

Perpetua 28: A Picture of the Hills 01

Transcriber: robotchangeling

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Opening Narration

[["Startup"](#) by Jack de Quidt plays]

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

Austin: On the western continent of Perpetua, four fated adventurers set out on a prophesied journey.

While to the east, in the Elevana League, a trio of travelers began to investigate a metaphysical sickness. What, if anything, connected these two groups? Who was powerful enough, invested enough, to watch each from above or below—besides you and I?

Perhaps, if not for the impending stress of a familial reunion and the ever present struggle between one's responsibility to their culture and to themselves, the brilliant Terrapine inventor Jonathan would find the perspective necessary not simply to answer these questions, but to intuit that they exist at all. Yes, I think that if it were laid out for him, he would see the patterns by now, the etchings and the echoes.

But we... We have the perspective, the maps, the right roles: Storyteller and listener. And we have the chapters in front of us: The Shadow of the Dragon Tower. The Flames of Burzin. Journey to the Bay. On Track to Iron Chains. Sizzling Rivalry, Crashing

Waves. A Roar Across Cenn. Aquatic Ambush. In Too Deep.

Indeed, those seven adventurers were themselves “in too deep” to know what was about to happen, to sense that there even were other heroes like themselves, whose stories carried a strange and powerful resonance. You will learn soon that they were not the only heroes across Perpetua’s many cycles. And perhaps this will be part of a new map you can understand in time. A map which will raise a new question: Are these echoes part of a careful yet uncanny balance in the cosmic play of our lives? Or a poetic rhyming that keeps existence itself aligned?

Introduction

Austin: Welcome to Friends at the Table, an actual play podcast focused on critical world building, smart characterization, and fun interaction between good friends. I’m your host, Austin Walker. And joining me today, Jack de Quidt.

Jack: Hello, I’m Jack. You can find me on Bluesky at [@notquitereal](#), and you can buy any of the music featured on the show at [notquitereal.bandcamp.com](#). It’s the end of 2025.

Austin: Art Martinez-Tebble?

Art: Hi. I’m Art. You can find me on the internet at all the regular places. Um, I usually don’t go second. The show, [friendsatthetable.cash](#) is where you can support us directly, and you can get fun shows like Realis, which just put out a bunch of stuff, and I’ve been told it’s either the end of the year or the beginning of the new year, so there should be stuff there. I’m usually not this frantic in these introductions.

Austin: No.

Art: I don’t know what’s happening to me. [Austin sighs] I’ve done this hundreds of times, right?

Austin: Almost certainly.

Art: Yeah, wow. Love you, mean it. [Jack and Dre laugh quietly]

Austin: Love you, mean it. Andrew Lee Swan.

Dre: Mean it, love ya. Hey, you can find me on Bluesky, [swandre3000.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/swandre3000.bsky.social). Just, it is the end of 2025. What a year it's been. [Art laughs]

Austin: What a season. What a season.

Dre: I would like to genuinely say: *Friends at the Table* and the people who listen to it have consistently been a bright spot in 2025, so thank you to everyone involved.

Jack: Thank you.

Austin: And Ali Acampora.

Ali: Hello. Hi.

Austin: Hi.

Ali: I have been anti-plug, throughout the year. I've been saving up all my plugs to have an extra long one right now.

Art: Wow.

Jack: Whoa!

Ali: If you listen to *Media Club Plus*, it's going to be familiar to you. I am on a different podcast called *A More Civilized Age*. It's a *Star Wars* podcast. Me and Austin do it with some other people.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Ali: We recently finished a big chapter of that podcast in covering KOTOR 2. If that interests you, you should go listen to it. However, you already listen to *Friends at the Table*, so I don't need to be really aggressive with you. I would like to thank you for listening to *Friends at the Table*. [Art laughs]

Austin: Oh. [Jack chuckles]

Ali: But if you know anyone in your life who only listens to AMCA or *Media Club Plus*, you have to get them to listen to *Friends at the Table*.

Austin: Mm.

Ali: You have to make the attempt. You have to do something.

Austin: You have to make the attempt.

Ali: You have to, one or two episodes at least.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: Please and thank you.

Austin: Yeah. There's some good resources online for, like, which ones to suggest. [Ali laughs] You know, I think you know your friends better than we do, so you probably can make a good guess, but I really think: think about it, because a lot of people say start at the very beginning, and people bounce off because of the audio quality. We have the numbers. We know that you're the freak who wants to start at the beginning. So am I. That's what I would do. [Ali laughs]

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Austin: 1000%. But we have the numbers, and people do not stick with the show if they start at the beginning, by and large. I'm not going to tell you which one to suggest, but I do think you have to know your friend. Don't assume your friends are the same types of freaks that you are. They could even tell you, "I'm the same type of freak as you."

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Austin: You gotta use your judgement. That's what it's there for, you know?

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: So.

Ali: Yeah. Like giving a gift, like you maybe just did.

Austin: Like giving a gift. Exactly.

Ali: Happy holidays.

Austin: Speaking of gifts.

Art: Oh, yeah.

Ali: [clears throat] By the way, if you...sorry. [laughs]

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Ali: Speaking of gifts, if you were like, “Wow, Austin and Ali do a KOTOR 2 podcast? I should listen to that. I like KOTOR 2,” you have to go to [friendsatthetable.cash](https://www.friendsatthetable.cash) right now and give us \$5! Janine is playing Kreia on Realis.

Austin: Oh, that is true.

Jack: Oh, yeah.

Dre: Mm.

Ali: She might not invite this comparison. I am making it.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah.

Ali: You have to give us \$5. You have to go listen to this right now.

Austin: Janine has some Kreia— Sacha Duodevicesimus has some real Kreia energy, for sure.

Art: Has that side started already?

Austin: That side has started.

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Austin: That side started a while ago, but now it's really going, you know?

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: I have another thing to say about—

Ali: It's biweekly on [friendsatthetable.cash](https://www.patreon.com/friendsatthetable). \$5.

Austin: Biweekly. That's right.

Ali: It's a deal.

Austin: Biweekly right now. Eventually we'll catch up, and it'll go back to being monthly.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: But for now. So, for the near future, for months and months, it will be biweekly. Speaking of gifts, if you go to [friendsatthetable.cash](https://www.patreon.com/friendsatthetable), you can send someone a gift subscription to our Patreon stuff now. You should do that. It's a good value. There's a ton of great stuff there. We know the numbers. We know how many people are Patreon members. We know how many people are listeners. And we know how many people have been historically listeners who, you know, never got to taste the fruits of the Patreon. Give out some Patreon gifts. There's some really good stuff on there. We would love it if you supported us and supported your friends by letting them hear some of the best *Friends at the Table* material there is.

Art: Also a good gift: fruit.

Ali: Mm.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah, it is good.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Art: Yeah. [Ali laughs quietly] It's winter.

Jack: It is good.

Austin: Right.

Jack: Everyone's happy to get fruit, and my favorite fruit is the raspberry.

Ali: Mm.

Austin: One raspberry.

Dre: Wow.

Jack: [laughs quietly] The succulent raspberry.

Austin: The succulent raspberry, yeah.

Art: *The* raspberry. Please.

Austin: Yeah, the succulent raspberry, exactly. All right. Today, we are continuing our game of *Fabula Ultima* by Emanuele Galletto. Our goals are to breathe life into the world and its characters; to play as heroes and to play to change and evolve; to ask questions and build on the answers; and to play to find out what happens.

Shop [0:08:05]

Austin: Last time, you all arrived to Spillaway Peaks, which is your hometown, Jonathan. Your hometown which you have been away from for many decades and which your family has been trying to bring you back to because your mom is ill. Your mother who was once, I think, a really important part of the cultural kind of community here, tied closely to the big choir which is tied to some large kind of rituals anticipating the Perpetuan Cycle. She has gotten ill. Your brother has kind of stepped up into that space. You ran into him outside of choir practice, kind of Rehearsal practice, Rehearsal being the name of the big weekly kind of mass, you know, spiritual gathering.

Elena and Veile, you seemed insistent that the best thing to do here would be to smooth things over with a gift for Jonathan's mom and family, and so y'all are heading out to the market. It's pretty late, so by the time you get up to the market area—which is that whole top orange/red area—most of the places are closed. The restaurants are closed. You know, there's probably one all-night restaurant, and there's an all-night general store. But like, the unique shops for armor and weapons and stuff, none of those are open yet, which is weird. You know, you'd think maybe Austin would have had cool gear prepared to sell to you at this point, but that'll happen sometime in the near future.

Dre: Mm.

Austin: But you can get IP, and you can get anything basic from the book from this general store.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: The general store is lit by little orbs that kind of look like the grenade that Jonathan has, the tech orbs. What are they called?

Dre: Ooh, what are they called? Hold on.

