:** Grande Sonnerie studies root magic, which is explicitly a type of magic that exists from cycle to cycle.

**Janine:** Okay. Okay.

**Austin:** So, yes.

**Sylvia:** Then, I guess...

**Austin:** Or from Perpetua to Perpetua.

**Keith:** And I think it's also part of what Antistrophe would have been studying.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** 100%, yes.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** I just couldn't remember if that was just a, like, table term for it or if that was...okay.

**Austin:** Right. No, yeah. I suspect, as a term, it does not get said very much here in the Elevana League.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** You know?

**Sylvia:** No, 'cause they don't think it's real.

**Austin:** That's right.

**Sylvia:** To get some input from my friends at the— my Friends at the Table, and then the title card pops up.

**Austin:** Mm!

**Sylvia:** I was thinking of asking for more information about the figure who is unhappy with the Perpetuan Cycle, being like, does this figure have a name, or how can we—

**Janine:** What shape is their nose? How good is their eyesight?

**Sylvia:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Are they, like, the beauty standard for elves in corporeal form? [Austin chuckles] There's the part of me where I was like, "Oh, should I ask if it's that?" but then I was like, "Well, then I'm just using my question for a yes or no." I think it is, like...

(as **Caoimhe**): Do you know of any way to combat the rot, the Sourcerot?

Austin (as **Castine**): [sighs] I remain unsure of its nature. Unfortunately, while I may be able to purify certain aspects of the world touched by this disease, much of it is out of my reach. It is a multifaceted thing, not a simple virus, not a single disease. It is both curse and project, both strategy and symptom.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): So it's something manufactured? If it's a project. Sorry. I forgot the rules for a second there.

Austin (as **Castine**): I admit this as acceptable addendum. Continue.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Well, I'm just wondering, right? The way you're talking about it sounds like, one, you've mentioned that something's behind it or someone is unhappy with the Perpetuan Cycle, like you just said, right? And then, on top of that, when you refer to it as something like a project, I mean, you...

**Sylvia:** Sorry. Out of character addendum. Castine is, like, a god that also is related [cross] to crafting though, right?

**Austin:** [cross] Is a god.

**Sylvia:** 'Cause of the iron and stuff, or no?

**Austin:** You know, that is, I think, a fair— that is one of the things. I mean, the two

things— I would say more related to, um...

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah. Let's say yes, broadly. These gods do not have that style of simple domain, right?

**Sylvia:** It's not like Catholic saints where they've got, like, a whole list of stuff that they...okay.

**Austin:** Not exactly, no. but I do think that, nevertheless, the cultures that have, especially in the Elevana League, have shaped themselves around individual Ennead members like this in the last hundred years, do build towards that sort of reading sometimes. Though—

**Keith:** You're saying that even though Castine is not, like, in particular looking to, like, blacksmiths as his, you know...

**Sylvia:** Okay.

**Austin:** That's right.

**Keith:** But the blacksmiths go, "Well, I work the metal."

**Austin:** That's right.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Blacksmiths have worshiped the metal gods for as long as there's been blacksmiths, right?

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** And secondly, you've already seen this: there is weird technology here because of the moon hitting here or being pulled up from here.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And so there is a technological association, even though, as far as you can see, this is not, like—you, the player, can see—this is not a computer guy, right?

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** This is not a robot. This is a weird— you know, before we started recording, you mentioned the Silver Surfer, Sylvi.

**Sylvia:** [laughs] Yeah.

**Austin:** And, like, this is— there are ways in which he's more like a Silver Surfer figure than a traditional, like, robot figure.

**Sylvia:** Okay.

**Austin:** Right? At least as you see him right now.

**Sylvia:** I guess— yeah.

**Austin:** But yes. Technology is fine.

**Sylvia:** So the way, like, Caoimhe, like someone in the world, would associate, would be like:

**Austin:** 100%.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Well, as a god who's closely associated with the crafting of things, you've made it sound like it's something that is being...this is an undertaking done with purpose. Have I gotten anything wrong so far?

Austin (as **Castine**): This was my analysis when the water left Milsorce ages ago, and such analysis was dismissed. Today, we have more data.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Dismissed by who?

**Austin:** People don't use the word "data." That's not really like a...I mean, I guess maybe the people down in the Hundred Burroughs do. Maybe, like, Hundred Burroughs,

Antistrophe, you know the word “data.”

**Keith:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** People in the Elevana League, people in Grande Sonnerie are not... There's no empiricists among the crowd there. [Sylvia chuckles] So, I guess, which is to say, at this moment, you know, Antistrophe, any question about, you know, how this guy thinks about the world is actually closer to the way you are thinking about it, in this moment.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** And as, Caoimhe, you started to, like, say something else here...

