

Perpetua 33: The Castle Eschatonica 01

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Arriving to the Dragon Path

Austin: The year is 397 BE—Before the End.

[[“The Castle Eschatonica”](#) by Jack de Quidt begins playing]

And in front of everything else, let me remind you where you are. You are in the Void. The Aether. The Dragon Path. The Dragon Way. The garish abyss that lies beneath and between all Perpetuan things. The horizon swirls with purple and pink and orange and yellow, not clouds so much as brush strokes, a sky dotted with floating isles, with land bridges connecting some and luckily allotted ruins connecting others. It is a surrealist landscape lit by nine suns. And in fact, some of you have seen one of them before. Indeed, it hangs fully in the air, below and behind you—the iron sun of Castine. And the others are there too: Cinner’s sun of fire to the west, and further on, the wind sun of Zepheus, pushing the tides of the world you know and lifting the vault into the air. Above it all, Lucena’s divine light, and deep deep below, Caliginia’s black hole. The sun homes of the other gods too dot the ether, but it’s only those two that look on to your groups with interest. Take 2 Fabula Points as the Villains watch on.

And no, that’s not quite right, because there is another figure, another being watching, a figure dressed in robes of the deepest blacks with little marks of color hanging in nothing. They are looking up at the many paths of the Dragon Way. Their face is covered with a mask. The mask is flat with a harlequin print, and in nine of the

checkerboard tiles are eyes, eight closed tight, but the top one wide open, asymmetric, bright with excitement. They have no mouth, but they make a grin with their arms and summon a large staff with a paintbrush's horsehair head into their hands. Across a distant bridge well above them, a few small shapes move. The figure pulls their brush in front of them and twirls it, painting a lens in the empty air in front of them, and they look through it to see a group. Closer up, you can see the figures, five of them, coming into focus. A Hexcloak. A living shield. A glamorous archer and his two bodyguards.

[song ends]

Austin: A leaf falls into the group and is caught and considered by the archer. Where would such a thing come from here? Before he can answer, a single pebble falls, and then another, and then a rounded chunk of earth, dozens of meters across, rolls into the group, grabbing them up in descent like a snowball and begins to fall into the nothing below. For those on top of that chunk of earth—a priestess of the goddess Caliginia, a criminal turned chef, an adventurous hostess who's left her home dungeon behind, a big-hearted inventor and his overeager sibling—the impact is hardly a bump. For both sets of adventurers, it would surely be death if not for the intervention of the stranger.

(as **trickster**): [gleefully] Fated visitors. Fated visitors!

Austin: The watcher laughs to themselves, and then they reach out with the staff brush and draw a curve in the air, and with it, a sweeping arc of a rainbow slides into view, and the mound of earth reaches it, slowing. Slowing, sliding, and finally rolling to a stop on a flat plane of land, hovering above the abyss. Everyone take 10 damage, but know you should have taken a hundred or so more. Antistrophe, Brontë, Caoimhe: There is a huge round chunk of earth—the one that just hit you off your path, which you were *not* going to wander away from—right next to you. Elena, Jonathan, Nicky, Veile: From the top of that big chunk of earth, you can just barely make out a structure over the horizon and some ill-fitting ruins, some of which look like nothing you've ever seen before and most of which don't even look very much like each other. Meanwhile, over the edge of your big chunk of earth, there are five people you've never met before—including, it looks like, an elf. What do you do?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): [shouting down] Hey, hold on! I got a rope. Hold on.

Dre: Rummage through my bag and start trying to throw down a thick rope to help them climb up.

Janine: Real quick, should we have healed?

Austin: No.

Janine: Okay. I'm in Crisis, just FYI.

Austin: No healing. Uh huh, yeah. [Ali laughs quietly]

Keith: Oh, hmm. I was at full health.

Austin: Many such cases.

Sylvia: Yeah, you're usually...

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: That's your whole thing, man.

Keith: It was not a brag, but, uh... [laughter] Just making sure that...

Austin: As a reminder for y'all, you were just in a fight, and often you come out with full health somehow.

Keith: Mm. Mm-hmm.

Janine: It's weird.

Keith: As long as that was right, then I'm fine.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: If you're hurt, do you want to take the rope last or first?

Janine: Um...

Sylvia: Like, do you want to get out of here first, or do you want to have someone go ahead in case?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Hey, y'all need help? If y'all can't climb up the rope, just let us know!

Austin: I'm going to reset the scene just a little bit. The five of you from the west are up on a big chunk of earth that's like a big boulder effectively, right? And so you have, like, a good perspective, but there's no way forward up there. There's only down to the ground where the rest of the group is.

Sylvia: Oh.

Dre: Mm. So we're going to them.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): [shouting back up] Why would I want to be up there?

Austin: There you go. [Sylvia laughs]

Dre (as **Jonathan**): You know, now, after assessing the situation... [Austin laughs] [shouting] Yeah, we'll be down in a second!

Janine (as **Brontë**): I do appreciate the thought, though.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Yeah. [louder] Okay. See you then.

Art (as **Nicky**): You know, they could have offered to hold the rope. We could have climbed down.

Janine (as **Brontë**): What?

Sylvia (as **Caioimhe**): [distantly] That's not how ropes work!

Art (as **Nicky**): I think it is.

Sylvia (as **Caioimhe**): Yeah, let me hold this rope from the bottom. [quiet laughter]

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Nicky, I don't think that's how ropes work.

Art (as **Nicky**): No, sure, right? So, I'm here. [Ali laughs] And they're holding it.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Okay, well.

Janine (as **Brontë**): Well, you could have— someone could hold the bottom, and someone up there could hold the top, and then you could ballet down.

Art (as **Nicky**): Yeah. Wait, how's the last person get down?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): I'm just going to hold the top, if, Veile, you want to go ahead and go down this rope.

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

Art (as **Nicky**): [cross] I'm going to figure this out, don't worry.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): [cross] Veile, please. Veile.

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

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Veile, please go first. Please go first, Veile.

Ali: [laughs] Shimmying, staff on my back. I'm full health, because I had god's special gift a moment ago.

Sylvia: Oh.

Keith: Oh, did you?

Janine: I rush up to help catch you. [Ali laughs]

Austin: Oh.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Oh no.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Oh no! [Austin laughs]

Sylvia: Sorry, my “Oh no” is in character. [Janine laughs]

Dre: Oh, no, so is mine.

Sylvia: Okay.

Janine: I notice there's a lady, immediately rush up like, “Oh my goodness.”

Dre (as **Jonathan**): [pointedly] Elena. Elena, get down this rope. Elena. Elena.

Jack (as **Elena**): I don't know who these people are, okay?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): I know, but Elena? That man is very handsome. [laughter]

Jack: Confusion on Elena's face.

Ali: What? [laughs]

Jack: Also, real quick, Austin, you said there were five of us with May. Is Waylon here?

Austin: Oh, I don't— oh, I guess Waylon is here. I forgot about—

Dre: He's gotta be here! [laughs]

Austin: Apologies to Waylon. Waylon is here. Waylon has got to be here. Oh my god, I forgot. I remembered Maebel, but I forgot...

Sylvia: [quietly] Oh lord.

Austin: I can't believe I forgot the most grumpy turtle of all time.

Jack: Elena glances at Waylon.

(as **Elena**): Okay. Mr. Waylon, are you hurt?

Austin (as **Waylon**): I'm not going to get my picture now, am I?

Jack (as **Elena**): Well, no, we're going to try and get back to Spillaway Peaks as quickly as possible, and then we can get the picture. You just stay up here until,

you know, we've had a chance to see what's going on.

Jack: And down the rope, following Veile.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Hey, remember how we got warned not to, like, follow the— you told me not to, like, follow the beckonings, Antistrophe?

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Yeah. You're not supposed to.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Is this beckonings? Are these beckonings right now?

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): No.

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

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): No, these—

Ali (as **Veile**): [sweetly] Sir, are you injured? My name is Veile.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Oh, I'm fine.

Janine: I think Brontë... [Ali laughs quietly] He definitely tries to help Veile down and then immediately, Veile being followed by another cute girl, [Ali laughs] he does feel like he has to divide his— You know, he can't just ignore Elena.

Austin: Wow. Right.

Jack (as **Elena**): I'm fine, thank you.

Janine: But definitely looking back and forth between them a little bit, sparing a brief glance back to Caoimhe.

Sylvia: Who has her arms crossed. [Janine and Sylvia laugh]

Keith: Like when a robot has been given a paradox and steam starts coming out of its ears?

Janine: No, it's the opposite of steam. What's good steam?

Sylvia: What's the opposite of steam?

Ali: Huh?

Austin: The opposite of steam?

Keith: [thoughtfully] What's the opposite of steam.

Sylvia: Oh, it's Epic Games Store coming out of your ears.

Austin: Ohhh.

Dre: Mm. [Ali and Janine laugh]

Keith: Maybe soup is the opposite of steam?

Dre: Do you have a nosebleed? Is that what we're trying to evoke here? [Austin, Jack, and Keith laugh]

Sylvia: Oh my god.

Janine: No, no, no, no, no. He's cooler than that. He doesn't get nosebleeds that easily.

Dre: Okay.

Sylvia: [quiet laughter] The nosebleed is from the damage we took.

Art: But soup out of his ears all the time. [Dre laughs quietly]

Janine (as **Brontë**): Thank you. That's so kind of you. I'm actually fairly hurt. We were just in a fight before, and then whatever this is happened. Are you a healer?

Ali (as **Veile**): Um, in a manner of speaking, I suppose. I could heal your injuries.

Janine (as **Brontë**): That would be lovely. I should introduce myself. My name is Brontë Adelvys. I am the sixth son of the Grande Sonnerie...well, you could call them the topmost family.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): [distantly] Oh, brother! [Ali laughs quietly]

Janine (as **Brontë**): It's a pleasure to meet you.

Ali (as **Veile**): Yes. I've not had the honor to visit Grande Sonnerie myself, but I've heard great things.

Janine (as **Brontë**): And your name is...?

Ali (as **Veile**): My name is Veile, and this is Elena, and—

Janine (as **Brontë**): Elena, Veile. Okay. Beautiful names.

Sylvia: I, like, shoulder my way past Brontë to introduce myself.

(as **Caoimhe**): Caoimhe Wake. This is Antistrophe.

Keith: I wave.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): What are you doing here? [cross] We weren't expecting to meet other people.

Jack (as **Elena**): [cross] I could say the same of you. We were traveling in the mountains north of Spillaway Peaks. We were escorting an elderly Terrapine, and we fell through the earth.

Austin (as **Waylon**): [distantly] I'm not that old!

Jack (as **Elena**): [chuckles] [loudly] I'm sorry, Waylon! [quieter] He is.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): They're talking about me, Waylon. Don't worry about it.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): [thoughtfully] Terrapine.

Jack (as **Elena**): And who's...who are you? What are you doing?

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): We were traveling from Cenn to...

Sylvia: Austin, I forgot the name of the island we're going to. It's not written down on the map.

Austin: Well, you're not even going— you were—

Janine: Weren't we—? We were pursuing—

Austin: Going to Lumai. You were going to Lumai, the Gleaming Fortress.

Janine: Yeah.

Sylvia: We were going to Lumai. Thank you.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Sylvia: I got the Gleaming Fortress and the Hexcloak Enclave mixed up.

Austin: Of course. No worries.

Sylvia: Yeah.

(as **Caoimhe**): We were traveling from Cenn to Lumai.

Austin: Those aren't places y'all have ever...

Ali: Yeah. Confusion.

Austin: You know, it's...yes.

Sylvia: Yeah, same face I made when y'all said Spillaway Peaks, if I'm being honest.

Janine: I know what everyone means. [Ali laughs quietly]

Sylvia: You're from there.

Austin: That's true, actually, yeah.

