

Perpetua 39: The Castle Eschatonica 07

Transcriber: frog (fferaldogs)

Recap	1
Reunion with Waylon [0:02:40]	4
Behind Locked Doors [0:10:36]	16
Conversation in the Observatory [0:26:47]	32
On the Cycle [0:35:24]	40
On the Ennead [0:45:05]	47
Follow-up Questions [1:00:37]	61
Down the Stairs [1:12:38]	1
Leaving the Observatory [1:23:33]	1

Recap

Ali (as **Veile**): Excuse me, uh—Brontë!

Janine (as **Brontë**): Yes, of course, did you want to—did you want to dance as well?

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

Ali (as **Veile**): Oh, um, as lovely as that sounds, I believe we’re having a bit of a, um, a point of tension. There seems to be some sort of puzzle or something about the masks. Elena and Jonathan seem quite taken by it and they’re debating dueling some strange man? And it just—I don’t know, I—

Janine (as **Brontë**): Oh dear...

Ali (as **Veile**): We sort of need you.

Janine (as **Brontë**): Alright let’s go, but you owe me a dance later.

—

Austin (as **Talking Door**): Three masks, oh my, the odds are high you know what you are doing.

Janine: [laughs]

Dre: Ah, god.

Austin (as **Talking Door**): But four is harder, for they grow smarter, and soon you'll set them stewing.

—

Dre: I think Jonathan just turns to the door and kind of like looks over it?

Austin: Mhm.

Dre: And then kind of mutters to himself and says,

(as **Jonathan**): Well damn. Ain't nobody keeping up with this poor thing.

Austin: [chuckles]

Dre: And he just starts fixing it.

—

Austin (as **Talking Door**): [playfully] You've brought them in, these masks of wind, you wear the full quartet!

Sylvi: [laughs]

Austin (as **Talking Door**): Now come inside and finally hide from this politics roulette.

—

Jack (as **Elena**): Well, see May, your brother opened the door and no one needs to duel!

Austin (as **May**): Dang. I was hoping to see a duel.

—

Keith: Ah well, I'm having a big "what the fuck is going on" moment about being in a spaceship. This is a totally new aesthetic environment, this is like, unlike pretty much anything I've ever seen. I saw that computer one time.

Austin: You saw that computer one time.

Keith: And so this seems more advanced than that so this is like blowing even the craziest thing I've ever seen out of the water and it's all around me.

Austin: Mhm.

—

Austin: It is not an alternate reality. There is no—there is no here. This is the wreckage of a world that is dead. You are standing in a corpse of a world.

—

Jack (as **Elena**): Where's Waylon? Nicky, did you see where Waylon went? Did you find him along your way?

—

Ali (as **Veile**): Caliginia, please hear my call! While I realize the Ennead might not hold any bearing here, the responsibility of the safety of this man is on me and my companions.

—

Austin: Veile, you see the rift itself take the silhouette, sort of the shadow of a figure you've seen before. It is Caliginia and you hear her say here, with a voice that only you can hear—and I mean only you can hear in all of the world, in all of the Dragon Way, everywhere. It is direct to you and it feels secret and it feels hidden, she says,

(as **Caliginia**): Do you remember me yet?

Reunion with Waylon [0:02:40]

Austin: Where did we leave off? Where—y'all were back in the big pentagonal room here, right?

Dre: Mhm.

Keith: This is an antechamber.

Austin: I think this is—no, cause I think this is a—maybe it is an ante—ah, it's so big. Can an antechamber be this big?

Janine: Yes.

Dre: Probably!

Art: Yeah, I don't think—

Austin: Maybe it's an antechamber.

Art: I don't think there are rules about this.

Austin: No, I—mmm.

Keith: It's—I guess it's—all that it has to be is smaller than the room it leads to.

Austin: Well it's not that. It's bigger than both of the rooms it leads to.

Dre: Mm.

Keith: Wait the—directly up and to the sun and moon room, it's smaller than that.

Austin: Well that's not directly into that room, is it?

