

Perpetua 25: In Too Deep 01

Transcriber: mees_____

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Opening Narration

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

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

Austin: A confrontation with the Hexcloak commander, whose ominous air suggests dire motive. A conversation with a living god of metal, whose curious mind pries into their own. A conflict with an ancient draconic mole, whose thunderous anger threatens the city of chains.

Antistrophe Landrace, Bronte Adelvys, and Caoimhe Wake have faced all of this and more during their stay in Cenn. And yet for now they've remained to help the city, now blocked off from the rest of the world by a massive sphere of pure iron, as it rebuilds from the dragon's earth-shaking attack. A city as great as Cenn can recover, but it needs more than time. People need healing. Structures need mending. Fearful spirits need to be calmed.

But mysteries abound. Where is Kley Kaina? What is the Sourcerot? How are the Hexcloaks involved? Lost, they turn to a pair of surprising allies: Johnny Cakes and Jimmy Cones.

Mango Chili Chutney. Pineapple Basil. Matcha Sesame Brittle. Mango Habanero. Lavender Lemonade. Coconut Lime Sorbet. Lemon Basil Sorbet. Beetroot Ginger Swirl.

These are the leading flavors of Cakes and Cones Ice Cream this year, sold and delivered across Cenn by the Dessert Brother's team of noble White Caps, whose confectionary compartment gives them access to the lowest of gutters and the highest halls of power. Perhaps these ice cream boys will have the perspective that Team ABC needs to crack their investigation wide open. Or perhaps the clue is closer than that, mixed in with the dairy, and the fruit, and the flavor extract, and the sugar, buried in the tasty cream itself.

[["Perpetua"](#) by Jack de Quidt ends]

Introduction [00:02:52]

Austin: Welcome to *Friends at the Table*, an actual play podcast focused on critical worldbuilding, smart characterization, and fun interaction between good friends. I am your host Austin Walker and joining me today, Janine Hawkins!

Janine: Hi, I'm Janine Hawkins. You can find the newsletter that I write every single week on [friendsatthetable.cash](https://www.patreon.com/friendsatthetable), which is our Patreon, which is where you can support us with money, or with your eyeballs [**Sylvia** chuckles], they are both equally good forms of support.

Austin: But don't send us your eyeballs, [cross] just use them to consume...

Sylvia: [cross] No, like, by looking at them.

Janine: [cross] PLEASE don't send us your eyeballs, they won't mail well.

Sylvia: [cross] Yeah.

Austin: [cross] No. [disgusted] Yurgh.

Janine: They're mostly water and the mail takes— There was just a postal strike here, [cross] like who knows how long they'd be out there.

Keith: [cross] Yeah, ask us how we know that. [**Austin** chuckles]

Sylvia: [cross] Save it for when we do a live show and you can make your offerings on the altar there.

Austin: [uncomfortable] Mmm. [cross] Don't like any of this. Keith Carberry...!

Sylvia: [cross] I'm sorry!

Janine: [cross] [laughs]

Sylvia: [cross] [laughs]

Keith: Hi, my name is Keith, you can find me on Twitter— No, you can't. Well, you can technically, [**Austin** and **Janine** laugh] but I haven't posted in well over a year, but you can find me online [cross] @KeithJCarberry.

Janine: [cross] Go on the Wayback Machine to Twitter when it was good-ish.

Keith: [cross] Yeah. [chuckles]

Sylvia: [cross] Ish.

Austin: [cross] Yeah. When it was bad in the way we liked. [chuckles]

Keith and **Sylvia:** Yeah.

Janine: Yeah, [cross] it was bad in an okay way.

Keith: [cross] Uh, or at least a way that I could deal with. [**Austin:** Yeah.] Um. You can find the Let's Plays that I do on [youtube.com/runbutton](https://www.youtube.com/runbutton) and you could find me and Sylvi

and Janine talking about *Lady in the Water* at [Media Club Plus](#), you can find me and Sylvi and Austin talking about... *After Earth*... on Media Club Plus, [**Sylvia**: Oh yeah...] and then on the Patreon you can find me and Sylvi and Austin talking about— or doing a watchalong of *The Last Airbender*! [**Sylvia**: Yeah.] [**Austin** winces] So listen to Media Club Plus!

Austin: It was bad...

Sylvia: That was so [cross] funny.

Keith: [cross] I watched a real movie after that movie, and, like, I had gotten so used to [**Austin** chuckles] how dark that movie is? Hey, I saw— I've seen other 3D movies, they didn't look like that!

Austin: They didn't— They didn't look like that, no. [**Sylvia**: Yeah.] It's really bad.

Keith: It's really [cross] bad. It's so bad.

Sylvia: [cross] It's no *Spy Kids: Game Over*.

Austin: Yeah... Should've watched that instead.

Keith: Yeah. I love— I love Elijah Wood in that.

Sylvia: He's great.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Also joining us, Sylvi Bullet!

Sylvia: Hello! You can find me on some places @sylvibullet, you can check out my band at gutmachineband.bandcamp.com, and you should check out Side Sh— *Side Story*, I almost said Side Show, [cross] side show dot story.

Keith: [cross] Side Show. [chuckles]

Austin: [cross] Side Show. Sideshow Bob...!

Janine: [cross] Side Showww. [**Austin:** Uh-huh.]

Sylvia: Go to sidestory.show to hear us talk about video games...!

Austin: [cross] It's true. I have no idea what—

Sylvia: [cross] A tremendous podcast.

Keith: [cross] I was on the last one, I had a ton of fun, I love being on *Side Story*.

Austin: [cross] Yeah, it's been great!

Sylvia: [cross] It's one of my favorite listens, honestly.

Austin: Which reminds me, Janine, we have to record another episode of *Outward*! [chuckles] [cross] Because we are running out of episodes, I should message you and Jack after we've done this recording!

Janine: [cross] We do...! Uh-huh. Yeah.

Austin: Uh, today though— For people— I say that because of course you can go to patreon.com/friendsatthetable, or friends_table, friendsatthetable.cash! To watch Janine, Jack and I play *Outward*, a really interesting, dynamic, and idiosyncratic open-world RPG. Lots of tents, lots of weird magic. Janine's playing a little freak. [cross] I'm a big freak.

Sylvia: [cross] Hell yeah.

Janine: [cross] I'm playing a— I'm playing a normal, human person. [**Austin:** Hmm! Mm-hm!] With a sword and a rich backstory. [**Austin** and **Sylvia** chuckle] About a childhood spent among the grasslands.

Austin: [cross] Yeah that's what—

Keith: [cross] You have a rich backstory in this, too.

Janine: [cross] Yeah.

Austin: [cross] That's true. That's true.

Sylvia: [cross] Oh, good one!

Austin: [cross] Boom. Boom!

Keith: [cross] [chuckles]

Austin: [cross] Today we are continuing our game of *Fabula Ultima* by Emanuele Galletto. Our goals as always are to breathe life into the world and as characters, to play as a hero, play to change and evolve, to ask questions and build on the answers, and to play to find out what happens. It has been a minute—I will say out loud, openly to the audience—since we played over here on Team ABC, [cross] Team Antistrophe, Brontë, Caoimhe.

Sylvia: [cross] Oooh!! The alphabet mafia!

Austin: The alphabet— [chuckles] The alphabet mafia, that's right. Um. I actually think that Team ABC is how Greg would throw to y'all on Taskmaster for a team [cross] task, you know.

Sylvia: [cross] Oh my god.

Keith: [cross] Yeah. Yeah.

Austin: In any case, it's been a minute since we recorded over here and played a session. So I think we probably need a little refresher on what happened, I took some notes. Uh, but please remind me if— or stop me if there's something you don't quite remember.

Sylvia: We'll interject.

Austin: Okay.

Recap and level-up [00:07:05]

Austin: You came to Cenn, city of iron chains—this is not written, this part is just me freestyling [**Sylvia:** Mm-hm!]
—because you got a note from Bartolo Temples, Caoimhe’s mentor and, like, boss basically in the Hexcloaks. [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] Uh.

Keith: They have sort of— They have sort of a... a semi... this is, like, [**Austin:** Right.] the least contentious relationship, Caoimhe, that you have [cross] in the Hexcloaks, right?

Sylvia: [cross] Yeah, very much so.

Keith: [cross] They’re, like, kind of half on your— on the side of, like, “well I don’t wanna— I want to investigate this.”

Austin: Yes. “But I can’t be—” couldn’t be an open advocate for you, [**Keith:** Right.] because it would get him in trouble. Right. And prevent his ability to protect you, right. You get a call from him, or you get a note from him, being like, hey you need to go to Cenn, you’ve been called there. The big cheese is there, Thereus Aegir, the head of the Hexcloaks.

Y’all take a train— You deal with some Fleggs, you take a train, you get here, on the way in there are earthquakes, there are earthquakes happening regularly it seems. And you go off to do different things. Antistrophe and Bronte you go play some beachminton, successfully. [**Janine:** Hell yeah!]

And Caoimhe you go and try to find Aegir. First you got to the Hexcloak HQ, where it seems like things have been kind of closed up, you know, things have been kind of abandoned there. And then you go to the— You kind of get redirected to the city hall where Aegir has taken over the mayor’s office and you have a meeting with Aegir in that office, blessed by a strange light.

And in that meeting he gives you a job. He says: I want to know why these earthquakes are happening and if it is the cause of Castine, Living Metal, the member of the Enead

who makes his home here, the temple of the summit on the moon which has emerged from the ground, [chuckles] which was pulled out of the ground about a century ago.

Along with you here—or travelled, I guess, alongside of you—were Kley and Delani Kaina, who were people you knew from your childhood. Uh, Caoimhe. You, instantly, after finding some information, decided a big mole is doing the earthquakes.

Sylvia: I mean, yeah, it made sense!

Austin: It made sense. You went, nevertheless, under ultimatum—remember, you were given the ultimatum: [**Sylvia:** Mm-hm.] You have to go try to see if this is Castine. If you fail to do the job right, we are going to exile and outlaw you, if you do it right, we will officially deputize your little friends, giving you free movement across the Elevana League, [**Sylvia:** Mm-hm.] and we will effectively kind of clear your name for whatever the ins— you know, the thing you were being investigated for. Um.

You go and meet Castine, after some hijinks. There's some hijinks, [**Sylvia** chuckles] but you get to meet Castine, you walk—

Sylvia: [cross] Sort of Mister Bean my way through the— through the temple. Yeah.

Austin: [cross] That's right. Yeah, [chuckling] uh-huh. You do a sort of lap around the Temple of the Summit, during which there is a back and forth of questions and answers. [**Sylvia:** Mm-hm.] And at the end of that, just as that's ending, there are more earthquakes, grander than ever before. And wouldn't you know it, it's a big, draconic mole.

Sylvia: Like I said, it just makes sense.

Austin: That's right. Um. The mole has— I think at some point you go out, you fight the mole. You're fighting the draconic mole. I believe you learn the mole's name?

Sylvia: Did we...?

Keith: I— I sure couldn't tell you that mole's name.

Austin: Maybe not, maybe I never wrote it, maybe I never said it. I don't have it in the thing, [Keith: Um.] so maybe I didn't...

Keith: Yeah. I remember talking a lot about it being a draconic mole.

Austin: [cross] That's true, yeah. Okay.

Sylvia: [cross] Yeah.

Janine: [cross] Yeah, and I got some sort of chunk of it and I just wrote "dragon scale, question mark."

Austin: [cross] Good. Great.

Janine: [cross] I probably would have given it a name if I had one.

Austin: Yeah, put down "dragon scale." Um, it is worth—on top of some other money that we'll get to in a moment—it is worth... [sighs] I think I told Dre it's worth a thousand Asta, because Dre also got some draconic... a draconic scale recently, so. [**Sylvia:** [impressed] Oh, yeah!] Go ahead and write that down. Um. You, like, went out of your way to get it during the fight even, if I remember right. You, like, went and grabbed it somehow. Um. Anyway!

Janine: [cross] I don't remember, I'm gonna be honest.

Austin: [cross] You went out there to fight it and stop it while Castine erected a massive, shield-like orb, a dome-like orb around the city, not only above it but also below it, surrounding it and separating it from the... the rest of Perpetua, the world. Using the metal of—if I remember right—the metal of the moon, actually, to some degree. Maybe I didn't actually say that, maybe I left that part out, [cross] I don't remember.

Sylvia: [cross] Uh! I think that came up, that does sound familiar.

Austin: [cross] Importantly, Castine is still doing that. The city that you are now back inside of has been surrounded by an orb of impenetrable metal. It kind of looks like a dome above the ground, again, it dips below.

The draconic mole remains outside of the dome at this point. It is continuing to attack the dome, regularly. Attacking from different sides, trying to find different ways in. The town was badly damaged by the attack. When you got back in, people looked at you at first very sceptically, because you were wearing the Hexcloak cloak. Because while you were fighting outside, the Hexcloaks, led by Thereus Aegir, went into the Temple of the Summit, into the moon temple, in an attempt to confront Castine. But when he did that, when the group did that, Kley Kaina appeared and attempted to assassinate Aegir, tried to kill him, and was apprehended. His assassination was stopped, Kley was apprehended. You found out that there was a sense of, like, um... If not for “blank,” I would kill you right here. But you’re not sure what “blank” is. And then that entire group seems to have absconded, somehow escaping despite the... the dome, or the orb being closed around the city.

And then y’all were gonna go rest! And you got— you got a little bit of, um... You kind of agreed to help do some rebuilding and some moving boxes, and some helping people with... with, you know, healing and medical stuff. Wherever you could. And I believe, Caoimhe, you took your Hexcloak off to do that.

Sylvia: Yes.

Austin: Which— Which— You know, because people had seen you around town in the Hexcloak and now you weren’t wearing it, was your first point of... [cross] what was it, what is it actually called.

Sylvia: I believe that is a “subversion point?”

Austin: A subversion point.

Sylvia: Yeah. Um.

Austin: And those are my notes on what happened last time.

Sylvia: Yeah! That I think covers the big stuff. [cross] Um.

Austin: [cross] Yeah! Uh, you ran into Delani, who was being attended to medically. [cross] Um, and—

Sylvia: [cross] Yes, I do— That was when we— that's how we found out about Kley, right?

Austin: That's right. Delani promised— made you promise that— that you would go after their kid.

Sylvia: Mm-hm.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: Um, should we talk about any sort of, like— Not like— I guess meta-level is what char— like, leveling up would be.

Austin: Yeah, [cross] totally.

Sylvia: [cross] Because I believe we did level up after that and that—

Austin: [cross] You did level, yeah. I think so, you should all be level 10, right?

Sylvia: [cross] Well, it's 'cause the— Yeah, the aftermath stuff kinda led into, with Caoimhe wanting to help with the rebuilding effort, [**Austin:** Mm-hm.] it made sense to me— for me to take my first level in Spiritist, my third class.

Austin: Ooh, fun.

Sylvia: Which means I now have Spiritual Magic and the spell I've learned is Healing. Like, I pictured her [cross] basically working with the healers after the... after what happened.

Austin: [cross] Fun. That's right.

Sylvia: And now she's got some basic heal magic.

Austin: I love that. [cross] It's good to have.

Sylvia: [cross] Yeah.

Austin: Um, you know I think— I should just do this quickly, we don't have to have a whole scene around this [**Sylvia:** Hm!]**—**but I think somewhere around here, with y'all helping and as it becomes clear to people that you actually fended the mole, the draconic mole off, at some point a representative comes up to y'all with, like, a gathering? People have gathered the money that they can, and give you... 1500 Asta, 500 Asta each.

Sylvia: Aw!

Austin: Which is sort of a mechaniza— or a narrativization of the mechanized rewards of the fight? It's a real, like, "we got what we can, don't worry, we aren't—you know. It's not doing us any good right now anyway. We're just trying to take care of each other," you know. Um, so.

Sylvia: My heart, that's so sweet!

Austin: Mm-hm. Um, so yeah! I think that's where we left off. Are there other meta-conversations or level-up things that we want to talk about?

Keith: Um... I think that that covers pretty much everything [**Sylvia:** Yup.] for me.

Rest and recovery [00:15:05]

Austin: Okay! Uh, [**Sylvia:** So...]**]** where do we wanna jump— I guess we should jump in on it: resting! We should— [**Sylvia:** Mm-hm.][**Keith:** Yeah.] You know, maybe it's been a day of the work— What's the work look like? What's the trying to fix things up the rest of the day look like for you?

Sylvia: I feel like I'm probably still working with healers?

Austin: The medics, makes sense. Yeah.

Sylvia: [cross] Yeah, that—

Austin: [cross] What about you, Bronte and Antistrophe? [**Keith:** Um.] How are you trying to help these folks?

Keith: You know I bet that there's a lot of stuff that needs to be moved and cleared out. You know, beams that have fallen, rubble that's blocking paths. [**Austin:** Hm.] Uh, that seems like Antistrophe work to me. Like, you know, turning one of the shields sideways and, like, pushing a bunch of rubble out to clear a path.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: Oh my god, he's— he's Mister Plow!

Austin: [chuckles]

Keith: Mister Plow.

Austin: [cross] [uncertain] Oh, okay...!

Janine: [cross] [chuckles]

Sylvia: Yeah!

Keith: Yeah, Mister Plow?

Sylvia: [cross] Yeah!

Austin: [cross] Yeah, the famous...

Sylvia: [cross] I just came up with that.

Austin: Yeah, okay, cool, write that down, [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] write that down.