Janine: [laughing quietly] I'm not from here, so I know.

Jack: Glances.

Dre: Mm.

Keith: Could I know any of these too?

Austin: Antistrophe could potentially know. Also, Antistrophe, I need a token for you. You didn't give me a token.

Keith: I didn't give you a token? Did you ask me for a token?

Janine: Yeah. Yes.

Sylvia: Yes, he...

Ali: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: Yeah. I got so many tokens. [Ali laughs]

Dre: There's so many fun pictures in the Discord right now.

Keith: Oh.

Janine: Why did you think we were all posting, like, transparent PNGs?

Austin: Weird turtles. [Ali and Dre laugh]

Keith: Genuinely, I didn't see any— oh, I guess I see it now.

Austin: Yeah. [laughter]

Ali: Can we also have, like, character descriptions?

Austin: I would love that so much.

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Ali: As people come together.

Austin: Please.

Janine: Yeah.

Ali: Because I don't know y'all. I know y'all, because I... [Ali and Sylvia laugh]

Austin: And I'll just say you were on a big gray rock of— Yeah, because you edit the show, Ali. [Ali laughs] You're on a big gray floating rock. The scale here is not to scale, at this point. It goes further north than this for quite some time, but assume that it's kind of like, you can see, just over the horizon, there is a structure. Actually, from the top of the rock, those of you that were on the top of the big boulder, [**Ali:** Oh.] you could see that there was like a castle over the horizon to the north. But now, between you and that kind of north area, there's just a bunch of weird ruins separating you from there.

Jack: And for the listener—since I know it's always fun when we get to do this, and we don't do this very often—we are looking at a Roll20 screen in which Austin has clearly prepared a gigantic fog of war.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: Oh my god. I just thought it was all black.

Austin: I should zoom out.

Janine: Yeah, I thought it was black screen.

Dre: Oh, wow. Yeah, same.

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: I was about to be like, “Hey, Austin, it's busted,” and then I moved.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah, you should zoom out.

Janine: And I found a little crusty Toblerone down there. [Sylvia laughs]

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: At the bottom of which is a little crusty Toblerone, and also, excitingly, there is a grid.

Austin: There is a grid.

Art: Wow. Yeah.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: This isn't a grid game. We're not going to probably be doing any grid stuff probably, but you know, who could say?

Jack: I don't know. I'm sensing a hex crawl.

Austin: Eh, could be.

Dre: Ooh.

Sylvia: Oh boy. What's everybody's movement speed? [Austin and Jack chuckle]

Dre: Slow.

Character Descriptions [0:13:50]

Janine: Brontë Adelvys is a...I would say tall-ish. I guess I don't think of him as short or exceptionally tall. He's like a handsome height. [Sylvia laughs] And he's a—

Austin: Hey, what the fuck does that mean? [Janine laughs]

Sylvia: No, I totally get it. [Ali laughs]

Janine: I don't know!

Dre: 5'11" but you put 6'2" on your Tinder profile.

Austin: I see.

Janine: Genre conventions. Yes, that's extremely accurate. Yeah, because he's definitely not, like... He's never the tallest nor the shortest person in a group. He's just, like, in the mix. He has sort of fluffy purple—the shade can vary—purple hair with sort of fluffy side pieces. I tend to liken his hairstyle to various, like, CLAMP manga hairstyles from the '90s. And the back is long but it's pulled up in a little sort of folded bun thing. He wears a lot of, like— He's wearing a drapey kind of— Didn't I get a fancy drapey shirt? I thought I got, like, a slightly fancier...

Austin: I don't quite remember, but I would believe you.

Sylvia: I don't remember. It's been a while since we last played.

Janine: But I had, like, a cool boy shirt. I don't know. It doesn't matter.

Austin: Did you, like, get one from somewhere?

Janine: He's wearing a shirt.

Austin: Okay.

Janine: [laughs quietly] And has a very big bow that has "Heartbreaker" on it. It had "Siegebreaker" on it, but the "Siege" was crossed out and replaced with "Heart." [Jack laughs]

Sylvia: I forgot about that.

Jack: Ah, I didn't know about that. [Dre laughs]

Janine: Brontë is accompanied by Efta and Zolfta, who are usually at a much greater distance than this, but they are close, and they probably separated themselves from the group, just in case some stuff is going— Like, they want a full view of the new people. They don't want to get too shut off, if something goes down. They are young adults. I think one's in a sort of gothic lolita dress. The other one is in what is called an ouji lolita. It's like suspenders, but it's still kind of, like, little goth doll type clothing. One has a sword. One has a gun. They say nothing and interact with no one in this moment. They

are just watching.

Austin: All right, so that is Brontë. Who's next?

Sylvia: Should we keep going with our team, or do we want to go back and forth?

Dre: Oh, we should take turns. We should take turns.

Austin: We should go back and forth. You should go back and forth.

Sylvia: Okay.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: Although we started with the wrong team.

Austin: We did start with the wrong team.

Dre: It's fine.

Janine: Well, we could follow, like, a sort of line of action and interaction.

Austin: There you go.

Janine: Like, Brontë is, you know, turned to Veile for aid, so maybe that means that Veile is next, and et cetera.

Ali: [laughs quietly] Yeah. Veile is a seemingly mild-mannered young adult woman. She has, like, green curly hair to her shoulder blades. She wears— Like, vestments are kind of tough to be recognizable in a mixed continent group, I think, but maybe Brontë might recognize, like see the style of clothing that she's wearing and be like, "Oh, she's a nun or something adjacent." She's wearing a white dress with a high collar and long sleeves with some decoration on it and then [laughs quietly] a coat you might associate with criminals with no markings because of a shopping trip she went on.

Austin: I forgot about this. [Ali laughs] It's very funny.

Sylvia: Ah, a Hexcloak. Nice.

Ali: A staff that is sort of shaped like a bell but without a bell on it and a purple ribbon tied to it. She's probably wearing, like, fingerless adventurer gloves and boots to hide her hands. Don't ask about it. Don't worry about it, either.

Austin: Mm.

Art: Mm, I'm more worried than ever.

Ali: [laughs] You know what's going on.

Art: But I was never told not to worry about it before. [Dre and Austin laugh]

Austin: And what are you doing in this moment? Let's continue to draw that line between characters.

Ali: Yeah. I think kind of, like, if Veile is sort of fidgetingly politely being like, "Oh, let me help your injuries," or whatever, she is probably involving Elena in the, like... [laughs quietly] Because she's new to healing is what we've also established.

Austin: Right.

Ali: So the sort of pair of them fretting over— or at least Veile would fret. I don't know what Elena is doing, but Veile trying to make the fretting contagious by asking Elena questions is what's happening. Also, I can just do the healing spell. Do you want me to just do it?

Austin: Sure.

Sylvia: Can I get some of that? [Janine laughs]

Ali: Uh, it's up to four? What is it? It's up to three?

Sylvia: Yeah, if it's the same spell I have, it's up to three.

Ali: It is. I believe so. Heal: up to three creatures. So.

Sylvia: I'm a creature.

Ali: All right.

Janine: I'm doubly a creature.

Ali: [laughs] Do we want a third in here? Does anybody want to get lumped in?

Art: If no one else wants it, I'll take it. [Austin chuckles]

Sylvia: Did Antistrophe take damage?

Art: I'm at 46, for comparison.

Austin: Antistrophe did not take damage.

Ali: We've been over this. [laughs]

Keith: I didn't take 10 damage?

Austin: Oh, you did. You did just now.

Sylvia: Yeah, that's what I was...

Austin: Sorry. Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes.

Keith: Just 10, yeah.

Austin: I thought you meant *before this* before this.

Keith: Otherwise I'm fine.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I got you.

Ali: Okay. As a sign of goodwill, I will heal your party, a thing I also just did to a bunch of Fleggs.

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Sylvia: Okay. Thank you. Oh, wait. Oh yeah, no. That's fine. Yeah, I'm good. I forgot how the character sheets on this worked. [Ali laughs quietly] I can go next.

Austin: Please.

Sylvia: Again by sort of elbowing my way between Veile— between Brontë and the other two girls, just to be like...

Keith: Wow. [Janine laughs]

Sylvia: Calm down. Calm down. We don't need this getting out of hand.

Austin: You're not jealous, right? That's not what that is, right?

Sylvia: [feigning awkward denial] What? No, never! Come on.

Janine: Caoimhe would never.

Austin: It's not just jealousy. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Sylvia: That's ridiculous. That's ridiculous. [Ali giggles] I guess I'll start with describing, and then I can give her action or what she's doing. So, because I'm not wearing my hexcloak right now, Caoimhe's sort of dressed like... I don't know, I want to say dressed like a fencer, but that doesn't really make sense, because when you look at fencers, they wear, like, athletic equipment, and I'm thinking like, from *The Witcher* or some shit, you know what I mean?

Austin: Sure. Yeah.

Sylvia: But it's like—

Keith: Fencing but *Witcher*.

Sylvia: Yeah, yeah, yeah, exactly. It's pretty functional. It's kind of like loose. I don't want to say she's wearing the pirate shirt from the *Seinfeld* episode, but the sleeves are kind of like that. [Ali laughs] They're like the loose puffy sleeves. And she's got, like, bright blonde hair tied back into sort of a messy ponytail. Round glasses. She always

looks like she could use more sleep.

Austin: Mm.

Sylvia: She has these sort of, like, they look like electrical scars is how I've described them or Lichtenberg figures, but it's a birthmark that goes from one side of her face and continues down her neck and presumably further. And she has her rapier, the Spellsever, hanging off her belt with a shield on her other wrist. And she is also currently taking notes and is like— Thank you so much, Janine. You have saved me from saying Jerry Seinfeld. Bishop sleeves. She's got bishop sleeves on her shirt. [laughter] I was straight up like, I was searching like, "What's Ciri's shirt called Witcher," so like, thank you so much. [Ali laughs] And she's taking some notes and is like,

(as **Caoimhe**): Could you repeat the name of that place? Spillaway Peaks is where you guys came from? And that's...where about is that?

Sylvia: She's, like, circling words and being like, "Something's going on here."

Jack (as **Elena**): It's on the western continent.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Ohh. That would make sense why you guys have a...Terrapine? Sorry, I've only ever read it. Up until now, I thought it was [pronouncing completely wrong] Tear-ap-in-ay.

Janine (as **Brontë**): Oh my goodness, Caoimhe.

Jack (as **Elena**): Oh, no, that's...

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): No, that's dip. That's a famous dip.

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

Austin (as **Waylon**): It's delicious!

Art (as **Nicky**): Yeah, I know terrapenne!

Austin: [laughing] Sorry, we're both trying to do... [Keith laughs]

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): I assumed it was named after— I thought that it— Okay, well, we need—

Art (as **Nicky**): No, no. It's all different. I get it. It's got a lot of cilantro. It's got a green color. I see where you got it.

Sylvia: Caoimhe just sort of nods and then looks over at Elena and Veile, and is like,

(as **Caoimhe**): Your father's very knowledgeable. [Ali laughs quietly]

Jack (as **Elena**): Oh! [laughs quietly]

Art (as **Nicky**): Oh! Hey!

Jack (as **Elena**): He's not our father. This is Nicky.

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

Jack (as **Elena**): Nicky. He's the cook of our outfit.

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

Jack: Elena is a young woman in her early 20s. She is wearing a dress with a pinafore over it. She is dressed very much like the sort of, like, young girl adventurer out on the beginning of a journey, even still at this point.

Sylvia: Let's go.