Keith: Oh okay, I guess there's a hallway.

Dre: Is this a foyer?

Austin: It's a—maybe it's a foyer.

Janine: Does it reduce heat loss?

Jack: [laughs]

Austin: It's so funny you say that.

Dre: Mm!

Sylvi: Oh boy.

Janine: [laughs]

Austin: It's like, truly kind of funny you say that. For reasons that we'll get to. Uh, the big room that you're all in—[laughs] the big ship that you all live on—

Janine: Gallery?

Austin: Yeah, the gallery, the entryway—the entry hall is what I've written here—of Eschatonica, the castle that you're in, is where we left you off. You had just brought one Waylon back to the group from taking photos [**Sylvi:** laughs] with your masked host. And I believe that Veile saw a collection of the night's own. The—I guess the henchmen? The attendants? Of Caliginia, Fated Darkness, one of the Ennead. And we just kind of left there. You have your keys to move on, to move north up the stairs and into the hallway. Who is marching up the stairs onward? And what are you saying about it?

Art (as **Nicky**): [gruffly] Ooh, look at these steps...

Sylvi: [laughs]

Ali: [laughs]

Art (as **Nicky**): Up we go.

Janine: We're missing what's his name right?

Keith: [laughs]

Austin: No, Waylon's back.

Janine: Or did we find him? Okay.

Dre: Waylon's back.

Keith: Waylon's back? Okay.

Janine: Okay. Phew.

Austin: Veile summoned him back.

Sylvi: We did a ritual for that right?

Ali: Yeah I summoned him back, that's how I got that weird flash.

Janine: Oh okay, I remember that. Yeah.

Ali: Is he pissed off at me? I bet he's pissed off at me. [laughs]

Austin: He's not talking to anybody! Yeah, he's a little pissed. I mean—it's fine.

Sylvi: [quietly] He's always pissed.

Austin: I know it's gonna be fine, but right now he's pissed.

Dre: Mm.

Ali (as **Veile**): Sir, where did you wander off to?

Austin (as **Waylon**): [grumbles] I just went up and took some photographs.

Jack (as **Elena**): How did you get through the door?

Austin (as **Waylon**): Knock.

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

Ali: [laughs]

Jack (as **Elena**): You—

Art (as **Nicky**): Shut up.

Sylvi (as **Caoimhe**): Ohh, why didn't we do that?

Jack (as **Elena**): Well there's still time!

Keith: [laughs]

Austin (as **Waylon**): People like you wouldn't have been welcome! Nothing to offer.

Sylvi (as **Caoimhe**): You got a problem with elves?

Janine: Uhh... [laughs]

Art: [grimly] Ohh.

Sylvi: [laughs]

Austin (as **Waylon**): I have problems with everybody.

Ali (as **Veile**): Well, we have inconvenienced you.

Sylvi: Shaking my damn head.

Art: [softly] Oh my god, he's racist.

Ali and Austin: [laugh]

Art: He's been racist this whole time!

Keith and Sylvi: [laugh]

Art: It never came up!

Keith: You just thought he was mad all the time?

Art: Yeah!!

Ali: Well we were rude to him, kind of. [laughs]

Dre: Yeah, we were pretty rude.

Keith: Why were you rude to him?

Jack: It was a whole thing.

Ali: [laughs loudly]

Art: But in retrospect, it kind of feels like it was okay cause he's racist.

Sylvi: [laughs loudly]

Keith: [laughs]

Austin (as **Waylon**): They were trying to make money off of me, is what they were trying to do! They were trying to make money off old Waylon.

Jack (as **Elena**): Do you really feel that way?

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): I thought they were just escorting you home.

Art (as **Nicky**): I thought you—

Austin (as **Waylon**): They were trying to maximize their profits!

Jack (as **Elena**): Wait, hang on—

Austin (as **Waylon**): [mocking] Ohh Waylon, we gotta do two things at once! We can't do one thing a time. We can't just lead me up to my place to take a picture and bring me back then deal with the sick cows on the way back, we gotta do it all at once!