Janine: [chuckles]

Sylvia and Austin: [chuckle]

Austin: Uh, [cross] cool.

Janine: [cross] Um. I think... Bronte's probably doing sort of a quartermastering role. Like the, you know, person who has, like, a list of stuff... and is, like, finding out, like, okay where does this stuff need to be— You know, like the organizational. 'Cause you can't just have, like, a crisis and a big pile of things [**Austin:** Yeah.] and everyone just doing their own thing, you kind of need— You know, I'm sure there was already someone who does something like this, but it can't help to have more, you know.

Austin: Mm-hm. [cross] Yeah.

Janine: [cross] Or it can't hurt to have more. Ehh! [laughs]

Sylvia: [cross] Yeah, I was gonna say— Hold on a minute. Hold on a minute!

Everyone: [laughs]

Austin: Ah, little Freudian slip.

Janine: [cross] Even—

Sylvia: [cross] I know— I doubt Bronte a lot, but I think he could help.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: [cross] Yeah. I do too.

Janine: [cross] But you know, someone just accounting for, like, okay, here's our supplies. You need what for this, okay, well, that team said they need that for the other thing, [**Austin:** Mm-hm.] can you do with a little bit less or do you really— You know, like, where— how do we allocate resources. I feel like he would probably have had a decent education in that kind of basic... shit. [chuckles]

Austin: Yeah, I think that makes sense to me! Yeah. Alright! Um. The... rest! It's time to rest. I say this— I rush to this because I know some of you are very close to knocked

the fuck out, so. [**Sylvia**: Mm-hm.] Let's talk about resting. You are in a safe place, you can easily— You can rest here, this is not a risky place. Unlike when we play *Outward*, Janine, we do— you do not need to spend a certain number of hours going into Guard Mode whenever you rest. Um.

And y'all have some special rest abilities, if I remember right. When you rest, you always get to create or change a bond— I guess, one, you recover all your hit points and mind points, you recover from all status effects. [**Keith**: Hm.] So, you're in a safe place, you can just do that. Two, you can create a new bond towards someone or something, you can add a new emotion to an existing bond, and you can erase an emotion from an existing bond and replace it with a different one. We'll have to talk about how you do that. Then on top of that, you also get to use one of your camping abilities, or camp activities. Um. So, let's go through those! Bonds and activities. Who has a line on what they wanna do here?

Keith: Uh, does being almost dead give anything specific that— Sylvi, that you need to do?

Sylvia: Huh?

Keith: Is there anything narrative about being almost dead that changes [cross] how you rest and recover?

Sylvia: [cross] Oh!

Austin: [cross] [chuckles] Great question.

Sylvia: No, I think she just sleeps a lot. [cross] I don't— None of my stuff is—

Keith: [cross] Yeah. Eat a— eat a chicken and then sleep? [**Austin** chuckles]

Sylvia: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, I eat a wall chicken like in Castlevania [cross] and then I have a nap!

Austin: [cross] Oh, okay! Yeah, it's interesting why— How—

Sylvia: [cross] That's my perfect Sunday.

Austin: How do we imagine HP— What is the abstraction here in Perpetua?

Sylvia: Um. I did kind of assume that since there were medics working [**Austin:** Yeah.] we would probably also get seen by them after the fight? Would be how I'd, like, narrativize it here? [**Austin:** Mm-hm, yeah.] Um. But if other people have better ideas, I'm down.

Austin: I'm thinking more of the, like... Are you— I'm thinking about... What's it mean to have 2 HP in this game? [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] You know, like, this game has an idea of "in crisis," but— And certain abilities will kick in when you're in crisis, for you or NPCs. But it doesn't have, like... You know, some games have a thing where it's like, when you're at 10% of your HP you're also, like, worse at everything 'cause you're hurt so bad. [**Sylvia:** Hmm.] [**Keith:** Yeah.] I don't think that's how it works here.

The book says "abbreviated as HP, hit points indicate a character's vital energy, fighting spirit, and general body health, as well as their ability to take a beating, withstand physical pain and fatigue. You should not see hit points as a measure of a character's physical integrity, however. [**Sylvia:** Okay.] Losing them does directly translate into wounds or severe physical harm. One could describe hit points as a shield that protects characters from suffering, that the final blow would then knock them— from suffering that final blow that would knock them out of a fight. Bruises, cuts, and burns are all ways to portray this in game fiction. The moment HP gets to 0, however, is when we see the antagonist blade find an opening and tear through the hero's armor."

So you know, you could be a little beat up. But you don't have to be, like— Your arms aren't broken, you know. [chuckles]

Keith: Right. Yeah, we— I think it was— Yeah, we talked ages ago about, like, it not being like in *Dragon Age: Origins* when you talk to someone [cross] and you're covered in blood.

Austin: [cross] That's right. [chuckles]

Sylvia: [cross] Yeah.

Austin: [cross] That's right. We— It is not that. And it's not like Fallout from *Heart: The City Beneath*, from our *Sangfielle* season, where you're, like, racking up particular maladies as the— as stuff continues. That's just, like, not the genre mode that we are playing in. So I think, like, yeah, you're probably beat up pretty bad, but you're not like... We didn't need to rush you to the medics at 2 HP. [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] At 0 we might have needed to rush you to the medics.

Sylvia: The way I'm kind of picturing it now... You know how when, like... Goku's been hurt a lot?

Austin: [cross] Yeah!

Keith: [cross] Mm-hm.

Sylvia: [cross] And his— Like, his, like, Gi is tattered and he's got those, like, scrapes and scratches all over him, but he's not really, like, bleeding that much or anything like that?

Keith: Right.

Sylvia: We got— I got Goku battle damage going on. [cross] That's—

Austin: [cross] I see, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Sylvia: My alternate costume is active. [chuckles] In *Perpetua Tenkaichi*.

Austin: Right, [cross] yeah, yeah.

Keith: [cross] Yeah, you're covered in scuffs. [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] One second ago you looked like you were about to die, but now you're [cross] walking around.

Austin: [cross] I'm gonna be just fine.

Sylvia: [cross] I had a Senzu Bean.

Austin: Right. If you dip the Caoimhe Wake action figure in the water it gets the battle damage, [cross] like, revealed, the cold water reveals it, you know.

Sylvia: [cross] [chuckles] [laughs] God, yeah.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: Oh, man. Action figures were great...

Austin: [whispers] They were great... Alright! Rest.

Sylvia: [cross] Mm-hm.

Keith: [cross] Rest.

Austin: [cross] Restore your HP. You each get to either create a new bond or update an old one. And you get to do a camp activity!

Keith: Hmm.

Sylvia: [quietly] Okay.

Bonds [00:21:39]

Janine: Um. I would like to add some loyalty to my bond with Caoimhe?

Austin: [cross] That makes sense!

Janine: [cross] Um. I think... [hesitates] It's one of those things where it's, like, the absence of loyalty is the part that feels wrong. [chuckles]

Sylvia: Mm-hm.

Janine: Um. [cross] Like it just—

Austin: [cross] Yeah, that's interesting.

Janine: I can't point to a specific thing and be like, this is what did it! [Austin: Mm-hm.] Um. But it is kind of a thing of like, well, you know... If Caoimhe said "hey Bronte I need you to do XYZ, it's important." [Austin: Mm-hm.] He'd do it, [cross] [chuckles] like...

Austin: [cross] Yeah. Can you— You can't point to a moment where you developed it, but can you point to a moment where Bronte realizes it? Like, not realizes... Not like "that made me loyal," but like, during this rebuilding day, during this, like, helping people out—or not just day, but this is presumably going on for a little bit—is there some moment where Bronte's like, "oh, I feel this way about— about Caoimhe. I feel loyal to Caoimhe"?

Janine: I think it might have actually been, um... sort of... going back to the moment where they're sort of retreating into the dome? And just the— [Austin: Right.] I recall— I think Bronte was, like, the last one in and got a little bit extra fucked up. Um. Unless I'm misremembering, but I think [chuckling] that's what happened. I think that moment of realizing, like, in this action he's not the leader, he's not a leader. He is specifically following, he is, like, acting in concert with. [Austin: Mm.] And that's good and okay. [chuckles] You know?

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: I don't think of him as, like, too... you know, classically egocentric prince kind of thing? But I think when you're in that— When you're raised in that way, you maybe aren't intuitively going to think of yourself as a follower. Um.

Austin: Yeah, that makes sense.

Janine: And often— You know, like, traveling... Before he got roped into all this, traveling with Efta and Zolfta, in that situation—I don't even, he's not really the leader, but he's, like, [cross] the focal point, you know.

Austin: [chuckles] He's the boss, [cross] he's in charge. [Sylvia: Yeah.]

Janine: [cross] He's the— He's the locus, I guess? Is maybe the more accurate way to frame it.

Austin: [cross] Yeah.

Janine: Um. But I think that would probably be— This was probably a— You know, it was a big fight, it was a big moment of realizing, like... [**Austin:** Right.] “Okay, Caoimhe is the locus right now. And that’s good because... I can trust her.”

Austin: Yeah! [cross] That’s good.

Sylvia: [cross] Aw...!

Austin: Caoimhe and Antistrophe?

Sylvia: Uh, I think I’m going to similarly add loyalty to my bond with Antstorphe. Um. I feel like— The thing that— One, I already did— I did already do this [chuckling] for Bronte. [cross] Um.

Austin: [cross] [chuckles] Yeah. Context, yeah, you’ve already done that, yeah.

Janine: [laughs]

Sylvia: Yeah. Uh, it’s not like I’m like— [cross] I’m— I’m icing him out.

Austin: [cross] [chuckling] Uh yeah, thanks Bronte, fuck off!

Keith and Janine: [cross] [laugh]

Sylvia: [cross] Yeah, um. I think the thing that clicked this into place for Caoimhe was in the temple, when... I mean, both of them were so— were willing to be distractions for me to get in to see Castine, but like... I think— That’s part of it, and then there’s part of it where it’s like, oh yeah, the reason I was actually investigating Castine was so these two wouldn’t have to be, like, enemies of the law anymore or, like, wouldn’t have to be on the run from the people I work with. And then that clicks into place of, oh I— I’m— These are the people I care about more than that. Obviously. [**Austin:** Mm-hm.] [**Keith:** Right.] Like I’m— I’m part of Team ABC before I’m part of the Hexcloaks!

Austin: [chuckles] Ah, I’m glad Team ABC is hittin’! It’s— It’s hittin’.

Sylvia: [cross] Yeah.

Keith: [cross] Yeah. It's—

Austin: [cross] We're gonna have Team ABC merch.

Sylvia: [cross] I like it.

Keith: [cross] I think that—

Janine: [cross] Every time I hear it, I think of Team Already Been Chewed.

Keith: [cross] [laughs]

Austin: [cross] [laughs]

Sylvia: [cross] Listen, that mole got— that mole did some damage!

Keith: [cross] Yeah, that mole chewed us up!

Austin: [cross] That mole... That mole chewed y'all up!

Sylvia: [cross] Yeah.

Keith: [cross] Yeah. [boasting] Although of course when I say "chewed us up" I mean the two of you, I wasn't even in crisis. [**Janine** chuckles] Um. But—

Sylvia: [cross] Yeah, okay, walking tank! Like...!

Keith: [laughs]

Austin: Ah...

Keith: [cross] Uh...

Sylvia: [cross] Damn, the black box survived the plane crash!

Austin: [laughs]

Keith: In the— In the same vein, though, as Caoimhe, I'm gonna add a bond of affection to Caoimhe. I already had a bond of loyalty. Um. My bonds with Bronte right now are mistrust and affection.

Sylvia: I love that.

Janine: [chuckles]

Keith: And I'm gonna keep that. And I thought hard about... admiration versus affection [Austin: Yeah.] [Sylvia: Uh-huh.] with Caoimhe. Admiration's a big— that's a big word.

Sylvia: [cross] [laughs]

Austin: [cross] [chuckles]

Keith: [cross] And I have written— [Janine chuckles] I have written here “willing and mildly capable leader” as [cross] my bond for Caoimhe, so I am going—

Austin: [cross] [wheezes] Ah...

Sylvia: [cross] That's accurate, though!

Keith: Yeah, I am go— I'm gonna have to wait for something... [cross] Some—

Sylvia: [cross] To make me medium capable...

Keith: Something big to swap affection with admiration, I think. [cross] That's a—

Sylvia: [cross] Fair enough.

Keith: That's a pending— [cross] it's a pending change.

Austin: [cross] Interesting... Interesting... Okay! And then, your camp ac— Those are all good— Or I guess actually, slowing down, are there any other moments like the one I asked from... from Bronte, in terms of when you felt that way? Or is it all just around the mole fight?

Keith: No, I think that it's, um... a... This is a reflection of what— of a preexisting feeling. [cross] The game— You know—

Austin: [cross] I see. It's, like, solidified, in the gameplay rules. But you've kind of felt like that for a bit.

Keith: Right, yeah, you have a second to sit down and think instead of bouncing from thing to thing to thing. Uh, you know, and it goes like— You know, it crops up... The game tells you this is when you can put— this is where you put the thought. [**Austin:** Mm-hm.] Um. But I— I think that there's... [**Austin** chuckles] That's a sort of— That's a sort of rolling truth from [cross] Cenn to now, is affection.

Austin: [cross] Right. [chuckles] It's like when you're playing a game that has builds in it, and you're like, well, when I'm level 15 I'm going to be a Blademaster, but I'm not— They won't let me be a Blademaster until they unlock subclasses, so I'll start putting points in the decks because I'll need it for my Blademaster class. [**Keith:** Right. Right.] You've been thinking this is where it's going anyway, [**Keith:** Mm-hm, mm-hm.] it's just this the first time the game has given you the tool [cross] to say this, since you first thought it.

Keith: [cross] Exactly. Yeah.

Austin: Cool!

Camp activities [00:27:54]

Austin: Alright! Camp Activities.

Keith: Uh, where are those?!

Austin: [cross] You should—

Sylvia: [cross] I have mine written in my journal page on the character sheet. Um.

Austin: Yeah, you picked two special ones. You should have, for yourself. At some point in the distant past!

Keith: Is that true, I thought that we always [cross] had access to all of them.

Austin: [cross] You do not have all of them, [chuckling] you do not.

Keith: Oh. I remember— So on the train I remember that I picked resting actions.

Austin: You did.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: That was for... ever?

Sylvia: [cross] That was forever, yeah.

Austin: [cross] Corr— You pick— You pick two to add to your sheet and then you get to do one of them when you rest.

Keith: Ohhh, okay. Well mine is Sleep Soundly.

Austin: Well, there you go! You should pick a different one to have as an option, also, if you'd like to.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: And you should write these—and these are from the *Natural Fantasy* Atlas book, that should— you should have. For the record, Sleep Soundly is [reading] “once before the next rest you may perform an additional action on your turn during a conflict scene. This action must be used to perform the Equipment, Hinder, or Inventory action.”

Keith: Okay. So, [reading] Camp Forge, Cartography, Combat Lesson— Oh no, those are Camp Activities.

Austin: That's it! That's right. [cross] Camp Activities is right.

Sylvia: [cross] Yeah, that's right.

Keith: [cross] Oh, okay. [continues reading] Daydream, Double Portion, Exploration, Gathering, Magic Lesson, Martial Practice, Massage... We've— I've seen that! Midnight Oil—

Austin: [cross] Art does massage, or Nicky does massage.

Keith: [cross] Art— Yeah, Art massages.

Sylvia: Is Midnight Oil what they use for that?

Austin: [cross] Yeah, you put midnight oil on.

Keith: [cross] [chuckles] You use— Yeah, yeah Art has a— It's, uh— It's truffle midnight oil.

Sylvia: [snorts]

Austin: Yeah. Mm-hm.

Keith: [continues reading] Peptalk, Planning, Sleep Soundly, Training.

Austin: I've added Sleep Soundly to your camp activity sheet. Um...!

Keith: Um. I'm— know that I picked two...!

Austin: [cross] I will check.

Keith: [cross] Not knowing it was forever.

Austin: Right, right, right. I will check the— the transcripts. Thank you as always to the excellent transcript team! You can find out about those by going to...

Keith: I'm gonna bet it was Planning.

Austin: That would seem right to you. Um.

If you search for *Transcripts at the Table* you'll get— you'll find a link to the Discord for it and to the excellent archive where you can read it all. This is a fan-led effort. It is also a paid effort. [apologetic] Though the payments come, uh, irregularly—they did just get a payment, but it took way too long for that to come this time, but... we'll try to be better at that going forward. Okay, thank you, bye. [Sylvia chuckles] Done.

Anyway! Sleep Soundly! [chuckles] Did you think of what the other one was?

Keith: Cartography and Sleep Soundly.

Austin: You got it? D'you found it.

Keith: Yeah. I found— I did it at search dot... fatt dot fish. [[search.fatt.fish](#)] [cross] That's how I got there.

Austin: [cross] Yeah that's— Fatt dot fish, shoutouts to fatt dot fish.

Keith: I knew that it was about— I didn't— I was like— I looked for “map” and I was like— I had already forgotten it said Cartography on the first page. [reading] “Once before the next rest after your group makes a travel roll you may reroll the die and keep the new result.” Or Sleep Soundly, “once before the next rest you may perform an additional action on your turn. It must be used to perform the Equipment, Hinder, or Inventory action.”

Austin: Mm-hm!