Austin: You know what I'm talking about.

Dre: Yeah, the little spheres.

Austin: Yeah, and I think—

Ali: Magispheres?

Dre: Magisphere, yep.

Austin: Magispheres. And I think...Jonathan, I think that you brought those here to begin with, from one of your previous trips. Like, not those literal ones, but the whole technology, you know?

Jack: Oh my god.

Austin: This used to be lit by candlelight or oil or something but is now lit by little glowy Magispheres. But they do let off a kind of soft orange glow. There's, you know, an old crotchety guy up at the front desk, at the front counter at the general store. In the general store, behind the crotchety guy, there is a photo of the crotchety guy, or a painting maybe of the crotchety guy—no, it's a photo—of the crotchety guy standing next to, Jonathan, your mother. This is a thing that's common in this town, because your mom was one of the choir leaders for as long as you've been alive and so is, like, **[Dre: Mm-hmm.]** sort of a local celebrity. And it's like the crotchety guy looking forward, center frame, and just off center from him is the photo in a beautiful frame of him looking, you know, 100 years younger, next to your mother who has the big Terrapine smile on, and she has a similar sort of hair situation. You know, the Terrapine have, it's like grass and moss and stuff, right?

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Austin: And it's up, it's like up in a really nice updo, and she has a big smile on. It's his pride, you know, that Lovey—everybody calls her Lovey; that's not her real name—but Lovey, you know, used to shop here before she had to stay home most of the time. Lovinia, that's her full name. You know, you call her Mama, but Lovinia or Lovey. Yeah, and this is pretty common. Like, paintings of her, pictures of her. The other Choir leaders also, but she has— you know that thing that happens sometimes in a local community where the generation changes over but, like, one person doesn't go?

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Austin: And like, so you go from being, like, the deacon in the church to the elder in the church, 'cause you stuck around, and everybody else left town? Not, you know, that's her. She has done that, like, twice now, and so she has the sort of, like, she has been one of the backbones of this city for, again, as long as you've been alive, basically. So. Not that there's any pressure on you or anything because of that. I'm just saying things that are true about the world. **[Ali laughs]**

Dre: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Austin: But yeah, you're able to shop here in this general store. What are you looking for as a gift, and also, who's buying IP?

Dre: I guess I'm selling this dragon scale and then buying IP.

Austin: [quietly] Wow.

(as **shopkeeper**): Now, where'd you get this dragon scale from? You go up in the mountains? You confront Ol' Blue Eyes?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): [sighs]

Art: It's Frank Sinatra. [Dre, Austin, and Jack laugh]

Austin (as **shopkeeper**): You know, he did it his way. [Art and Dre laugh]

Dre: God, where did we get these from? I can't remember.

Austin: You got these—

Jack: We found them in the jellyfish.

Dre: Oh, that's right.

Ali: Mm.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Would you believe it, Gerald? They just washed up on shore?

Austin (as **Gerald**): Well, I'll be. You know, you're looking different. When was the last time you came in the shop? I don't remember seeing you for a little bit.
[Jonathan sighs] You get a new haircut?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): New haircut, yep. Gosh, yeah. Guess I haven't been back

since the last time I installed those for you.

Dre: And I think points up at the lights.

Austin: Looks up and squints.

(as **Gerald**): Those have been a mighty big help. Mighty big help. Well, you let me know if you need anything. I'll be right here. [Art laughs]

Ali (as **Veile**): Um, sir?

Austin (as **Gerald**): Oh, we got a visitor.

Ali (as **Veile**): Hi. I don't suppose you'd be—

Austin (as **Gerald**): You're so little.

Ali (as **Veile**): [taken aback but friendly] Oh. No one's ever said that to me.

Austin (as **Gerald**): Now, what's your name?

Ali (as **Veile**): Veile.

Austin (as **Gerald**): Veile, where's that accent from? It doesn't sound familiar. Doesn't sound like it's near here.

Ali (as **Veile**): Oh, I'm from quite a bit west.

Austin (as **Gerald**): Quite a bit west. Quite a bit.

Ali (as **Veile**): Mm.

Austin (as **Gerald**): Calstega Bay! No, that's not what you sound like.

Ali (as **Veile**): No, um, from Salaan? If you're familiar?

Austin (as **Gerald**): You're from the salon? No wonder your hair looks so good.

Ali (as **Veile**): [laughs quietly] Aw, that's kind of...

Austin (as **Gerald**): Little missy with the good hair. [Dre laughs]

Ali (as **Veile**): Do you buy gems?

Austin (as **Gerald**): Do I buy gems.

Ali (as **Veile**): Yeah, sorry, I—

Austin (as **Gerald**): Well, yeah, I can buy. Of course I'll buy gems. People come down from the mountains with gems all the time. You don't look like a gem dealer, but I'll take a look at what you got.

Ali (as **Veile**): Well, it's quite striking, you see.

Gem [0:14:18]

Ali: And I pull out what is called “Beautiful Gem” in my Inventory.

Austin: Mm.

Ali: Ocean-colored, comma, deep teal. Worth 500 asta.

Austin: Give me an Insight + Willpower roll.

Ali: [concerned] Why? [laughs]

Dre: Oh, you haggling?

Austin: No. Something's happening, as you handle the crystal.

Ali: No, there's just something wrong with this, and I'm just a creepy person. I'm just the creepy party member. [Dre and Jack laugh] That's a 12.

Austin: Critical success.

Ali: Oh, wait, that's a snake eyes too. 6 and 6.

Austin: Yeah, that's what makes it a critical success.

Ali: Oh, duh.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah.

Ali: Okay, sorry. [giggles] Sorry.

Austin: Oh, it's so good that you got this. It's so...

Art: That's not what we call snake eyes, though. That's not... [Austin and Ali laugh] I want you to know that that's not snake eyes.

Austin: Art, snakes have 12 eyes. We all know this. [Art laughs]

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Ali: It's when they match. It's when they match. It's when they match.

Dre: Is this boxcars? No.

Art: No, 4s are boxcars, right?

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: What are two 6s?

Art: Maybe 6s. I don't know, maybe it's boxcars.

Jack: Snakes' eyes.

Ali: This is a baker's. This is a baker's dozen, right here.

Austin: Oh, of course. [Ali laughs] It is boxcars. It is boxcars.

Art: A baker's dozen is 13! Words have meaning on this show! [Ali laughs]

Austin: Critical success. You get to decide a thing here, but...yeah, you get to decide something here. There's a magical resonance happening here. I'm going to reveal something, but you do get a crit, which means that you get an Opportunity here from our

Opportunities sheet.

Ali: True.

Austin: Advantage, Affliction, Bonding, Faux Pas, Favor, Information, Lost Item. I'll tell you the beginning of what happens here. As you lift this crystal just a little bit— what was yours, again? It was the amethyst one, right? Or was yours the teal? Yours was the teal one.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Yes. Okay. You hear a voice. It is kind of— it's a little like the FLEGbot's voice in that it feels mechanical or electronic, but you hear a voice in your head. I guess you don't know that it's only in your head, because it sounds like the crystal is talking, but you're the only one who hears it, and it says:

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

(as **crystal**): Oh no. Don't sell me to him. He has no idea what I'm worth.

Ali: I think Veile, like, imagining her sort of holding out the crystal with both hands like she's cupping water in her palms or whatever.

Austin: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

Ali: Sort of moves her thumbs [**Austin:** Yeah.] so it, like, covers the crystal [laughs] to kind of squeeze it a little bit.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: And goes,

(as **Veile**): [gasps]

Austin: It feels warm in your hand. You got a crit, though, so you get an Opportunity here. [Ali sighs] Advantage, Affliction, Bonding, Faux Pas, Favor, Information, Lost Item, Progress, Plot Twist, Scan, or Unmask.

Ali: I am so torn between Information and Bonding, but I think Bond is funnier, so I'm just going to go with that.

Austin: It is funny. So yeah, so this thing starts talking to you. You cup it in your hands. I'll give you a name for this character momentarily.

Ali: And I think she stumbles over her words and says something like,

(as **Veile**): [hesitates] Oh, this isn't the right one.

Austin (as **crystal**): Hello? Hellooo!

Austin: Says the voice from the gem.

(as **crystal**): Can you not hear me?

Ali (as **Veile**): Hello?

Austin (as **crystal**): [hesitates] Who are you?

Ali: I think she's, like, turned away from the counter and is mimicking like she's digging around in her purse for a different gem that she doesn't have.

Dre: Mm.