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** I think he just straight up cuts you off.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, fair enough. I'm not following the rules.

Austin (as **Castine**): Caoimhe Wake.

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

Austin (as **Castine**): What brought you to the Hexcloaks?

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): I wanted to help people, and then I learned that's not really part of the job.

Austin (as **Castine**): Brontë, you are due a question.

**Austin:** Now reversing the order, allowing you to ask first.

**Janine:** Oh.

**Austin:** And seemingly working backwards up the order from what he walked down.

**Janine:** Uh...this is me thinking.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Janine:** I feel like Brontë would probably have something on tap.

**Sylvia:** Know any good dance moves? [Austin chuckles]

Janine (as **Brontë**): What's the best restaurant in town? [someone applauds]

Austin (as **Castine**): I am sorry to say I do not consume food in this way. If I—

Janine (as **Brontë**): But you talk to a lot of people.

Austin (as **Castine**): If I told you what people think, it would be—

**Austin:** Now I have to think of a quick name. Let's see. [Janine laughs] Hmm.

**Sylvia:** Johnny Cake's House of Steaks.

Austin (as **Castine**): It would be Johnny Cake's House of Steaks.

**Janine:** Ew. No.

**Austin:** No, it would not be Johnny Cake's House of Steaks. [Keith laughs] We can't do another Deep Dish Steakhouse.

**Sylvia:** I just wanted a rhyme.

**Janine:** No.

**Austin:** We already have a Deep Dish Steakhouse. Yeah, I got you.

(as **Castine**): It would be Korvols. K-O-R-V-O-L-S. Founded three centuries ago.

Janine (as **Brontë**): That's a good run.

Austin (as **Castine**): Its founder is long since dead, but...

Janine (as **Brontë**): I would hope.

**Austin:** Well, elves live long, right?

**Sylvia:** I think so?

**Austin:** Right? Is that true?

**Sylvia:** I don't remember.

**Keith:** It was what? Say again?

**Austin:** I believe that's true.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** I believe we've said this many times, but I'm now suddenly doubting myself.

**Keith:** What have we said?

**Austin:** That elves are long-lived in the way [**Keith:** Yes...] that elves are often, yeah, written about as being long-lived.

**Keith:** Yeah.

Austin (as **Castine**): But his protege took over the restaurant. I unfortunately never met the founder. Even as I waited in the moon below, when those worked on pulling it from the depths, I would hear them speak, praising the quality of the dishes, the atmosphere of the restaurant, and the reliability of the meals.

**Keith:** Taking it very serious.

**Janine:** That's a pretty good review.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

(as **Castine**): Four stars.

**Keith:** Wow.

Austin (as **Castine**): What draws you towards flirtation and entanglement?

Janine (as **Brontë**): Um...it's fun.

Austin (as **Castine**): Antistrophe Landrace.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Mm-hmm?

Austin (as **Castine**): You're due a question.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Yeah. And I go first, right?

**Austin:** Nods.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): What do you know about the force that's gathering strength and causing the earthquakes, and what can you tell us about that?

Austin (as **Castine**): "Force" is an interesting word, for I believe it is more force than person, though not entirely. I cannot say for certain but believe it is ancient, a being as old as, if not older, than any member of the Ennead, and so fear that its power outstrips ours. Perhaps, perhaps draconic in nature.

**Keith:** I scribble in a little notebook. "NOT mammalian." [Austin laughs]

Austin (as **Castine**): What drew you to your studies to begin with?

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): It just sort of was what I did, you know? I just, I didn't... You know, they make you go to school, and then they don't make you stop going.

Austin (as **Castine**): Mm.

**Austin:** And still on you. You get another question.

**Keith:** I do?

**Austin:** You do.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** Oh, I guess that's not true. I guess that's not true, because that was an answer to your question on the way back up.

**Keith:** Yeah, yeah, that was an answer to my question.

**Austin:** So, actually, follows right into another question to you, before working back down the order.

**Keith:** Okay.

Austin (as **Castine**): If you had your power returned to you, would you return to your old life of study with it, continue on this path, or find a new one?

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): I guess it depends on if I solved the thing. I'm doing a practical— this is practical research now. I'm hands-on in the field. I don't mind this. This is fun. It's interesting. I'm learning a lot. I do want to not be robbed of magic, and also I don't want the world to be robbed of magic. It would be— so if the whole world got, you know, everything goes back to how it was before, that's the what-if, and then I still don't know 100% for sure, but it would definitely be a choice. I would have to choose to do that or not do it. I don't know.