Keith: Oh that's a good one for me! I'm glad I picked that. [Austin and Janine laugh] Good job! That was a good— It's a good one for me.

Sylvia: Hey well done Keith!

Austin: Well done. So which one are you doing today?

Keith: Uh. I— You know, I did Cartography before so I'm going to Sleep Soundly this time I think.

Austin: Alright.

Keith: No! No, I lied! I should have done Cartography before, but I switched because I was— ‘cause you said that the next travel roll was gonna be easy, so I didn’t do it. And then we failed the travel roll. [cross] Um, so.

Austin: [cross] That sounds likely.

Keith: Yeah. But I don’t think we’re going anywhere, so I’m gonna stick with Sleep Soundly.

Austin: Okay! So make sure you take a note that you can do an additional action on your turn during a conflict scene. [**Keith:** Yeah.] Once, once. Yeah. Alright! [**Keith:** Mm-hm.] Bronte? Caoimhe?

Sylvia: Um, I... So, last time I used Train, if I’m remembering correctly. But I think I’m gonna use my other ability, which is Camp Forge. [**Austin:** Hm!] Um. Which was something that we sort of talked about as being, like, a necessary part of, like, Hexcloak field training.

Austin: [cross] Oh, right, yes!

Sylvia: [cross] Um. Sort of basic forging stuff. And I would like to make a shield!

Austin: Ooh! Okay!

Keith: [cross] Ooh.

Sylvia: [cross] Um. It says I can make a... [reading] “Choose one option, you repair a damaged item owned by the group or you create a single basic weapon, armor, or shield of your choice—see pages 130 to 133 of the core rulebook—[**Austin:** Yeah!] without paying its cost in Asta. Or you destroy a single piece of equipment owned by the group and obtain a material whose value is equal to the cost of the destroyed item.”

I th— I’m doing the first part of the— making a basic shield. I just wanted to clarify if Runic shields still count as basic? [cross] They are listed as that in the thing?

Keith: [cross] Is it—

Austin: [cross] If it's in the basic thing, it's— it's there! Yeah.

Sylvia: Cool. Then that's what I'm working on.

Keith: Yeah, that's what I bought. [cross] That's—

Austin: [cross] Yeah. So wait, does it— It doesn't say, like, you have to, this doesn't— You start a project. You just do it?

Sylvia: You just do it, that's— [**Austin:** Yeah!] At least that's how it— Yeah, I'd have to double check [cross] the book, but...

Austin: [cross] "You create," that's what it sounds... [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] that's what it sounds like to me. [cross] Yeah!

Sylvia: [cross] If we want to say, like, where she got the materials, I think maybe, like, left over things from like— Like, stuff that couldn't be repaired into the way it was originally, [cross] like things that aren't like...

Austin: [cross] Yeah, that makes sense.

Sylvia: Like, buildings that are just, like, beyond the point of being, um, able to be made structurally sound again, [cross] or stuff like that. And then she—

Austin: [cross] Yeah, totally. There's lots of that stuff, plus remember there are all those, like... the chains from the digsite hanging— [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] You know, "Cenn, City of Chains," you know. So there's lots of sorts of, like, big structural scaffolding and stuff— There's all sorts of stuff it could be from, construction stuff, everything, you know. So I love that!

Sylvia: [cross] [quietly] Hell yeah!

Austin: [cross] Um. Do you wanna— What's it— Give thought to, like, what it looks like and also I'd love to know what it looks like when you make this. Are you making this... old-fashioned style? Are you doing this with magic? What's the...

Sylvia: It's a bit of both? [**Austin:** Okay.] It's, like, the ma— The way that her magic works is bec— The way I was picturing this—and as an extension of her, like, Spellblade stuff? [**Austin:** Mm-hm.]—she's able to, like, channel the heat into the metal itself as opposed to needing a forge to do it? The way, like, she can channel fire into her sword when she uses that in combat.

Austin: Totally.

Sylvia: And then I imagine that, like, because of the rebuilding effort there are, like, some stations around or, like... like impromptu, like, places where people are working that she's able to also work without making, like, their stay at the inn, [amused] like, super, like, loud [**Austin:** Mm-hm.] and smelling like burned metal and stuff. [chuckles]

Austin: Yeah, that's fun. [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] Yeah, and I'm guessing you're probably still staying in the same place you were staying before, I was thinking about the inn or whatever, but yeah that actually— [**Sylvia:** Mm-hm.] That makes perfect sense. Sure! Um, cool! Which brings us to... Bronte!

Janine: [exclaims] Daydream! Uh. Bronte's gonna... just... just zonk— not zonk out, but you know, just... Sometimes you just wanna get away from it all and you can't [**Austin:** Mm-hm!] 'cause you're in a big dome... Uh, so you just kinda find a place to chill. [**Austin:** Mm-hm.] Lay down some pillows... [cross] Put your sleeve over your eyes... [chuckles]

Austin: [cross] Ah, that sounds great...

Keith: [cross] A vacation from your vacation. [**Austin** chuckles]

Janine: [cross] Think a little bit about stuff.

Austin: What'ya— What'ya daydreaming about?

Janine: [sighs] Uhm... Beachminton...

Austin: Ohh.

Sylvia: [cross] Yeah, that makes sense.

Janine: [cross] Go back to that Beachminton day, you know, it was nice. Everything was different.

Austin: [cross] That sounds great...

Janine: It was victory.

Keith: That was a pre-moled world.

Sylvia: [cross] The golden days...

Janine: [cross] Yeah.

Keith: Pre-MOLE world.

Austin: Yeah, I was gonna say— Mold?! [**Janine** chuckles]

Keith: [cross] [chuckles] Sorry— Mold was still very much part of it.

Sylvia: [cross] Ah, the Draconic Mold battle is gonna suck.

Janine: [cross] Yeah, there is mold.

Austin: Draconic Mold— Draconic Mold must exist...!

Janine: [whinces]

Sylvia: Yeah...

Keith: Wow...

Janine: Anyway, [cross] [reading] once before the next rest—

Sylvia: [cross] [chuckles] The shitty Draconic Landlord.

Keith: [cross] Ye olde Mold.

Austin: Sorry—

Janine: [continues reading] When I lose Hit Points for whatever reason, [cross] you may choose to halve the HP loss instead.

Austin: [cross] Right. Right. That's really useful, love that.

Janine: Uh-huh!

Austin: Alright! Great! Um.

Next days in Cenn [00:35:41]

Austin: So to some degree now we're kind of... back to y'all. Maybe it's the next morning, you know. A kind of... A little breakfast in the inn before going back out. Maybe it's been a couple of days of working and resting and working and resting, as long or short as you want. I don't know how... I don't wanna give you that, because maybe you wanna move right now and rush out the door and go do something, but you know. The world is your oyster in terms of how y'all wanna frame and structure this.

Sylvia: Um. The only other thing I really want to get done is buy something that I wasn't able to before we did, [**Austin:** Sure.] uh, the Cenn stuff? There was a sword at the market that, um... [**Austin:** Hmm.] But it's this— It's called the Spell Sever. It's a one-handed— [reading] It's a Dark, one-handed melee weapon. 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. It's weaker than my two-hander, [**Austin:** Mm-hm.] but I like the effect and, uh... [cross] I've got just enough to get it now.

Austin: [cross] Love it! Yeah.

Keith: Nice. [cross] Uhm.

Sylvia: [cross] So... I'm gonna grab that, if there are no objections to that still being available.

Austin: Works for me!

Sylvia: Hell yeah! Okay!

Antistrophe's shields [00:36:57]

Keith: I also had something I wanted to buy. But I don't have quite enough for it. I was thinking of selling something...

Austin: You could sell stuff!

Keith: Let's see, where— I have my backpack... [cross] Uhm...

Austin: [cross] What would you like to— What are you trying to buy?

Keith: I'm trying to buy what the game calls a Black Belt, which— [reading] your attacks with Brawling weapons deal 5 extra damage. But actually what I wanna do is I wanna have my shields reworked. You know, narratively. I just want— I want the effect of the Black Belt. But I want, um... this to be reflected on my pre-existing shields by, like, adding... [cross] Uh, you know—

Austin: [cross] You want the effect "your attacks with Brawling weapons deal 5 extra damage," you don't want the armor.

Keith: [cross] I want the effect. I just want— Yeah. Exactly.

Austin: 'Cause Black Belt is an armor that has that ability on it, "your Brawling weapons deal 5 extra damage." **[Keith:** It's not—] But what you would like is a shield that has that ability built into it. But what you would really like is your shield, that you're already using, to [cross] have that.

Keith: [cross] Right. I don't wanna just put on a Black Belt, like I would put on my Oasis Fig.

Austin: [cross] Well, they don't have the Black Belt here, anyway. But, you know. [cross] But yeah, maybe you can—

Keith: [cross] Oh, we had talked about it in one of the—

Austin: [cross] I— Yeah. I would say that we probably should find something else that fit— that makes more sense, thematically, that has that ability. That's all. You know.

Keith: Right. That's what I'm saying, yes. [**Austin:** Yeah, yeah.] Like, this is the effect that I want in an item.

Austin: Right.

Keith: Um. And I would love to know how to get it.

Austin: Uhm...! I think you're gonna have to try to, like, find something like that, you know, here. [**Keith:** Yeah.] Like you have to go shopping a little bit. Or you can use— [cross] The other thing is—

Keith: [cross] I love to go shopping. Love to browse.

Austin: The other thing you can actually do is, um... This sounds like a custom weapon? [**Keith:** Okay.] Which is what I think I said at the time, though it isn't— This would be a different thing, this would be... getting a shield that gives you +5 Brawling weapon, Brawling damage, or whatever. [**Keith:** Mm-hm.] Um, I think we talked about this at the time. Also, it is— Is that what it is, shields do Brawling damage? Is that why you want this?

Keith: Shields do [cross] Brawling damage, yes.

Austin: [cross] Okay, yeah. Okay. That's what I wasn't sure about. Um! Yeah! I think that this is... So this would cost you, the Black Belt—which again is armor, importantly—this is why I'm like I have to make sure that we... that we keep it balanced,

right. I'm looking at the... [**Keith**: Right.] So, there's kind of two ways to look at this, one is designing rare—

Keith: [cross] It's armor as in like instead of the armor I'm wearing I'd wear a Black Belt?

Austin: [cross] That is correct, it is not an accessory. That is correct. [**Keith**: Ohh.] The thing you're looking at called Black Belt takes the place of your regular-ass armor. [cross] Which is what...

Keith: [cross] Ohh, that makes sense.

Sylvia: [cross] You're dressing up like a... a guy who just started his Taekwondo lessons.

Austin: [cross] That's— [chuckles] That's right. Yeah. Yeah.

Keith: [cross] Right.

Sylvia: [cross] Is... is what— if you do the Black Belt in the book, [cross] is what I'm picturing.

Keith: [cross] We should be allowed to buy a Black Belt.

Austin: [cross] Which is why I wanna make sure that we balance it correctly, right. 'Cause—

Keith: [cross] That makes sense. I had— It didn't read as armor to me, it read as a belt.

Austin: [cross] Right, I understand.

Janine: [cross] Yeah, 'cause it's called a belt, yeah.

Keith: [cross] Like you would— Like I would put on a cloak. I have the Oasis Fig cloak that has, like, [cross] poison immunity?

Austin: [cross] Yeah. Yeah. Totally, this is not the same thing, right

Keith: Oh no, that's— No.

Austin: And I say that because part of why it's the cost that it is, is that it does not give you any defense or magic defense bonus. [**Keith:** Right.] So... So we have to balance it around that money-wise. You know, it's a thousand, [**Keith:** Yeah.] but part of it being a thousand is...

Keith: A thousand, is that it's bad armor.

Austin: Is that it's bad armor. Is that for... for dirt cheap you can dex and— You can get dex+ and insight + defense and magic defense respectively. Or a flat— Like, right now your armor is what, your armor is...

Keith: It's really good.

Austin: It's 11, uh...

Keith: It's 11. 11 Defense and...

Austin: Nothing magic defense, so it's just your Insight die in magic defense, which is why you're— Wait, why is your magic defense so high? Your magic defense is so high because of some ability you have, presumably. Oh, [cross] it's 'cause of the Runic Shields! It's 'cause you have the shields.

Keith: [cross] Uh, it's 'cause of the Runic Shields. Yeah, the shields.

Austin: [cross] Right, that's what it is. Yes. Yes, yes, yes. Of course.

Janine: But! [**Austin:** Yeah.] You have that thing, your rest action that lets you do an equipment action for free or whatever, right?

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: Mm-hm.

Janine: So theoretically if you got it and were in a situation where you wanted that stat changed and you had, like, a moment, you know, you could swap 'em out.

Austin: [amused] You could— This is true, you could do that!

Janine: You could quick— You just drop your armor and [cross] you got the belt on.

Austin: [cross] Yeah.

Keith: [cross] Just a quick change.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: That's— That's tough, I think that's tough 'cause then I wouldn't be able to swap back.

Austin: [cross] Well you'd have to spend your round.

Janine: [cross] Well you would, but you'd have to take an action.

Keith: [cross] I'd have to spend— Right, I'd have to spend a turn swapping.

Austin: [cross] Yeah, that's right.

Janine: [cross] Well you'd do it at the end when you'd want to get a really good hit in and...

Austin: [cross] Yeah.

Keith: [cross] Yeah.

Sylvia: [cross] It's your limit break.

Janine: [cross] Yeah. [laughs]

Austin: [cross] The—

Keith: [cross] I would rather get a smaller... I would rather get a smaller damage bonus... than... [**Austin:** Right.] have to mess with multiple inventory slots.

Austin: Yeah. The way that the— So what you would like is an accessory that does bonus Brawling damage. [**Keith:** Right.] Ideally. Or— [cross] Or a new shield.

Keith: [cross] Or, like, shields that do what my shields do, or something close to it, plus more damage. ‘Cause my damage output’s very low.

Austin: Right, because you’re invincible.

Sylvia: [laughs]

Keith: [cross] Because I’m invincible.

Austin: [cross] Right. Just wanna makes sure we—

Keith: So that’s why— So I’m just trying to sure up my weaknesses.

Austin: I understand! I understand, yes. Um. And I’m looking through all of our— all of the stuff that is available right now to see, like, some comparisons, right. So for instance, [**Keith:** Yeah.] in the Natural Fantasy book—‘cause I’m sure this is great podcasting—

Sylvia: [cross] It’s actual play!

Austin: [cross] There is a Lid Shield—[chuckles] yeah—which is +2 Defense, 2+ Magic Defense, like your Runic Shields, right?

Keith: Yes.

Austin: And that says, that’s 1500 asta, or 1500 zenit, or whatever it is in the book. [**Keith:** Okay.] And that says when you deal damage with a Delicacy—which is the special thing that is tied to Resource spending from the... the Gourmet class—you deal 5 extra Damage. [**Keith:** Mm-hm. Right.] 5 is like— In the book 5 is what the Damage plus is going to be. You know what I mean, there’s no +1 damage in this game, [**Keith:** Right.] because there’s so much HP, right. [**Keith:** Mm-hm.] Especially as the game continues.

Like the— If you take a look at “Making a rare item” or whatever, weapon up is 2000 cost and it’s [reading] “your attacks with Melee or Ranged (choose one) weapons deal 5 extra Damage.” So that’s 2000. So this will be less than that, because it’s technically only Brawling weapons, but if it’s on the shield and the shield is a Brawling weapon, then it’s always whenever you’re using the shield, you know what I mean. **[Keith: Right, yeah.]** I’m looking— I’m trying to find some other different rare shields to see if there’s another thing that we can compare to. Um... I would love to just find something that is this in one of these many books I have, you know. [cross] And I have many books, so.

Keith: [cross] Yeah, I— I looked around while we were recording and then a little bit after, **[Austin: Yeah.]** and that’s why we— ‘Cause we had not found something... that was exactly right, **[Austin: Yeah.]** although it’s not like we spent an hour looking. **[Austin: Yes. I—]** It was not immediately obvious that there was just like “oh this is what you want, [cross] it’s this +5 Damage.”

Austin: [cross] Mostly I think it’s really expensive because of how generally good it would be, right. **[Keith: Yeah.]** So for instance, again, over in the High Fantasy Atlas, [reading] Shield of Blades, 2000, +2, +2, when you attack with a weapon **[Keith: Mm-hm.]** belonging to the Heavy Spear or Sword category, if the attack has the “multi” property, that attack deals 5 extra Damage. So it’s worth 2000— **[Keith: Right.]** It costs 2000 AND it has to be a Heavy Spear or Sword AND it has to be multi, it can’t just be a regular attack. **[Keith: Right.]** So I think it’s very expensive, the thing that you want. Or it’s a trade-off, right, or we have to drop what the defense bonus is in order for you to get the higher— [cross] You know.

Keith: [cross] Sure. I’m happy to keep saving. I do have some thing— some— I have my— I have a Dragon Scale... [cross] I have the Fleggus Staff...

Austin: [cross] Yeah That’s worth a lot. Yeah, those are worth money. You could start selling those.

Keith: [cross] Uh, I have my Palm Leaf Cape.

Austin: Yeah! Do you have how much those are worth written down anywhere? Did we go over those? [**Keith:** Uh...] We might not have done the cape, what's the cape do?

Keith: The cape is— It gives immunity to poison?

Austin: Okay. That I can figure out.

Keith: Yep. [**Austin:** Um.] The Fleggus Staff is Willpower + Willpower + 5 Physical Damage and— OR, I guess, recover high roll + 15 MP.