Ali: But like, one hand is in her bag and then the other hand is holding the gem to her mouth like it's a walkie talkie, to be like, "Hello?" [Ali and Jack laugh]

Austin: Oh my god. As you pull it up, especially with the crit, you know, it catches the light, maybe the magical light from the amber Magispheres, and you can see... You know, it's almost like a, you know a lenticular card, like a holographic style card, where you turn it and you can see, like, the image inside? You see... It's very sensitive, so if you turn it just a little bit, it's as if the image inside moves a lot, so you have to be very careful to try to piece together what you're looking at. The first thing you see is stars, little twinkling stars like in the sky inside of there. And you see objects moving between the stars, almost like the boat you were just on but up in space. And then, eventually,

you're able to settle the crystal that's in your hand on a face of someone. I'm trying to think if you've seen... It kind of looks like a Manakin but if a Manakin was made from metal, like a metallic person with kind of dark green hair—it must be dark green hair, because the gem is teal, so it has this kind of teal color, but the hair looks darker than the teal of the rest of it—and these kind of eyes that almost look like what we would say are camera lenses. The hair is, like, built into the body of the form. It's a robot with hair built into it. It's like metallic hair.

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Austin: You know what I'm talking about here. And this is Cerulea. C-E-R-U-L-E-A. And she has just asked you,

(as **Cerulea**): Who are you?

[song ends]

Ali (as **Veile**): [hesitantly] I'm, um, my name is Veile?

Austin (as **Cerulea**): Oh, Veile. My scan reveals good things about you.

Ali (as **Veile**): Your scan?

Austin (as **Cerulea**): You're a hero like me, aren't you?

Ali (as **Veile**): Uh—

Austin (as **Cerulea**): You've gotta get me out of this crystal.

Ali (as **Veile**): Oh. Um, I'm a little tied up right now.

Austin (as **Cerulea**): No, but I have to get back home!

Ali (as **Veile**): Um...um...Jonathan, can I talk to you for a minute? [Ali laughs quietly]

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Uh, yeah, sure. Gerald, this is my other friend, Elena. You

have a lot of questions you'd probably like to ask her too.

Austin (as **Gerald**): Mm, you're from the dungeon. I can tell.

Jack (as **Elena**): Sure am. Yeah.

Austin (as **Gerald**): We get your kind in once in a while.

Jack (as **Elena**): Oh yeah? Who'd you see?

Austin (as **Gerald**): Someone with a J name. Go over all the J names you know. I'll see if I remember which one it is. [Dre laughs]

Jack (as **Elena**): Is it Jeremy?

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

Jack (as **Elena**): Is it Jessica?

Austin (as **Gerald**): I know a Jeremy, but that Jeremy was not from the dungeon. Nor was it Jessica.

Jack (as **Elena**): Hmm. Is it Jemima?

Austin: [cross] Et cetera. This continues.

Jack: [cross] And then this continues. [Dre and Jack laugh]

Austin: You pull Jonathan away.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Veile, what's going on?

Ali (as **Veile**): Jonathan, there's a face in this gem that I was trying to sell. It says it's a hero.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Well, okay, let me take a look.

Austin (as **Cerulea**): [offended] Not "it." She! *She* says *she's* a hero.

Ali (as **Veile**): Oh, my apologies, ma'am. This is—

Austin (as **Cerulea**): “Ma’am”?! I'm not an old woman! [Ali laughs] I was only manufactured 19 years ago.

Dre: I'm assuming Jonathan can't hear any of this?

Austin: Can't hear a word.

Dre: Okay.

Ali: If I hold it up, can he see the face?

Austin: Um, no.

Ali: [laughs quietly] Great.

Austin: It just looks like a cool crystal, a cool gem.

Ali: I'm back home. My brother's mad at me. My fucking squadmate is losing her fucking mind. [Austin and Ali laugh]

Dre: Can I roll a Study Check on this?

Austin: Yeah, give me a Study Check.

Dre: Okay.

Austin: Hey, a 17! God damn!

Ali: Wow.

Dre: I'm smart.

Austin: You're smart as hell! What are you doing? Tell me what the Study Check looks like, and I'll figure out how to give you information. Lot of information.

Dre: Um...so, as Veile is holding it up, I'm, like, squinting, and I think it's something like

suddenly the light from the Magisphere lights [**Austin:** Mm-hmm.] starts to, like, look different and reflect off of the surface.

Austin: Oh.

Dre: And I start, like, moving my head around, looking at different angles, [**Austin:** Mm-hmm.] looking for the light to come together in the right way.

Austin: You cannot see the figure inside, no matter how much you do this, [**Dre:** Mm-hmm.] but what you can tell from that is that it's reflecting light wrong. It's like, for the brightness that it is as an object in the world, it should be either reflecting more or less light than it is, and you come to realize it kind of has its own light. It's producing its own— it's a little bit like watching a cartoon and seeing, like, an object that has been drawn on top of the background cell, so you know, like, oh, that's the object that can get moved around in this scene. We talk about that sometimes; you know what I'm talking about?

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Or like in a video game from this era. If you're playing an adventure game from this era or a game like *Resident Evil*, you walk into the room, and your like, "Oh." One of the *Resident Evil* games that has the prerendered backgrounds, but then there's, like, a gem on the table, and you're like, "Well, that gem is not part of the background. I can go pick that gem up." It is that. It has its own light built into it in that way. And so, one, something is weird and magical about this thing. As you continue to look at it, you also realize, like, you've been all up and down this world. You have never quite seen a color quite like this. You can't place— you know all about gems and minerals, because you build stuff. This is not a traditional teal gem from here, you know?

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Austin: You cannot place it. There's something else about it. And then, three, because of the way it's interacting with the Magisphere light, you can tell that it's, like, resonating with magic in some way. It is tied to— it has a magical energy in it, but it maybe is a

magical energy from a different Perpetua or something. It has this sort of, like, maybe you've seen this before tied to Celestial Echoes.

Dre: Mm.

Austin: It has that sort of energy about it in some way. So you know that Veile is, at the very least, even if you can't see the person in there that Veile's talking about or hear it—hear her—you can tell something is up here.

Dre: Oh! We still have that Echolabe, don't we?

Austin: You do. You sure do.

Dre: Does that, like, react to this at all?

Austin: Um, it doesn't, not in a strong way.

Dre: Okay.

Austin: It's clear that this has...the way I would say this is it almost feels like...it is not from an echo. The Echolabe is built to find Celestial Echoes. This is like something that has been in a Celestial Echo or is from another world originally or has been around otherworldly energy, but it is of this world now, and so it can't quite trigger the Echolabe. You've never seen anything quite like this before.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: And based on what— so, Veile, what have you explained to Jonathan, at this point?

Ali (as **Veile**): There's this woman inside who's saying she needs to come out.

Austin: You've heard vaguely of the idea of crystals or gems being, like, a place you could store something magically before.

Dre: Mm.

Austin: That's not completely out of the realm, you know? But a person, I don't think you've heard of.

Dre: Yeah.

(as **Jonathan**): And she's talking to you. Like, right now?

Ali (as **Veile**): Uh huh, and she's quite easily offended.

Austin (as **Cerulea**): I'm not—! [Art laughs] People always say I'm sensitive.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): [cross] Oh, she probably didn't like that one, did she?

Austin (as **Cerulea**): [cross] Gail [spelling?] is always saying I'm sensitive.

Ali (as **Veile**): She's yapping!

Austin (as **Cerulea**): I am not sensitive! I just have opinions about the world and my place in it.

Ali (as **Veile**): "I'm not sensitive. I just have opinions about the world and my place in it."

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Yeah, me too, sister.

Austin (as **Cerulea**): Stop repeating what I'm saying! I'm talking to *you*!

Ali (as **Veile**): I'm trying to tell him what's going on!

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

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Can she hear me?

Ali (as **Veile**): I'm helping you. Can you hear Jonathan?

Austin (as **Cerulea**): Who's Jonathan?

Ali (as **Veile**): Start talking. Start talking.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Okay. Uh...hello, I'm Jonathan.

Austin (as **Cerulea**): Blah blah blah, [mumbles] Jonathan. That's what I heard.
Very faint.

Ali (as **Veile**): Okay. There's some sort of funny, like, through a door or something.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Okay. You should put that in your bag, and we will mess with it all later.

Ali (as **Veile**): Okay. I'm sorry. I know you have a lot on your plate.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): No. No, this is the best thing that has happened to me today, Veile.

Austin: [quiet sympathetic sound]

Ali (as **Veile**): Do you know what kind of cake your mom likes?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): [sighs] [Ali laughs]

Austin (as **Cerulea**): Wait, don't just put me in your backpack! We're at the shop.
I could help at the shop.

Ali (as **Veile**): How could you help at the shop?

Austin (as **Cerulea**): I know all about shops.

Ali (as **Veile**): Okay. Well, most of them are closed. I'll talk to you later, okay?

Austin (as **Cerulea**): [resigned] Fine. Nice to meet you. I'm sorry. I don't mean to be rude.

Ali (as **Veile**): Oh, it's okay.

Austin (as **Cerulea**): I just miss home.