Jack: She has red hair. She has a scarf tied in her hair, sometimes a bow tied in her hair in, like, a ponytail. She is carrying a magician's staff, except it is almost more like wand length. It's closer to, like, a conductor's baton that she's holding between her index finger and her thumb, and it appears to be made of glass, but it's actually made of ice. And she has been sort of standing back. I think that her staff is kind of slung at her belt, actually, and she has got her arms folded and is looking with a kind of, like, guarded caution at the new party and at the work that Veile is doing. But as Nicky appears, I think, you know, feels a little comforted that Nicky has come down from the

rock. [Austin chuckles] Although Elaine— Elaine. [laughs] I'm thinking of *Seinfeld*.

Austin: You're thinking of *Seinfeld*, yeah. [Dre laughs]

Sylvia: I'm sorry. I've cursed you all.

Jack: Elena is looking back at Antistrophe with a sort of like a “who the hell are you?” expression on her face.

Keith: I guess that means it's me, and Antistrophe is, I think, very worried. This is not how you're supposed to be traveling through the paintings.

Jack: It's absolutely not, right? The paintings is one of those things like taking the bullet train or something, where if it all goes well, it's straightforward and linear.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah, and everybody knows about how trains can derail.

Jack: Yeah.

Keith: This is a disaster. This is, like, a different thing. Like, normally you either get on the train and then get off where you're supposed to go or it derails and something insane happens, but this is not either of those things.

Jack: It's like the train has gone through a hole in the ground.

Keith: This is like a new kind of disaster, or not disaster! [Jack and Austin chuckle] It seems like a disaster. There was like an earthquake, and, you know, there's this big rock, and we really shouldn't be here. And so, as everybody's been introducing themselves, I've been worriedly thinking. Antistrophe is wearing big heavy armor. He's carrying two...I wouldn't say ornate but like, slightly decorated shields, giant shields, and, you know, a simple pack. And is, like, brow furrowedly not listening to anybody.

Austin: Great. Let's swing back to Nicky, who was being introduced earlier, then.

Art: You know, like if Wario were in *Cooking Mama*. [laughter]

Keith: Is he not? [Jack and Ali laugh quietly]

Austin: He should be. He should be.

Dre: Cooking Mama's probably in Wario.

Art: I mean, if Mario can play tennis and golf, Mario can cook, and I think they should make that game, but I'm not here to tell Nintendo what to do.

Dre: [cross] That's for *Side Story*.

Art: [cross] That's for *Side Story*. Yeah.

Austin: Yeah, that's right.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Hell yeah.

Austin: Let 'em know.

Art: Let 'em know.

Keith: *Side Story's* good.

Art: You know, so Nicky has that kind of build. Nicky's wearing an apron over inventor's garb, which I think I just realized was probably supposed to be purchased by Jonathan, which I imagine is like a pockety, you know, Rob Liefeld style armor. [Austin chuckles]

Sylvia: Oh, wow.

Austin: *Cooking Mama* Wario in Rob Liefeld style is breaking me. I can't do this.

Sylvia: That's crazy.

Art: If Rob Liefeld drew the *Cooking Mario* tie-in comic.

Austin: I see. Yeah.

Art: Uncle Nicky's armor would be—

Keith: Who is that, by the way? Who's Rob Liefeld?

Art: He's, like, an iconic '90s comic book artist, who I believe is like—

Keith: Oh! He drew the Captain America.

Sylvia: He drew the Captain America with the big tits, yeah.

Keith: Yeah, he did do that. Yeah.

Dre: Ohh.

Austin: But there's other—

Art: He drew a lot of guys with a lot of pockets.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: He was a pockets guy.

Sylvia: And not feet. He couldn't draw feet.

Art: No, he does not draw feet.

Sylvia: Yeah. Everybody has hooves.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: The anti-Tarantino.

Keith: Tar-anti-no.

Sylvia: Yep. [Austin chuckles]

Art: Yep. We did it.

Sylvia: All right. Good episode, everybody.

Austin: Have a good one.

Keith: Yeah, wrap it up.

Austin: Time.is. Okay, Nicky. Were you done describing yourself? Was that the gist?

Art: Uh, yeah. You know, kind of.

Dre: I think you've left out description of the giant fucking fork that you carry around?

Austin: You do carry around a giant fork.

Art: I do carry around a giant fork. I imagine, to climb down a rope, that was probably secured somehow, maybe on a loop on this adventurer's garb. Maybe just jammed through a pouch, because who needs all these pouches? I guess there are, like, spices and ingredients in some of the pouches.

Keith: You could have used it to zip down.

Art: What's that?

Keith: You could have used it— like, one end of the fork in each hand, and then you zip down the rope.

Dre: Ooh.

Art: Oh. No, I didn't think of that, so it didn't happen.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: Oh. [Jack laughs]

Art: I thought you meant like spear it, like getting it between the two of the tines and going down. I was like, that, you're going to fall. [laughter]

Sylvia: Oh. Take the rope, rolling up the rope like a big thing of spaghetti and then

unfurling it so you can go down. [Dre laughs]

Art: Oh, I like that.

Keith: And very well acquainted with spaghetti, so.

Art: That's what we get in the Marvel vs. Capcom vs. Perpetua character introductions. Yeah, big fork. Rob Liefeld. *Cooking Mama*. I think I've hit all my talking points.

Keith: Do you have the zigzag mustache like Wario?

Art: I think it's a more regular mustache. More of like a—

Keith: A Chef Boyardee?

Art: Yeah, a Chef Boyardee. Well, I don't want to get too unrealistic here.

Dre: Mm.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: Thank you. Yeah. I appreciate that.

Art: And not a chef's hat, even though there's a chef hat on the icon. I just think that that's more for work time, not for adventuring time. The chef hat is in the Snail.

Sylvia: Okay.

Keith: Okay.

Dre: Mm, mm, mm.

Keith: Is the Snail up there?

Austin: No. No, they were not, in fact, in the Snail when this happened.

Sylvia: Oh shit.

Austin: They weren't even close, unfortunately.

Keith: Right.

Austin: Though maybe we should talk about—

Art: So if there's a chef hat [**Austin:** Uh huh?] portion of this, we're going to be in trouble.

Jack: [laughs] If we have to cook for these people.

Discussion [0:29:49]

Keith: I ask,

(as **Antistrophe**): Hey, did you all go through a painting?

Ali (as **Veile**): Oh, no. We were just—

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

Ali (as **Veile**): We were hiking, and...well, I—

Art (as **Nicky**): You know, doing some journalism.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): [thoughtfully] Journalism. You weren't traveling in a painting.

Ali (as **Veile**): No. I was trying to do a ritual which might have affected— I don't know.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): What kind of ritual?

Ali (as **Veile**): Well, I was trying to make, like, a time dome, you see.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): What is a time dome?

Ali (as **Veile**): [nervous laugh] It's like a space of being where time moves slower. I study entropic magic, and we wanted to rest in an efficient time and experience that rest outside of the normal flow of time.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): You're trying to take a long nap quick.

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

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): And so you did *entropic magic* for that?

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

Art: The painting traveler is telling us about...

Dre (as **Jonathan**): [shouting distantly] Hey! Get away from the rope! Look out below! [Jack and Austin laugh quietly]

Keith: Jonathan's going to jump?

Dre: No, there's a giant thunk, because Jonathan is dropping his giant hammer.

Austin: Oh.

Keith: Okay.

Dre: Instead of trying to carry it down the rope.

Austin: Smart. Smart.

Ali: Boom!

Keith: I sidestep the hammer.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: *Boom!*

Janine: Wait, are you the last one down?

Dre: Yes, I am.

Austin: Well...

Dre: Well...

Janine: Then who's holding the rope?

Austin: Well, are Waylon and...

Janine: Oh, right. Okay.

Dre: I have an idea for that.

Janine: Okay. Okay. Okay.

Austin: Okay.

Janine: Okay. Okay. [Ali laughs]

Dre: I think Waylon and Mae go down first, before Jonathan.

Austin: Okay. So two other Terrapine, one who's older than Jonathan and one who's younger, come down the rope first. These are Waylon, who is an elderly Terrapine photographer. He is carrying a big camera, like, on a stand or with a stand, and walks past all of you. Like, ignores everybody and just starts walking north. Slowly. He's not going to outpace you. [laughs quietly] You could hang out here for a while.

Keith: Okay. [Jack laughs quietly]

Austin: He's not going to get away. And I think Maebel, who is Jonathan's little sister, who's like, you know, young but not a child, right? In the Terrapine equivalent of, you know, 20s.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Runs over to the other party, to the eastern continent party, and is just like immediately— like, not asking questions but leaning into the conversation and, like, trying to mentally jot things down and is, like, looking at all your gear and is, like, very clearly in “encountered something new and exciting and shiny” mode.

Sylvia: Oh, so we're in the same mode.

Austin: Right. Yeah. Uh huh.

Sylvia: Her and I. [Ali laughs]

Austin: 100%.

Janine (as **Brontë**): Oh my goodness. What's your name, miss?

Austin (as **Maebela**): My name's Maebel!

Janine (as **Brontë**): Maebel.

Austin (as **Maebela**): And who are you?

Janine (as **Brontë**): I'm Brontë Adelvys. I'm the sixth son—

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Wait til you hear about which son he is. [Sylvia and Jack laugh quietly]

Austin (as **Maebela**): You're from, um, [snaps] Grande Sonnerie!

Janine (as **Brontë**): I am, yes.

Austin (as **Maebela**): You're like a prince.

Janine (as **Brontë**): Well, I don't use so many words for it, but yes, that's true.

Austin (as **Maebela**): Prince is only one word!

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): It's one word.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): You usually use more words for it. [Austin and Art laugh]

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Yeah, usually you use *so many* words.

Jack: Fucking Waldorf and Statler over here. [laughter]

Art: [imitating muppet laughter]

Janine: To be fair, I don't usually— He doesn't usually brag about being a prince. He just brags about other stuff, like being cool and good at stuff.

Sylvia: Uh huh.

Dre: Sure.

Keith: I haven't heard a million times about the sixth son of the scion?

Janine: Well, I'm laying it on a bit thick today.

Sylvia: We've noticed.

Janine: Because there's, you know.

Dre: Good.

Ali: Is that in character?

Janine: No.

Sylvia: No.

Ali: [laughs] Okay.

Janine: Unless—

Keith: This is a pseudo in character.

Janine: I mean, we could have a version of that in character, if we wanted. [Janine and Ali laugh]

Austin (as **Maebela**): What's a prince doing with an elf?

Janine (as **Brontë**): Wh— Now, now.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Is that a problem?

Austin (as **Maebela**): No, no, no! [Janine laughs] I just, I didn't think y'all had princes and princesses and whatnot over there.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Oh, I'm not a... [chuckles] Oh, definitely not a prince or a princess over here.

Austin (as **Maebela**): Well, that's my question. What's a Grande Sonnerian prince doing over in elf land?

Janine (as **Brontë**): Oh, well, you know, I'm doing sort of a...you could say it's a diplomatic exchange. My family requested—

Austin (as **Maebela**): Jonathan, they got a prince and an elf down here! You gotta hurry up!

Dre (as **Jonathan**): [distantly] I'm working on it!

Austin (as **Maebela**): Jonathan's my brother. He's been away from home for, like, *decades*, but he's finally back.

Janine (as **Brontë**): Aww.

Austin (as **Maebela**): Though I don't know where we are now. This ain't home.

Janine (as **Brontë**): No, it's definitely not.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): So you were doing magic, and you wound up here?

Ali (as **Veile**): Uh, well—

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): You weren't in this place on purpose.

Ali (as **Veile**): Well, there was a great burst of land, and then, yes, we seem to have lasted here.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): That's fascinating.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): You didn't teleport via magic?

Sylvia: Writing down, "failed magic transports you," and underlining it three times.

Austin: [sarcastic] Yeah, that's what happened. For sure.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): I just, I need to know if you were, like, up there somewhere and fell straight down or if you warped here.

Ali (as **Veile**): No, there was some sort of man who was giggling, and then...

Janine (as **Brontë**): [distastefully] Oh.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Oh. Okay. Was it on purpose?