Jack: Elena, glancing at the other members. [laughs]

Janine (as **Brontë**): Well you know what they say, [**Ali**: laughs] to do two things at once is to do neither.

Janine: [laughing] Sorry, that's today's time.is quote.

Austin: [laughs]

(as **Waylon**): I heard that!

Janine: [laughs]

Austin (as **Waylon**): I heard that recently!

Art: [laughs]

Austin (as **Waylon**): Yeah. And! They tried to make me be the story in the newspaper! They couldn't even write a different story.

Ali: [laughs]

Austin (as **Waylon**): I was part of three of their quests all at once.

Art (as **Nicky**): Some people said that the newspaper thing wasn't something we should have done.

Austin (as **Waylon**): Well I don't know who they are, but they were right.

Art (as **Nicky**): Well I'm not saying because I think it would be rude.

Austin (as **Waylon**): Oh, you had no problem being rude before!

Art (as **Nicky**): I think I've been one of the nicer people to you, until it turned out you were racist.

Ali: [splutters, laughs]

Austin (as **Waylon**): [dismissively] I'm not racist, I'm just particular.

Art (as **Nicky**): [skeptical] Mmm.

Keith: Mm.

Sylvi: Mm.

Dre: Mm.

Janine: So, you were—you were all just—

Sylvi: [laughs] We all Marge Simpson'ed at him.

Austin and Keith: [laugh]

Janine (as **Brontë**): You all just go around doing jobs? What is it—?

Austin: [laughs]

Ali (as **Veile**): No!

Ali: [laughs]

Jack (as **Elena**): [indignant] No!

Austin: [laughing] You some type of Super Mario?

Keith: [laughs]

Ali: Veile's face like suddenly hot and she's like squeezing her hand.

Austin: [quietly] Ohhh.

Ali (as **Veile**): We're quite important you know!

Ali: She's just— [laughs]

Sylvi: This is a real like, "you guys have to work for money?" question.

Ali: [laughs]

Dre: Mhm!

Janine: I don't know, it's just we're on like a mission or whatever, kinda, we're going in a direction—

Art: We're on a mission! But we accidentally—

Janine: And then other people are doing cow medicine and journalism and stuff and it's a little confusing [laughs] for those of us who don't know them personally.

Keith: Yeah, we do beach volleyball.

Art: We accidentally—

Ali (as **Veile**): [indignant] Those cows were—

Sylvi: Beachminton.

Art (as **Nicky**): We accidentally parted with an item that it seems that we need.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Accidentally? Is this the pawn shop thing again?

Art (as **Nicky**): Yes, the pawn shop thing.

Dre: Yes, this is the pawn shop thing.

Janine: Oh right, okay. Yes.

Dre: It is. And we did all these at once because we needed to make enough money to guarantee that we could afford Art's item back.

Austin (as **Waylon**): Why didn't you just not sell the gem to begin with!

Dre: That's a great question.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Yeah, if you're doing all these jobs.

Ali: [laughs]

Art (as **Nicky**): I think that that's a great piece of advice to bring into the future,
[**Keith**: Yeah.] but it doesn't help right now at all.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Sorry, you said that you're—that you guys are important?

Jack (as **Elena**): [angrily] Yes!! We—we have a—we have a gifted mission!

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

Art (as **Nicky**): A gifted mission? Who would want something like that?

Jack (as **Elena**): We've been granted—

Janine (as **Brontë**): Like someone gave—okay.

Jack (as **Elena**): We've been granted a mission.

Art (as **Nicky**): I don't think that's what you call that.

Jack (as **Elena**): Now you're turning against—? Ugh.

Ali: [laughs]

Sylvi (as **Caoimhe**): What is your—f

Art: I'm not turning against anyone.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): [aside] These guys seem disorganized.

Sylvi (as **Caoimhe**): [aside] I know right?

Art: We are pretty disorganized right now.

Austin (as **Waylon**): A mission where you try to convert people to religion?

Janine: Uh—[laughs]

Jack (as **Elena**): [wearily] No...butt out, Waylon.