Ali (as **Veile**): I'm sorr— I'll help you, I promise.

Austin: Okay. [Ali laughs] I need you to add a thing to your Inventory.

Ali: Okay. Add a thing to my Inventory?

Austin: That's right, yeah. You're getting...

Jack: Angry Girl.

Austin: Angry Girl. That's right. [Dre laughs] Uh, one second.

Ali: I have the gem in my journal.

Art: Potentially 19 years old.

Austin: This is— you can keep it in the journal. I just want to make sure it's somewhere that you have it on hand. This gem is an expert in loot and gear, and it can be used as a Trait when you spend a Fabula Point.

Dre: Oh.

Austin: And I've written here: When you do this 10 times, dot dot dot...

Ali: Okay. Cerulea gem. And then what was the things that I got?

Austin: Is it in there now? I'll drop it in there. Boom.

Ali: Okay.

Austin: Expert in loot and gear. Can be used as a Trait when you spend a Fabula Point. So it's as if you had— you know how you have the Trait—

Ali: Yeah, yeah, yeah. My Trust In You, yeah, yeah.

Austin: Or no, just like, sorry, no, your Identity. Whatever your Identity is.

Ali: Oh, yes, yes.

Austin: It's as if she can use her Identity, which is expert in loot and gear. So if you're ever like, "What is this weird sword I found?"

Ali: I see.

Austin: And you roll to know, you can spend a Fabula Point to reroll something as if it was from her, instead of...

Ali: Okay.

Austin: You know, you can consult her. She's like an expert in— I mean, quite literally, she is like a tutorial for loot and gear. [Ali laughs] But also is maybe something else. There's something else happening here. She's far from home. She misses someone named Gail, she said. And she's a robot.

Ali: Okay. And when she was like, "Oh, I can help you at the store," I can use a Fabula Point to, like, get more information or to, like, open a new UI screen. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: Get some more information. If you're in a dungeon and find a weird sword that's unidentified, you could call on her to help identify it.

Ali: I see. Okay.

Dre: Ooh.

Austin: Yeah.

Shop Cont. [0:28:54]

Ali (as **Veile**): So, about that cake.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): [sighs] Yeah. I'll go pick it out.

Austin (as **Gerald**): Janessa! Or Jenesis? Something like that. That's what it was.
[Ali laughs]

Jack (as **Elena**): Jenesis.

Austin (as **Gerald**): Jenicia.

Jack (as **Elena**): I think my aunt knows someone called Jenicia? I don't think I've met them. They might be from...I don't know.

Austin (as **Gerald**): Well, she was, um...she was an interesting lady.

Jack (as **Elena**): Oh yeah?

Austin (as **Gerald**): She bought up all the flyswatters. I don't know why.

Jack (as **Elena**): Oh. Did she have some kind of a plan, or...?

Austin (as **Gerald**): Maybe a problem.

Jack (as **Elena**): Do you sell cakes?

Austin (as **Gerald**): Yeah, we got cakes.

Jack (as **Elena**): Yeah. I'm looking for sort of, like, a hospitality cake.

Austin (as **Gerald**): A hospital cake? We don't do hospital cakes.

Jack (as **Elena**): No, no, no, no, no. Like reverse—

Austin (as **Gerald**): A cake that looks like a little hospital. That sounds like something you need to go to a baker for.

Jack (as **Elena**): Yeah, I'm sure you would need to go to a baker. I want a cake that I can give to someone that says, "Thank you for your hospitality."

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Here we go.

Dre: Plops a cake down in between you all.

Austin: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah. [Ali laughs]

Austin: And it says, “Thank you for your hospitality,” on it.

(as **Gerald**): Oh, a hospitality cake. Why didn't you say so?

Jack (as **Elena**): Oh, perfect.

Ali (as **Veile**): Isn't that a bit informal? Don't you want to—

Austin (as **Gerald**): I could make it say, “Thank ya!” instead.

Ali (as **Veile**): Well, what if it said, like, “Happy to be home!” or...

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Oh. [sighs]

Ali (as **Veile**): “I'm here!”

Jack (as **Elena**): “I missed you”?

Ali (as **Veile**): Yeah, “I missed you”!

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Yeah, that's a— okay, I'll go back and look. And it's probably—probably going to have to say at the end anyway, if Mom's sick, so.

Jack (as **Elena**): Well, no, I don't know that we need that bit. That's...

Art: I would like to pick this moment for Nicky to just wander up to the counter with just arms full of spices, [Austin and Ali laugh] just like various spices and like finishing salt, and just dump it on the counter and be like,

(as **Nicky**): I'll take all of these.

Art: And I'm not sure how many Inventory Points I need, but that.

Austin: But all of them.

Art: All of the Inventory Points I can carry.

Austin (as **Gerald**): A weird cake you're preparing. Okay. Okay.

Art (as **Nicky**): I'm not involved in the cake.

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

Austin: [chuckles] I want that apron.

Ali: How much is an Inventory Point?

Art: [laughing] "I'm not involved in the cake," it says on the apron.

Dre: It's, like, 10.

Austin: 10 asta per point. It's dirt cheap.

Ali: Oh, okay, then I...okay, then yeah.

Austin: That's why it's so outlandish that anyone would ever try to haggle. [Ali laughs]

Ali: It's 30. 30 for 3, not...

Austin: 30 for 3.

Ali: Okay. I was going to subtract 90 and not leave myself with 90 like I should.

Austin: That's right. Yeah, 30 for 3.

Ali: And that would have been bad. That would have been bad.

Austin: Boom.

Ali: Okay.

Austin: And Jonathan, you are selling the dragon thing, right? The dragon scale?

Dre: Mm-hmm. Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: Take 1000. Did you already take it?

Dre: I did, yeah.

Austin: Okay.

Dre: And then subtracted 50 for my IP.

Austin: For IP? Gotcha.

Dre: Yep.

Austin: Cool. And you're buying spices and stuff.

Art: The spices are just for flavor.

Austin: I see.

Art: I just wanted to barge into the scene.

Austin: Perfect.

Art: [chuckles] And I think we can all agree I nailed it.

Austin: Anyone else shopping? Anyone else talking to their crystals? [quiet laughter]

Jack: No. I think I'm all done here. I don't need IP. I'm going to rest. I don't want to sell my crystal yet, because I want to haggle for a better price, [**Austin:** Good.] and I'm not going to be able to do that at this shop.

Austin: Good.

Jack: So I'm all good.

Austin: All right. You heading back to the Jonathan clan shell house?

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Dre: Mm.

Austin: All right.

Ali: And we have a cake with a little heart on it, right, that says, "I missed you," or

something.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Dre: I don't know if it says anything. [Ali laughs quietly] I think it just has, like, a nice floral design.

Jonathan's Family [0:32:27]

Austin: You get in. You know, you head down the road. At this point, I think things in town are fully into night and past evening, so things are really quiet. I didn't say this part, but each of the kind of tiers of this town has, like, a bunch of little lakes and ponds and stuff on them. There's a pair or rivers that run down from the mountains towards the sea here and kind of work as natural borders around Spillaway Peaks, but in between it all, there's also like a bunch of other lakes and ponds. And Jonathan, your family's home is kind of right up against one of the biggest of these lakes, the one that the Clutch, the set of little tinier homes and stuff for the youngsters, where they all live. And so it has kind of like a lakefront quality to it. This, again, is a huge communal home that has a bunch of rooms and stuff in it. It's huge, because it's not just your family. It is like, you know, a dozen families are all part of the same clan that you're part of. Push come to shove, I bet that that's what you would use as a last name, but I don't think anyone here actually uses those names, you know what I mean?

Dre: Mm.

Austin: Your name is Jonathan. People know you as Jonathan. It's not a big deal. They know that you are Jasper and Lovinia's kid, Jonathan. You know? But if you decide later that you want last names to be important or clan names to be important, we can do that, but right now, [Dre: Sure.] it didn't seem like that was the case, so.

Jack: This is, like, very different to the Rosemerrow clan stuff going on back in Winter in Hieron.

Austin: I think so. I don't remember.

Jack: They were the people that stacked names.

Austin: Oh, that's right, they did do that. That's right.

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Austin: I'd completely forgotten about that. Yes, very different than that. The halflings. I remember Rosemerrow. I remember the halflings. I don't remember the details of their culture. I gotta tell you: you finish a whole thing like that [**Ali:** Mm-hmm.] and you stop adding to it?

Jack: It just goes.

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Austin: A lot of those details aren't there. I remember a lot of the end. I remember a lot of the world state at the end and stuff, but I don't quite remember season one, season two things, you know?