Austin: [cross] It has, like, drain... Right, okay, okay.

Keith: Which is, I think, huge.

Austin: Yeah, that's very nice. Uh, alright. [cross] That immunity—

Keith: [cross] And the Dragon Scale I think you said was worth a thousand.

Austin: Yeah, I think that's— I think that that's flatly worth a thousand, I'm pretty sure. That's what I told Dre, because Dre got one on the other side. The Immunity Poison is— You could sell it for... 850. So I think between those— [**Keith:** Okay.] I think it's gonna cost you... Tw—

Keith: Everything I have?

Austin: Everything you— I think it's gonna cost you—to get +2 +2 +5 damage on Brawling weapons, which actually would mean +5 damage on both of your shields...

Keith: Uh so, the shields do not do independent damage, they act together [cross] as a weapon.

Austin: I see. I see.

Keith: Yes.

Austin: So then yeah, +5 on— And you have to use both of them to do...

Keith: Correct.

Austin: Right, okay. Yeah!

Keith: So that's the downside is that it's like, I have to use both of them for it to count as a weapon [cross] and it doesn't count as two weapons, it counts as one.

Austin: [cross] Well... There are other Brawling weapons you can get eventually, right, so.

Keith: [cross] It's not a big downside.

Austin: So, yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. I see. [**Keith:** Yeah.] So then, yeah, I would say—

Keith: Well, my moves— I'm, like— I'm built into keeping that, because I get bonuses [cross] to using two shields. Yeah.

Austin: [cross] Totally. That's your whole thing, yeah. Okay, then, yeah, [**Keith:** Yeah.] I'd say it's gonna be— it's gonna cost you 2000 asta. [**Keith:** Okay.] Which is what these other fancy ones cost. Maybe it should be 25 'cause of how— How it doesn't— Because it doesn't lock you in in the way these other ones do in the same way. You know. [**Keith:** Okay.] I guess Brawling locks you in pretty tight. [cross] Brawling locks you in pretty tight.

Keith: [cross] Brawling locks me in. Yeah.

Austin: And Brawling weapons are only melee— So yeah, let's just say it costs 2000 asta.

Keith: [cross] Okay. I'm happy— I'm happy with that.

Austin: [cross] And I think you're gonna have to— I think you're gonna have to, like... I think you're gonna have to... [hesitates] Here's what I'll say: I think by default it costs 2500, [**Keith:** Yeah.] and I would love to see you haggle someone down for this, you know? [cross] Or find someone who has it on a deal.

Keith: [cross] I'm happy to do that.

Austin: What is it, also, what is it that you're doing? Is maybe the other way to come at this.

Keith: Just to clarify, did we land on, um... Did we land on that I'm altering the shields that I currently have, or that I'm getting new shields? [cross] 'Cause, uh, that changes things.

Austin: [cross] I think it's— I think it's more fun if it's new— if it's something new? [Keith: Yeah.] Or I guess it could be that you're getting your shields customized in some way. [cross] You know?

Keith: [cross] Yeah. Uhm... Uh... You know, I— I like the Runic Shields. [Austin: Yeah.] I'm happy with customizing them. I think, you know, I'm used to magic stuff, you don't just get rid of your magic stuff. [cross] You... You magic it up!

Austin: [cross] Right. Where did you get these shields to begin with?

Keith: What's that?

Austin: Where did you get these shields to begin with?

Keith: Uhm... [sighs] I live— I lived in... the Hundred Burroughs.

Austin: It's true.

Keith: I lived in, you know, basically a... a teacher's dorm [Austin: Mm-hm.] at an academy. And... it was... I think it's not a super martial town, these shields are basic shields. I think that there's just, like, people who roll into town who sell [Austin: Yeah.] off... uh... like, off-class items. They're like— You know, people come in and they're like

Keith (as **traveling salesperson**): Hey you need— D'you need like sword-and-shield-guy stuff? [Austin and Sylvia chuckle quietly][Austin: Yeah.] Anybody here need that this way?

Keith: You know, it's not worth it for them to be there, but they'll roll in, these are the shields that they had. Runic shields! I'm like,

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Ah, I like rune stuff! [**Austin** chuckles] That's kinda my...
Yeah, I'll take the rune one.

Austin: What do the runes say?

Keith: What do the—?! [chuckles]

Austin: What are they? I'm asking you! [cross] What are the runes on the Runic shields?

Sylvia: [cross] They say "juicy."

Keith: Um... I think that they're— they're defensive runes, [**Austin:** I see.] they're like magic— They're, like— They add— They're what gives it magic defense.

Austin: Well then that's what we have to do, right. You have to find someone in town who's some sort of runic master!

Keith: Who carves in more, new runes that are also [cross] attack runes.

Austin: [cross] But without ever crossing out any of the defense runes, right?

Keith: Right, it has to work around... [**Sylvia:** Ohh.]

Austin: [cross] Right, in the empty space, which is really hard to do without it, like, breaking. You know, without fucking up the current runic inscription. [**Keith:** Right.]

Sylvia: Would we be looking for someone who's got the type of mag— What's the— There's a drawing class in one of these games that, like, lets...

Austin: [cross] Oh there is a drawing class!

Janine: [cross] I was just looking at that, yeah.

Sylvia: [cross] I feel like someone doing that type of magic would be who'd be looking for. Um.

Austin: [cross] That's really fun! Yeah, that is the Symbolist.

Sylvia: Yes!

Austin: Yeah, who is like a— [cross] the—

Keith: [cross] We have to find a Symbolist?

Austin: You have to find a Symbolist! Yeah! Um...! I love that! Yeah, give me— give me... like, a Study roll.

Keith: I love to give [cross] a Study roll.

Austin: [cross] I know, you're good at this!

Keith: Yeah. Um, so, just to make sure that I have...

Sylvia: He's an academic!

Austin: [cross] It's true.

Keith: [cross] Alright. I get +3 to this now.

Austin: Ooh! [cross] Is that from... one of your scholar things?

Sylvia: [cross] Hell yeah.

Keith: That's from Focus, [**Austin:** Okay.] [reading] when you perform an open check using Insight + Insight gain a bonus equal to skill level on that check. [**Austin:** Mm-hm.] Um, so that is in Conflict... Study... 3... Submit, there we go. 11!

Austin: 11! Okay, yeah! I think you've heard there is a Symbolist who is working... on the—I have to close all of your sheets so I can look at the map again, [Sylvia chuckles] one second here—um, who is working, let's say... in the rebuilding effort? [**Keith:**

Uh-huh.] Um. You know, I think when you wander up to them you, um... You see... that they are engraving—or not engraving, but doing temporary—they're, like, drawing in ink... new runes onto things like pickaxes and shovels and hammers, to make the tools more durable as they get used, [**Keith**: Right.] to, like, dig through stuff and to make it [cross] so that you can—

Keith: [cross] You can make iron tools act like steel tools.

Austin: That's right. Exactly right, yes. [cross] Um, it's—

Janine: [cross] Can I propose something other than ink for that?

Austin: Please!

Janine: Do you know, I think they're called... Oh, are they called, like, China pencils? Um. They are, like, a sort of waxy...

Austin: Like a grease pencil?

Janine: More like a— Yeah, like a grease pencil. Like a oil, sort of, crayon.

Austin: Right, I know this type of thing.

Janine: That are good for writing on glass and metal and... Uh, I guess— I guess a grease pencil is wax, not... Okay, well, whatever.

Austin: [cross] Yeah, not grease. Yeah.

Keith: [cross] Not grease?

Janine: Yeah, I mean non-porous surfaces but it's... Basically, they're more waterproof. Um. You can, like, scratch them off, but it just feels a little more durable than the ink would be. [cross] And also a little bit more tactile to me? I don't know.

Austin: [cross] Yeah that makes more sense. Yeah, appropriate. Yeah. No, that makes sense, that makes perfect sense. Um.

Keith: And then you bake it in there with magic.

Janine: [cross] Oh...!

Austin: [cross] Then you bake— Well, I think these are actually pretty short. These are, like, the magic is already in the ink or the wax, you know. These are not— This person has to use—this is Phoebe—she has to use her MP every day to do this during this process, so she has been, like, saving. [**Keith:** Okay.] She has to, like... [cross] She can't be in permanent—

Keith: [cross] When she's got spare MP she's stockpiling grease pencils, infused with magic.

Austin: [cross] That's right. That's right. Right, exactly, to be used later. Yeah, it's like prepping—

Janine: [cross] They're already kind of magical looking, [**Keith:** Right.] like they're— There are those ones that have, like, a little string in them.

Austin: [cross] I love that little string.

Janine: [cross] So to sharpen them you have to peel the string and then you, like, peel the stuff down.

Austin: Yeah, yeah. [cross] And so she, uh, she as you—

Janine: [cross] Hm. Whatever. That's magic to me.

Austin: It is magic, it basically is.

Sylvia and Keith: [chuckle]

Austin: Um. You see her approaching, or you approach her. I'd say she is probably in her... her middle ages, grey hair, up in a bun. Also has a little hat on, you know? Like— I think, maybe not up in a bun, it's like in a bun tied low and then a hat.

Keith: Down in a bun.

Austin: Down in a bun. And then, um... You know, I guess, sees you approach and assumes you're just another... another one of these constructions guys. And is like

Austin (as **Phoebe**): Alright, what do ya need?

Keith: Uh, is— Do I know if Phoebe has, like, a shop? Is that how I heard about this, that I just heard that she was here today? Or... [cross] Did I— Was I just pointed in a direction?

Austin: [cross] Yeah, you were asking around, you were asking around “can someone upgrade my shields”?

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah, I think someone said

Austin (as **Cenn NPC**): Oh, you're gonna wanna see Phoebe for that. She's over at, you know, she's in digsite— Or, you know, Dig-West near the old, you know, near the old refinery.

Austin: Or whatever.

Keith: Right. Uh.

Austin: Mm-hm!

Keith: [chuckles]

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): [cross] Uh, hi, are you Phoebe?

Austin: [cross] That's one of the districts, Dig-West, Dig-East, yeah.

Austin (as **Phoebe**): Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. What is that you need?

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): I was told I could get, um, some shield work? [cross]
Upgrade to my shields?

Austin (as **Phoebe**): [cross] Some shield work...! Uh, [hesitant] whoo, those things. I don't know, what do you need 'em for?

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Blocking. And attacking.

Austin (as **Phoebe**): Who are you attacking?!

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): [stammers] I— I guess, en— enemies!

Austin: Just looking around. [**Keith** chuckles]

Austin (as **Phoebe**): Aren't the enemies outside? You're not going outside?!

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): I was just outside, yeah, we came— Yesterday we were fighting that mole.

Austin: She like... She rolls up her sleeves, then reaches inside of the—she has like a painter's apron on—and produces a pair of glasses and looks at you and says

Austin (as **Phoebe**): [in awe] You were fighting the mole...!

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): [cross] Yeah.

Austin (as **Phoebe**): [cross] I've heard about you. Um. You're from the Burroughs.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Yeah, mm-hm!

Austin: She is a... What type of— what type of cool Elf will she be... Um... We haven't gotten any Ice Elves, or— or Earth Elves, [**Sylvia**: Mm-hm!] [cross] or Shadow Elves...

Keith: [cross] We should have a... an Elf die.

Austin: I think she's a Shadow Elf, I think she's a Dark Elf. She's from Umbexia, Shadow Spired. She has, like, a... One, I think her shadow is literally on a very slight— It's the other way around, I think her shadow moves before she does.

Keith: [cross] Ugh!

Sylvia: [cross] Ah that's so good.

Austin: [cross] Which is a little disconcerting. Um. But, so like— She's, like, snapping her fingers in her shadow when she's trying to remember your name, before her fingers start snapping.

Keith: Mm-hm.

Austin (as **Phoebe**): Antistrophe!

Austin: She says.

Austin (as **Phoebe**): Right! Um...

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Mm-hm!

Austin (as **Phoebe**): Well, I— You don't want me to just use the old pencil on that.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): No. I was hoping for, like, a permanent— like, permanent.

Sylvia: Like a sharpie. [**Keith:** Yeah.]

Austin (as **Phoebe**): Alright, follow me to my workshop.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Great!

Austin: Uh, begins leading you, you know, through the rubble of this part of the city, to an actual studio that she has. Which itself looks like it hasn't— It doesn't— It's hard to tell if the earthquake affected it, it's kind of a mess in there! Except for the workspace,

which is, like, the actual desks, like, the areas that she's doing her inscription on are pretty clean, but the rest of it? Is like— it's like a pile of junk. There's a little bit of hoarding going on here. There are old books, there's a lot of stuff with bad runes written on it. Lots of stuff that's like—

Keith: Like swearwords?

Austin: Yeah, [chuckling] lots of curse words. I mean, there might be some stuff that is literally cursed in there. [**Keith:** Right.] But there is— You know, there is stuff that's like the runes didn't work, there's student material in there, there's lots of stuff [**Keith:** Okay.] that's just like... vases and... [cross] frames, painting frames.

Keith: [cross] Yeah, you gotta try out a rune and go, does this rune work? And then you throw... throw a vase against the wall to see if your "don't break" rune works and it doesn't.

Austin: [cross] Yeah, uh-huh, sure, a lot of that stuff. To see if it don't— That's right. Yeah. yeah.

Austin (as **Phoebe**): Alright, put 'em up, put 'em up!

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Okay!

Austin: And like—

Keith: I hold up my hands.

Austin (as **Phoebe**): [exasperated] No— [sighs] On the table. [**Keith** laughs] [cross] Let me take a look at these.

Keith: [cross] I heave the giant shields onto the table.

Austin (as **Phoebe**): [cross] Ah, and who did this work? Who did this?

Austin: Like, pointing at the runes.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): I— I think— I think, just, I don't know, it was on a shelf.

Austin (as **Phoebe**): It was on a shelf?

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Well, it was on a rack, I guess. There was a whole rack of 'em. They're just...

Austin (as **Phoebe**): No... Something like this isn't just put on the shelf. Let me see here.

Austin: And like, leans forward, takes her glasses off and pulls up a jeweler's... What is that called, why am I blanking on this...

Keith: [cross] A loupe.

Austin: [cross] A loupe, thank you. Pulls up a loupe from a different pocket in her apron. Um.

Austin (as **Phoebe**): Apolodoris made this.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Oh. Okay.

Austin (as **Phoebe**): Yeah, you know. Does alright work.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): That's good. Alright's pretty good. I've done pretty good.

Austin (as **Phoebe**): He's no Phoebe... You know.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): [cross] That's less good.

Sylvia: [cross] I love her...

Austin (as **Phoebe**): Let's see what we can do. So— so you want what?

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Uh, I just— They're great shields, but they don't really pack a punch.

Austin (as **Phoebe**): My friend. They're shields...! You— [stammers]

Austin: [cross] Hand on your shoulder.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): [cross] I got really good with the shields and I never quite got the sword [cross] to work.

Austin (as **Phoebe**): [cross] I get it, I get it. When you stop riding a pony you start riding a horse. You know?

[pause]

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): [cross] No...

Austin (as **Phoebe**): [cross] And you don't expect it to swim for you.

[Sylvia chuckles]

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): [hesitant] Y— Yeah...

Keith: I'm doing like calculation in my head to see if that makes sense. [Austin chuckles]

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Sure, yeah!

Keith: It doesn't.

Austin: [chuckles]

Austin (as **Phoebe**): What you want... is a sword or an axe. Maybe a hammer.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Bashing with the shields has been really good!

Austin (as **Phoebe**): Well it sounds like you don't have a problem!

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Well, it's been— I would just like to be even b— even more good.

Austin (as **Phoebe**): Even more good, okay, let me take—

Austin: Loupe out again.

Janine: Phoebe talking herself out of a sale here.

Austin: She's busy! [cross] She's got other work to do. [**Janine** chuckles]

Austin (as **Phoebe**): [cross] Do you—

Janine: [cross] We're all busy.

Austin: [chuckling] That's so true.

Sylvia: [chuckles]

Austin (as **Phoebe**): You want— You want these to hit harder? Hit more?

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Yeah. [cross] Hit more.

Austin (as **Phoebe**): You want them to be more accurate, you want them to be—

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): No, no. I want to be able to blow up a rock when I smash. Instead of to chip it. I can chip a rock, I can crack a rock in two, but I can't... I want smithereens.

Austin (as **Phoebe**): You want smithereens.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): I'm looking for smithereens.

Austin (as **Phoebe**): Okay, let me... [sighs] Is that like sardines?

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): No, it's like rubble.

Austin (as **Phoebe**): Well, we got a lot of that.

Sylvia: The rock fish is another season.

Austin: [cross] [amused] Oh, I see. [**Keith** chuckles]

Janine: [cross] Yeah, I was gonna say we can't do— we can't do fish rocks again.

Austin: We can't do fish rocks again, so true.

Austin (as **Phoebe**): Uh, alright, uh. I guess I could— I could see what I can do. I can... Maybe I could fit something in between the... Do you see this curve here?

Austin: And like, begins to point at a curve that you didn't really notice that's in one of the runes that's on this thing. [**Keith**: Uh-huh.] And you realize that, like, the curve— I think she says, like

Austin (as **Phoebe**): See how the curve appears here and here and here, in all the different runes.