Sylvi (as **Caoimhe**): [quietly] I didn't get that vibe.

Dre: [sighs]

Austin (as **Waylon**): So what are you doing, then?

Art (as **Nicky**): We're gonna—wait, what are we doing?

Ali: [laughs loudly]

Dre: I'm walking up these stairs. We need to get the hell out of here.

Keith and **Sylvi**: [laughing uproariously]

Dre: That's what I'm doing.

Sylvi: [laughing] Ohh Nicky, god bless.

Ali: Veile looking angrier, but not saying anything. [laughs]

Art: We're making some damn good food, I'll tell you that.

Janine (as **Brontë**): Well, for what it's worth, Waylon—

Keith: It sort of makes sense because these people just sort of adopted your thing by being near you.

Ali: [laughs]

Keith: He's like, I'm just the guy with the truck.

Janine (as **Brontë**): For what it's worth, Waylon, it doesn't seem like they meant to take advantage of you. It seems to maybe have just happened.

Austin (as **Waylon**): [pointed] Yeah, seems like most of what they do isn't something they meant to do, it's just something that happened.

Art (as **Nicky**): [angrily] That's very true!

Ali: [laughs quietly]

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): You sounded like you disagreed, but you agreed.

Austin (as **Waylon**): Yeah, cause they don't do anything the way they mean it!

Janine (as **Brontë**): You shouldn't be mad at them then, you should just be disappointed.

Art (as **Nicky**): Thank you!

Austin (as **Waylon**): Oh, very very thin difference between the two in my age!

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

Janine (as **Brontë**): Well that's a shame. We should extend grace.

Art (as **Nicky**): [triumphantly] Yeah!

Keith: [laughs]

Austin (as **Waylon**): The only place for grace is at a table before a meal.

Art (as **Nicky**): The foppish pervert's right!

Keith: I go up the stairs.

Sylvi: Yeah, I'm also gonna go up the stairs.

Janine: [laughs] I'm also going up the stairs.

Ali: [laughs]

Austin (as **Waylon**): Now they're gonna leave me behind...

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): You already went up the stairs!

Austin: Shaking his head.

Janine: We were—

Sylvi: I'm not saying this out loud, but Caoimhe's really like, "this guy's not my responsibility."

Austin: [laughs]

Janine: [laughs]

(as **Brontë**): We did all think you had been eaten by an owl. So you know, it came from a good place.

Austin (as **Waylon**): [skeptically] Mhm.

Janine (as **Brontë**): We could have been summoning you out of an owl's stomach and then—then I think you would be much happier.

Austin (as **Waylon**): [skeptically] Mhm!

Art: Nicky at the top of the stairs to Jonathan,

(as **Nicky**): But this guy might be racist, right?

Ali and Austin: [laugh]

Sylvi: [laughs quietly]

Dre (as **Jonathan**): [sighs] I don't know, man.

Keith: I hate it when people are racist against Italians. [eye-talians]

Sylvi: [laughs]

Art: I don't think you're supposed to say that.

Sylvi: [laughing] It's anti-Italian discrimination.

Dre: Anti-Italian discrimination.

Art: I said that in the last episode.

Austin: Mmm, you did, you did.

Sylvi: Oh good, it's your catchphrase now.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: [laughs]

Behind Locked Doors [0:10:36]

Austin: Alright, you've placed the crests into their proper places presumably?

Janine: Mhm.

Jack: Can we try knocking first? Can we just try—can we just knock once?

Janine: [laughs]

Austin: Yeah, give me a knock.

Jack: To see what happens?

Art: Why do we have all these crests??

Sylvi: I'm like in the middle of putting a plate in and then you say that and I'm like,

(as **Caoimhe**): Fine. Go ahead.

Austin: [sighs] Give me a d100, fuck it.

Jack: Alright, fine.

Austin: We'll roll some dice, that's kind of fun. Try to get a hundred.

Art: Oh this sounds like it's gonna go great.