**[0:30:42]**

**Austin:** Still with you. You know, quietly walking.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Uh...uh...uh...is everything dying? [Sylvia laughs] It's true, right? We're not crazy?

Austin (as **Castine**): Everything is dying, but death is not the end. This is, I've been told, the beauty of the cycle. A story unending. A game with no finish. Such are the forces at work.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): I mean, it's not the end in some sort of cosmic sense or in— it's the end for the person— anyone who could say that, "death is not the end," it's the end for them. Or no? I don't know.

Austin (as **Castine**): I will allow the addendum. It is unclear if any of you will survive the cycle, but such a result is not simply possible, it is proven in my continued existence. And yet, even I may die still, may take a final step on Perpetua, may find myself relegated to the stars or may leave behind a legacy in exchange for my very existence. Brontë Adelvys.

Janine (as **Brontë**): Mm-hmm?

Austin (as **Castine**): What lies beneath Grande Sonnerie, a place I cannot see?

Janine (as **Brontë**): Do you mean, like, metaphorically or, like, literally?

Austin (as **Castine**): I will count this as clarification.

Janine (as **Brontë**): Yeah. Well, I just want to know what answer you're looking for more specifically.

Austin (as **Castine**): Material.

Janine (as **Brontë**): Okay.

Austin (as **Castine**): Though if colored with metaphor, I would understand.

Janine (as **Brontë**): Mm. Okay. In that case, I would say cellars, but there's a lot of things you can put in a cellar, and not all of it is wine.

Austin (as **Castine**): Hmm.

Janine (as **Brontë**): My question for you: if I could fire an arrow in any direction, what direction would be the direction most likely to solve all of this stuff here?

[Keith laughs]

**Sylvia:** I'm obsessed.

Austin (as **Castine**): West.

Janine (as **Brontë**): Okay.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Good answer.

**Austin:** No, uh, let's see if I can— is this a thing I can figure out? Let's see.

**Janine:** Wait, is west, like, the ocean?

**Austin:** No, I'll pull you back over to the map real quick. Actually, wait. Let me do something first, and then I'll pull you back. [Janine laughs] Let's see if I can find— I have to figure out if I can find a degree. Is that a thing that I can do with these sick tools?

**Sylvia:** Oh, like with a compass. That kind of degree, yeah.

**Austin:** Let's see. Yeah, exactly. My guess is—

**Janine:** Just get a protractor out.

**Austin:** Yeah, if I just got a protractor out.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Janine:** You don't have a protractor?

**Sylvia:** [sarcastic] Don't you just keep one of those on your desk? I thought we were all supposed to.

**Austin:** Fuck. Fuck! Damn, I'm getting old. I'm getting old.

**Keith:** [joking] What happened to the desk protractors we all got?

**Janine:** I have a protractor within one minute of searching.

**Sylvia:** Okay, actually, that's crazy to me.

**Janine:** Also those triangle ones. I don't really know what the triangle ones are for.

**Austin:** [to self] No, that's a sewing kit. Do I have...?

**Janine:** Just making triangles? Like...

**Sylvia:** Trigonometry stuff? I don't know.

**Austin:** Hmm, yeah, I don't think I do.

**Keith:** I believe that's called a square. [Austin scoffs] It's true.

**Austin:** Ooh, ooh! Ooh. Wait, is this...? No. It's close, though. It's close to what I need. Okay. I think this is about right. I think I have figured it out, give or take. Mm, maybe a little. Maybe it's a little more...okay.

(as **Castine**): Westerly. 160 degrees from where I face now.

**Austin:** And is facing...I guess I didn't figure that part out. I guess is facing— I was thinking north. I think that that's right. No, it's actually east. It's facing east. You're facing east from here, 'cause 90 degrees would be north, right?

**Janine:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Like, 90 degrees counterclockwise, right?

**Janine:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And so, yeah, 160 degrees. I'm just going to put this on the map. I've given you a thing. If you had a protractor. And Antistrophe, you would—

**Keith:** We could just do this when we got back to the inn.

**Austin:** That's exactly right. I was like, Antistrophe, you would just do this, right?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Janine:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Boop. Do you see it?

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Janine:** [laughs] Yes.

**Sylvia:** Oh. Oh!

**Austin:** Uh huh. There we go.

**Janine:** Okay.

**Sylvia:** So...

**Janine:** So it's actually not Valt.

**Austin:** Yeah. Like, pretty clearly. You can see why I was like, "I think it's too far south."

**Janine:** Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah.

**Keith:** Grand Academy of the Collapse.

**Janine:** Well, that makes sense. It's right in the name.

**Austin:** It does, as you suggested, go through a number of places, huh?

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** What's the...