Ali: [laughs] This is true, by the way. There was, like, a guy who rolled up and said, like, [mocking] "Are you working for the painter or the whoever?"

Dre: The poet or the gambler?

Ali: Yeah, or some shit like that.

Austin: The poet or the gambler, yeah.

Ali: Yeah.

(as **Veile**): And then we kind of just fell through a hole.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): You fell.

Janine (as **Brontë**): I'm very sorry that happened to you. That sounds awful.

Ali (as **Veile**): It was quite startling. And so you came through a painting.

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

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

Janine (as **Brontë**): Yes.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Yeah, we're here on purpose.

Ali (as **Veile**): From a different continent.

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

Janine (as **Brontë**): Well, that presumes this is no longer that continent and not vice versa, but maybe.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Yeah, maybe you're on our continent.

Art (as **Nicky**): You think you went through a painting, and what happened was we changed where we were?

Janine (as **Brontë**): You think you exploded in earth, trying to take a time nap, and...?

Art (as **Nicky**): That makes perfect sense to me. I mean, I don't want to...

Janine (as **Brontë**): Hmm. Hmm.

Keith: Austin, this does not look like the void anymore?

Austin: No. You're still in the void. You are still—

Keith: We're still in the void.

Austin: You are on a floating island in the Dragon Path, yeah.

Keith: Okay. So...

Ali: Okay, so we all know we're not supposed to be here. [laughs]

Austin: Yeah. [Sylvia laughs]

Keith: As far as I know, we're in the void between two places on our continent, and *you*

ended up *here*.

Austin: Well, you were— okay. You stepped into the painting, Antistrophe. You walked.

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Austin: You managed to ignore the beckonings, because you're good adventurers.

Keith: Right, right.

Austin: And then, from a strange place above, a big rock knocked you off into the abyss. You all would have died but for the outside influence of someone you have yet to meet.

Keith: Right.

Sylvia: Okay.

Austin: Eh, maybe you wouldn't have died, but you would have been very, very, very badly hurt, in the middle of nowhere.

Keith: Well, if I took 100 damage, like was implied, I would have died.

Austin: Yeah. Well, that's not how the game works, you know what I mean? But.

Keith: Yeah, sure. Yeah.

Austin: You would have been at 0 HP, for sure. And you could have told me, "I think that was it for me. I think bad luck killed me."

Keith: Yeah. Yeah.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): We can't—

Keith: Well, actually, the game would not let me do that, according to my rules.

Austin: Oh, that's true. Yeah, you're special. Anyway.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Sylvi, what were you going to ask?

Sylvia: No, just Caoimhe was going to say,

(as **Caoimhe**): We can't assume that geographical rules apply to somewhere like the Dragon's Path. It doesn't play by the same rules as...

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Totally. You're totally right. I just want to know, [**Caoimhe**: Yeah.] why are these people here?

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): And they're saying, "We were just hanging out doing a spell, and then we fell through a crack."

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): I mean, it sounds like this giggling fellow might have had something to do with it.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): [hushed] Yeah, I just think they don't know what they're talking about.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): [hushed] That's fine.

Ali (as **Veile**): Well, there was also some sort of beast.

Janine (as **Brontë**): Oh my goodness, Antistrophe. The interrogation.

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

Janine (as **Brontë**): The doubt. Why assume malice when we ourselves are not here in malice?

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

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): It's not malice.

Ali (as **Veile**): Thank you, sir.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): We just need to figure out what's going on. This is not supposed to be happening. We're supposed to be on the path to the fortress.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Yeah. And they were supposed to be taking a nap or whatever, so we're both kind of in a— We're both not where we're supposed to be.

Art (as **Nicky**): A speed nap, thank you! [Ali laughs quietly]

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): I'm only making an argument for figuring out what's going on, not for...

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Okay. You sound very accusatory.

Janine (as **Brontë**): You've been very confrontational. It's riled some concern. But if you don't mean it in that way, then all is understood.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): You two should be 100,000% more concerned than you are. This is not a meet and greet.

Ali (as **Veile**): Well, not 100,000.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Oh my god. [Ali laughs quietly]

Janine (as **Brontë**): We are meeting and greeting. It's not a *planned* meet and greet. It's not a reception. There's no caterer, but, you know. We are meeting and greeting at the moment, and then it will proceed, and...

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): You're right.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): One of them's a chef. Are we supposed to be scared of that? Like, it's fine.

Janine (as **Brontë**): Oh. That's true. He could make some appetizers.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): It's not them. It's the place.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): I'm perfectly worried about the place. Don't you worry. Well, worry, but like, about the place. I'm just saying, we're all in the same boat, at least it seems like, and if it turns out not to be, then we'll cross that bridge when we get to it.

Descriptions cont. [0:39:37]

Austin: Speaking of being on the same boat, can we get a Jonathan description?

Jack: Yeah, I was going to say.

Dre: Yeah. Jonathan gets down off the rope. He is a tall older-looking Terrapine. Not as old as Waylon, definitely older than his sister. Has kind of a scraggly beard and kind of medium-ish unkempt hair. Terrapine hair looks kind of like wavy kelp, more or less. He has a big fucking thing of armor on. He has, like, a whole steel plate set of armor that is, like, also latched into his big turtle shell. He hefts his big hammer off the ground, and then he shouts up at the top of the cliff,

(as **Jonathan**): Okay, Fleggory. Just, you can throw the rope down now.

Austin (as **Fleggory**): [robotic] One second.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): What the fuck was that?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): We talked about how to do this, Fleggory.

Austin (as **Fleggory**): I don't want to. [Keith laughs]

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Oh. Oh, okay. But, uh, what do you want to do, buddy?

Austin (as **Fleggory**): [rapidly] Wanna go home. Wanna go home. Wanna wanna wanna wanna wanna go home.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Me too, bud. If we want to go home, you gotta come down

here.

Austin (as **Fleggory**): Where's the Little Snail? Where's the Little Snaaail?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Hey. Do you want to play a game?

Austin (as **Fleggory**): Yeah!

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Okay. We're going to play a game.

Austin (as **Fleggory**): [excited] What's the game? What's the game?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): The game is: first you pick up the rope.

Austin (as **Fleggory**): The game is: first you pick up the rope.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Yep. And then, you're going to fly.

Austin (as **Fleggory**): Yep. And then, you're going to fly.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): No, you're going to fly.

Austin (as **Fleggory**): No, you're going to fly.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): No, you're— [Keith laughs]

Austin (as **Fleggory**): Pick up the rope. Pick up the rope.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Fleggory, I'm on the ground. You're up there. You jump. I'll catch you. It'll be real fun.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Antistrophe, you might be right about them.

Austin (as **Fleggory**): I'm going to jump. You will catch me. I'll flyyyy.

Ali (as **Veile**): He's just a little guy.

Austin (as **Fleggory**): One, two, three, and jumps. [Ali and Dre laugh]

Austin: [turns off voice filter] And jumps, and was not holding the rope. Was not holding a rope, but you can just pull the rope down.

Dre: It's fine. It's just a rope.

Austin: You can just pull the rope down. Yeah, you can just pull the rope down. It's not a big deal. Do you catch him?

Dre: Yeah, of course. What? I'm not going to tell the child to jump.

Austin: Give me a roll. Give me a DEX + Might roll.

Dre: Okay.

Austin: You're going to catch this thing, and you're going to tell people what it is.

Dre: [sighs] Okay.

Austin: Difficulty level 7. This is a low roll, but just don't mess it up, you know?

Dre: [sighs] I don't know why we gotta do DEX and Might about it, though.

Sylvia: Just don't choke. You know, it's fine.

Austin: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah, just don't drop, it's fine.

Austin: Because it's heavy. It's heavy. You gotta catch, like, a little heavy guy.

Dre: It's a robot. Yeah, you're right. Is there just not a premade DEX and Might?

Austin: I don't think there is. You can just, yeah.

Sylvia: No. Huh. Wait, DEX what?

Austin: DEX + Might. Hey, that's a 12.

Sylvia: That's weird.

Dre: Woo!

Austin: Now, you've written here, "Catching a Flegg," but is it a Flegg?

Dre: No, it's a robot Flegg. But it looks like a Flegg, sort of.

Austin: Sort of. It looks...

Dre: Sort of.

Art: FLEGbot. I mean...

Austin: Yeah, I guess that's the question. I guess we didn't really zoom in on this. It does look like a robot in, like, a classical robot sense, right? Like a genre robot.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Like, it has bolts, and it has metal, and it has, like... What color are the Flegg eyes?

Dre: You know the owl from *Jason and the Argonauts*? Is that what that movie was called back in the day?

Sylvia: Oh! It might have been *Clash of the Titans*.

Dre: *Clash of the Titans*. Gizmo, was that the owl?

Sylvia: I'm looking it up right now.

Dre: Bubo! Bubo.

Sylvia: Shoutout Bubo.

Dre: Shoutout Bubo!

Austin: I didn't know about Bubo. Wow, this is great. Shoutout Bubo. So funny that this thing's called Bubo.

Keith: Oh, yeah, look at that.

Austin: For reasons that will become...not clear, but I'll explain it. Wow, this is cool looking.

Janine: Does it have anything to do with the Black Plague, because that's where my mind went.

Austin: Oh, no, it doesn't. That's so funny.

Sylvia: Does the Flegg robot have boobs?

Austin: It has boobs. The Flegg robot has boobs. [Ali laughs]

Keith: Bubo, short for Bubonic?

Austin: Mm.

Janine: Bubo is the word for the boils that appear in your armpits and stuff when you have the Bubonic Plague, so it's what Bubonic is named for, yes.

Austin: It is also the name of the genus of the eagle owls. The horned owls are named the bubo. That's why it's called that.

Janine: Shame to them.

Dre: Oh.

Keith: So it's like, it looks like this but an egg.

Austin: Yeah, I love that. That's exactly what I thought it was like.

Janine: Yeah, cute.

Austin: Yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): What is that?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Oh, this is Fleggory. He is an animatronic Flegg companion that I made.

Austin (as **Fleggory**): That's my dad.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Why did you make that?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): I don't know. Why haven't you?

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): [quietly] Why would I want to?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): I don't know.

Austin: Speaking of little creatures, though: you do have a little creature, don't you?

Keith: Yeah, Riant's here.

Austin: What's Riant?

Keith: Riant is a living flame. [Austin chuckles]

Dre: Sick.

Sylvia: It's a little lantern guy, right?

Austin: It's a little lantern flame guy. Yeah, uh huh.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Little paper lantern that's alive.

Keith: Yeah, he's a paper lantern. He is fire.

Austin (as **Riant**): [wispy voice] Hello!

Keith: I guess he's the fire, and the paper is his skin?

Austin: That's right. The paper is his skin. Yeah, uh huh.

Dre: Mm.

Keith: And he's just sort of bouncing around.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: Floating.

Austin: And I think, is that everybody? Have we gotten intros from everybody? We all have...?

Dre: I think so.

Keith: Did we get a full intro from Jonathan?

Austin: We got a description. Older Terrapine, armor.

Keith: Okay.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Is there more to that, Jonathan?

Keith: Oh, yeah, okay. Yeah, we did.

Dre: Probably also just has, like, a rucksack [**Austin:** Mm.] that jangles and rustles. You can tell it's just full of stuff.

Austin: Yeah.

A Mysterious Stranger [0:45:05]

Austin: With everyone gathered here finally and introductions done, there is a burst of light and a sort of loud pop or plop sound, and the figure that we as listeners saw before is now floating above you all with, like, riding on top of the giant paintbrush staff that they had as if it were like a witch's broom. They're sitting kind of side saddle on it. And

they say,

(as **trickster**): [teasing whimsical voice] Greetings, fated visitors! You've come to walk the looping halls of Castle Eschatonia, hmm? Come to pick through the celestial wreckage, yes?