Austin: And there's like a bunch of different runes, and this one curve does appear again and again. [**Keith**: Yeah.] It's almost like there's, like, a "B" curve, you know like a curve at the bottom of a "B," a lowercase "b" or something. [**Keith**: Right.] That really doesn't— It isn't its own rune, but it shows up again and again. Um, and she says

Austin (as **Phoebe**): That's a warding curve, a curve like that. You can ward with a bunch of— Or you can inscribe a bunch of different runes and it's the type of linework that you use that ends up giving it the effect, you know, the punch you might be looking for. And a round curve like this is gonna give you protection, sort of like the dome that Castine built for us, right?

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

Austin (as **Phoebe**): Now. Do you— Can you take a guess at what type of runes might throw a little extra heat on the job? Not literal heat, heat would be different altogether, but you know, a little extra force. With the punch.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): You mean a non-warding rune, [cross] like a hurting rune.

Austin (as **Phoebe**): [cross] Yeah, what type of shape might you think that that would that need to be?

[**Sylvia** snorts]

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Uh, like a point.

Austin (as **Phoebe**): Like a point, like a point. And so it's hard to get the points in without ruining the curves.

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

Austin (as **Phoebe**): And here's— Let me tell ya, it's gonna be really hard to add more curves if you wanna add more curves. You know what's easy to do? You already have the curves, you know what would be really easy? [cross] For me anyway. Maybe not Apolodoris.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): [cross] What?

Austin (as **Phoebe**): Adding more curves. You know, you just—

Austin: And then, like, with a regular pencil on, like, a sheet of butcher paper draws, like, a circle and then draws another concentric circle, you know, into it. And then she goes

Austin (as **Phoebe**): Now watch this!

Austin: And then does one out of it, you know?

Austin (as **Phoebe**): The curves, they sit with one another. [cross] You understand.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): [cross] You can stack a curve.

Austin (as **Phoebe**): You can stack a curve! You can't stack a curve and a spike.

Janine: You can draw a triangle in a circle.

Austin: You're not here, but absolutely you could.

Janine: No. [chuckles]

Sylvia and **Keith**: [laughs]

Janine: I'm saying this for Keith's benefit.

Austin: Yeah.

Austin (as **Phoebe**): But you could stack so many circles! [stammers] I hate to lose the canvas. But I'll do it...!

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): You think you'd lose the canvas?

Austin (as **Phoebe**): No I— There's— There's space— There's... What we could do is, really over time, over many inscriptions, inscribe over and over again more and more of this warding curve. We could even add some additional thing, so maybe you do want to be, uh, cool in the heat, maybe you do want to be warm on the cold. Maybe you don't like poison so much, these are all variations on the curve.

Austin: She's doing it on the butcher paper, right. [**Keith**: Right.] And so she's, like— She's doing a curve, but like, then it loops in just a little bit at the edge and it kind of like— it kind of almost has like a twirl at the end to indicate the poison, or kind of at the very end it spikes up a little bit to be like crinkly fire, or something.

Sylvia: Can I suggest something she does when she's doing the fire warding.

Austin: [cross] Please.

Sylvia: [cross] Is just she holds, like— tries to light it on fire, and it just doesn't— it just like doesn't do anything.

Austin: [cross] And it just— The paper doesn't light up, yeah, perfect.

Austin (as **Phoebe**): You see?

Keith: [cross] [laughs]

Sylvia: [cross] It's just like the fire's avoiding the paper.

Austin: Yeah!

Austin (as **Phoebe**): This I can do— And you can just keep doing it, it's beautiful. But you draw the spike in there, you draw the point? The point makes it harder to then get another whole curve, a whole arc across. 'Cause the point needs to basically either touch or emerge from the curve. But it's fine. We can do it, we can do it. It's not a problem. I'm just— I'm telling you what it is. It's gonna limit—

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Are you sure it's not a problem?

Austin (as **Phoebe**): They're your runic shields! And it's just Apolodoris, you know.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Sure. I mean, it's been a good shield.

Austin (as **Phoebe**): I bet. Some shields are for using... and some shields are for life.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): If they're for life they're also for using.

Austin (as **Phoebe**): No... [cross] These shields are gonna break one day.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): [cross] No?

Austin (as **Phoebe**): I can't tell you what day. But I can see the... the cracks already forming.

Keith: I look really close. [chuckles]

Austin: Give me a study.

Keith: Uh, let's see, okay. Study? [pause] 12.

Austin: Alright! There are—let me take a look at your sheet really quick—I believe 0 out of— Uh, when does Ruinbringer trigger?

Keith: Uh... 9?

Austin: There are 0 out of 9 cracks currently!

Keith: Okay. [cross] [laughs]

Austin: [cross] When Ruinbringer triggers these shields are going to break.

Keith: [cross] Okay.

Austin: [cross] [ominous] You can feel it. It does not feel good.

Keith: But I can feel that there aren't any cracks.

Austin: Hmm, you can— there are no— [cross] There is nothing structural.

Keith: [cross] You can feel— These are— These are... I can feel the cracks of the future.

Austin: These are faded cracks. [cross] Yeah.

Keith: [cross] Right. I guess I go

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): I can feel the cracks!

Austin (as **Phoebe**): I thought you might be able to. You didn't always used to be a... shield wielder, huh?

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): No, I lost all my magic...

Austin (as **Phoebe**): You lost all your magic, what the hell is wrong with you?

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Yeahhh, I had a bunch of magic, [cross] lost it all.

Austin (as **Phoebe**): [cross] Where'd you lose it?

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): [scoffs] I don't know.

Austin (as **Phoebe**): Did you check your couch cushions? What are you— [cross] What are you talking about you lost it?

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): [cross] It's a when, it was a when more than a where.

Austin (as **Phoebe**): Oh.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): But I guess I was in my office.

Austin (as **Phoebe**): Bad place to lose your magic.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Yeah, I was surrounded by all my magic shit!

Austin (as **Phoebe**): Huh, you know, this changes things, for me a little bit. I understand the situation.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): [pause] You do?

Austin (as **Phoebe**): 2000 asta.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Alright!

Austin (as **Phoebe**): And a couple days.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): And a couple days. [cross] 2000 and a couple days.

Austin (as **Phoebe**): [cross] Yeah. Yeah.

Keith: I start p— piling things out from my pockets onto the table. [cross] Uh. [laughs]

Austin (as **Phoebe**): [cross] [chuckles excitedly] Wh— What have we got here!

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): [stammers] Well I— Do you take— Do you take stuff?

Janine: [cross] [laughs]

Austin (as **Phoebe**): [cross] My friend, look around the room!

Sylvia: [cross] Do you accept the barter system?

Austin (as **Phoebe**): Look around the room!

Austin: [chuckling] Broken vase. [cross] Yeah.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): [cross] It looks like you take stuff.

Austin (as **Phoebe**): I do take stuff! [cross] But what type of stuff is this?

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): [cross] Alright, how much— how much for this, I've got a Fleggus staff.

Austin: What's it— Uh, tell Austin what it does again. [cross] The MP drain, right?

Keith: [cross] Willpower + willpower + 5 damage physical and also recover 15— Sorry, recover high roll + 15 MP.

Austin: High roll, 15— 15! MP, okay, yeah.

Austin (as **Phoebe**): I think that's probably... I could give you 600 for this.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Alright. And... how 'bout this.

Keith: And I take out the Dragon Scale from the mole.

Austin (as **Phoebe**): [whistles] You get this from that big mole!

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

Austin (as **Phoebe**): [pauses] 1000. Easy. Just a matter of [cross] 400 left.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): [cross] Alright. Alright.

Keith: And then I take a stack of coins of asta and I stick it on the counter.

Austin (as **Phoebe**): Alright! [sighs]

Janine: It'd be fun if she didn't take asta.

Austin: Yeah, [chuckles] stuff only!

Keith and Janine: [laughs]

Keith: I only take stuff!

Janine: I guess I can melt this down, I dunno...

Austin: [chuckling] Yeah, [**Keith** chuckles] put this over here in the melt-downer and just give me some stacks of metal. [**Keith:** Yeah.]

Sylvia: She does kind of have that vibe. [**Keith** chuckles]

Janine: I'd like to put a rune on each of these coins and then I chuck 'em at cars.

Austin: [chuckling] That's— That's right.

Janine: Horses. Not horses, carts.

Austin: Carts. Yeah. [chuckling] Not at the horses themselves, that'd be kind of fucked up. [**Janine:** No...] [**Keith** chuckles] [sighs] Um, yeah!

Austin (as **Phoebe**): Alright! Two days, I'm gonna be ready for you.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): [cross] Alright! Two days. If you're happy to do anything about the cracks, then you know, [cross] that'd be good.

Austin (as **Phoebe**): [cross] You want the cracks sooner?!

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): No, no! I want them longer.

Austin (as **Phoebe**): [cross] Oh, well then, no—No, that's not possible.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Oh, okay.

Austin (as **Phoebe**): Don't... Don't try to put it off.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Don't try to put it off...?

Austin (as **Phoebe**): It'll break bigger.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): If I try to put it off it'll break bigger...

Austin (as **Phoebe**): Something like—

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): I don't even know how I would try.

Austin (as **Phoebe**): Something like this... You don't get some... I've seen people. They come in. I say there's cracks in this. They say no, no, no, no, no, it's treated me well for years. I say there's cracks in this! They say well, maybe I'll put a glaze on it, the glaze'll reinforce it. In the end it all just blows up bigger.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Well. Yeah, it's not that kinda crack.

Austin (as **Phoebe**): It's not that type of crack. Two days.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Alright, two days.

Austin: Two days! It sounds like [cross] a farewell now, in my brain, yeah.

Keith: [cross] Two days. Yeah. Two days to you, too.

Austin: [chuckling] Two days to you, too, exactly.

[everyone chuckles]

Austin: Alright! Check back in with Phoebe in two days!

Keith: Great.

Janine: You should start saying that to people on Friday, like at your work or whatever.

Keith: [cross] Two days!

Austin: [cross] Oh, that's good, two days, yeah, see you in two days.

Janine: [cross] Yeah, two days. It's kind of like a— It's kind of like a good luck thing 'cause it's like, you don't wanna see them on the weekend. [**Austin**: Yeah.] You wanna have a nice weekend away from work. [**Austin**: Yeah.] [**Keith**: Yeah.] Makes you think...

Keith: Or it's like a threat. Like... Only in two days [**Sylvia:** Two days.] will you be back at this. [**Austin** and **Janine** chuckle] It's almost like the weekend never happened. [**Austin:** Yeah...] [**Janine** sighs] Two days...

Austin: Two days...

Next steps [01:08:15]

Austin: Alright! Um! Who else is up to some stuff?

Sylvia: I'm... not entirely sure what I'd be doing right now.

Janine: [cross] Yeah, same.

Austin: [cross] Yeah, let's talk about what you'd be doing. What's— What's the play? Last thing that we saw, storywise big time was that... Kley got kidnapped, or arrested by the Hexcloaks who vanished. [**Sylvia:** Mm-hm.] Um... And then the— all the destruction and stuff. You know? I think that Delani is being— You maybe checked in with Delani, Delani is... Or maybe you haven't, you tell me actually.

Sylvia: I think I would have. [**Austin:** Yeah.] I don't think I would've just like... assumed she's recovering fine after what happened, especially given the fact that she did come here to turn into a statue.

Austin: Yeah. Um. [**Sylvia:** Um.] And I think kind of given that, the type of care she is receiving is about reducing pain. Um... But is not... There are some deeper things with her, [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] that are probably beyond... simply getting medical attention at this point, you know. She's old. [**Sylvia:** Mm-hm.] She is dying. [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] Um. And I think that if you got to see her again she immediately asks about Kley and— and whether you have any leads, you know that type of thing. I don't know that we have to zoom in 'cause it's just that type of, [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] you know, question.

Sylvia: [hesitates] Do— I can't remember, did we have a place that they were taking Kley? [cross] I feel like I remember something about that.

Austin: [cross] They vanished, effectively.

Sylvia: [cross] They vanished, okay.

Austin: [cross] They— You weren't— You didn't see them. What you heard after the fact was, while you were fighting the mole, Kley tried to assassinate Aegir. [**Sylvia:** Mm-hm.] Aegir and the Hexcloaks arrested them, arrested Kley, and then they... disappeared and— and you lost them. You know, [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] like, no one knows where they went.

Sylvia: Yeah. Alright! Then, unfortunately, I do not have good news for her.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: Um. But you know. I keep her company [**Austin:** Mm-hm.] over the next couple of days, while we're— before we can leave the city.

Austin: Eh it's not clear when you can leave the city...!

Sylvia: Well, yeah, but like... until we start planning to leave [cross] the city, you know what I mean.

Austin: [cross] Yeah, I see. Yup. Gotcha.

Sylvia: Um. 'Cause I imagine we're not doing much of anything until... these shields are done.

Austin: Good a guess as any. Yeah, I don't— [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] It's up to y'all what you wanna do. Maybe that's— this is a Team ABC meeting type situation.

Sylvia: Yeah. But—

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Uh, hey did you— Were you trying to get— Are you gonna try to get your friend out?

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Uh, that is the plan, yeah. I just need to narrow down where they could've taken them.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Oh, they're gone...

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

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Okay... Well, [cross] I think it could be—

Janine (as **Bronte**): [cross] Gone like outside of the orb or...?

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Like gone from Cenn, yeah.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Could... Could they have gotten out of the orb? It's not their orb, it's Castine's orb.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): I— Listen, we've been in this city for a couple of days since the orb's been up and we have not seen hide nor hair of any of the other [cross] Hexcloaks here.

Austin: [cross] I mean, have you investigated at all?

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Well, no actually, that's a good point. Maybe I should!

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

Janine (as **Bronte**): [cross] They could just be in a cellar somewhere.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): [cross] Thank you omniscient voice!

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): That's...

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): [cross] That is true.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): [cross] That's what I'm saying, underground...!

Janine (as **Bronte**): Uh-huh. [cross] In the mine, in the mole holes, or I don't know.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): [cross] That would be really funny given... Yeah.

Austin: In the mole holes...

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Tricky... Tricky tricky.

Austin: The mole cannot make hole— Thankfully the mole cannot get through the orb, the shield around [cross] the city.

Janine: [cross] I meant like preexisting mole holes.

Keith: [cross] Well, the shields go down, too.

Austin: [cross] Preexisting mole holes, yes.

Janine: [cross] Like, like ancient mole... [**Sylvia:** Yeah.]

Austin: Ancient mole holes...

Sylvia: [cross] Tunnels...

Janine: [cross] Some sort of ancient... mole hole.

Keith: I have vague memories of saying that the mole hole goes— or sorry the— the wall goes down. [cross] Into the ground.

Austin: [cross] The wall does go down. But to Janine's point, that wall is new. New wall, [**Keith:** Right.] old holes.

Keith: Oh, you're s— Okay, I understand, there's an old mole hole, that is [cross] in the city.

Janine: [cross] Could be!

Austin: [cross] Potentially. [**Sylvia:** Yeah.]

Keith: [cross] Could be potentially.

Janine: [cross] Not— Not confirmed. Theoretical.

Keith: [cross] Right, yeah, yeah.

Austin: [cross] Unconfirmed mole holes.

Keith: Unconfirmed mole hole— And people can also build into the ground!

Austin: [facetiously hesitant] No...

Sylvia: [cross] What?!

Keith: [cross] Actually a lot of that happens here in the city, right?

Austin: [cross] No... I think mostly [chuckling] it's moles.

Keith: [chuckling] Mostly it's moles. [**Janine** laughs]

Austin: I'm a mole truther, [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] [**Keith** laughs] [chuckling] I don't think anyone's ever dug a hole by themselves.

Sylvia: [cross] What— Shovels are an affront.

Keith: [cross] Yeah. Have you heard about basements... [**Austin** chuckles] That's all [cross] moles...

Austin: [cross] It's all moles.

Keith: Basements are all moles...

[pause]

Sylvia: Yeah! What else would they be.

Austin: Yeah.

Investigation in Cenn [01:12:30]

Sylvia: I do think that we have figured out what to do now, though, is to look for traces or clues to where the Hexcloaks went and where they took Kley.

Austin: A good— a good thought.

Keith: Uh, if you— If we could get to Castine, that might help.

Sylvia: Is that possible right now? 'Cause Castine is still actively defending the city [cross] right?

Austin: [cross] Yeah, that's— What you were told by the kind of high priest, the high cleric of Castine, Athen; Athen said that Castine is like... in a state of constant focus [Sylvia: Yeah.] of mending and keeping the shield up basically.

Keith: [cross] Right.

Janine: [cross] Yeah, we should probably not... [chuckles]

Sylvia: [cross] It could be worth it— We could talk to him, though— Or them? Athen's pronouns? [cross] Do we have those?

Austin: Athen... Athen... I think Athen was he/him?

Sylvia: Okay.

Austin: I think I said he/him. I think it's he/him in the— in the episode description.

Sylvia: 'Cause... I mean, if we can't talk to— to Castine [Austin: Yeah.] themselves, like... I think we probably have made ourselves a little more trustworthy to [cross] the people who work at the temple.

Austin: [cross] For sure. Yeah. Um. Yeah, you know I— We don't... We don't need to... You did talk to Athen last time, so I'm just gonna summarize what Athen said as I remember it, [Sylvia: Cool!] so that we don't need to rework material that the audience maybe just heard but has been a while for us. [Sylvia: Mm-hm.] Which is, Athen said they took Kley away and no one's seen them since then. And I think that's probably what Athen knows. [Keith: Right.] Where they took Kley, I don't think he knows. But they did— You know, it's not like... [Sylvia: Okay.] I don't think I said "and then they

disappeared into a bolt of white light,” you know what I mean. So they did go somewhere, but no one knows where they went to.