**Janine:** It could also be Grapt, kind of. Not really.

**Austin:** Let's just say them all, [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] so that we are all, more or less...

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Sorry, that was the wrong— there we go.

**Janine:** Oh, it should be Stitchscore. I remember Stitchscore. They do the dye stuff. They're cool.

**Austin:** They do all sorts of games in Stitchscore.

**Keith:** It passes just north of the Gleaming Fortress.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** Through Marl.

**Keith:** It passes from maybe across or just south of Marl, the Bustling Mountain Pass.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Which we'd have to go through, probably, to get to anywhere after that. The Frosted Port Town, Glaishora, [**Austin:** Mm-hmm.] and then the Grand Academy of the Collapse.

**Austin:** Yeah. And just under—

**Janine:** So I guess I do have to care about Glaishora. Fuck.

**Austin:** Yeah, you do. Yeah, you do have a thing there, don't you? And then Parisolia also passes just under, I would say.

**Keith:** Just under Parisolia, yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah, so basically all of the Elevana League's major powers in the kind of central stretch. None of the northern ones like Fulmin or Billough or Umbexia.

**Keith:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** But yeah. But also not south. Not towards Milsorce, not towards Valt, not towards Grande Sonnerie. Yeah.

**Janine:** Hmm. Guess we have to go coat shopping. [Austin chuckles]

**Keith:** I like, you know, good job, Janine. That question was very silly and then extremely useful.

**Sylvia:** Yep. [Keith and Janine chuckle]

**Austin:** I'm going to permanently draw that line on the map.

**Janine:** I can't wait for you to explain that to the other party.

**Austin:** Yeah. Uh huh. “Hey, what’s going on over there? Why are y'all—? What?”

**Janine:** The himbo asked a question, and we had to put a line here permanently.

**Sylvia:** We got a quest marker.

**Austin:** That’s basically right, right?

**Sylvia:** The, like, glowing Xenoblade trail is going that way.

**Austin:** Yeah. Oop. There we go. Cool. And that was your question and answer, so now we're down to Caoimhe. I would say we are, you know, rounding the eastern side of the moon now. You know, we're coming. We're at 3:00, you know? So. Making some distance.

(as **Castine**): Caoimhe Wake. Is it better to kill the wrong person because you are ordered to or because incorrectly—through ignorance, bias, fear, or otherwise—made the decision yourself?

**Austin:** I guess maybe “Killed an innocent person.”

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

(as **Caoimhe**): I think it would be better for me if I didn't have that to hide behind than if I just had made the decision myself. I think if I was, you know, “just following orders,” I wouldn't be able to— I don't know. That seems like something that would be hard to come back from.

Austin (as **Castine**): May I ask for an addendum?

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Only fair.

Austin (as **Castine**): You said better for yourself. Would it be better for another too?

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): I don't know. I can only speak for myself, can't I?

Austin (as **Castine**): Hmm.

Janine (as **Brontë**): Well, I can say that if you killed me, I would rather you chose to kill me than be ordered to kill me.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Ugh...listen, it's crossed my mind a couple times. [Austin and Janine laugh]

Janine (as **Brontë**): I'm glad you think of me. [Austin laughs]

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

**Sylvia:** Big sweat drop. Big sweat drop.

**Janine:** You fell into my trap!

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** Thank god, honestly.

**Austin:** And now silence, as the question is back to you.

**Sylvia:** This might have already been implied to be answered, and so, I apologize if, one, if anyone's screaming at their phone right now, being like, "You didn't need to ask that!" or if y'all are like, "Okay, Sylvi." But I think what she says, and it's kinda maybe a little, I don't know how Castine's going to take this wording, but she says, "Are the Ennead powerless in the face of the Sourcerot?" Or maybe not powerless.

(as **Caoimhe**): Are the Ennead also in danger from the machinations causing the Sourcerot?

**Sylvia:** I think that's a better way to put it.

**Austin:** He stops walking for a moment.

(as **Castine**): It comes for us even now.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Is that why you have to keep the city— you try to keep the tremors from affecting the moon here?

Austin (as **Castine**): If I could stop the tremors for the whole city, I would. If I...

**Austin:** Stumbling now. Not literally, [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] but, you know, over words.

**Sylvia:** It's probably wild for all of us here to be witnessing that!

**Austin:** Right, yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah.

(as **Castine**): There are limits, as you know, to our power. We are limited by our domain. We are limited by sight and knowledge and reach. We are limited by information. In these ways, it is not so different being of the Ennead than it was being the servant I served as in my first life. The rot is dispersed, as I said; not simply curse or disease but series of actions, and many of these we can hold at bay, but in an outright conflict, I am unsure if we would win. But we do not know the scale of the battle. I do not know who or what exactly we face. And so it is impossible to make such a judgment, and thus: fear. This and this alone, I know. I am weakening. It is as if I have been targeted, placed at the center, and I worry what you will have left to fight with, should iron leave the world.