Austin: Eh, 73, pretty good. [**Jack:** Oohh.] Nothing—you don't hear anything.

Ali: [laughs]

Jack: Okay, I didn't know if this was a trick puzzle. If we were outflanked by the turtle man.

Austin: Mm mm.

Sylvi: [snorts]

Jack: Alright, plates in the slots. You know.

Austin: You know, they glow as you place them, the soft blue of the lunar plate and the kind of soft amber of the sunrise one. And then the doorway lifts—remember it was this kind of strange metal—it lifts up into the ceiling, allowing you to progress down this hallway.

Like the other hallways of Castle Eschatonica, this one is built from the remains of dead worlds. But here, each piece is laid with precision and care into a new mosaic, instead of the chaotic jumble or the single style that you've seen in the rest of the dungeon. Cinderblocks and rusted metal plates, wooden slats and sandstone block—sandstone blocks, rustic red brick and impossibly sleek chrome—all fitted together with artistic precision.

They combine to form a geometric pattern, spiraling lines with dots of color surrounding them like planets or moons in orbit along a—around a long super-helix stretching from this entryway towards a pair of impressive wooden doors at the end of the hall. There is a soft, but noticeable, sense of warmth coming from these doors. What do you do?

Keith: Woah. [hushed] It is an antechamber.

Ali: [laughs]

Sylvi: [snorts]

Jack: If we put our hand on the door, [**Austin:** Mhm.] is there a sense that the warmth behind is dangerous? Like do we get a sort of a better sense of the intuition of the heat behind the door?

Austin: Yeah, it doesn't feel—it just feels warm in there. It doesn't feel like a raging fire, you don't hear any evidence of—there's no secondary—it's warm, it's not hot.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: But it's warm in a way that's not—it's warm in a way that is noticeable. You know?

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: There's some sort of source of heat in there.

Jack: Then let's go ahead! I'm gonna—unless someone stops me, I'm just gonna sort of gently push the doors open.

Austin: Alright.

Keith: Yeah, I think that's the right thing to do.

Ali: Yeah.

Dre: Let me go first.

Janine: You sure you don't want to knock on this one too?

Art: No no, let Elena do it. [laughs]

Sylvi: [laughs]

Ali: If Veile invites Waylon up the stairs will he come with us?

Austin: He's coming up.

Ali: Okay.

Austin: He's just—yeah, he's coming up. [laughs] I almost made him big by mistake for a second.

Sylvi: I mean, does he have to?

Keith: Big Waylon.

Austin: He's holding in the back.

Art: [laughs] Big Waylon!

Austin: Alright, you open the door?

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: Alright. Beyond the doors—

Janine: Hang on. Does Waylon get along with Efta and Zolfta if they're hanging in the back?

Ali: [laughs]

Austin: I think—does Efta—do Efta and Zolfta make any attempt to talk to Waylon?

Janine: I—I mean, they don't make attempts to talk to people, but they probably like wave a little bit when he catches up.

Austin: He gives them a little nod. He sees them [**Janine:** Okay.] as being inconvenienced by you—

Janine: Okay. [laughs]

Austin: In the same way that he is being inconvenienced by everybody.

Janine: Yeah, that's fair. I was just curious.

Austin: Mhm, yeah. Alright. Elena and Jonathan, it sounds like you two are going in first here. And inside of these doors, beyond them, inside of a huge domed tower, its floor

level walls lined with bookshelves, you see where the warmth is coming from. There are two small stars. One, the larger, a deep orange, almost red, slowly pulsing at the center of the room about halfway up its many dozen floors of height. The second smaller one is blue and it's steady in its speed as it glides around the larger one in graceful and playful arcs.

Around them, hundreds if not thousands of other smaller objects orbit. Many of them are smaller stars or planets or moons, some as tiny as little motes of light, some as large as, say, a globe. But some of the things in here are anything but celestial, like decor or furniture. Like, for instance, an actual globe. Or a bed, or a few well-framed paintings free-floating in the air. There's a pair of large armoires, there's a wrap-around couch that has nothing to wrap around.