Keith: Right. And by somewhere... somewhere could include somewhere in the city?

Austin: [hesitates] Sure, but no one’s seen them, [cross] it’s not like—

Janine: [cross] Somewhere is somewhere. [**Keith:** Right.]

Austin: Yeah, yeah. They’ve been— They vanished. You know, [cross] they disappeared is what I think Athen said.

Keith: [cross] They vanished.

Sylvia: [cross] Mm-hm.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): What about uh... What about your friend— your temple friend?

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): I’d have to write a letter. He’s not in the city, but I could send a correspondence to him.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Oh, letter.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Yeah, it wouldn’t be [cross] an instant—

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): I thought the letter was from this city, [cross] when we got it.

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

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): [cross] Got it, okay.

Austin: Yeah, where is Bartolo Temples at?

Sylvia: Um... Could— [cross] Um, did we have...?

Austin: [cross] I don’t remember if we ever wrote that down...

Sylvia: No, I don't think we did. I always sort of figured he'd be wherever the Hexcloak, like, [cross] main headquarters are.

Austin: [cross] Base is. Yeah. [**Keith:** Yeah.]

Sylvia: Yeah. But I don't know if we ever defined that either.

Austin: Well, we didn't 'cause the Elevation League is weird. And there's like [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] the nine city states. It might be the case that the Hexcloaks train in a different place. [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] You know. That there's like a... What's it called in *The Witcher*? Castle... Mor...

Sylvia: [cross] Oh...

Janine: [cross] School? Oh, Castle Morg— Morgen? Morgaine? [cross] Mor...den...

Austin: [cross] Morgaine.. Mor— Mor... It's something like that.

Keith: [cross] This is— Okay, I know what you're talking about.

Sylvia: [cross] Something like that.

Janine: [cross] Mor— Murten...

Austin: Morgraig...

Janine: [cross] Whatever.

Sylvia and **Keith:** [cross] More Greg?!

Austin: [chuckles] Morgraig! Morhen! Morhen?

Keith: [laughs]

Janine: Kaer Morhen!

Austin: Kaer Morhen. Morgraig is different. It was the— It became the seat of the order of the Witchers, [cross] but I don't think it always was.

Janine: [cross] You know the shit about the different schools isn't even in the books.

Austin: I'm well aware.

Janine: That's all [cross] video game stuff, it's crazy.

Austin: [cross] He's mad about it, he hates it, he hates—

Janine: He's sooo mad about it.

Austin: It's so [cross] funny to me.

Keith: [cross] Tell me— I don't even remember, tell me about the different schools?

Janine: Cat School, uh...

Austin: Wolf School. [cross] You know how—

Janine: [cross] Snake?

Keith: [cross] Got it.

Austin: [cross] Yeah, you know how he has, like, the necklace that's like [deep, serious voice] "I'm from the Wolf School... [**Keith:** Right.] of the Witchers" or whatever.

Keith: That's not in the books? [**Janine:** Yeah...]

Austin: That's not in the books and he's mad about it. [**Janine:** Yeah...]

Keith: He hates it?

Austin: He hates it. [**Janine:** Yeah...]

Keith: Does it even do anything in the game?

Austin: [cross] Yeah, there's like different—

Janine: [cross] They have, like, different specialties.

Austin: Yeah, exactly, there's different specialties and if you get, like, the Griffin armor you're better at ranged attacks or whatever. You know? Or whatever.

Keith: Sure.

Austin: Fast, you're fast mode. You know... And bear is strong.

Keith: [cross] Alright.

Sylvia: [cross] Mm-hm. It is.

Janine: [cross] It is kind of stupid if you think about it...

Austin: [chuckles] [cross] It's— It's kind of—

Keith: [cross] It's definitely kind of stupid, but welcome to video games. [**Janine** chuckles] [**Sylvia:** Yeah.]

Austin: But it's kind of like— it is kind of the opposite of the way the Witchers I feel like maybe— You know, when I think about the Witcher it's like, I'm going to— I know the right way to fight a monster. And sometimes that's heavy armor [**Janine:** Mm-hm. Yeah.] and it's— and it's, you know, poison [**Keith:** Right.] [cross] and sometimes it's light armor and it's crossbow.

Janine: [cross] And also, if you're gonna— [**Keith:** I agree, yeah.] If you're gonna, like, steal a kid, [Austin chuckles] and put them through training that might kill them, why would you be like alright, we're gonna take you to the school for fast people.

Austin: [laughs]

Keith: [cross] It is—

Janine: [cross] And you're gonna learn how to be fast or die.

Austin: [sighs]

Keith: [cross] It is—

Janine: [cross] It just seems like a waste. [chuckles]

Austin: [laughs]

[pause]

Keith: I haven't played— I haven't played *The Witcher* since *The Witcher 3* came out, I wonder how that... feels to play in 2025.

Austin: Great question. [cross] Uh—

Janine: [cross] He was nice to his horse and I like that.

Austin: He was. [**Sylvia:** Hmm.]

Keith: He was nice to his... series of horses?

Sylvia: [cross] It's Roach.

Janine: [cross] They're all the same name, though, 'cause they're [chuckling] interchangeable...

Austin: [cross] Well. They're all the same name, that's right.

Keith: Right, they're all the same name.

Austin: [cross] Yeah, [hesitates] yeah.

Janine: [cross] [sighs] Anyway...

Austin: [cross] Alright!

Sylvia: [cross] They're reincarnations of the same horse, [cross] to me.

Austin: [cross] Hmmm, okay.

Janine: [cross] Hmm, mm-hm, mm-hm.

Sylvia: [cross] That's— that's my belief.

Austin: I think it's in this— this island that has nothing on it, to the north. To the west, [cross] northwest of Billough? You know. This feels like here.

Sylvia: [cross] I've— Yeah. I was gonna ask about that, I wasn't sure if you had, like, plans for what that was or...

Austin: [amused] I actually sort of did, which is I actually imagined that both of those—that Billough and the big island next to it, to the northwest of it—are actually floating in— they're like sky islands? And the western one, [**Sylvia:** Oohh.] the northwestern one is like wild, it's like wilderness up there, it's like jungle. And I know this doesn't make any sense because it's very north, there's snow to the east of it. But it's magic. It's a [cross] magic isle?

Keith: [cross] Yeah, it's also closer to the sun!

Austin: [cross] It's closer to the sun, exactly. And it's humid air, [**Sylvia:** Mm-hm, mm-hm!] magical humid air is there.

Keith: Right, the warm air rises.

Austin: [chuckles] That's right, the warm air rises. It's really warm high up. But, [cross] uh...

Keith: [cross] It's really warm high up, yeah.

Austin: [cross] I mean it is really warm high up, but you have to get really high before it gets warm again. You know, it gets cold first and then it gets warm again. But it's— [**Keith:** Yeah.] it's just magically warm up there. So I think it's, like, jungle up there. And maybe in the jungle is the Hexcloak base.

Sylvia: That rules!

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: They've got an enclave!

Austin: They've got an enclave...! I'm gonna add it to the map, Hexcloak Enclave. And then I'm gonna make it, like, a cool font [cross] instead of this boring one.

Sylvia: [cross] Oh, it's gonna be such a fun dungeon.

Austin: Yeah, uh-huh.

Sylvia: [chuckles]

Janine: But anyway, [cross] back to the—

Keith: [cross] I didn't even see... Which floating thing? Oh, the floating isle [cross] above Billough?

Austin: [cross] Up here, and then to the northwest of it there's the... Yeah.

Sylvia: [cross] Yeah.

Keith: [cross] Okay, I see it. Got it.

Austin: Anyway. So yeah, there is that, that's where Bartolo Temples is. Kind of far away.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Kind of far away.

Janine: Mm-hm.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): I can try and, like, send a message to him, but like I said it wouldn't— [cross] it wouldn't be—

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): It would not be a fast or...

Janine (as **Bronte**): Can— Can we just, like, rent a dog?

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

[Austin snorts]

Janine (as **Bronte**): Like rent a dog, like find a dog that smells stuff and just like...

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): [cross] Oh!!

Austin: [cross] Ohh!

Janine (as **Bronte**): You know. [cross] Like do something, like do something right now. [chuckles]

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): [cross] Like a— You wanna get a hound. You want to borrow a hound.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): [cross] Yeah, like a— like a bloodhound!

Sylvia: I'm so— [**Janine** chuckles] I got so confused, but I was like, [**Keith**: I—] is this like a type of messenger thing that I'm not aware of? [**Austin** sighs]

Janine: [cross] [chuckling] No.

Keith: [cross] Janine, I— I got it right away, I knew the whole time that what you wanted was to borrow a hound.

Janine: Uh-huh.

Austin: [cross] Huh!

Janine: [cross] Yeah, yeah. Someone surely has a dog that smells things. [**Austin**: Yeah!] Maybe not like a professional dog that smells things, but that's what rolls are for.

Austin: That is what rolls are for.

Keith: Yeah. I think it might be worth also talking— finding— thinking of someone to talk to that's in the city.

Austin: [cross] A hound, perchance?

Sylvia: [cross] Talk to... Well, the hound obviously. [cross] But also...

Keith: [cross] Oh yeah, talk to the hound.

Sylvia: [cross] The mayor had dealings with the Hexcloaks and might know something [cross] about where they went. Um.

Austin: [cross] The mayor did have— Yeah, the mayor did.

Keith: [cross] The mayor. Maybe—

Austin: The mayor who was, like, kind of a mewling... [cross] sycophant.

Janine: [cross] Also...

Austin: Yeah?

Janine: Also... We happen to know some... people who are connected in town... [pause] The Dessert Brothers.

Austin: [chuckles] That's true. You do know the Dessert Brothers.

Keith: The Dessert Brothers know everyone!

Austin: They do know everyone.

Sylvia: You talk about them like they're the Mob.

Austin: Eh, [cross] that's kind of the energy sometimes! [**Keith** laughs]

Janine: [cross] Yeah. Exact— And that's useful, [**Austin** and **Sylvia:** Yeah.] [chuckling] in this exact circumstance.

Austin: [cross] Oh, they've given out so much free ice cream over the last couple of days. [cross] To children.

Keith: [cross] It's on the house.

Janine: [cross] Aw...

Austin: It's on the house— That's what it says, [cross] they have big— big signs that just say, it's on the house... The Dessert Brothers.

Keith: [cross] Hey, it's on the house.

Austin: And like signed, the Dessert Brothers.

Sylvia: I... love them.

Keith: [cross] Scent strong.

Austin: [cross] You know, like, when you're in, like... Janine, we visited Jack and KB in Ann Arbor one time [**Janine:** Mm-hm?] and there's just signs around that place from like... you know, a pair of brothers who own a local restaurant and it's like, you know, "50 years. Still cookin'." You know, [chuckling] or stuff like that, like that energy.

Janine: [cross] [chuckles]

Sylvia: [cross] Let's go!

Keith: [cross] Still cookin' after all these years?

Austin: [cross] [chuckling] Exactly.

Janine: Ann Arbor's great.

Austin: Yeah, it really is. Shoutouts to Ann Arbor. Um. Yeah! I think there's like a... They put up a big sign basically immediately and they sent out the Dessert Corps, to help keep people's spirits up

Sylvia: [cackles] [cross] The Dessert Corps...

Austin: [cross] Little white dessert hats, like little white, like, you know. Like— [**Sylvia:** Yeah.]

Keith: They do a pose, they do an action pose.

Austin: Yeah, yeah. [cross] What's the action pose, Keith?

Sylvia: [cross] They're the Ginyu Force, but with ice cream.

Austin: They're the Ginyu Force but it's with ice cream.

Keith: Uh, they grab a little ice cream cupcake thing that they have and they lift it up into the air and look at it and then they sort of bring it around—it's almost a Ginyu thing—and then they, like, hold it out, like, at punch speed to right in front of you. [**Austin:** Uh-huh? Right.] And then they freeze until you take it.

Austin: Perfect. Perfect.

Sylvia: [cross] [mumbles] Incredible...

Janine: [cross] You get an extra one if you don't flinch.

Austin: [sighs in awe]

Keith: [chuckles]

Sylvia: [snorts]

Janine: [chuckles]

Austin: That's right. [chuckling] The bravery cupcake. [**Janine** laughs] [chuckles]

Sylvia: They really— They really are kind of the mob, wow. [**Keith** chuckles]

Austin: Yeah, uh-huh.

Austin (as **Dessert Corps member**, jokingly): And you don't tell nobody [chuckling] about this every cupcake I gave you!

Janine, Keith, and Austin: [chuckle]

Austin: Um...! Yeah! It sounds like you have two leads, you have the mayor and [chuckling] you have the Dessert Bros!

Janine: [cross] And a hypothetical dog rental.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): [cross] [sighs] I'm— I wanna meet the— I haven't met the Dessert Bros.

Austin: [cross] And the dog rental. This is— Yeah.

Janine (as **Bronte**): Oh, Caoimhe should meet the Dessert Bros...

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah.

[pause]

Austin: [cross] Uh, where do you—

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): [cross] It's on the way!

Keith: I made that up.

Austin: [cross] It is... It's on the way!

Janine: [cross] Eh...

Sylvia: [cross] It's on the way, yeah.

Austin: [cross] We all know this. Let me bring us back over to Cenn.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): [cross] Hell yeah. Let's go talk to the Dessert Bros!

Austin: [cross] If I remember it right, the mayor's office is in, like, this kind of north area. North of the— In the north, you know, half of the city, the north district, this kind of thin district. Um.

Keith: [cross] It says "Admin" right there.

Austin: [cross] Oh it does, it does say it, yes. It does. It's north of the digsites. Groundbreak.

Keith: Mm-hm.

The Dessert Brothers HQ [01:23:08]

Austin: And, uh, yeah. Maybe they are towards, like, the northwest of Digwest, they have their offices. Um. And they are doing a lot of what Bronte was doing. Which is... telling people to go here or there and... looking at reports... [**Keith:** Mm-hm.] and assigning people materials, etcetera. Um.

Keith: They screamed "managerial" when, uh— when we played them, [cross] I could tell that— that they were great managers.

Austin: [cross] I— Yeah, a hundred percent. And let me tell you, it used to be that they screamed "managerial," I think they're— they're looking a little presidential today!

Keith: Wow.

Sylvia: [impressed] Wow...

Austin: [chuckling] The first brother presidents.

Keith: [cross] This is a run, they're running.

Austin: [cross] Uh, they're running. Yeah, uh-huh.

Keith: [cross] They're running! [laughs]

Sylvia: [cross] They're gonna play one-on-one Beachminton to figure out who gets to be president and who gets to be vice-president.

Austin: [cross] Who gets to be VP. They might just co-own it, you know. [**Sylvia** and **Keith:** Yeah.] Or they might swap day to day, don't worry about it so much.

Sylvia: Oh my god...

Austin: You step into the offices. You know, I think that they have, like, an open-plan office space, so you can see them across the hallway. It's less open-plan modern, it's more open-plan... old warehouse?

Keith: [cross] Warehouse? Yeah. [chuckles]

Austin: [cross] [chuckling] Yeah, uh-huh, exactly. You know exactly what I mean. [cross] Old textile warehouse where the boss has a—

Keith: [cross] Yeah. It's not Apple, it's Garage.

Austin: It's Garage, yeah. It's— The boss has a special desk in the corner. Um. [**Keith:** Yeah.] There's like a little back— It's a— Imagine a square, and in the northeast of the square, the top right of the square there's another slightly smaller square? But it doesn't have a wall up or anything, it's just, like, added on, [cross] this little alcove.

Keith: [cross] Different floor.

Austin: [cross] Same floor! No, no, same floor.

Keith: [cross] Okay, same floor.

Austin: [cross] All one floor. They're just in a little alcove in the corner. And they have two desks.

Keith: Oh. Sorry, I meant by floor— I mean, like, a different [cross] pattern on the floor.

Austin: [cross] Oh, a different pattern on the floor. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Keith: [cross] So that you can tell when you're in the boss's office.

Austin: [cross] That makes perfect sense to me, yes. Exact— [chuckles] Yeah. "Come into my office!" In fact, that's what they say. [**Keith:** Yeah.] They look across, they lock eyes with Caoimhe and Bronte— Sorry, with Antistrophe and Bronte, and they go

Austin (as **Johnny Cakes**): Look who it is, Jimmy!

Austin: And Jimmy—that was Johnny—Jimmy says

Austin (as **Jimmy Cone**): Step into our office!

Keith: Take one step on— from a concrete floor onto a slightly off concrete rug.

Austin: [chuckling] That's right, yeah, uh-huh.

Austin (as **Jimmy Cone**): We're very busy these days but what can we do for ya? You don't want a rematch do ya? [**Sylvia** snorts]

Keith: I think— I think Bronte does want a rematch, so I won't say no. [**Austin** laughs] To that.

Janine (as **Bronte**): Not— Not right now, certainly.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Uh, we're looking for someone.

Austin (as **Johnny Cakes**): Well, you just found 'em. Jimmy and Johnny.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Oh, well, I guess, yeah, we were... [cross] looking for you.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): [cross] [hesitant] Nice to meet you?

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): [cross] But we were looking for you for someone else.