**Sylvia:** Whoa! Okay. Not in character. Not in character. I didn't just go, "Damn, that's crazy," in character.

**Austin:** [laughs quietly] Mm-hmm. And begins to step again, and has a really appropriate question for you.

**Sylvia:** Hit me.

**Austin:** Unless you interrupt or something.

**Sylvia:** No, no, I don't have any clarifying questions or anything like that.

Austin (as **Castine**): What is it like for you to blend magic and metal?

**Sylvia:** I think, this time, Caoimhe pauses for a little bit. Like, crosses her arms and thinks for a little bit and then starts walking again, and is like:

(as **Caoimhe**): You know, it used to be...honestly, the only word I'd have for it is exhilarating, you know? There's something about having any mastery over the elements, in any form, that just gives you, like, there's a rush to it. But these days, I have been, despite it all, feeling like it's not as effective as the cadet I once was believed it to be.

Austin (as **Castine**): Mm. Brontë Adelvys. Do you have a question for me?

Janine (as **Brontë**): Uh...yeah.

**Janine:** Again, this is me pausing, 'cause I think [**Austin:** Yeah.] he'd have one ready to go.

**Sylvia:** "You got games on your phone?" [Janine and Austin laugh quietly]

**Keith:** You got games on your mysterious device? I think that's what we saw in the shop.

**Austin:** You did see a mysterious device. It's true.

**Sylvia:** We did see a mysterious device that we couldn't afford.

**Keith:** [chuckles] It was really expensive.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, it was, like, 2000 or something.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** And who even would we text? [Austin laughs]

**Janine:** Mm. So true. It's tricky to think of questions to ask a god but also a god who has, to an extent, limited knowledge.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Janine:** I'm also very torn between, like, stupid bullshit and, like, slightly clever bullshit. [Austin laughs] You know?

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Oh, ain't that the way?

**Sylvia:** To be fair, [Janine: Yeah.] the arrow thing was some really good clever bullshit, so.

**Janine:** Thank you.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Janine:** I stewed on that one for a little bit before I...

**Sylvia:** Don't feel like there's too much pressure here. You literally got us our next objective. Like... [Sylvia and Janine laugh quietly]

**Keith:** Yeah. We could have left here with nothing other than that and been good.

**Janine:** Yeah. There's also stuff I could ask that's a little too— feels too early for this character.

**Austin:** Mm.

Janine (as **Brontë**): Who is the most beautiful person in town? [someone sputters]

**Sylvia:** Who's the fairest of them all?!

**Janine:** Well, no, 'cause you ask, “Who’s the fairest of them all?” hoping the answer is you.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Right.

**Janine:** Brontë is genuinely curious.

Austin (as **Castine**): Clarification.

Janine (as **Brontë**): Mm-hmm.

Austin (as **Castine**): Do you mean by my estimation?

Janine (as **Brontë**): Hmm... [sighs] Can I ask a clarification to your clarification?

**Austin:** Nods.

Janine (as **Brontë**): Is your estimation a character-based, like, intelligence or niceness or virtue, or is it, like, physical?

Austin (as **Castine**): I am new to forms like these and have had only one cycle to explore and experiment with the aesthetic, in the way you understand it, and so I cannot promise you that our visions of beauty are comparable. But I do not simply think in terms of character. [Sylvia laughs quietly]

Janine (as **Brontë**): Okay, I'm intrigued now. As long as it's not a rock. [Keith muffles a laugh] It has to be a person.

Austin (as **Castine**): [awkwardly] Haha.

**Sylvia:** You said “who.” Is that in character, Austin?!

**Austin:** Like, trying— yeah, uh huh. [Janine laughs]

**Sylvia:** God bless. Oh my god.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Wow.

Austin (as **Castine**): I laugh, because you are on the edge of correctness, as she is on the edge of becoming rock.

Janine (as **Brontë**): Oh.

Austin (as **Castine**): I met a woman today.

**Sylvia:** No fucking way.

**Keith:** Oh my god. She did it.

**Sylvia:** No fucking way!

**Keith:** [laughs] She knew she would!

**Sylvia:** Absolute madwoman.

Janine (as **Brontë**): Wow.

Austin (as **Castine**): Her visage, blessed by iron. Her voice, sonorous but loud.