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): No. We have not done that.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Hold on.

Austin (as **trickster**): And yet, you are here.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): We are here.

Ali (as **Veile**): Um, what is this fate that you speak of?

Austin (as **trickster**): [chuckles] You of all to ask me of fate. Ah! A jest. A jest. You cannot ask me questions, no. No, no, no, no, no! Not here. In the Observatory, you will find me. There, with perspective, per-spec-tive, you can ask me what you will.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Uh, we are not participating. We would like to leave.

Austin (as **trickster**): Very well. Farewell. If you change your mind, the castle is ahead. Walk the horizon north, and be careful. I can hide you from his eyes, but his other senses are sharp indeed.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Uh, who's "him"? He, his?

Austin (as **trickster**): You do not know?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): I mean, I could guess, if you want me to.

Austin (as **trickster**): Take a guess! I love a guessing game.

Dre: We're just going to roll Insight + Insight and see what I get.

Austin: You don't have a fucking clue with a 5.

Dre: What's a bad guess? Um... [Ali chuckles]

(as **Jonathan**): My old Uncle Jerome?

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): [quietly] What?

Ali (as **Veile**): [quietly] Huh?

Janine (as **Brontë**): Oh...

Austin (as **trickster**): I did not know that you were related to the Dragon Owl Xirts. Nor did I know he was called Jerome.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Yeah, that's who I was talking about. For sure.

Austin (as **trickster**): Be wary. Say hello to your uncle. I could hide you, if you wish.

Sylvia: The second this person says "dragon," Caoimhe's glasses do that thing in anime where the lenses just become pure white. [Janine and Ali laugh]

Austin: Yeah. Uh huh.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): We need to go to this castle.

Janine (as **Brontë**): Yes, I...

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): I need—

Austin: There is a deep loud rumbling sound that, if you sped it up and quieted it, it would sound like a hoot, but instead sounds like a dinosaur roar. And off in the distance, you do see the wings of a vast scaly owl in the distance. The reason I was laughing at the word "bubo" is because I was reading about owls last night.

Jack: But this guy is not called Bubo. He's called Xirts?

Austin: Yeah, X-I.

Keith: Uncle Xirts, I guess.

Austin: Uncles Xirts. Uncle Xirts. Uncle, what did you say, Jerome, before?

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: Uncle Jerome Xirts.

Austin: Yeah. X-I-R-T-S.

Sylvia: Ooh.

Jack: Xirts.

Austin: Xirts.

Jack: Yeah, we have a real... There's a real "fiddle dee dee" energy happening here.

[Sylvia snorts]

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Oh, yeah.

Janine: I was going to say, I think sort of in response to Antistrophe trying to opt out and Caoimhe being like, "Well, we need to go and do this," I think I have a sort of, like, blasé, like, well, you can't just opt out of a trickster's game. That will never work. They're never going to let you do that. They're only going to make it harder for you. You have to go along with it. [laughs quietly] Like, as if this is just... I feel like in Grande Sonnerie there's a lot of people who fancy themselves tricksters. That's not in the lore, it just feels like a thing that a wine town would be into.

Austin: I like it. Yeah, yeah, yeah. There's like a trickster holiday.

Jack: Mm.

Austin: It's like what if April Fools was a bigger deal. It's a nightmare. [Art chuckles]

Janine: Yeah, probably like... I don't think it's like a prank town, I want to say, but I bet there is a generous assortment of, like, "Oh, that's so-and-so. You know, he likes to speak in riddles and whatever. [Austin chuckles] He's my brother-in-law." Just the occasional weirdo who's, like, got a bit that they really really stick to.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Ali: Is there, like, social escape rooms but it's just some guy doing a bit?

Sylvia: It's called going to the bar.

Dre: And you want to escape and get fuck out of there as fast as possible. [laughs]

Sylvia: Yeah.

Janine: I think that's called a standup comedian who does crowd work.

Ali: [laughs] Well, no, 'cause you go there and he does little tricks on you.

Sylvia: Oh my god.

Ali: I would go to a place if it was a trickster guy who wanted to do tricks on me and it wasn't just, like, a form in a room.

Jack: Wait. Hang on.

Ali: I don't know. I've never done an escape room. [Dre laughs]

Janine: I don't know. [Janine and Ali laugh] I don't know.

Dre: That sounds like closeup magic I think is what you're describing.

Art: I don't think I do want to go to the escape room where the guy does tricks on me. No. [Ali laughs]

Keith: No. [laughs]

Austin: You know?

Ali: I mean, you know, if you're in the mood for a riddles three...

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: Right.

Austin: If you're in the mood for a hence. [Ali laughs]

Keith: I think that that's just a regular escape room, is what you want, Ali.

Austin: We should do an escape room.

Ali: Friendsatthetable.cash Realis to revisit this idea.

Keith: I only did the one that we did together, and it was really fun.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Put this in the back pocket.

Dre: Yeah, they're cool. When they're good, they're good. [Ali laughs]

Janine: Anyway.

Art: I didn't remember that Ali didn't come.

Austin: Yeah. Different event. Anyway.

Janine (as **Brontë**): Caoimhe, I agree. We need to go to the castle. Ladies, fellows. Are you in?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): [sighs] I don't think there's much debating to be had.

Ali (as **Veile**): Well, we should think about this. We just had some trouble with dragons, did with not?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): I know. That's why we gotta get out of here.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Oh, us too.

Ali (as **Veile**): Wait, what happened with your dragon?

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): We fought, to a stalemate, a dragon mole.

Janine (as **Brontë**): A draconic mole, yeah.

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

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

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): And Castine helped fend it off once we did so.

Ali (as **Veile**): Castine helped you?

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Yeah, they're nice. A little cryptic, but pretty nice.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Yeah. Yeah, pretty nice.

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

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Pretty normal seeming.

Ali (as **Veile**): We were investigating some cows beset by some illness that we believe is draconic in nature?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): I don't think we believe. I think we know.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): What kind of dragon?

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): [quietly] Obviously bovine.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): They're trying to kill the ox dragon. Not trying. They are, right now, very much succeeding.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Who's "they"? The cows?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): No.

Ali (as **Veile**): No. That's the trouble of it for us, I suppose.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Well, D. G. Flay is the only name we got.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): [thoughtfully] D. G. Flay.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Yeah, he's made out of bugs. It's very unpleasant.

Austin: There is another call from the dragon owl, who gets dreadfully closer. If you're going to try to outrun it, you should probably start. There was an offer from the strange trickster who you don't know.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: To let you not be seen, though you were warned that he does have other senses, Xirts.

Keith: I personally don't stink, so I'm okay with that. [Ali laughs quietly]

Dre: Mm.

Austin: Okay.

Sylvia: We just got in a fight in a basement before we came here.

Janine: Yeah.

Sylvia: We probably do stink a little bit.

Keith: I was at full health. I was not...

Austin: Y'all probably are smelling something fierce. [Ali laughs quietly]

Janine: And I think I'm the only one who wears perfume, [Austin chuckles] so I'm the only one who's got, like, a plausible mask on the B.O.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: Wow.

Ali: Veile dramatically giving Elena a “pee-ew.” [laughter]

Sylvia: Y'all were hanging out with dragon cows or whatever! I'm just saying.

Ali: We wash our hands.

Janine: Mm...

Sylvia: We wash our hands too! [Ali laughs]

Keith: This is a classic east versus west right here. [Dre and Keith laugh] “You guys don't wash your hands!”

Janine: I would like to be hidden.

Austin: Say that again, Brontë?

Sylvia: Yeah, I would also like to be hidden.

Janine (as **Brontë**): I would like to be hidden. Yes. Hide me.

Austin (as **trickster**): Step up, step up.

Austin: And, like, asks you to get into a line.

Keith: All right, I guess we step up.

Art: All right. Into the hiding line.

Dre: Ugh. I think Jonathan gets in line behind Antistrophe and whispers,

(as **Jonathan**): Is this a good idea?

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): [whispering] No. [Ali laughs quietly]

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Why are we doing it, then?

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

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Yeah, all right.

Austin: They hop off their staff, floating next to it, revealing that it wasn't really a mount at all, they're just like hanging out there for fun. [Dre laughs]

Sylvia: I love this.

Janine: Uh huh.

Austin: And they begin to, like, take the brush end and wave it through the air, and as they do, you see a stream of color from each of you kind of, like, getting lifted up into their paintbrush. You fade. You kind of grow faint, not in feeling but in saturation. You get dim and gray and a little transparent. You can still see each other, but you kind of look like ghosts, like in the kind of classic generic sense of the ghost, and you can kind of tell you've been enchanted with some sort of invisibility spell and/or you've had some sort of core part of what it means to be alive taken from you.

Jack: Mm.

Sylvia: Oh, cool.

Jack: We got soul ripped.

Austin: You got soul ripped.

Dre: Mm.

Austin (as **trickster**): I'll leave the front door open, but you'll have to find your own way. [mischievously] That is the fun of it.

Austin: And then, with a burst of light and color, they're gone again.

Keith: Is there any way to get any sense of who this guy is? Is he in books?

Austin: Uh, they/them on this character. That's a great—

Keith: Okay.

Austin: Antistrophe, you should give me a Study roll. You are probably the person who has the only chance to have encountered any of this because of your academic background. Like, I'm allowing it because of your...

Keith: Sure.

Austin: What is your character? Troubled eccentric— uh, now you're career path— I guess your Origin of the Hundred Burroughs. You know, the Hundred Burroughs is a place that would have information about this.

Keith: Right. Yeah.

Austin: But it would be very strange information. Sorry, say again?

Keith: Yes.

Jack: Before Keith rolls, [**Austin:** Yeah.] I would like to make a guess that this person's name is, like, Zarthruthio or something.

Austin: Mm, I see. I see.

Sylvia: Oh. Thus spoke Zarthruthrio. [Keith laughs]

Dre: R-3PO.

Keith: That's your guess? Your guess is it's Zarthruthio?

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: I think it's Kyle.

Keith: And this is probably a Study roll, I assume?

Austin: Yeah. That's right. Give me a Study roll.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: The difficulty here is 16. It's pretty high. This is not, like, a common figure.

Keith: Okay. So, I have a +3 on that because of, I think it's called Focus. 13.

Austin: Not enough. There are many tricksters. There are many painter figures. There are a lot of rumors of strange beings that live on the Dragon Path, besides the dragons. You remember, of course, like, I'll just give you some core background stuff on the Dragon Path one more time. The dragons live here. The dragons live in between Perpetuan Cycles, [**Keith:** Mm-hmm.] so this owl dragon would have seen a whole different Perpetua than the one you've lived in, presuming that it wasn't just born. Presuming that, if any previous Perpetua had owls, this owl dragon was there, right? Or like, witnessed it.

Keith: Right.

Austin: Et cetera. So, yeah. You know that stuff, but no, you don't know who this is.

Keith: Okay. Yeah, I guess we have no choice.

Sylvia: Before we get moving, [**Austin:** Mm-hmm.] I just want to say, from a mechanical standpoint, I am a magic user with no mana right now and would love some help, if anyone can spare me an elixir, because I'm one IP short of being able to refill my mana before we go looking for the weird figure and the dragon castle.

Dre: Yeah, I got you.

Sylvia: Thank you so much, new bestie. [Austin chuckles]

Dre: Mm-hmm. Yeah, how does she make that ask in character?

Sylvia: I think it is just sort of like a thing. She, like, rummages around in her bag for a bit and is just like,

(as **Caoimhe**): Oh, dammit. Sorry. Would anybody here be able to spare an elixir or something of the like, just so I'm prepared when we get going? I don't want to drag anybody down.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Yep. Catch.

Sylvia: I catch. [Austin chuckles]

(as **Caoimhe**): Thank you. Jonathan, right?