Austin (as **Johnny Cakes**): I don't think we've had the pleasure of an acquaintance. I'm Johnny Cakes. This is my brother, Jimmy Cone.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): [cross] Is your—

Austin: [cross] And does the— They both do a little bow to you, Caoimhe.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): [cross] Oh! Uh—

Austin: [cross] Are you wearing your Hexcloak? Or are you not wearing your Hexcloak.

Sylvia: No, she's kept that off.

Austin: She's kept that off, okay.

Sylvia: Yeah, that is not— that does not serve anybody [cross] any good right now.

Austin: [cross] Yup.

Austin (as **Johnny Cakes**): Who's your friend!

Austin: Says Johnny to Antistrophe and Bronte.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Uh, this is Caoimhe. We were busy yesterday with the mole. And we're trying to find... some Hexcloak stuff.

Austin (as **Johnny Cakes**): Yeah, the mole business...

Austin (as **Jimmy Cone**): Johnny won't say so, but... we both felt our spirits lightened when we learned that... it was the two of you, and I guess your friend here, who helped take that mole down, or at least stop it in its tracks. It made losing youse... burn a little less! We lost to a pair of heroes. I guess a trio of heroes we're learning now!

Janine (as **Bronte**): Well, you didn't lose to Caoimhe. Yet.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Wow! Hey, I don't— Lose at what? What?!

[**Keith** and **Janine** laugh]

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Oh, we played a beach game.

Janine (as **Bronte**): Yeah.

Austin (as **Jimmy Cone**): [cross] We played Beachminton.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): [cross] Ohh, Beachminton

Austin (as **Jimmy Cone**): That's right!

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): [cross] Yeah.

Janine (as **Bronte**): [cross] It was a very good game.

Austin (as **Johnny Cakes**): [cross] I see you're a fan of us already.

Janine (as **Bronte**): Mm-hm.

[**Sylvia** snorts]

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): [unconvincingly] Yeah... Totally.

Austin (as **Jimmy Cone**) Anyway, what would you like? You'd like a free cup of Beetroot Ginger Swirl? Or maybe some Mango Habanero?

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): [whispers] The Beetroot's really good.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): [quietly] Uh, I mean, yeah, I'll— I'll try it, why not. Uh, [louder] but that's not the purpose of our visit!

Austin: Produces a small cup of it from the desk drawer.

Keith: [laughs]

Janine: [cross] [disgustedly] Urgh...

Sylvia: [cross] That's... Oh...

Austin: [cross] It's like a little paper cup.

Keith: [cross] Refrigerated desk drawer?

Austin: You know it!

Janine: Check that thing for runes.

Austin: [chuckles]

Sylvia: Gave me a pup cup...

Austin: [chuckling] Gave you a pup cup! Ah...

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): [cross] Uh... Thank you.

Austin (as **Johnny Cakes**): So how can we help you? Seriously, now.

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

Sylvia: Do— Should I take over here? Do you guys wanna lead this?

Keith: [cross] Yeah I think— I think you should introduce it.

Janine: [cross] Yeah.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): The— We're trying to track down how the... We think the Hexcloaks have left the city. Specifically we think Thereus Aegir, their leader, has left the city. But we cannot find any evidence of where they went? And we were hoping you guys could help us out. If—you know... If you're able to.

Austin: When you say "Hexcloaks" the two brothers lock eyes for a brief second. And they look back at you.

Austin (as **Johnny Cakes**): What's it you'd be wantin' with the Hexcloaks?

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): They— You know what, I'm not gonna— I'll be honest! They took a friend of mine!

Austin (as **Jimmy Cone**): Like to the slammer...

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

Austin (as **Johnny Cakes**): Well, you might wanna check the jail they got.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): The slammer.

Austin (as **Johnny Cakes**): Yeah! In City Hall. They took over City Hall recently and that includes the jail [cross] we got there.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): [cross] Oh! Yeah, thank you, I— I didn't know about that.

Austin (as **Johnny Cakes**): Yeah. [cross] You said they're gone, though?

Janine (as **Bronte**): [cross] They can just do that? They can just take over City Hall?

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): [cross] Listen...

Austin (as **Jimmy Cone**): [cross] Well that's the thing with them. Yeah.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): That is kind of their whole deal.

Austin (as **Jimmy Cone**): They... They're a higher authority, if you catch our drift.
[Caoimhe: Hm.]

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Could you— Could you drift a little lower?

[Sylvia chuckles]

Austin (as **Johnny Cakes**): They're the ones who are really in charge. If you get our meaning.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): I— Now I get your meaning.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): [cross] Thank you so much! That is helpful.

Austin (as **Johnny Cakes**): [cross] In any case, it's... it's good to know they're...

Austin: I guess that you didn't say they were gone, you just said they took your friend, right?

Sylvia: Yeah, [**Keith:** Yeah.] we said— I said— I think I might have mentioned that we have been having trouble [cross] tracking them down.

Austin: [cross] Tracking them, yeah.

Austin (as **Johnny Cakes**): Yeah, it's funny, we haven't seen 'em either. We in fact thought our little, uh, free dessert plan would come up to some resistance.

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

Janine (as **Bronte**): [cross] They don't like ice cream?

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): [cross] What's wrong with dessert?

Austin (as **Jimmy Cone**): They like ice cream for themselves just fine, trust me. We send enough of it to them every year.

Janine (as **Bronte**): [cross] Ohh...

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): [cross] You pay— There's an— Sorry, there's an ice cream tax?! Like, [cross] with ice cream?

Janine (as **Bronte**): [cross] Ice cream extortion, I've heard of this.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): [cross] Really?!

Austin (as **Johnny Cakes**): [cross] I can't say it's our bravest day when we send it...

Austin (as **Jimmy Cone**): It's alright, Johnny, don't beat yourself up. We gotta do what we gotta do to stay in the business.

Austin (as **Johnny Cakes**): I know... Doesn't mean I gotta like it. In any case, yeah...

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): So they took over the jail at City Hall. They could be there. It seems like maybe they've disappeared somewhere more secret. But we're on our way there anyway.

Austin (as **Johnny Cakes**): [cross] And listen, we'll put out the word.

Janine (as **Bronte**): [cross] I'm just curious...

Austin (as **Johnny Cakes**): Uh-huh?

Janine (as **Bronte**): What flavors of ice cream do they get from you? Do they have a preference or is it just... anything?

Austin (as **Jimmy Cone**): It doesn't matter what we put out. They always get the first scoop.

Janine (as **Bronte**): That's cute, but I meant like actual flavors.

Austin (as **Johnny Cakes**): I haven't really investigated, I— They send over a list every year.

Janine (as **Bronte**): You don't keep the list?

Austin (as **Johnny Cakes**): Well, we keep the list, we don't—

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Do you think this might be a clue?

[Austin and Sylvia chuckle]

[Keith chuckles]

Janine (as **Bronte**): You don't keep it in your books?

Austin (as **Johnny Cakes**): We keep it in our books, we just haven't really— We're busy! We don't run the numbers on— [cross] We're not looking for— We're not—

Janine (as **Bronte**): [cross] [mutters] Alright I was— I was just wondering if they're, like, freaks for beetroots or whatever, and we could... I don't know.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): [cross] You don't keep it in your ice cream bribes ledger?

Austin (as **Jimmy Cone**): Well, we do different seasonal— Every year we do a different run.

Janine (as **Bronte**): Oh, okay.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Wow, [cross] that's classy.

Austin (as **Johnny Cakes**): [cross] And they don't tell us what to make. They just tell us they want some.

Janine (as **Bronte**): But they keep abreast of what your current offerings are, they stay looped in?

Austin (as **Johnny Cakes**): Yeah. Well, this year, let me take a peek. [whispers] Okay.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Glad we're getting to the bottom of this.

Austin (as **Johnny Cakes**): Alright, looks like they wanted, uh...

[**Janine** chuckles]

Austin: Flip, flip, flip, flip... Flip, flip, flip...

Austin (as **Johnny Cakes**): Pineapple basil, 200 units... [**Antistrophe**, whispering: 200...!] Black sesame coconut, 20 units... Mango chili chutney, 22. Lemon basil sorbet, another 180. Uh, spicy mango chutney, 23. You know it's really just the basils they took a lot of!

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): It's the basil, they took a lot of basil.

Austin (as **Johnny Cakes**): They took both basils, in the hundreds!

Austin (as **Jimmy Cone**): Well that's weird!

Keith: Doing a study roll for the significance of basil. [**Austin** and **Janine** chuckle]

Austin: I mean, do it!

Keith (as **Antistrophe**, half-joking): What could they be doing with all that basil...!

Austin: [cross] Yeah, do it.

Sylvia: [cross] I'm— Flipping through my notebook, being like

Sylvia (as **Caomhe**, joking): Have I— Is there any evidence of moles thriving off basil...?

Austin: [amused] What d'you roll? An 11...

Keith: I rolled a 12...

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: [cross] Oh, no, I, sorry I just have—

Janine: [cross] Those aren't the ones that have... The ones that had, like, flavor magic or whatever was the sesame one, right?

Austin: Is that true, is that what it was, yeah. [cross] I believe that.

Janine: [cross] I think so, yeah.

Austin: Yeah. Uh... With an 11 you might find that... [typing sounds] Let me just quickly finish this research I'm doing.

Janine and **Sylvia**: [cross] [laugh]

Austin: [cross] Well, basil is... an anti-inflammatory...

Keith: Okay.

Austin: So maybe there is some— a medicinal reason. [chuckling] Or maybe they just like the flavor.

Keith: They're getting headaches.

Janine: [cross] [cackles]

Austin: [cross] They're getting headaches, you know.

Sylvia: Now... that could be brainfreeze. [**Austin** snickers]

Janine: Or... if they... if they are beating people up, they could be using ice cream to treat them because then they wouldn't have to report medical supplies [**Sylvia** gasps] [cross] which would prove they're beating people up!

Austin: [cross] Oh my god.

Sylvia: We gotta save Kley... [**Austin** and **Janine** chuckle]

Keith: Hm. I tried to turn the basil into a clue, I don't think it worked. [**Austin** chuckles]

Janine: [chuckling] No. Well, I was thinking, you know, it's one more thing maybe the dog could smell.

Austin: Oh, that's not bad! [cross] That's not bad! That's not bad.

Sylvia: [cross] That's not bad.

Keith: [cross] Oh, yeah. That's not bad.

Sylvia (as **Caioimhe**): [cross] Oh hey, do you guys— do you two know where we could get a dog that's good at smelling?

Keith (as **Antistrophe**) Yeah, do you know any hounds for hire?

Austin (as **Johnny Cakes**): [cross] [hesitates]

Janine (as **Bronte**): [cross] Good AT smelling, not good-smelling.

Austin (as **Jimmy Cone**): [cross] Oh...

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): [cross] Or whatever!

[Austin chuckles]

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): No. No, good AT smelling is crucial.

[Keith and Janine laugh]

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Oh, sorry, both. I guess— I guess both [cross] is fine.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): [cross] It's both or just good at it.

Austin (as **Johnny Cakes**): I guess Cupcake's out of the picture then... Mostly just good-smelling, but... I mean, if you want to [cross] you could smell Cupcake?

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): [cross] Aw, is Cupcake your dog?

Janine (as **Bronte**): Do you have a dog that smells— [cross] Does— Does Cupcake smell like a cupcake?

Austin (as **Jimmy Cone**): [cross] Jenessa Jenessa!! Je-ne-ssa!! Bring over Cupcake!

Austin (as **Jenessa**): Right away, Boss!

Keith (as **Jenessa**): Okay!

Cupcake [01:33:17]

Austin: And 30 seconds later a woman appears holding a small dog. [**Sylvia** gasps] With big eyes.

Janine: [cross] What kind of dog?

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): [cross] [endeared] Well hello!

Austin: I don't know my dog breeds well enough. [cross] Um...

Janine: [cross] Okay, hang on.

Austin: [typing] Dog breeds...

Janine: [cross] Keep talking.

Keith: [cross] It's a Nova Scotian Duck Tolling Retriever.

Austin: [chuckles] I don't think it's that. I don't think it's retrieving anything, it's tiny!
[pause] [cross] What did you say—

Janine: [cross] Here we go, small— [gasps] Aw...

Keith: [cross] It couldn't retrieve a duck?

Sylvia: A Pomeranian?

Austin: It might be a Pomeranian, it might be... a Pomeranian [cross] named Cupcake.

Janine: [cross] I think it should be a King Charles Spaniel.

Austin: Oh, [cross] it could be a King Charles Spaniel, that actually makes perfect sense to me.

Sylvia: [cross] Ohhh.

Janine: [cross] Cavalier King Charles.

Austin: Yeah, I think that that's right.

Janine: I'm gonna copy this image I found 'cause this is a Cupcake. This dog is for sure a Cupcake.

Austin: Oh, that's Cupcake. That's Cupcake right there. And it smells—

Sylvia: [cross] Yeah, this dog is Cupcake to me.

Austin: [cross] It smells like it's been shampooed today, but also that it just has a sort of sweet scent all the time.

Janine: Ah!

Austin (as **Cupcake**): Arf!

Sylvia: I'm so happy to see this dog.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Oh my god. Oh, aren't you just the sweetest, oh my god!

Austin (as **Jimmy Cone**): I mean, you could take it out for a walk, I don't know if it's much of a hound dog!

Janine (as **Bronte**): We need a dog that can smell things.

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

Austin (as **Johnny Cakes**): I mean, our dog'll smell things just fine, I just don't know that it's gonna... talk about it.

Keith: I take a sprig of... I take a sprig of basil. I let the dog sniff it. I hide the basil, and I— [chuckles]

Janine: Well, it's just gonna look all around, 'cause there's so much basil being [chuckling] processed here.

Austin: Yeah, it goes and starts—

Keith: Well, but that's the thing, there's basil everywhere, we need a dog that can pick out the basil.

Janine: Hmm.

Austin: This dog cannot pick out the basil, I'm sorry to say.

Keith: [cross] Okay.

Janine: [cross] Okay.

Austin: [cross] Actually, roll some dice!

Keith (as **Antistrophe**, joking): [cross] Sorry, Cupcake, you're fired.

Austin: [cross] Let's roll some dice! Let's roll some dice! Let's roll some dice. You never know.

Keith: [cross] Okay! Alright!

Janine: I mean, actually I have something that would be better for it to smell [cross] than basil.

Austin: [cross] Oh yeah?

Keith: [cross] Okay.

Janine: 'Cause I have that letter from Kley.

Austin: You do have that letter [cross] from Kley...!

Keith: [cross] Oh, look at that.

Sylvia: [cross] Oooh...!

Janine: [cross] Which is what I've been angling at [chuckling] this whole fucking time with this stupid dog bit!

Sylvia: Ohh.

Janine: [cross] [laughs]

Keith: [cross] Oh, I thought you were angling at the basil. [**Austin** laughs]

Janine: [cross] That was a plan B.

Sylvia: [cross] Sorry, we were so focused on the basil.

Keith: [cross] I heard—

Janine: [cross] That was, you know, if you need to narrow it down. Like, someone who has [Keith: Okay.] the smell on the letter plus basil equals...

Keith: [cross] Got it.

Austin: [cross] I see.

Janine: [cross] You know.

Austin: [cross] Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah, of course. Of course.

Keith: Yeah, give it the— give it the letter!

Austin: Give it the letter! Why don't you give it the letter.

Janine: Yeah, I'll give it the letter.

Keith: (dramatically) Why won't you give it the letter...

Austin: (echoing Keith) Why won't you give it the letter... [Sylvia snorts]

Janine: What is this roll?

Austin: Uh...! I'm checking... [mutters]

Keith: Study + willpower? [cross] Or sorry, insight + willpower?

Austin: [cross] I think it's... insight + willpower, yeah. It's insight + willpower + 1... 'Cause it's adding something.

Keith: For being a dog.

Austin: For being— It's adding its +1 "is a dog." It's adding its +1 faithful companion basically.

Janine: [cross] Oh!

Sylvia: [cross] Aw! Thank you so much, Cupcake.

Austin: That's a 10!

Janine: [cross] That's a 10!

Austin: [cross] It's an 8 and a 1, but it's a 10, a 10 is the second level of success!

Keith: You could Fabula Point that— that 1.

Austin: Yeah, but it's already— You'd have to get up to a 13 for it to count as a higher tier of success, 'cause it's 7, 10, 13, 16, so.

Keith: Sure, but a 4 on an 8... [Janine: That would—]

Austin: That's true...! That's true! I'll give you something different.

Keith: It's just an option, it's just an option.

Austin: Yeah!

Janine: I mean that makes... Yeah, a 1's a 1. Um. Yeah, I'll Fabula Point that 1.

Austin: Okay, what trait are you using?

Janine: Uhm... I think in this case, uh... I'm using my... Um... [chuckles] My theme of scintillation, am I allowed to use that? [**Sylvia** snorts]

Austin: You're scintillating the dog?

Janine: I think this is a scintillating experience, I think what is boring is just being like "I guess we'll go to the City Hall [cross] and see if the cops are still there..."

Austin: [cross] Yeah, okay! I see it! I see the logic.

Janine: [cross] But instead I'm like, give me the dog that smells beautiful. [**Austin:** Yeah.] [**Sylvia** chuckles] I need to see if it can smell this letter I got from my heroic deed and lead us to saving [cross] my friend's friend!

Austin: [cross] That's pretty scintillating. Give me the roll.

Janine: [cross] That's very scintillating!

Austin: [cross] 1D... 8? 1D8, [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] is that what it is?