Janine (as **Brontë**): Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Caoimhe's eyes are bugging out of their skull right now. [Janine laughs]

Austin (as **Castine**): I could not say— I could not speak to the nature of her character except to say she was one. [Janine and Sylvia laugh]

Janine (as **Brontë**): That's a good line.

**Sylvia:** Uh huh.

Janine (as **Brontë**): Keep that one in your pocket. That's a good one.

Austin (as **Castine**): I felt lucky to meet her before she could no longer meet me,

grateful for her faith, moved by the journey she took. Worried for the violence carried in her child's heart, [cross] just though it may be.

**Keith:** [cross] For the what?

**Austin:** Uh, worried for the violence carried in her child's heart, just though it may be.

**Keith:** Mm.

**Sylvia:** Okay. I'm making a mental note about that.

Janine (as **Brontë**): You could take her out to that restaurant. [Austin chuckles]

**Janine:** Sorry, you were asking something.

**Austin:** No.

**Janine:** That was in character.

Austin (as **Castine**): I will consider it. [Janine laughs]

Janine (as **Brontë**): She'd love it.

Austin (as **Castine**): If you were to be made king...

Janine (as **Brontë**): Ugh.

**Janine:** In character noise.

Janine (as **Brontë**): Euughh.

**Austin:** Yeah.

(as **Castine**): What dance would you do first?

Janine (as **Brontë**): [sighs, unenthused] I...ugh. I don't think I would want to dance. They make you wear so much heavy stuff. I don't know. Maybe just a light sort of two-step. I don't know.

Austin (as **Castine**): Antistrophe Landrace. By right, you have a question.

**Austin**: And, at this point, you are sort of, like, at the southern tip of Castine's Moon and slowly turning to make your way back north towards the temple.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): How old is the moon? [someone snorts] This moon.

Austin (as **Castine**): In this cycle? Or in a stretch of all time?

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): All time.

Austin (as **Castine**): Then it is...

**Austin**: I'm trying to do some math in my head. I have to do some math with a calculator. [typing] [Keith chuckles]

**Sylvia**: I love you asking a question that makes perfect sense to ask within context but also sounds like something a child would ask their dad before bed. [Keith laughs]

**Austin**: Yeah.

**Sylvia**: "How old is the moon?"

**Keith**: "How old is the moon?"

Austin (as **Castine**): 1.92 cycles long.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): How long is a cycle?

Austin (as **Castine**): I'm sorry, is this a request for clarification?

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

**Austin**: Considering it. Considering it.

(as **Castine**): 5000 years on standard.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Oh my god. That's so short.

Austin (as **Castine**): There can be fluctuations, but this is only my second cycle, and I've seen none yet. Antistrophe Landrace.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Uh huh.

Austin (as **Castine**): What is the first mystery you failed to solve?

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): The Sourcerot thing, it really stands out, in a way that it makes other mysteries feel unimportant.

## **Arrival [0:51:06]**

**Austin:** Begins to say something, and the ground starts to shake, shake in a way it hasn't quite yet. There is no leadup. There is no slow rumble that builds. To the west, you can see dozens, hundreds of the figures, the iron statues, people turned statues of the parade lifted up into the air, as something, clearly something very big, seems to be emerging from the ground.

**Sylvia:** Oh my god. It's the mole.

**Austin:** Northwest of the city. Castine looks to you and says— again, was about to say something about whatever the first mystery you failed to solve was.

**Keith:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** But before he can finish, says:

(as **Castine**): It's here. I need to defend the people of the town. Please, help us if you can.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Yeah, of course.

**Austin:** And as huge chunks of rock get lifted into the air and become, you know, kind of missiles falling towards the city, a huge shelf of liquid metal lifts off the moon and acts as a sort of shield, blocking these hug boulders before they can land into Digsite West and the Pilgrim's Quarter. And Castine, you know, you look over to Castine. Castine is,

like, in the process of melting into the moon itself.

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Cool.

**Austin:** And as Castine does that, behind him, at the Temple of the Summit, you see the sneering face of Therius Aegir, your boss, who, at this point, does not know what to think, but still clearly seemingly— again, sneering face.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** You know.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** I get the vibe.

**Austin:** I can't say what is in his heart or mind, but yeah, you get the vibe.

**Keith:** This is a man who sneers. We know about him.

**Austin:** This is a man who sneers. Yeah. And, to the west, emerging outside of the city, beyond the sort of kind of low city walls, is something not unlike a mole. In fact, you might say that is the most mole-like thing there is. It is, of course, the predecessor of all moles. It is the draconic mole, the blueprint from which anything molelike ever, in any cycle of Perpetua, is descended from.