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

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Cool, cool. Appreciate it.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Mm-hmm. What was your name, again?

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

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

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Right, you were upstairs when I introduced myself. Yeah, nice to meet you.

Austin: *Bioshock Infinite* mod where you replace Elizabeth with Jonathan who tosses you stuff and goes, "Here, catch." [Ali laughs quietly]

Sylvia: Oh.

Jack: Better fucking game.

Austin: Great game.

Jack: Not much better, but better.

Austin: Pretty good game.

Sylvia: Oh no, I'm going to be—! It's going to turn out that I'm the owl dragon now!
[Austin and Dre laugh]

Jack: Oh nooo. Oh, Ken's one trick, once again! [Austin laughs]

Dre: Ahhh. Somehow I'm your daughter and your wife and your mom at the same time.

Aaah!

Austin: That's right!

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: [groans] Can't wait for the Judas simulator to come out. [Sylvia laughs]

Jack: Oh my god. Let's assemble a team of some of the best and most talented art directors and game designers, and then...

Austin: And then that happens.

Jack: Waste all their fucking bullshit.

Austin: Yeah.

Dre: The most devastating move in professional wrestling: the Judas simulator.

Austin: The Judas simulator. [Austin and Sylvia laugh]

Traversing [0:58:29]

Austin: All right. To your north, over the horizon, at the very tippy top. I mean, first of all, to your north is Waylon, who has already begun this journey [**Jack:** Yeah.] and is not invisible.

Jack: Not to check our homework, he has not gone dim, has he?

Austin: He has not gone dim. He wandered off.

Jack: Yep. Fuck.

Austin: Uh huh.

Jack: Okay, well, fine. I don't know.

Austin: And you're invisible to him too.

Sylvia: Oh.

Jack: Yeah. He's survived a very long time, though. I sort of feel like when you see a tree that's been around for 400 years, you're sort of like, "There's not much we can do here. He'll be fine."

Austin: Uh huh. And he begins to— he's going north, and again, between you and the castle to the north is, you know, a mile of strange ruins. I described them earlier as being, you know, unlike anything you've seen before. That's not entirely true. Of course there are things that you've seen before. You know what a brick looks like. You know what windows look like. But there are, like, walls of metal that are worked with finesse and seeming ease that aren't like anything you've ever seen before. You briefly, some of you in the eastern party, saw that strange device, that strange device with keys and a glass tube that you could, like, get information on in the one Cenn marketplace. There's stuff like that here, like, everywhere. But it's right next to a weird broken, you know, glass vial from a world that looks much more like yours. This is a place where it seems like different worlds have collided, or at least different parts of history that you didn't know existed or different parts of the world that you didn't know existed have all collided here. The figure described this as being celestial wreckage, and that calls to mind the Celestial Echoes, where other visions of Perpetua once were and how they were. And so you can kind of start to see a little bit of similarity between some of the stuff here, but it's more like a— when I say ruins, I don't mean, like, there was once a coliseum here and you're walking through the remains of its halls. I mean like the ruins of a pileup, of a trainwreck. It has all fallen here. It looks like a junkyard. And to get from here to the north, you have to crawl over, above, through, and under the wreckage. And I think that that's probably simply a group roll of some sort. How are you going about it?

Sylvia: Mm...

Janine: Helpfully.

Austin: Who's taking the lead? Helpfully.

Dre: Mm.

Sylvia: I'm happy to take the lead. I'm excited about this. I mean, even if it's— it might not be a *great* idea, but I'll do it.

Austin: Yeah, sure.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Art: Love the confidence.

Keith: What's the nature of the roll that we're going to make?

Austin: It depends on what you're doing, I think. You know?

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: You have to describe to me what the play is.

Sylvia: I mean, my move was just to climb. [laughs quietly]

Austin: All right.

Janine: Try not to roll ankles on loose stuff.

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Dre: No, we're doing team building at the ropes course. It's great. [Austin laugh quietly]

Austin: Are you using ropes? Yeah.

Sylvia: Oh, that could be actually part of it, is I can climb up and then get tossed the rope and help people who aren't as, like, dexterous up over whatever pile of junk we're trying to get past.

Austin: Yeah. I think that's a great idea. We're going to do this in one big roll, you know? We're going to see if you get there safely or not. We're not going to go beat by beat. I think that that's not— We have a lot to get through over this little detour, and let's

not focus on climbing over trash. I mean, we'll do the roll, though. So.

Sylvia: It this... Could I get a DEX + DEX on this?

Austin: I don't think— What you described I think is part DEX, but then you described helping people climb, which I think is Might. I think it's DEX + Might.

Sylvia: [concerned] Okay.

Ali: Would it be, like, a lead roll, where we all feed into it, though?

Austin: This is a Group Check, for sure. Yeah. And it's not—

Ali: Okay, okay, okay.

Austin: Yeah. So, this is... Let's go over the Group Check rules. This is the biggest Group Check we've done so far. Let me make sure I get it all right, because if I remember right, there was a thing we'd been forgetting for a long time, and I want to really make sure we get that one right. Here we go. Group Checks.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Austin: All right. "Characters nominate a leader: this is the character who will perform the final Check and determine the action's outcome. Everyone else acts as a supporting character. Each supporting character performs a Support Check identical to the one the leader will perform, with a fixed difficulty of 10. Fumbles and critical successes generate no opportunities but still count as automatic failures and successes." So, everyone who isn't Caoimhe should roll DEX + Might. The difficulty for y'all is 10, because you're just trying to add a bonus. Caoimhe, your eventual need is going to be 13. Your eventual difficulty is going to be 13.

Sylvia: Okay.

Austin: So, everybody else. Antistrophe, that's a 5. Jonathan, that's an 11, so that's 1.

Sylvia: Hell yeah.

Austin: Nicky, that's a 13.

Sylvia: Yes!

Austin: Veile, that's a 12.

Sylvia: YES!

Austin: It's a shame that that's a crit. That doesn't give you anything cool. [Sylvia laughs quietly]

Janine: Can I get a bonus because I have a fishing spear that I feel like would be good to use as like a walking stick, because you stick the tip in the ground and you can, like...

Austin: Unfortunately, no, you cannot.

Janine: Aww, okay.

Austin: But that's a great visual to have.

Janine: Oh, I got a 12.

Austin: And you got a 12 anyway.

Sylvia: Okay, so that's 1, 2, 3, 4 successes?

Austin: You get +4 to this. Yes. And then, on top of that, because this is the bit that we— So, each supporting character that successfully performed their Check grants a +1 to the leader's Check, so that's +4. If any of the successful supporting characters have a Bond towards the leader, the highest strength among those Bonds is also added to the leader's Check. Only add—

Jack: Oh, that's great. Yeah, we do keep forgetting that.

Austin: We do keep forgetting that.

Sylvia: So, I get... What's your Bond with me at Brontë? I have a 2 with you, but I don't

know if that's mutual.

Janine: Oh, that's mutual all right.

Sylvia: Okay, cool. [Ali, Austin, and Dre laugh]

Austin: Oh, okay.

Dre: Ohoho!

Janine: That's loyalty/affection is what that is.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: +6.

Sylvia: That is loyalty/affection.

Austin: Wow, loyalty/affection.

Sylvia: [awkward mumbling] Yeah, it's fine. We're coworkers. It's totally cool. [Janine laughs quietly]

Austin: All right.

Dre: I just have a lot of respect for him.

Sylvia: I rolled a 22.

Austin: You rolled a 22. You are absolutely fine.

Sylvia: I did not need— I rolled a perfect roll.

Austin: You did. Wow.

Sylvia: I rolled a 10 and a 6.

Austin: You did. It's not a crit, because you didn't roll a 10 and a 10 or a 6 and a 6.

Sylvia: That's fine.

Austin: You rolled a perfect roll here. So perfect, in fact—

Sylvia: I've seen how I've been rolling.

Austin: I need you to tell me how you lead everyone through and how you manage to get Waylon there with you safely.

Sylvia: I think...okay...oh, go ahead.

Austin: Because the big owl does show up, and it is sniffing around at y'all and, like, listening for your movements and pecking around and, like, moving its head around in strange ways. For a while there, it flies up on top of a broken...let's just say it's literally a broken train car, and it's just hanging on top of it, and it, like, lowers its head slowly and begins to look back and forth. It's gigantic. It's a gigantic, gigantic creature.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: And Waylon has to get through this too somehow, and Waylon is not invisible.

Dre: I know what this looks like in the video game Perpetua.

Sylvia: Yeah?

Dre: It's a minigame.

Sylvia: It is a minigame.

Dre: It's a minigame where you have to, like, drop the obstacles in the right lanes [Austin laughs] to make Waylon go down the right route.

Austin: That's really funny. [Janine chuckles]

Sylvia: That is such a good idea that I'm just going to say that's part of it. I think with the rest of the group, it's like Caoimhe's doing some, like... I imagine Hexcloak training involves some sort of, like, rough terrain traversal stuff.

Austin: Oh, for sure.

Sylvia: That she's probably got, like... Maybe she, like, tied extra knots in the rope so they have, like, footholds and stuff when they're climbing up it, so it can be a little faster. She's been, like, moving ahead first to somewhere that's, like, not in the bird's line of sight at the moment and then getting people to follow. I'm doing *Resident Evil 4* escort mission moves is what I'm saying, I guess, but like... [Austin and Dre laugh]

Austin: Yes. Yes.

Sylvia: You know.

Austin: Good. Love it. All right. Y'all get there. You get up to this northern end here. You can move yourselves up to the very northern part of this, if you'd like to.

Sylvia: I would. That felt good.

The Castle Eschatonica [1:06:27]

Austin: Xirts, the dragon owl, the draconic owl is hanging out in the middle here, still investigating, but you all have made it. And the front door to— I guess, actually, when you get there, what you see is a strange— Like, as you get closer, you get to see the shape of this castle, and the front gate does look like a castle gate. There's a sort of pentagonal shape to the front. But from there, it kind of... First of all, it looks like it's dangling off the edge of this cliff, which is impossible, so it must be floating under its own magical power, in the same way that this island is. But it is not built on anything. Like, directly under the ground of the floor in front of you, in front of where the castle is, is nothing, is just the abyss again. And then, it kind of stretches out to the left and the right and up and down, in very uncanny ways.

There is a mix of architectural styles, but everything has been layered with the same sort of purple blue gray brick. So it's as if you're looking at a melange of different eras and architectural ideas and worlds, but they're all cast in this same sort of, like, medieval fantasy kind of classical castle look. But, you know, to your or my

eyes—Austin’s eyes, your eyes as the crew—you’d be like, “That one looks like a skyscraper. Why is there a skyscraper in here, and why does it look like what if you built a skyscraper with a castle?” You know, that thing over there is a weird polyhedron, but it kind of has the facade of a fantasy castle. And the front gate is open, as promised. There is— I guess you rush into the gate of the castle, presumably, escaping Xirts, the dragon owl, behind you?

Jack: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: All right. Go ahead and move your tokens inside. I will describe what you see in front of you.

Sylvia: Nyoom.

Austin: Okay. As soon as you pass through the doors, you all return to your full opacity. At least, you think you did. You think that you have all of the color you had back. You’re pretty sure this is what you looked like before. You are in a large pentagonal hall. The point of the pentagon is south, is the gate that you just came through, so the kind of short sides are immediately left and right of you and then, like, northwest and northeast are the longer sides, and then the bottom of the pentagon, the flat bottom is all the way to the top. I’ll go around the room.

I guess I’ll start in the middle. There is a group of crystals in the middle of the room that are emanating a sort of light white glow that light things up just enough for you to walk around without bumping your head into anything. It’s not bright enough to see clear details. It’s not bright enough to read by, but it’s bright enough— it’s like moonlight, basically.