Keith and **Austin:** Yeah.

[pause]

Austin: Ohh my god. Oh wait, [cross] that was just me looking away.

Janine: [cross] I didn't— No, what— Calm down!

Austin: [cross] That was me looking away and looking back, I got excited.

Janine: I was declaring and spending my Fabula Point, thank you.

Austin: Yeah, I looked away and [cross] thought somehow you rolled a 10 on a 1D8, so...

Keith: [cross] No, reroll.

Sylvia: [snorts]

Janine: [chuckling] Okay, well...

Austin: I was— I was excited!

Janine: I got a 4.

Austin: [cross] Okay well that's a 4 but—

Janine: [cross] That gets me to— That does the thing! That's all it takes.

Keith: [cross] Perfect! That gets you over.

Sylvia: Yeah!

Janine: [cross] That's all I need.

Austin: [cross] It sniffs you. And at 10 it was gonna lock in, and stop smelling the basil, and stop smelling all the ice cream flavors, and just look at the envelope to be like, oh, yes, I can actually do this. Instead it grabs the envelope, in its mouth, and starts running, towards the exit.

Cupcake on the scent! [01:37:53]

Austin (as **Johnny Cakes**): It's on the scent!!

Austin: [cross] Says—

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Oh— Oh my god, follow that dog!

[**Janine** chuckles]

Austin (as **Johnny Cakes**): Everybody follow that dog!

Sylvia: [cross] Scooby-Doo chase time.

Austin: [cross] And— Scooby-Doo chase time, we run outside. It's sniffing around. You know, [cross] I think Jenessa—

Janine: [cross] Can I add flavor [Austin: Please.] and say that Efta and Zolfta are—I think we're probably trailing behind the dog, Efta and Zolfta I think are keeping pace but they're, like, like on the rooftops or something.

Austin: Yeah, like looking down, uh-huh.

Sylvia: [cross] Yeahhh.

Janine: [cross] Like, running.

Austin: Yeah. As you're leaving Jenessa says to, you know, one of the Dessert Brothers

Austin (as **Jenessa**): I haven't seen Cupcake like this since the day of the attack! Something really got his ire up!

Keith: The day of the attack yesterday?

Austin: Yeah. [pause]

Janine and Keith: [cross] [laugh]

Austin: [cross] I don't remember if we had gone a day or two days, 'cause [chuckling] we were vague about how long you had spent helping people. [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] So.

Keith: [cross] That's true. That's— [chuckling]

Janine: [cross] I haven't seen him so worked up since yesterday afternoon around 3PM! [**Austin and Keith** laugh]

Austin: But! Point being, something got his ire up in the middle of the attack! [**Keith** laughs, **Janine** chuckles] And now he seems to be just as worked up. And he's running through the streets northeast towards Groundbreak! And he's headed towards City Hall. [**Keith:** Right.] Uh, I think we need to keep up with the dog roll.

Sylvia: Oh my god, okay.

Austin: I think this is a group roll. [**Keith:** Okay.] We haven't done a group roll in a minute. [**Keith:** Okay.] Someone's a leader, and everyone else is supporting. I think that this is probably [cross] a dex/dex roll.

Keith: [cross] Not me. Yeah.

Sylvia: I could do that.

Austin: Alright! So then, um, Bronte and Antistrophe, you go first. Give me dex/dex, if you get a 10 or above Caoimhe gets a +1 on her roll.

Janine: Okay. I'm just hitting the sneak button even though this [cross] not sneak, obviously.

Austin: [cross] That's fine, yeah.

Janine: [singing] 11...!

Sylvia: [cross] Nice.

Austin: [cross] Alright, so Caoimhe, you're getting a +1.

Keith: 6.

Austin: [cross] And you're not getting a +2. You're just getting the +1, yeah.

Sylvia: [cross] Yeah, +1. [**Janine** chuckles]

Austin: Alright, Caoimhe, give me the dex roll!

Sylvia: I got an 8.

Austin: So that's a 9! I should've said this, you need a 10 to keep up... [cross] Can you Fabula this?

Sylvia: [cross] Uhm... I can, I believe.

Janine: [cross] Also, wait, that's an 8+... That's already plus the 1, so it's not a 9.

Sylvia: I did include the 1, yeah.

Janine: [cross] So you just—

Keith: [cross] Oh, okay.

Austin: [cross] Oh, okay, yeah, yeah, yeah. So you do need another plus, you need +2 here.

Sylvia: Right, we always get a Fabula [cross] at the start of a session, right?

Austin: [cross] If you have a 0, you get one, so you should have a Fabula Point, yeah. Uh, and you could just spend it immediately and use a... [cross] get a +2 from your bonds, which would get you to a 10, which is what you need.

Sylvia: [cross] [muttering as she types] Get... that... dog. Oh, true! Then I'll do that.

Austin: Are you gonna use your Antistrophe or your Bronte bond?

Sylvia: I like the idea of using the Antistrophe bond, 'cause Bronte rolled well, so it's like... through the power of our bonds [**Austin** chuckles] Antistrophe is also able to keep up.

Austin: I see.

Keith: Yeah, we rolled dex/dex, [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] which means that I didn't use might, which means that this bond could be about how we've started to slow down, so I've started to, like, push objects out of the way [**Austin** chuckles] that were holding us up. [**Austin:** I see.] [**Janine** chuckles] The dog can sneak through [cross] small little spaces, but we can't.

Austin: [cross] Ah, right, okay.

Janine: [cross] Ohh.

Sylvia: [cross] I love that.

Austin: [cross] Yeah, you have to have shield up— Oh, you don't have your shields!

Keith: No, but [cross] I can tear, I can tear.

Austin: [cross] You could tear through, yeah, yeah, yeah. A hundred percent.

Sylvia: Yeah!

Keith: Might 10!

Austin: Might 10! Yeah. Alright! You've kept up, no one else has kept up, you've left behind the Dessert Brothers, you've left behind the numerous White Caps that were following you—that's what they call their army of dessert dealers? [cross] The White Caps.

Sylvia:[cross] [chuckles] White Caps?

Janine: [cross] Oh...

Austin: [cross] They were gonna let the White Caps go out and try to listen and, you know, put their ears on the ground for you, but this is so much better. So they— Yeah, you make your way past— up, past City Hall. It stops for a second, you can see it, and then it keeps running. And it's running towards— The old— Like, it stops as if it's like, it's found something. And then it realizes, ah, the trail continues. And it continues back towards the Hexcloak headquarters, which is where you went the first time, Caoimhe. It's where you went thinking you would have your meeting with Aegir and instead Aegir turned out to be in the mayor's office, but Cupcake has run to the Hexcloak base here in Groundbreak. Kind of western Groundbreak. And stops outside. Actually, probably doesn't stop outside. Goes up and starts barking at the door.

Sylvia: Well. I'm gonna pet this dog first, to be like, good job.

Austin: Tail wagging.

Sylvia: And...

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): We should probably go in here, right guys?

Keith (as **Antistrophe**) and Janine (as **Bronte**): Yeah!

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Yeah! [cross] Alright.

Team ABC enters the building [01:42:23]

Austin: [cross] As you go in, the sound of the city behind you kind of dips away, almost unnaturally. This is not surprising for you, Caoimhe. You know that Hexcloak places are often warded in various ways. Sometimes that includes sound. Sometimes that includes, you know, simply like, oh we want it to be quiet enough for people here—the work they're doing in here, sometimes it's like, we don't want any sound getting in or out, you know. Mostly out, I guess.

In the place—it's a two floor building—the first floor is a number of places behind closed doors and then a big kind of reception desk. There is... There are three people that you can pick up on. There is a receptionist, who is a Hexcloak, a uniformed Hexcloak, with the features of a... a Bolt Elf like you, of a Lightning Elf like you, Caoimhe. They have the same sort of... you know, what's the pattern called again? It's a Lichtenberg—?

Sylvia: [cross] Uh, Lichtenberg figures.

Austin: [cross] Lichtenstein figure? Lichtenberg figure.

Sylvia: No, I think it's Lichtenberg.

Austin: A Lichtenberg figure. Who's behind the desk. There is a big Earth Elf, who's in front of one of the doors, one of the doorways. And then you can hear the boots of a third one, up one the second floor. The second floor here has a balcony that looks down on the first floor. The second floor is where you went to find that—the paperwork that noted the theory about the mole, [chuckles] the big mole theory, [**Sylvia:** Right! Yeah. was upstairs.

And so there's someone else up there. And that does have a balcony that can look down onto here, but you know, peeking up from where the entry hall is, you don't see anybody there right now. But you can hear their footsteps moving around, they seem to be the only thing moving in the room.

Otherwise there's just the elf at the reception desk and there's the big elf at the door, at the end of one of the hallways, or you know, towards the end of one of the hallways.

Sylvia: [cross] Uh, I—

Austin (as **Hexcloak receptionist**): [cross] [uninterested, somewhat menacingly]
Can I help you...?

Austin: Says the... Lightning Elf.

Sylvia: Uh, do... I'm trying to decide between just coming out and saying, yeah we're looking for the Hexcloaks or being like...

Austin: These are— These are Hexcloaks, they're in the Hexcloak uniform.

Sylvia: Okay! Okay, then yeah! Um... Maybe— Oh, I— [cross] Here's an idea, maybe—

Keith: [cross] You're solo at this point, right?

Austin: Wait no, aren't all three of you?

Janine: [cross] No, we're all here.

Sylvia: [cross] Huh?

Keith: Oh, I thought that— that, Austin, [cross] you said the White Caps were the only ones who kept up

Sylvia: [cross] The White Caps were the only ones who kept up with the dog.

Austin: No, no, no, the three of you were the only ones [cross] who kept up with the dog.

Janine: [cross] "You" like "us."

Austin: [cross] There was a group— there was a group check, yeah.

Keith: [cross] Oh, the three of us, got it. Okay.

Sylvia: Yeah. Um... Yeah, I'm gonna mention that I'm looking to report, um...

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): I have a report to file with Aegir and he left the city before we could talk about it. It was very important.

Austin (as **Hexcloak receptionist**): Are you a witness, or...

Sylvia: [chuckles and stammers] I pull my cloak out of my bag, [chuckles] just for— to flash it.

Austin (as **Hexcloak receptionist**): [scoffs] Why aren't—

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): I work here.

Austin (as **Hexcloak receptionist**): Why aren't you wearing your cloak?

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): I don't know if you've noticed, but the citizens here aren't exactly, like, happy to see us right now, and I've been able to move through the city better without it.

Austin (as **Hexcloak receptionist**): [sternly but also rather indifferently] We're not the joy committee. We're Hexcloaks. Don't remove your uniform again, yeah?

Keith: Does this person outrank you?

Sylvia: That's the— That was about to be my question! Because, like...

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Oh, you've never had to— you've never had to go undercover before, huh.

Austin (as **Hexcloak receptionist**): Were you on an undercover assignment?

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): I was charged with making sure that Castine had nothing to do with this and to do that I had to be able to move among those who are faithful to Castine.

Austin (as **Hexcloak receptionist**): You're Caoimhe Wake.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): The one and only.

Austin (as **Hexcloak receptionist**): I got a package for you.

Sylvia: I hold out my hand.

Janine: I don't like the way they said that...!

Sylvia: [cross] I don't like it either, but I'm not flinching!

Austin: [cross] From the— From the desk, produces a sort of leather satchel. Or like a— not even a satchel, [**Sylvia**: Mm-hm?] but like a piece of leather that's been tied, you know, with... Or like a leather folio or something. And just kind of tosses it to you. Accurately... But... [cross] disinterestedly.

Sylvia: [cross] Aggressively?

Austin: [cross] I think— No, not like— Not, like—

Sylvia: [cross] Oh, okay. Like, the opposite.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Sylvia: What's in the bag?

Austin: Uh...!

Sylvia: That's not me asking— [cross] That's me asking Austin, not— Yeah.

Austin: [cross] Yeah. You open it up. There is a letter handwritten by Aegir. It says...

Sylvia: Great...

Austin (as **Thereus Aegir**, in his letter to Caoimhe): Bartolo trained you well. You are a beacon to all Elevana. Find my promised reward enclosed.

Austin: And underneath it is a pair of Deputy badges. They are silver. They are nine-point stars. So there's like two star things on the— There's like— It's like two, four,

six, eight, and then there's one on the top basically. [**Sylvia**: Yeah.] Uh. And then in the middle of that is a sort of chromatic, Elevana, runic, like the kind of "E" that we've discussed as being the kind of Elevana symbol. [**Sylvia**: Mm-hm.]

So there's the two Deputy badges, presumably for Bronte and for Antistrophe. And then there's a pair of Deputy Deputy badges, which are just copper lapel pins with a silver pin in them. [**Sylvia** laughs] Presumably for Efta and Zolfta.

Janine: [cross] [triumphantly] Heh heh heh heh...

Sylvia: That's so funny!

Austin: I think Ryant, who we have not mentioned, but your lantern, makes some sort of... [**Keith**: Yeah.] sound. That's upset... that there wasn't like another badge for him, for the little lantern guy.

Sylvia: Aw...

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): It's okay, you don't want it.

Austin (as **Ryant**): [cross] [sad trumpety noises]

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): [cross] We'll make you one, buddy.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): We'll get you a different pin.

Austin (as **Ryant**): [somewhat comforted trumpety noise]

Austin: I don't know the sound that a lantern makes, I don't remember what these lanterns, like—

Sylvia: [cross] No, but I think you're doing good.

Janine: [cross] I think whooshy, like, sounds. Like, whoosh...

Austin (as **Ryant**): [cross] [trumpety sounds]

Austin: [cross] Yeah, yeah. Like, whoosh, I guess

Austin (as **Ryant**): [cross][softly] Woosh, woosh, woosh!

Keith: [cross] I think it sounds— I think it sounds like when you put water on, like... a smouldering log.

Sylvia: [cross] That's good.

Austin: Oh, that's really fun.

Keith: [cross] Like a sizzling.

Austin: [cross] Like "tschh!" Yeah, that's really fun. That's really good. Uh, alright! Yeah.

Austin (as **Ryant**): [sizzles softly]

Austin: Lower when it's sad. [louder] "Tsch" when [cross] it's happy. Yeah, I like that.

Sylvia: [cross] Aw...

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: So the idea for a new— for its own button. "Tsch." You know. Uh. And then! There is a signing bonus! You're Deputies now!

Sylvia: [cross] That's so funny.

Austin: [cross] There's a 100 asta for Bronte and Antistrophe, and [cross] another 50 for Efta and Zolfta.

Keith: Wow...

Sylvia (as **Caioimhe**): Wow. Welcome to the Joy Committee, [cross] guys.

Keith: Damn...

Sylvia: [cross] And I do say that out loud.

Janine: [cross] I think Bronte looks straight up kind of disgusted. [chuckles]

Sylvia: Yeah. I'm also going to... show them to you guys, but not give them to you yet? I kind of want to check these for magic [cross] when we get outside?

Austin: [cross] Fair. Yeah.

Janine: [cross] Smart.

Keith: That's fair.

Sylvia: [cross] This is it.

Keith: [cross] No offense, I wasn't going to wear it.

Sylvia: I figured you weren't, but like, you know, it's... [**Janine:** Yeah...] This is more like, hey if you get in trouble, [amused] you can pull these out.

Keith: [cross] Yeah, that's true.

Janine: [cross] Yeah, it's worked really well for you whenever you've had to [chuckling] pull things out.

Sylvia: It's been great. Yeah.

Austin: [sighs]

Sylvia: You know what, worst case scenario... give 'em to Phoebe! I'm sure we can get something for 'em. [chuckles]

Austin: [chuckles]

Keith: Yeah Phoebe loves— I'll put 'em in the meld pile.

Sylvia: Yeah! Um...

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): This is everything?

Austin (as **Hexcloak receptionist**): [arrogantly] Yeah.

Austin: Or are you talking to me, Austin? That's everything. [cross] Or were you saying that to— Yeah.

Sylvia: [cross] Uh, I'm talking to them, yeah. Um.

Austin (as **Hexcloak receptionist**): Uh, yeah, as far as I know.

What about the attack on the commander?

Austin (as **Hexcloak receptionist**): It's been dealt with.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): [cross] In what way?

Austin (as **Hexcloak receptionist**): [cross] Do you have any questions, were you involved, is there... an admission you wanna make?

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

Sylvia: Laugh— I laugh at that.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): I happened to be at the temple the same day that the accused was, and I was just curious [cross] if it was connected.

Austin (as **Hexcloak receptionist**): [cross] The "accused"...? We were there. It was an assassination attempt.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Uh-huh?

Austin (as **Hexcloak receptionist**): There's no accusation about it. There's just the thing it was.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): The attacker...?

Austin (as **Hexcloak receptionist**): Yeah.

Sylvia: I'm trying to pretend that I don't know Kley, [cross] so I'm not— I'm acting like I don't know the name.

Austin: [cross] I see, yeah, yeah, right. Yeah.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Like, how do you want me to refer to this person. I'm just curious.

Austin (as **Hexcloak receptionist**): You don't need to refer to this person at all. It's. Being. Dealt. With. In fact, [cross] they're probably—

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): [cross] Hm. Yeah, just like the mole was, huh.

Austin (as **Hexcloak receptionist**): They're— [scoffs] You think you're funny.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Eh, I'm okay.

Austin (as **Hexcloak receptionist**): Yeah, I think I'm busy. Have a good one.

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