**Keith:** It was draconic *and* mammalian.

**Sylvia:** Oh my god.

**Austin:** That's right.

**Sylvia:** Oh my god!

**Keith:** Fuck! This is what happens when you assume.

**Austin:** And it is destroying the sort of radial monument that surrounds the city of Cenn and is, you know, just kind of smashing through things. You know, destroys the railway out of here and is bearing down towards the city. Castine seems occupied with trying to protect incoming, you know, earth and spikes being flung at it. I think Aegir, like, locks eyes with you, Caoimhe, to see what you're going to do. Actually, you know, calls out and says:

(as **Aegir**): Is it the Living Metal?

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): No! Of course not!

Janine (as **Brontë**): It could be a metal dragon mole, I guess. [quietly] Dumbass.  
[Austin and Keith laugh]

**Sylvia:** High five, Brontë.

**Austin:** Yeah. And scowls at you. And then, you know, goes to turn towards the temple, to go, like, inside of it.

**Sylvia:** I'm going to yell back. I'm yelling, "What are you doing?" back at him. I'm not actually yelling it, because we're doing a podcast.

**Austin:** Doesn't respond.

**Sylvia:** Well.

**Austin:** Right, yeah. Well, give me a little stage yell.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): [mock yelling] What are you doing?!

**Sylvia:** How's that?

**Austin:** That's great. Ignores you. And, like, is flanked by a number of other Hexcloaks.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): [sighs] Useless assholes.

**Austin:** What are you doing?

**Janine:** Is he west of us? Could I shoot him with an arrow and get off on a technicality?  
[Austin laughs]

**Sylvia:** Oh my god.

**Austin:** No, he is north of you at this point, unfortunately.

**Janine:** Aw.

**Austin:** I'm sorry.

**Sylvia:** Well, this is what I— I'm not sure, because...

**Austin:** The dragon, though, is about 160 degrees from you, actually, if I'm thinking about placement here, so, you know.

**Sylvia:** Whoa!

**Austin:** It kind of worked out.

**Keith:** Wow.

**Austin:** You know, 'cause I've been picturing y'all are, like, here, and that's about the right angle, you know? Like, right in here is where it is, so.

**Sylvia:** Holy crap. [Janine laughs quietly]

**Austin:** That's kind of funny.

**Sylvia:** Holy crap.

**Keith:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** Well, so, here is my question for the crew. Should we prioritize fighting and stopping this thing or helping to make sure that as many people are able to, like, evacuate safely or get away from the attack while it's happening?

**Janine:** Hmm.

**Sylvia:** It's, like...

**Keith:** That's a great question.

**Janine:** We didn't really get a chance to ask if the mole was mad for good reasons.

**Sylvia:** I...

**Austin:** You did not. Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Listen.

**Austin:** Well...yeah, not really.

**Keith:** We know someone is mad for good reasons but not this mole.

**Sylvia:** No clue about the mole.

**Janine:** I think it's very telling that the god here has been focused on mitigating damage and not, like, "I'm going to go punch that mole to death."

**Sylvia:** Yeah. But it's hard to tell how much of that is— sorry, Austin. Do you want to go ahead?

**Austin:** No, you go ahead. You're the character. You're the player.

**Sylvia:** It's hard to tell how much of that is Castine's, like, disposition versus, like, [Janine: Mm.] knowing that— it's "he" for Castine, right?

**Austin:** He...

**Keith:** He, yeah.

**Austin:** Castine is currently he/him.

**Sylvia:** Okay, yeah.

**Austin:** Yes.

**Sylvia:** Eh.

**Austin:** Castine has not always been he/him, in my mind. Castine spent the last cycle she/her. Castine is trying it out, you know?

**Sylvia:** Good for Castine! Hey—

**Austin:** Castine—

**Keith:** Only two cycles. That's not long enough.

**Austin:** That's right.

**Sylvia:** If you're listening to this, why don't you give it a try? Just play around a little.

**Austin:** Yeah. You know? Castine— I kind of gestured at this a little bit, but like, Castine was like a servant robot in his own time, in his first cycle.

**Sylvia:** Ohh. That's cool.

**Austin:** And I think was like, you know, gender was not a thing made available.

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** And I know what happened to make Castine part of the Ennead, which is already showing some of the hand, in terms of like— but again, I guess Castine said, right? You could all become— you could all survive the cycle. Castine seemingly did and became a member of the Ennead, and so, that's apparently available. And I don't think it's anything godly that allows Castine to, like, fuck around with gender. I think that's just a thing— that's just a thing people do, you know?

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And Castine can do that now, so. Shoutouts.