To the immediate west of you is a makeshift camp of some sort, someone’s makeshift camp. You don’t see anybody around. You can see, because of the little things I’ve put down on the map here, the little icons. I made this map, by the way, with a thing called Dungeon Scrawl, S-C-R-A-W-L. Shoutouts to Dungeon Scrawl. And that

had, for the subscription, you get a bunch of, like, stickers and stuff. So, you can see that there's a little chest of stuff. There's like a makeshift bed, or it's like a bedroll rolled out on the ground. There's a little campfire. There is a broken vase, a broken sword, and some wooden, like, a stack of firewood.

To your immediate east, there is a little pool of water that seems to be fresh water. It's like a fountain, like a spring. You don't know how that's possible, because you saw that there was nothing under the floor where that is, so maybe there's piping, or maybe it's magic. There are a bunch of vases around that also, some of which have water in them already. There are some barrels and crates and stuff around the room.

On the northwest/northeast wall, so those kind of long walls, there are doors. The one on the left— There are two big doors basically, one on each side. The one on the northwest has a sort of amber glow. It's as if it's being shot by a spotlight, but you cannot see where that light source is coming from. Like, you trace it back up, and there is no spotlight pointing at it, but it looks as if it's been hit by an amber kind of glow. The one on the northeast has kind of a soft blue. This is different than the light coming from the crystals. The light in the crystals, the crystals are emitting that light, but the light here light on the doors feels like it's being pointed at it.

And then, to the north, there are some stone stairs that go up to somewhere else, that you can't quite see what they go up to here. You'll have to climb the stairs to find out. And then, right to the left of those stairs, there is a small hole dug into the wall, and you can kind of see the bright purple. It's like a window almost. You can see the bright purple of the Aether beyond it. A smaller person could crawl through the hole, but the bigger of you could not, certainly not with armor on, but really you'd have to be pretty small to fit through that hole. And on the ground in front of both of those doors are big kind of plates in the ground, big circular discs that have been placed in the ground or were built when the ground was built; it's hard to know.

Keith: Can I tell from looking how old this camp is?

Austin: Give me a Study check.

Keith: Sure.

Austin: Let's say difficulty...difficulty 13. Difficulty 10. Eh, you know, I'm going to say it's open-ended. I'll give you more information based on what the thing is.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: And I'll ask you— well, that's a 6.

Keith: Jesus christ.

Austin: That's a 6. That's with your bonuses?

Sylvia: We did get a bunch of—

Keith: I get a +3 on this roll, by the way.

Austin: Oh, then it's a 9. Oh, no. I see. [Ali laughs]

Keith: No, no. It's already in there.

Sylvia: We do have a lot of Fabula Points that we got at the beginning.

Austin: You do. You got two bonus ones.

Sylvia: Yeah. So, like...

Austin: On top of, if you had 0, you would have gotten one. You would have started with one. Everyone should have at least one before the two.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: So that means there should be a minimum of three.

Keith: Okay. I will reroll this whole roll.

Austin: Okay.

Keith: I'm going to reroll with a Fabula Point. I will submit my—

Austin: What Trait are you calling on?

Keith: I'm calling on one of the Hundred Burroughs.

Austin: Okay.

Keith: Actually, no. I'm calling on my Theme of doubt.

Austin: Interesting.

Keith: Because I think that there is something to know about this. Because I rolled; I failed.

Austin: Yep.

Keith: I think that it's like, I wanted to find something interesting here and didn't, and I actually think that that's wrong, so I really want to take another look.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: So I'm declaring...

Sylvia: You've also been the most skeptical since we got here. It makes a lot of sense.

Austin: Yeah, that's fair.

Keith: Take another look at the camp.

Austin: Now, I will have to tell you something that I think maybe no one has thought about yet.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: How many points do you have to spend to get a bonus XP?

Dre: Oh. [chuckles]

Keith: The whole group.

Austin: The whole group.

Keith: One per group.

Austin: One per the group. One for each group. Yeah, one for each person in the group.

Keith: Yeah. So it doesn't help us get more XP.

Austin: It does. You just have to really spend them, actually.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: That's fine.

Keith: Right, yeah.

Sylvia: Ain't nothing wrong with that.

Keith: But if just each party alone had gotten two extra Fabula Points at the beginning, we would have gotten XP equally as quickly.

Austin: Sure. I don't follow, but that's okay. Let's just keep moving. Give me the roll.

Keith: Okay. All right. Go back to Conflict. Reroll this with my 3. 13!

Austin: There you go. That's a success. It has been quite some time since this was here. How are you poking around this thing? Give me the picture of what you're doing, and I'll give you some information.

Keith: The first thing that I'm doing is checking the wood.

Austin: Mm, yeah.

Keith: The logs presumably are fresher wood. They would have been, like, not super old if someone was using it for firewood, but it would have been dry. And then the chest is, like, processed wood, and so it would have already been, like, cut into pieces and

been a chest for a while, presumably.

Austin: Right.

Keith: And then I'm checking, like, the fabric, like rot in the fabric of the pillow and blankets.

Austin: It's bad. They're, like, about to turn to dust when you touch them. The wood is interesting. The wood seems to have been magically conjured, and so the wood feels fresh in a way that it shouldn't, but you can sense the—

Keith: Okay.

Austin: I mean, you can't sense this actually, right? But you know what, from your years of being a wizard, what magical wood. Like, maybe there's a certain sort of— Maybe there's a common wood summoning spell, you know?

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Austin: That you've seen used before. It's like a classic...

Keith: It has a smell. Magic wood has a smell.

Austin: There we go. It has a smell that you pick up. So that still seems fresh. That spell is ongoing. But the wood of the chest is also super, super, super dry and old and falling apart. Pinned under— so that's like your basic success. Pinned under the sword, the broken sword near the vase, is a piece of paper that is, like, very lightly blowing up into the air from a draft coming in from the hole in the wall. It's as if some pages have been spread across this place by a wind, and I'm going to send you the text of it, and you can read it out loud or keep it to yourself, as you wish.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: I've sent it to you via DM.

Keith: I pick it up. I think that my impulse is I'm just going to read this out loud before I

even see what it says.

Austin: Yep, sounds good.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): “Day One: Well, Jark, you told them you were sick of the monastery and wanted to start a new chapter in your life, said you wanted to see the world, and look at you now: setting out east on a train out of Veris with a few hundred asta and little else. Just a knapsack, my enchanted shovel, a bedroll, an old sword, some longrations, and that gem I found. Brother Henry asked me where I'd go, and I told him the furthest place I can get from here. He looked shocked for a second, and then said, ‘You’ll never make it to the Hundred Burroughs.’ Well, I'll show him. I'll take this train east to Calstega Bay and hop on the first boat off Tidaline that I can find.”

Austin: I've now pasted this in the Perpetua chat for everybody.

Janine (as **Brontë**): He shouldn't call himself that. That's a little disparaging.

Austin: [laughs] Jark? That's just his name. That's his name. His name is Jark.

Janine: Well, you can't read a capital letter. I don't know that.

Austin: [laughs quietly] You *can* read a capital letter. [Dre laughs]

Janine: I mean, like, out loud. You can't hear a capital letter.

Austin: Oh, I see. I see. [laughter]

Sylvia: I knew what you meant.

Austin: I see. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. I gotcha.

Keith: It would be a very fun time to learn that Janine never learned capital letters.
[laughter]

Austin: But knows they exist, conceptually.

Keith: [laughing] It's just a mystery.

Art: Some of them work, so.

Austin: Some of them. I see, I see, I see. Okay. Yeah. So yeah, you find that, and that's the gist of the camp, the little campsite to the west.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): I hope Jark made it to the Hundred Burroughs.

Janine: Oh, I have a gem. I totally forgot I have a gem.

Sylvia: I also have a gem.

Austin: You do have a gem. [Ali gasps] Everybody has gems, in fact.

Keith: I have a gem.

Austin: Not everybody. Sorry.

Jack: And so does Jark.

Austin: And so does Jark.

Dre: Mm.

Keith: And Jark has a— Can I check the chest for a gem?

Austin: You can check the chest for something. You know what you find in there?

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Full IP for everybody!

Dre: Whoa!

Ali: Yay!

Art: Whoa.

Sylvia: Hey. I did not need that potion, but thank you regardless.

Jack: 4 IP or full IP?

Austin: Full IP for everybody.

Keith: Well, actually, it's great. It's great, because you used some of Jonathan's IP to get your stuff back, and then Jonathan now gets refilled.

Sylvia: Exactly.

Austin: So it was actually perfect.

Keith: So it was actually a good move to do that then.

Austin: Yep. Mm-hmm.

Dre: Man.

Sylvia: Yeah, we're on New Game Plus.

Janine: Is there MP in there as well?

Jack: I should have...

Sylvia: We're playing Perpetua New.

Jack: I should have taken a potion and then got this thing.

Janine: Yeah.

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Austin: Yeah, uh huh.

Jack: But that's, you know.

Austin: That's how it goes. That's how it goes.

Jack: Them's the breaks.

Dre: Eh.

Jack: That's how it goes.

Austin: All right. What else are people doing in here? The gate has closed behind you. The owl is not going to come in, but I am going to place it right by the door, like the dogs in *Resident Evil 1*.

Dre: Mm.

Austin: Don't go out that mansion door. The dogs will get you.

Keith: I was curious if the FLEGbot can fit into the little hole.

Dre: I'm curious about that.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Dre: I'm curious— So, that message was what we got from the western gate?

Austin: No, that was from—

Jack: No, from the...

Austin: Go ahead. I'm going to be quiet.

Jack: From the little hole in the door, just to the left of those stairs.

Dre: Okay.

Austin: Not true at all. That's not right at all, actually.

Dre: Oh, oh.

Austin: So, I am going to speak up. Does anybody else know where I said the letter was from?

Keith: The letter was from under the sword, by the camp.

Austin: There we go.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Okay. Okay, okay, okay.

Jack: Oh, sorry. I thought the question was where does the FLEGbot go.

Austin: No. No.

Dre: Mm.

Keith: Oh, where the hole is. Oh, yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: I knew what the letter, because I read the letter. I found it and read it.

Dre: Right, yes. But no, yes, I am also interested in potentially sending the FLEGbot on a side quest.

Sylvia: Do we want to do that next, or does anybody else want to, like, do exploration in here first? Because I am kind of curious about these crystals, but they might just be a lighting fixture. [laughs quietly]

Keith: Hey, there's big crystals here. I think that, you know, it's easy enough to get a lamp.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Austin: I want to say something really quick, because somebody mentioned that they had a crystal. Brontë, you do have a crystal.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: It seems to just be a crystal. It seems to just be a gem. Veile and Elena, you do

not hear the gems. They have not said a word.

Jack: Hmm.

Janine: I should also say that mine I have listed in my Inventory as “Green gem that Austin is being weird about.”

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: Yeah, mine is “Mysterious red gem that is mysterious and magical.”

Austin: That’s right.

Janine: Okay. All right.

Jack: No, we know what that’s about.

Sylvia: Mine is “blue gem” with a bunch of question marks after it?

Austin: Sorry, Janine, can you say what I said the color was?

Janine: Green.

Austin: Because I've written it down differently. You sure that—? Sylvi, what color do I have—?

Janine: I wrote, “Green gem that Austin is being weird about,” yes.

Austin: Okay. Sylvi, what color—

Sylvia: I have the blue one.

Austin: You have the blue one. Okay.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: I've swapped these in my head. Let me switch them back.

Dre: What color was Nicky’s?

Austin: Yellow.

Jack: Uh, yellow?

Austin: Yellow for sure.

Jack: Yellow.

Art: I can't believe we triggered this special before I bought that gem back. This is flagrant anti-Italian discrimination.