This is a big building. It's a big, again, kind of round domelike structure that has a number of levels inside of it. They don't just go up. They go down into the earth too. Things get cooler down below, so not only are there things like cellars, but also the hangout zone in the summer is like a lower level living room basically or a big common area that gets nice and cool. And then if things are cool, like in the middle of the winter, you go up to the top where a lot of the heat rises up to, and there's like a big chimney in the middle of this thing that is kind of like the entire structure is built around this center chimney, and that heats up each level, which is really fun, and there's like vents at the top level that you can open to get some extra heat. And, you know, you— I think your family is a really prosperous one for the clan, both for the clan and in the clan, and so has a lot of space to work with, including a really nice guest wing that they have available because Lovey often has so many, you know, people who come to stay or visitors or whatever, and so making sure that you can put people up is important.

I say all of that, because you are given the tour. You are given the tour by Jonathan's little sister, who, when you come in, rushes over and gives you a huge hug.

She is not a child at this point. She is graduated. She left and came back. She did the thing that you have to do to leave the Clutch but only very recently, only in the time since you have been gone. She says— her name is Mae. Her name is Maebela, but she's commonly called Mae. She says,

(as **May**): I did it! I did it! I got out the Clutch!

Dre (as **Jonathan**): [sighs] Well, I can tell. I can't even pick you up anymore.

Austin (as **May**): You gotta tell me where you been! I want to get out there. I want to go too. I didn't know you were coming home! Why didn't you send word?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): [sighs] Well, it was a bit of a surprise to us as well. But don't worry, I got stories, and I brought some friends who all have stories of their own too.

Austin (as **May**): Oh, mom's going to be so excited. Did you tell her you were coming?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): No. I didn't...I didn't know that she was sick, Mae. How is she?

Austin (as **May**): Oh, she...you know how she likes to play things up. She's going to be all right. I always say, Momma won't never die.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): That's... I don't think Jasper sees it that way.

Austin (as **May**): Well, Jasper... You ask me, I think Jasper's... I shouldn't say. Not in front of your guests. Hi! My name is Maebela.

Ali (as **Veile**): Well, hello.

Austin (as **May**): I'm Jonathan's little sister.

Jack (as **Elena**): Hi!

Austin (as **May**): Wow!

Art (as **Nicky**): Hi there.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Hi, Mae. This is...

Austin (as **May**): I never seen anyone look like any of you. [Dre and Art laugh]

Ali (as **Veile**): Oh.

Dre: I think Jonathan laughs at that, actually.

(as **Jonathan**): Well, this is Veile.

Austin (as **May**): Veile, pleased to meet you.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): This is Nicky.

Austin (as **May**): Nicky. What a gentleman.

Art (as **Nicky**): How's it going?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): And this is Elena.

Jack (as **Elena**): Hi!

Austin (as **May**): You are so beautiful.

Jack (as **Elena**): Oh, thank you.

Austin (as **May**): Well, let me show you around.

Austin: And, like, gives you the tour that I just gave you but is, like, much more slow and in depth. Shows you the three different kitchens in the building.

(as **May**): You look like you might be a chef. Are you a chef, mister?

Art (as **Nicky**): I am a chef, yeah.

Austin (as **May**): Oh, we gotta get you cooking in here. We gotta show you how to cook Terrapine style. Although maybe my brother already showed you that.

Art (as **Nicky**): I mean, a little. I'd love to see anything you've got to show me.

Austin: You know, shows you there's like a little back porch on, like, the third level that looks out over the big lake. It's really pretty. This is a nice place. Hey, Jonathan's from a nice place.

Ali (as **Veile**): What a nice place this is.

Jack: Nicer— Is this like when you find that your friend comes from a richer family than you think they do?

Austin: It's a little bit like that, and it's also a little bit like when you meet your friend's family, and you're like, "Now, wait a second. Was your home life pretty good, actually?" [Art, Dre, and Jack laugh] Now, literally. I want to be clear: the actual situation with Jonathan's family seems hard in different ways. But there is a vibe of, like, this town seems cool. And it is not Jonathan comes from a particularly rich family, even though I have kind of been clear that Lovey is a local celebrity. It's just like, the vibes are good. The people in the hallway are really nice to you. Mae does not seem exceptional in her politeness and interest necessarily, you know? I'm not saying there aren't problems with this place, but the first blush seems to be pretty...the vibes are good.

Jack: This is interesting as well, because Genuine Sincere sort of felt the same way.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Jack: I mean, he didn't say it in so many words, but the only kind of sort of putative optimism or interest that he showed in a response to the Perpetuan Cycle was he as like, "The Terrapine are onto the right thing."

Austin: Yeah. They're getting ready for it to come, but they're not pretending that it isn't.

Jack: In contrast to the way he spoke about other outlooks, which was, like, nihilistic.

Austin: That's right.

Jack: Interesting.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Ali: Well, he's like a guy murdering for the sake of the cycle continuing?

Austin: That's what it seems like, yeah.

Jack: Yes, but he—

Ali: And they seem to be the only society that's like, "Well, let's do something about it. We also want the cycle to happen."

Austin: Well, it's interesting, because [**Jack:** Yeah.] you are from a church that believes it's coming and you should, like, make sure life right now is pretty good.

Ali: Uh huh.

Austin: You know, you're not from a— your church is not like, "We should stop it from happening." I mean, your particular...

Ali: Right, right, right.

Austin: Vinnor Jekk does, but there is a difference, right? The Terrapine seem like they are not just letting it happen but being part of it, in a different way.

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Austin: They do want some stuff to last from cycle to cycle. They do want to take care of whatever comes next, whoever they can potentially lead into the next cycle, but they aren't trying to simply... You know, the Holy Protectorate is just kind of like, "Well, it's coming!" you know?

Ali: Right, yeah, yeah. [Jack chuckles] Come to our church services, admire our books, and do, like, little adventures for us.

Austin: That's exactly right, yeah. Exactly. Yeah. So, different vibe. You know, I'd written down originally that the Holy Protectorate is like acceptance, in that schema: a kind of cheerful fatalism.

Ali: Right.

Austin: Which is not really what the Terrapine have. It is different, so. Yeah.

Jack: There was also a kind of desperation from Genuine Sincere when he was speaking about the cycle ending. He was like, “It *has to* end.”

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: You know, we *have* to bring it to an end. And I wonder if there is a way to square—

Austin: Or, sorry, that the world has to come to an end, not the cycle. The cycle needs to continue.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Oh, yes, the cycle absolutely needs to continue, but there is like an imperative to bring the world to an end.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: And I wonder if, on some level, his fondness for the Terrapine is like, they've found a way to feel comfortable about that [**Austin:** Yeah.] or a way to feel involved with that.

Austin: Totally.

Jack: Sort of like sweetening the pill, from the perspective of a man who, like Ali said, stands on a tower and shoots people.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: You know, even Martin Blank, [chuckles] you know, wants things to be different sometimes.

Austin: Sometimes. Mae, I think, takes the cake from you and puts it... I think says, like,

(as **May**): Are we going to have this tonight?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): [sighs] Well, sure. Yeah, if you'd like to.

Austin (as **May**): Oh, I'll put it out, and you want to go say hi to Daddy? He's in the workshop.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): [sighs] I was hoping to see Ma first, but is she sleeping?

Austin (as **May**): Well, she been sleeping. But we can check!

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Yeah. No, that's... I'll go see Pa.

Austin: And yeah, I think, actually, probably says,

(as **May**): You all can help me put the cake out and get dishes.

Ali (as **Veile**): Oh, we'd love to.

Jack (as **Elena**): Yeah, happy to help.

Jasper [0:42:26]

Austin: What's your father's workshop look like?

Dre: Um, I think not that dissimilar to the Little Snail.

Austin: Yeah.

Dre: Like, it is organized chaos. If you walk in there and you're like, "Oh god, this is overwhelming," but like, no, everything's in its place. It's just it doesn't matter if it looks good when it's in its place.

Austin: Yeah. The thing that your dad is known for is, you know, the Shell Barrow is out there in the bay and at the end of this long bridge dock thing. It used to be...what is now

the shoreline used to be up the mountain, and the mountain flooded. And your father is the one who— and this was before— eh, maybe it was when you were real little. Maybe you have memories of this from when you were real little. You know, figured out how to update the Shell Barrow's design to lift it up and reinforce it against future floods. At this point, if the sea level goes up again here, it will be fine. It can sustain being underwater now. And this was his big invention, his big engineering marvel, which also, of course, gave y'all a huge amount of kind of cultural cache, you know?

Dre: Mm.

Austin: But now, he likes to tinker with little things. I mean, I guess you haven't been home in a bit, but he's in there as you come in, and I think he's making little, like a train track. You know what I mean? Like a little...he's making little train cars that go on a train set.

Dre: Mm.

Austin: In his engineering, in his little workshop. He's carving them. He's painting them. He's giving them little power cells. And he looks up at you and, like, lifts up his glasses as if perhaps he's seeing too well when he sees you.