**Keith:** I thought you were saying it's not anything godly that allowed him to survive the cycle.

**Austin:** No, I did not say that.

**Keith:** No. That's what I thought you were going to say, and I was like, "Well, that's crazy."

**Austin:** Mm-mm. Yeah, no, definitely something godly.

**Keith:** "That's new information."

**Austin:** No, yeah. Yeah. So, yeah. I think that that's a fair question, Sylvi.

**Janine:** Sorry, what did Castine specifically say, in terms of, like, "If you're able to help us..."

**Austin:** Asked you for help.

**Janine:** Right, just like...

**Austin:** Didn't ask for a particular thing.

**Janine:** Yeah, okay.

**Austin:** I think that you're right, Janine, to note that Castine seems focused on helping people and not going out there to fight it.

**Janine:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Though I will say, again, these are not gods who can travel the world independently, the way we've maybe had similar types of beings in past seasons, right?

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah, this is what I was saying about, like...

**Sylvia:** I've kind of been picturing them has having, like, a Virtue type situation, where they can't go too far from where they're based for too long.

**Austin:** Right. I mean, we quite—

**Sylvia:** But that's me mostly just pulling stuff from past seasons and making assumptions.

**Austin:** Right. We quite literally know that they, you know, can take— they can move anywhere. They can inhabit the material that they are gods of, right?

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** You know, if there was a giant robot made of pure metal, maybe he could take that form, you know? He clearly can take the form of the moon and move the moon's metal around here. And, you know, maybe there is a moment here of seeing him swipe at the big mole with a huge wave of metal, but his focus is "I'm trying to protect people here," you know?

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** Because I think that's what he sees as his unique capability, in this moment, right? No one else is stopping the giant rocks from hitting the ground. And each time it hits one of the pieces of metal, you know, one of these new shelves of metal that's being built, it's damaging them, you know?

And I think maybe what we're getting here is actually, you know, as that's happening, if you— picture the city. The city's on the coast, right? And it is— or it's, like, near the coastline, right? The west side is the side that goes out towards the continent. The east side is the side that goes towards the ocean. From the eastern side of the moon— the western side of the moon has these kind of big, almost like waves, I'm imagining them, of metal lifting up above the city to try to, like, block incoming attacks and stuff. Which are, like, you know, a big strong draconic mole tossing stuff at the city, you know, tossing huge clumps of raw earth, tossing rocks that have been sharpened, et cetera. Occasionally breathing fire. It's a dragon, right? Or I guess breathing dragon breath, right?

Then, on the eastern side of the moon, it's like there's an additional, like, giant wave, almost, lifting up, that you can intuit is going to be some sort of dome that covers not

just the moon but the whole city, right? It's like, as he's fending off the incoming attacks, he is going to try to, like, build something that protects everything inside from the first outright attack on Cenn. So, he is focused entirely on defense. Whether that will— you know, whether that dome will get up in time, it's not clear. That's taking a while, because his attention is focused on the dragon.

**Keith:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** Should that be something we try and do, then, is we're a decoy while the dome goes up?

**Keith:** I 1000% agree.

**Janine:** Yeah, I'd been thinking that.

**Sylvia:** Okay.

**Janine:** I feel like I could do a pretty good job at that.

**Sylvia:** I'm down to give it a shot, yeah.

**Austin:** All right. Let's give it a shot. So, y'all rush through the city?

**Sylvia:** Yeah. Yeah, absolutely.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Towards the west, towards where the dragon is? Okay. As you're running that way, you see...you run past Kley and Delani, who are heading east, back towards the Temple of the Summit. You know, I think Kley locks eyes with you, Caoimhe. You know, is pushing Delani's wheelchair.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Does not stop to say anything. Simply moves past you. And, you know, people are yelling and screaming. Like, "Everybody head towards the temple! Everybody get on the moon! You know, get as close to the center as you can!"

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** You know, there are not sirens running, but there are big iron bells being hit, you know? Being rung as you head west. And these are bells that are normally very beautiful, but all of them ringing at once has a degree of cacophony still. And eventually, yeah, you make your way out past the Digsite West, out past the Pilgrims' Quarter, past— you know, maybe the hotel you stayed in the first night has been destroyed by the debris that's being flung.

**Janine:** Aw.

**Austin:** And you see it. It is gigantic. It is the size of a full dragon, you know? It is...I don't know, many stories high.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Mm.

**Austin:** It has scaly— it almost an armadillo-like quality, because it has dragon style scales but is not as— but is longer than an armadillo. It is still a mole, in shape, you know? It has, you know, sharp teeth. It has the kind of tight mole-like eyes. You know what a mole looks like.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And it has big sharp claws that it's using to dig up the earth and wreck the Ironclad Parade, the kind of statuary around the whole city.

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