Austin: Now, wait a second. [Sylvia, Austin, and Jack laugh] Okay, so I've swapped—

Keith: Italians should be allowed to sell gems to pawn shops and then buy them back in time for a special. [Ali laughs]

Austin: All right. [quietly] Do I want to swap these?

Art: Did I intentionally design Nicky not to be Italian? Yes, but.

Austin: You did.

Art: Only because otherwise I'd be doing an accent, and...

Austin: Wait, can I go back in time and fix something that I did wrong in a previous episode?

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Ali: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah, why not?

Austin: I meant to give Janine the blue one and Sylvi the light green one.

Janine: Hmm. Mm-hmm?

Sylvia: Okay.

Austin: This will make more sense as the world advances. But maybe you just took them.

Janine: I assume the blue gem has a more beautiful being inside of it.

Austin: That is literally true. [Janine chuckles]

Ali: Oh.

Sylvia: Okay, fine. I'll take the uggo gem. Damn.

Austin: Though maybe I shouldn't. Maybe it's funnier.

Janine: No, it's too late. You already said it. You can't change it twice.

Keith: Giving Sylvi the ugly being.

Austin: Maybe it's funnier that Sylvi gets the blue gem and Janine gets the light green one. Maybe it's actually very good.

Janine: No, you already said it, you already said it, you already said it!

Austin: Mm...

Janine: And you meant to do it originally, so we have to do it that way now.

Sylvia: Hmm...

Dre: Mm...

Janine: I already changed it in my sheet, and you can only change a certain number of things in your sheet per day in Roll20. [laughs]

Austin: Oh. I see.

Jack: Otherwise the demon dog gets you.

Dre: I see.

Sylvia: Yeah, I'll edit it.

Austin: Okay. What's up? What's the next step that the group is doing? We've heard from Antistrophe. Let's go somewhere else. Who's doing something else in this big space?

Jack: Caoimhe, you were interested in looking at those gems, right?

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah, I was trying to figure out the crystals. Specifically, I kind of just want to see if, like... I think, while checking these out, I might bring out the magical Reagent, just to see how it's reacting to things here, because I did get that back.

Austin: Totally. Yeah, give me a Study Check, and I don't remember if that gives you a bonus. Does it give you a bonus when investigating magic?

Sylvia: It gives me a bonus specifically for investigating magic, I believe, yeah.

Austin: Take the bonus.

Sylvia: Okay, cool.

Austin: That is an 8, so that is only the lowest level of success here.

Sylvia: That's fine.

Austin: It's some sort of magic. You don't know what type of magic. It doesn't seem to be— I'll say this. It's not a color you're used to seeing. It doesn't, like, shine with the bright white of Lucena's light. It doesn't have the red hot fire of Cinner's flame. You know, it's this kind of pale, like I said, moonlight color. And I guess I would say...uh, that's it. I think that's what you get for that.

Sylvia: Okay.

Austin: But then you do find something else in the crystals. You find another piece of paper that has blown around in there.

Sylvia: Oh.

Austin: [chuckles] And it just has one thing on it. Let me send it just to you.

Sylvia: Oh, wonderful.

Austin: Send it right to you. [typing]

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): “Day Five: I have gotten a sunburn.” [Jack chuckles]

Ali: Mm.

Sylvia: Looks back at the group.

(as **Caoimhe**): That's it. [Austin laughs]

Art (as **Nicky**): Okay, so we're missing three days.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Wait. How'd they get a sunburn in here?

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): It could be from the—

Jack (as **Elena**): There are suns everywhere, Jonathan.

Art (as **Nicky**): There's not suns in here.

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

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Maybe they weren't locked in.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Could be something that's presenting like a sunburn.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Maybe this place wasn't here; it was somewhere else where there was sun.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Yeah. Also, you know, we need to be— You know, this is a magical area. It might not be an actual sunburn. It could just be a burn that comes from sort of, like, the residual magical energy of these crystals or

something.

Sylvia: And she just keeps going and starts talking faster and faster. [Ali laughs quietly]

Dre: Jonathan is locked in and is listening very, very closely.

Art (as **Nicky**): I wouldn't call that a sunburn, personally.

Sylvia: Her point basically is: I don't know what it is, [Ali laughs] but we shouldn't assume it's actually a sunburn.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Mm-hmm, mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Jack: Can I go and gently sort of put a foot on one of those plates in front of one of the closed doors.

Ali: Oh, wait! Oh, wait! Wait, wait, wait. I wanted to whisper to you and conspiratorially be like,

(as **Veile**): Go over there on the plate, and I'll go on that other plate. As a book reader. As a knower. I'm a knower. We're knowers. And you're an adventurer.

Art: Oh my goodness.

Austin: Okay, who's going to which plate?

Ali: [laughs quietly] I'm going to the blue one.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Ali: [cross] And I'm instructing Elena to go to the yellow one, yeah.

Jack: [cross] I'm going to the amber one.

(as **Elena**): Okay. Be careful.

Art: Oh, I'm so upset about this turn of events.

Sylvia: They're doing this while I'm talking about the sunburn. [Ali laughs]

Dre: Yeah, totally.

Austin: Oh, that's very funny. Yeah, uh huh. Let me get something.

Dre: It's like on the beach that makes you old.

Sylvia: Oh, it's the crystals that make you burned! [Dre laughs]

Austin: Let me look at the thing here. So, Veile, you were on the one in front of the kind of bluish door. Elena, you were on the one in front of the yellowish, the amber door.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: Veile, you have the teal gem, and Elena, you have an amethyst gem, right?

Jack: Yes.

Austin: Veile, as you step onto the plate, the light grows brighter on the door, but nothing seems to happen. Elena, you being on the— actually, both of you, when you step onto the plate, the light gets brighter, in both cases. Veile, your light gets even brighter than Elena's.

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

Austin: But the doors don't seem to move.

Jack: Okay. Having established— oh, go on, Janine.

Janine: Brontë's been paying attention to Veile and Elena. Doesn't really know what they're doing but just decides, like, to walk over to Veile. [Sylvia chuckles]

Austin: Uh huh.

Janine: To, like, make small talk. You know, so kind of gets on the edge of that plate, blue gem in his pocket.

Austin: Yeah.

Janine (as **Brontë**): So you're a priestess. I haven't seen one of you in a while.

Austin: The color on the door becomes more saturated, but it's still not bright enough.

Ali (as **Veile**): So you're saying you don't go to services, sir?

Janine (as **Brontë**): Well, I'm on a different continent, and there's not a lot of, uh... It's a bit different over there.

Sylvia: The idea of Brontë going to church.

Jack: Elena doing the math in her head, the... I mean, Elena is like an adventurer's adventurer, and I have to imagine that color locked doors exist in Perpetua.

Austin: Oh yeah. [Art laughs]

Jack: This feels like the sort of thing that you would have encountered in some—

Austin: You're from a dungeon.

Jack: Oh, yeah, yeah. And so, yeah, I'm going to go over and stand on the plate to see if the sort of purple/blue/teal hues power things up.

Austin: When you step off of the plate, the left plate, the western plate, the light diminishes on both of them.

Jack: Oh no. Sinking feeling in Elena. Elena is rattled; kind of has been since the arrival. Elena talks a big game about being from a dungeon, [Austin laughs] but I think that there is something going on about being in an unfamiliar dungeon [**Austin:** Mm-hmm.] that she's like, "I don't really know about all of this."

Sylvia: Um...oh, no, go ahead.

Jack: But with that being said, I'm going to kind of, like, creep north and try and get eyeline up these stairs.

Austin: As you do, you find a piece of the journal that you've been collecting. I'll send it to you now. It's just on the bottom of the stairs.

Jack: Huh.

Sylvia: I hope this is more about his dermatology situation. [quiet laughter]

Jack: Day Six: Found a dermatologist. [Austin and Jack chuckles] Okay.

Sylvia: Did you get it? Were you right?

Jack: Yes, I did. No, no. [Ali laughs]

Austin: Sorry, I have to put the Day Five on here.

Jack: Elena reads it aloud but reads it almost to herself, you know, sounding out the words.

(as **Elena**): "Day Four: Calstega Bay is incredible. The food isn't great. They'll have to do something about that. But the sights, the sounds, the beaches! I spent some astá on proper swimming attire, but the waves were a little too frightening for me. Tomorrow, though, I conquer the sea."

Austin: That's day four.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Okay, so, was a sunburn.

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

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): My bad.

Jack: [chuckles] Does seem like an actual sunburn.

Austin: One second. I have to give Elena the line of sight here, because that is what they asked for.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: So let me reveal north.

Jack: This is cautious movement.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Just trying to, you know, clear the...

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: Did that work.

Jack: Oh, motherfucker. Okay.

Austin: There's a stairwell up and another door, and on the door, next to the door, are two plates in the wall. They're flat here on the surface but they're up against— they're, like, in the door. There is an image of a rising sun and an image of a moon, kind of like reliefs, you know?

Jack: I think Elena kind of comes back down the stairs and says,

(as **Elena**): Um, your attention, everybody. Please.

Sylvia: Zooms over.

(as **Caoimhe**): What's up? What'd you find?

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

Jack (as **Elena**): You know, I said earlier, but we'd kind of just met. Again, my name's Elena. I grew up in Rillspur. I think what we are dealing with here is a sort of color locked door and two plate situation. I think that some combination of... Me and my comrades are traveling with colored gems. Do you have any gems in your possession?

Sylvia: I pull out my Mountain Dew colored gem.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): We all have gems, yeah.

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

Janine (as **Brontë**): Several, but this one's the most notable. [Austin laughs]

Art (as **Nicky**): I don't have a gem.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Why don't you have a gem?

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): [quietly] Why is that the most notable?

Janine (as **Brontë**): It's the largest. [Sylvia laughs quietly]

Art (as **Nicky**): I'm working on acquiring a gem.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): I also don't have one, but I never had one.

Jack (as **Elena**): Well, that puts you two in good positions, I think, because it allows us to balance our adventuring parties. I think the situation that we're dealing with here is two gem-locked doors, each of which will lead to some sort of unlocking plate that we can carry forward to the central chamber.

Jack: Gestures up behind her, up there.

(as **Elena**): Now, without seeing what's behind these doors, it's hard to make a plan. We could possibly exchange gems, if we wanted to be clever about this. A classic adventurer's trick.

Jack: And she's kind of gaining confidence as she's talking.

(as **Elena**): A classic adventurer's problem is to think that you can't swap the gems, that you're bound to the situation that you're with, but unless there's some sort of enchantment or lock on the gems, the gems can— or color-locked doors can be exchanged. I've seen this done with badges in Rillspur, colored mosaic tiles. But that's the situation as I understand it.

Jack: Kind of a look for, like, trying to get support from Veile.

Ali (as **Veile**): Well, Elena, I made a promise to my gem. [Austin chuckles]

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): You made a—

Ali (as **Veile**): I don't know that switching them is the right idea.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Your friend can talk to gems?

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Why did you make a promise to—? Our gems don't accept promises, I don't think.

Janine (as **Brontë**): Well, I never asked.

Ali (as **Veile**): There was a woman, like a mechanical woman, and she seemed quite upset.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): [quietly] Mechanical—?

Sylvia: I pull out my gem and start rattling it and go,

(as **Caoimhe**): Hello? Hello! [Ali laughs]

Janine: I pull out my gem and ask if it would like a promise.

Keith: I also pull out my gem and start talking to it.

Austin: None of the gems seem to respond, here in this place.

Janine: Hmm.

Jack (as **Elena**): They're quiet here. The gems don't talk here. Something about their power is...

Dre: Don't worry, these gems *definitely* talk, but just they don't work here. [quiet laughter]

Sylvia: Raising an eyebrow at Elena for, like, talking like an expert about this. [Ali laughs]

(as **Caomhe**): Oh, yeah, of course. Huh.

[[“The Castle Eschatonica”](#) by Jack de Quidt plays]