(as **Jasper**): Jonathan.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Hey. Hey, Pa.

Austin (as **Jasper**): I'm so glad you made it home. We didn't think you were going to make it.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): I didn't know. Dad, if I had known about Mom, I would've...

Austin (as **Jasper**): You know, we didn't even send a messenger when she got sick. At first, we just thought you'd probably be home soon. Why'd you stay out so long, son?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): [sighs] I told you, Dad. I—

Austin (as **Jasper**): Oh, we don't have to get into this right now. Where you been? Tell me about your journey.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Well, I brought people with me. I brought friends with me.

Austin (as **Jasper**): Oh, are they joining? Are they going to go through the process?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): [chuckles] Well, I guess you could ask 'em. No, we have reason to believe that somebody's got bad schemes involving...well, involving home.

Austin (as **Jasper**): Bad schemes?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): I don't know a lot yet, [Jasper sighs] but that's why we're here.

Austin (as **Jasper**): Well, I guess I'm glad you're back to help out and keep everybody— do what you can.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Yeah, no. you just tell me. You just tell me what to do. I mean, they could probably handle it, and I can stay here. I can help you. I can help with Ma.

Austin (as **Jasper**): Yeah, we could use an extra pair of hands. We could use that voice of yours too. Think it got a little deeper.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): [sighs] Yeah, I'm rusty, but I'm sure it'll get back into shape.

Austin (as **Jasper**): Carl is on his journey right now. We have a spot available in the choir. You'd fit right in.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Uh...yeah, I'll...

Austin (as **Jasper**): I bet you got new stories to tell. You know, maybe...your momma sure would love to hear new stories. Maybe we could come up with

another song to add for Rehearsal.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Oh, you know what? You should look at this, Dad.

Dre: And I think the FLEGbot, like, pops out of the backpack.

(as **Jonathan**): [cross] I wanted to show you—

Austin (as **FLEGbot**): [cross] [robotic] Hello. Hello. Hello.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Oh boy. Okay. Well, it's a prototype, Dad.

Austin (as **FLEGbot**): He built me! He built me.

Austin: Hops up onto the workshop.

(as **FLEGbot**): [increasing in intensity] Train. Train. Train! Train! [cross] Train train train train train tr— [Ali laughs]

Dre (as **Jonathan**): [cross] Hey. Hey, don't touch— no.

Austin (as **FLEGbot**): [disappointed] No train.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): [sighs]

Austin (as **FLEGbot**): What is this guy? Looks like a damn Flegg!

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Yeah, that was the idea.

Austin (as **FLEGbot**): You built yourself a Flegg.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): I thought it'd be fun.

Austin (as **FLEGbot**): It is fun! How'd you get this thing working?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): [sighs] Had to use a special power source that...

Austin (as **FLEGbot**): [thoughtfully] Special power source.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Yeah, Dad. We found it at the bottom of a ruined tower.

Austin (as **FLEGbot**): Ruined tower?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Got attacked by a ghost dragon priest, Dad. It was crazy.

Austin (as **FLEGbot**): Ghost dragon priest?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Yeah!

Austin (as **FLEGbot**): You gotta tell your momma these stories!

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Yeah. Yeah, yeah, I do.

Lovinia [0:47:37]

Austin: The rest of you meet his mother first, because she is up from bed and coming out to the main hall, and she says,

(as **Lovinia**): Oh, I know the smell of coffee and cake. Who do we have here, Maebel?

Austin: And Mae goes around the room and says,

(as **May**): All right, I'll see if I can get it all right. This is Elaine. [Dre laughs]

Jack (as **Elena**): Uh, Elena, hi.

Austin (as **May**): Junathan.

Austin: Not Junathan. Fuck. Jonathan's her brother. [laughter]

(as **May**): Nucky?

Art (as **Nicky**): It's Nicky. It's fine, though.

Austin (as **May**): And Veile.

Ali (as **Veile**): Yes, hi, hello.

Austin (as **May**): Jonathan brought them home.

Jack (as **Elena**): Thank you for letting us stay in your house. It's beautiful.

Austin: At hearing...there's a brief moment of surprise on Lovey's face, but she kind of immediately suppresses that with, like, stills it. Stills her eyebrows as they start to go up, and then says,

(as **Lovinia**): Well, if you're friends of Jonathan's, we are going to treat you great. You take a seat. If y'all need anything, you let me or Maebel know, and we will make sure that anything you need is going to be met. I'm going to take a sit down real quick, and I would love a piece of that cake, Mae.

Austin (as **May**): Right away, Momma.

Ali (as **Veile**): Oh, well, yes, we brought it for you to enjoy.

Austin (as **Lovinia**): Oh, you brought me the cake? Aw.

Jack (as **Elena**): Well, no, Jonathan. Jonathan brought you the cake.

Austin (as **Lovinia**): No, I— you know, I'm sure Jonathan's been very busy. Thank you all for the cake so much.

Jack (as **Elena**): No, no, no.

Austin (as **Lovinia**): What a kind gesture. Glad your parents raised you right.

Jack: Sensing maybe not to push back too hard on this, Elena just sort of smiles and, like, a sidelong glance at Veile.

Ali (as **Veile**): Um...well, it seems like a beautiful night. Is the city usually quite so temperate?

Austin (as **Lovinia**): Oh, the city is beautiful. It is a beautiful night you showed up. I was looking out the window. It sounded so good, practice tonight. It's going to be a beautiful Rehearsal. You going to Rehearsal this weekend? I hope you get

to make it to Rehearsal.

Ali (as **Veile**): The streets have been filled with music, but I've been curious but unable to sort of poke my head in, as it were.

Austin (as **Lovinia**): You are one formal girl, aren't you? I can tell you studied some religion, but you're so...pardon me saying so, but you don't gotta be so practiced all the time. It's easier to talk to people if you sound a little more like 'em. [Veile laughs] That's just from one pro to another.

Ali (as **Veile**): I understand. I'm told I relate to people quite easily, which is...

Austin (as **Lovinia**): Oh, I bet.

Ali (as **Veile**): I will keep that in mind. [Dre and Ali laugh]

Austin (as **Lovinia**): Now, how do you take your coffee?

Ali (as **Veile**): Iced, please.

Ali: [laughs quietly] No, she doesn't say that.

Austin: Eyes go wide.

Ali: No, no, no. I would say that. I would say that. [Austin laughs] No. I wouldn't say that. I wouldn't say that. I would want to, but I would not. And Veile's a different person who knows not to.

Austin: Yeah, uh huh! [Ali and Austin laugh]

Ali (as **Veile**): Sugar and a bit of cream if you could.

Austin (as **Lovinia**): Oh, we got it. We got it. Mae, make her some coffee.

Austin (as **May**): Right away, Momma.

Jack (as **Elena**): You're a singer?

Austin (as **May**): Oh, I was a singer for quite some time. I still sing now and then, and if I'm lucky, maybe I'll be here still when Rehearsal starts.

Art: [amused huff]

Jack: It's— Oh, sorry, you go, Art.

Art: No, I don't have anything to say. This is just...

Austin: Oh yeah. Deep gallows humor with her. You know, Rehearsal's a couple days from now. It's not...

Art: Yeah.

Austin: And she's clearly not, like, on her deathbed. But she is...

Art: Yeah. I mean, yeah.

Austin: You get it.

Art: Nicky knows people from back in the neighborhood, [Austin laughs quietly] you know, women who have been doing this for 15 years, and they don't live as long, so.

Austin: Uh huh. Yeah. [sighs]

Jack (as **Elena**): Jonathan mentioned that you'd not been well.

Austin (as **Lovinia**): Oh, you know. Just a little cough, just a little ache. That's life.

Jack (as **Elena**): Well, you don't need to host on our account. I'm sure we can see each other—

Austin (as **Lovinia**): On your account? It's a joy for me! I don't get visitors that often. Not like this, not these days. You're from, um, Rillspur, right?

Jack (as **Elena**): Yes, ma'am.

Austin (as **Lovinia**): Rillspur. We had some sort of vermin expert come through

here from Rillspur.

Art (as **Nicky**): A vermin expert?

Jack (as **Elena**): Oh, yes.

Austin (as **Lovinia**): A vermin chaser? A bug hunter.

Jack (as **Elena**): Bought a lot of flyswatters.

Austin (as **Lovinia**): That's right! Janessia. Now, she had a beautiful voice.

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

Ali (as **Veile**): A bug hunter?

Jack (as **Elena**): Oh, there are good singers in Rillspur. I'm something of a musician myself.

Austin (as **Lovinia**): You're a musician? Do you sing?

Jack (as **Elena**): Here and there.

Jack: Most of the time we've heard Elena sing, it's been, like... [quiet laughter]

Dre: Horrific?

Austin: Strange atonal screeching?

Jack: [laughing] Yes.

Austin: Some, like, Alva Noto but, like, vocal? Like, it's been like, yeah, uh huh.

Jack: Yeah, yeah.

(as **Elena**): Yeah, here and there. Mostly, you know, nowadays I, you know, tend to work it into the art.

Jack: Sort of, like, gestures at her staff to be like, it's adventurer's singing.

Austin: Right.

Jack: I'm sure that combat, the sort of stuff that Elena does exists in the world, right?

Austin: This is not there's only—

Jack: This is not the Hieron “I’m the Wizard” situation.

Austin: Yeah, there are other Chanters, quote, unquote, here that do this.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin (as **Lovinia**): Oh, yeah, of course, of course. Well, we all have a niche in this life, don't we?

Austin: She does not like it. She does not like it when singing is used to, for instance, give someone an elemental weakness or do damage to anyone who can hear you. That is not the purpose, as far as she is concerned, but she is too polite to say those words out loud, but she does look at you with that look.

Art: Mm.

Jack: Yeah, and J. Robert Oppenheimer believed that science is, you know, like a morally neutral and valuable study, until a certain point in his life.

Austin: Uh huh. Yeah. Yeah.

Jack: I think Elena would be like, “Well, look, I sing.” You know, she wouldn't say it, but she'd be like, “You know, I love to sing.” Usually for, like, melting people.

Austin (as **Lovinia**): We'd love to hear you. Maybe we could teach you a couple of the songs, or even just a chorus.

Jack (as **Elena**): Oh, I'd love to go to Rehearsal if possible.

Austin (as **Lovinia**): Please, of course. All are welcome.

Jack: For Elena, it has now reached the point in the conversation where you are talking to your friend's parents, [**Austin:** Mm-hmm.] [Ali laughs quietly] and it was pleasant, and now it's not unpleasant, but it is enough.

Art: But you are trying to make plans for other... [Austin and Dre laugh]

Ali: Yeah.

Jack: Look, sometimes this is also how it goes.

Austin: That's how it goes. The other way it goes.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Ali (as **Veile**): Is this a good area for bug hunting? How strange.

Austin (as **Lovinia**): Oh yeah, you get down in the marshlands.

Ali (as **Veile**): Oh.

Austin (as **Lovinia**): Or in the summer, you get up in the peaks. Shoot, lot of bugs.

Ali (as **Veile**): Huh.

Art (as **Nicky**): Well, we aren't bug hunters ourselves, so I appreciate Veile's...

Austin (as **Lovinia**): No, you don't look like much of a bug hunter. Handsome, though.

Ali (as **Veile**): Well, there's nothing wrong with being curious. [pointedly] Making conversation, Nicky.

Austin (as **Lovinia**): Nicky. Nicky, Nicky. I don't—

Art (as **Nicky**): This is the conversation you want to have? This is the— “Hey, where are the big bugs around here?” That's conversation to you.

Ali (as **Veile**): Well, you don't think it's curious that someone would come and collect all those bug materials?

Art (as **Nicky**): Why?

Ali (as **Veile**): Well, that's what I'm asking. [quiet laughter]

Austin (as **Lovinia**): See that, May? They're bickering. They'll fit right in here. [Ali laughs]

Austin (as **May**): Momma...

Austin: And Jonathan, you come in to this moment.

Ali (as **Veile**): It's the topic du jour.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): And then, Dad, I woke up in the top of the tower, in a completely different place, and she showed me this book, and— Mom, you're awake.

Austin (as **Lovinia**): Yes, I woke up while you were away.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): [sighs] I just went to go see Dad, 'cause Mae told me you were sleeping, but I'm glad you're awake.

Dre: I think Jonathan, like, hurries over and is, like, fussing, [**Austin**: Mm-hmm.] even though she's already got, like, cake and coffee.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Austin (as **Lovinia**): Oh, I'm— get— [mutters]

Austin: And, like, kind of waves you away, you know?

(as **Lovinia**): Your *friends* brought me a cake. You see that?

Ali (as **Veile**): Jonathan brought the cake.

Austin (as **Lovinia**): Oh, Jonathan brought the cake. And left it on the table before he went to see his daddy in the workshop. Same as it ever was.

Ali (as **Veile**): Well, we...

Ali: [laughs] Just stumbling out of steam on that one. Has not interacted with a person like this, and just...

Austin: Mm-hmm.

(as **Lovinia**): Take a seat, Jonathan. Get yourself a cup.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): You look like you're doing well.

Austin (as **Lovinia**): Oh, I'm doing great. By the glow of the Barrow. Where you been?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Well, all over. We were just...

Dre: Whoops, the map is not the thing, so I forget the name of the city we were just at. [chuckles]

Austin: Calstega Bay.

Dre: We've been traveling with Veile for a while now, helping her with her pilgrimage.

Austin (as **Lovinia**): Her pilgrimage? Now, I knew she was a woman of the cloth, but I didn't know she was on a pilgrimage. Where are y'all headed?

Ali (as **Veile**): Oh, that's just the trouble of it, ma'am. I'm seeking someone who might help guide me while I'm here.

Austin (as **Lovinia**): Oh, we got some people who can give you guidance. We know all sorts of people who have explored basically the whole of the world, at this point.

Ali (as **Veile**): Um...

Ali: And kind of, like, glancing to Jonathan, [laughs] back to Jonathan's mother, and being like:

(as **Veile**): Does the term "Luminary" mean anything to you, ma'am?

Austin (as **Lovinia**): I've been called that a couple times.

Ali (as **Veile**): Oh, sure.

Austin (as **Lovinia**): Young luminary of Spillaway Peaks!

Ali (as **Veile**): Yes.

Austin (as **Lovinia**): That's what they used to call me. But no, if you're asking...that, to me, sounds like more *your* type of religion than mine.

Ali (as **Veile**): Okay, yes.

Jack (as **Elena**): What about White Lectern?

Austin (as **Lovinia**): [thoughtfully] White Lectern.

Jack (as **Elena**): Or any kind of lectern, really. We can narrow it down from there.

Austin (as **Lovinia**): That rings a bell, but I can't quite put my finger on it. I'll think about it. That's where y'all are headed, the White Lectern?

Ali (as **Veile**): Yes.

Austin (as **Lovinia**): Hmm. Something like it, for sure, but not top of mind. My memory, these days. So much to remember. You know, I think a lot of people think, "Oh, the Terrapine. They're a little older than most people. That means that they have more knowledge." And that's true. That's true, but you gotta keep it somewhere.

Ali (as **Veile**): Well.

Austin (as **Lovinia**): You see your brother yet, Jonathan?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Yeah, we ran into him when we first got into town. I was surprised he wasn't back here already, actually.

Austin (as **Lovinia**): Well, he's been...he took up my role as the leader of the Middle Choir, and I hear he's doing a good— did you get a chance to hear him lead song?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Just at the end, but it sounded great. I'm really happy for him. That was always his dream.

Austin (as **Lovinia**): It sure was. Well, this cake has been delicious, and your friends seem great, but I will say we are glad they brought you back to us. Glad you're gonna be back around.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Yeah.

Austin (as **Lovinia**): I'm going to head back into my room for the rest of the night and see if I can sleep despite the coffee and cake. If y'all need anything, you don't be afraid to ask.

Austin: What were you going to say, Dre?

Dre: Oh, just that Jonathan was going to offer to help walk her back to her room.

Austin: She absolutely accepts that.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Austin: She takes your help as you stand up. You can feel her flexing to, like, stand up. You can feel the use of the effort. You can feel the energy being used.

Dre: Mm.

Austin: She's tired, man. And like, I think is in pain all the time and is not showing it, because it would be rude and embarrassing to show the pain that she is in.

(as **Lovinia**): Well, you know the way.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Yeah. Yeah. You know, I had to think about it so I wouldn't get lost.

Austin: And, you know, as you're walking back, I think she says:

(as **Lovinia**): I'm glad you got some people. We miss you here, but I'm glad you got some people. That's always been the worry for me with you. You love to, like, your daddy, be in the workshop and be building stuff, but it's the people. But it's the people that matter. Even if it ain't us, I'm glad you got some.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): [quietly] Yeah. Listen, you should get some rest, but could we talk more tomorrow?

Austin (as **Lovinia**): Yeah, we could talk more tomorrow. I ain't got nothing else going on.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Yeah. [sighs] All right, Ma. Good night.

Austin (as **Lovinia**): You're gonna stay through Rehearsal, right?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Yeah.

Austin (as **Lovinia**): You promise?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): I promise.

Austin (as **Lovinia**): All right. Then yeah, we can talk tomorrow. Your bed's all made up. We never— Mae wanted the room, but we never— We kept your bed the way it was, the whole room.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Thanks.

Austin (as **Lovinia**): Now, I love you. All right?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Yeah. I love you too, Ma.

Austin (as **Lovinia**): You better. [Ali laughs quietly] Good night, Jonathan.

Dre: Closes door behind him. Shoulders slump.

Austin: Mm.

Dre: Are you all still back in the kitchen at this point, or...?

Jack: Yeah, or like, getting shown to the guest room. I don't know.

Austin: Yeah, I think that's probably it. Mae, at this point, showing you all to the guest room. It's like a guest suite. It's like a nice, big, it's couple of bedrooms, you know? And in fact, yells out. You know, hears you close the door.

(as **May**): We're in the guest suite, Jonathan!

Dre: Sure.

(as **Jonathan**): [sighs] Damn, Mae. She's not good.

Austin (as **May**): Yeah, well. It must be hard, you know? She was so important for so long, and now she barely leaves the room, you know?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Yeah.

Austin (as **May**): That's why I... I don't know. Between you and me, as soon as I can leave, I want to get out of here. I don't want to be here when things get real bad.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Yeah.

Austin (as **May**): And I want to see the world like you're seeing it.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): [sighs] Well, I already told Momma I'd catch up with her tomorrow, but as soon as she's done talking off my one ear, I'll give you the other one.

Austin (as **May**): Oh, tomorrow I'm gonna be at work.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Oh. What are you doing for work?

Austin (as **May**): Oh. Of course. You weren't here. Theo—

Austin: Who, you know, Theo was one of your boys growing up. Thelonus, Theo.

(as **May**): Theo started a new paper. The Shining Star, up on the hill. And I've been doing all sorts of...I don't know, they call it, you know, gopher type work. I go and I get people coffee, and I help people set stuff up in the print machine, and sometimes they have me go get a quote!

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Hmm.

Austin (as **May**): Working my way up. I want to be a reporter.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): What are they writing about?

Austin (as **May**): [hushed] Oh, that's the thing. Theo thinks we should be more, um, worldly. Stop spending all our time in our shell, so to speak, here in Spillaway. Between you and me, sometimes Theo talks about how we gotta do more than just prepare for the end. We gotta try to stop it.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Mm.

Austin (as **May**): And sometimes it makes a lot of sense.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): And they've let him set up a paper?

Austin (as **May**): Well.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Normally talk like that gets...

Austin (as **May**): He ain't talking about it on the front page! He's talking about how good Jeremiah's ribs are and what a good rehearsal it was, and sometimes he slips in a little bit of, you know, other perspectives. That's the name of the

section. You can write in. You can have yourself a little editorial. Other Perspectives. Call 'em op eds. [Jack laughs] Other Perspective Editorials.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Yeah, okay. Well. That sounds like Theo. [sighs]

Austin (as **May**): Anyway, I hope you all get some rest.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Yeah.

Austin (as **May**): And you'll find me at the Shining Star tomorrow.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Yeah.

Austin: And then leaves y'all to it.

Debriefing [1:03:45]

Jack: All across Perpetua, people are writing the two kinds of Perpetuan op eds: [Austin laughs] “Wouldn't you like the world to end?” and “Maybe the world shouldn't end.”

Dre: Now, hold on a minute. [Jack laughs]

Austin: There was something, of course, that rang, I think, as a reminder, maybe Elena has this written down.

Jack: Hmm.

Austin: What was told to you by old Commodore Onyx? Maybe you didn't.

Jack: Did I write this down? Oh, he said look for the—! Yes, he did! I have this. He said, like, “Look for the sign of the shining star.”

Austin: “Look for the sign of the shining star.”

Ali: Ooh.

Dre: Mm.

Ali: Hell yes.

Jack: Now, alternatively, what if you tell everything about your plan to the mysterious old woman? [quiet laughter]

Austin: Over coffee and cake.

Jack: Over coffee and cake.

Art: Mm-hmm.

Jack: The two options. But, you know, you ever get into such an awkward situation with somebody else's family that you start [laughing] describing key religious secrets?

Austin: Yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Art (as **Nicky**): I think we need to have a conversation. [Austin laughs]

Jack (as **Elena**): Mm?

Art (as **Nicky**): And that conversation is about telling every single person we meet every single thing about what we're doing. And I don't think everyone's doing this—Jonathan is someone who is not doing this—but some people are doing this.

Jack (as **Elena**): Hey.

Ali (as **Veile**): Hmm. That doesn't sound right.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Nicky, you can—

Art (as **Nicky**): You just told Jonathan's family—who you never met and didn't know why Jonathan left—everything about what we were doing, within 20 minutes of meeting them.

Jack: Elena, blushing, like, bright red. [laughs quietly]

Ali (as **Veile**): We didn't tell them everything.

Jack (as **Elena**): Well...

Art (as **Nicky**): What didn't you tell them?

Ali (as **Veile**): Well, I didn't tell them about my mark, and I didn't tell them about the Luminaries, and I didn't tell them about General Onyx and his whole secret, and, um...

Art (as **Nicky**): Sure. You're right. There are many details you did not tell them, but you told them enough to do real harm to us. If only you cared about our own security as much as you care about General Onyx's.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Nicky. Come on, now. That's taking it too far.

Art (as **Nicky**): You're right. That was too far. That's too much. But I seen people get hurt over stuff like this.

Jack (as **Elena**): I don't mean to be rude, Jonathan, but it was fine to tell that stuff to your mum, right? We don't need to... [Jonathan sighs]

Art (as **Nicky**): But you didn't know.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Well, it's—

Jack (as **Elena**): I trust Jonathan!

Dre (as **Jonathan**): It's—

Art (as **Nicky**): Jonathan didn't tell you anything.

Jack (as **Elena**): Jonathan seems good. Jonathan's folks seem good.

Ali (as **Veile**): Mm-hmm.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): [cross] Hey. Hey! HEY!

Art (as **Nicky**): [cross] Jonathan hasn't been here in how many years?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Can I talk about my own damn family?

Jack (as **Elena**): Yeah, okay.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Nicky.

Art (as **Nicky**): Yeah.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Elena is right in that my mother is a wonderful person
[**Elena**: Hmph!] who would never do anything to harm us.

Ali (as **Veile**): Exactly.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Elena. [Ali laughs quietly] Nicky is right in that my mother would do nothing to try to harm us but that doesn't mean that she wouldn't. Also, she likes to talk. I mean, that's who she is. You know how people talk about somebody being the talk of the town? That's her. That's been her, her whole life. [Art chuckles] And it's not just people talking about her. It's her doing so, so much of the talking. And, you know, if people found out that what we're ultimately trying to do is end the cycle, there'd be a lot of complicated, mostly negative reactions to that.

Jack (as **Elena**): We didn't tell them that.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): I know. I'm just saying.

Ali (as **Veile**): One might think it would be a good idea to bring people to our side, perhaps.

Art (as **Nicky**): People we've known for more than 20 minutes, sure. I think maybe people should take some advice from the criminal here and shut their damn mouths.

Ali (as **Veile**): Well, she's going to—

Austin (as **FLEGbot**): Shut your mouths. Shut your mouths. Shut your mouths.
[Jack and Dre laugh]

Art: Shut The Fuck Up Friday over here.

Austin (as **FLEGbot**): Shut The Fuck Up Friday!

Ali (as **Veile**): Don't curse.

Jack (as **Elena**): Don't curse, Flegg. How come the little one curses?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): [sighs] That's Nicky's fault.

Ali (as **Veile**): Jonathan.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): I didn't do it!

Austin (as **FLEGbot**): Nicky taught me all the bad words. [Jonathan sighs]

Ali (as **Veile**): There should be a setting.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): I'm trying.

Austin (as **FLEGbot**): Don't touch my settings.

Jack: Elena is, like, losing it.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): He won't let me touch his settings now. And he's got a point. It would be kind of messed up, if I just could turn a knob and you wouldn't say certain words anymore.

Ali (as **Veile**): You built it.

Austin (as **FLEGbot**): It's dehumanizing.

Ali (as **Veile**): I beg your pardon?

Austin (as **FLEGbot**): It's dehumanizing. [Ali laughs]

Jack (as **Elena**): You're not a human, little guy!

Austin (as **FLEGbot**): It's depersonaficationating.

Ali (as **Veile**): Well, let me explain to you why you don't want to curse for the rest of the night.

Jack (as **Elena**): Yeah, I'd like to hear this. [Dre laughs]

Austin (as **FLEGbot**): That sounds fun. Okay. [Ali laughs]

Ali (as **Veile**): Now, come sit down and take this notebook.

Austin: Flops over and sits down and takes the notebook. [Ali laughs] And, for just a minute, *really* wants to rip all the pages out of the notebook. [Dre laughs] And then looks up and looks dead in your eyes. Like, you know, we cut between your eyes and FLEGbot's eyes. And then, like, pats the paper like it's a cat, very softly.

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