Some of what's floated up here are remnants of the library below. There's some desks, there's a number of shelves, some loose piles of books. There's a single page with a pen clipped to it. And there is a lot of other stuff. The rest is hard to know how to categorize. There's a large brass horn, there is a scratching pad for a cat, there's a cask of wine. There is a strange white metallic device that I don't think any of you have ever seen before, but anyone in our world would recognize as an in-window air conditioning unit.

And beyond it all, at the very very top, a couple of dozen floors up, there is attached to the ceiling and poking out, a big massive bronze telescope. It seems to be able to rotate around. That whole dome top seems to be able to rotate around with the telescope pointing out. And it is from there that your masked host looks down and calls out,

(as **Gnova**): Oh! You've finally made it. Are you coming up or should I come down?

Jack (as **Elena**): [cross] We can come up!

Art (as **Nicky**): [cross] You should come down.

Sylvi: [laughs]

Jack (as **Elena**): You can come down.

Austin: And they leap down at full speed and about halfway down, you know, produce their big staff paintbrush thing and begin riding it the rest of the way, coming down to ground level. And again, the ground level is basically like a—kind of a library with some additional desks and tables and reading places. And it's a library—it's a library in the mid-century, mid-20th century model. You know, little desk lamps. Not a library from the world you are familiar with. You know the little desk lamps with like the green lampshade? You know what I'm talking about?

Dre: Mhm!

Jack: Oh yeah.

Austin: It's like those. It's like that style of library down here.

Jack: They got little pencils that say Castle Eschatonica Rare Books Division.

Austin: [laughs] That's right, yeah, etched into them. Exactly, yeah. And yeah, they land here in front of you with their strange mask and their extremely strange presence. They really just like—they have a way about them that is at once deeply in command of themselves but that feels out of place and out of time somehow with the world around you.

(as **Gnova**): You finally made it. Congratulations.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Well thank you.

Austin (as **Gnova**): Would you like any tea? Coffee? Soda?

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): What are we doing here?

Austin (as **Gnova**): Oh is that for me?

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

Austin (as **Gnova**): What are you doing here?

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): I don't know. We ended up here, we shouldn't be here.
We—

Austin (as **Gnova**): Well you would have fallen to your deaths, if not landing here.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): But why here?

Austin (as **Gnova**): Why not? Where else?

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Well—uh, I ge—the path we were on or our deaths.

Austin (as **Gnova**): You can only put out a ladder from where you stand.
[amused] Or perhaps you have some talent I haven't yet seen!

Dre (as **Jonathan**): What is here? Like what is this place?

Austin (as **Gnova**): Oh, this is my home. This is the Castle Eschatonica. The first last place there is.

Austin: They begin to like—

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

Sylvi (as **Caoimhe**): Wait, what?

Austin: Walk towards one of the shelves.

Dre: Mhm.

Austin (as **Gnova**): I built this place. When my world ended, so that there'd be...something left! Of all the worlds that would end after.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): The first last place?

Austin (as **Gnova**): Well there were last places before, but this is the first one that exists.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Yeah, no, I'm tracking.

Jack (as **Elena**): Where are we? Where are we exactly?

Austin (as **Gnova**): We are in the observatory and library of the Castle Eschatonica. In the Dragon Path.

Jack (as **Elena**): In the Dragon Path. Which is underneath Perpetua?

Austin (as **Gnova**): [amused] Mm underneath, no. Prepositionally, that's wrong.

Jack (as **Elena**): We fell through the ground.

Austin (as **Gnova**): Well, you fell into the Dragon Path.

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

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

Austin (as **Gnova**): Inwards! Outwards! Aside, astride. Beyond.

Jack (as **Elena**): This is a magical—

Keith: This is the first part that, uh, that Antistrophe understands. [laughs]

Sylvi: I'm trying to take notes keeping track of all this and am getting—her—Caoimhe's brow is getting increasingly more furrowed.

Austin: Yeah.

(as **Gnova**): Imagine a pair of lines dancing around each other like the helix you saw in the hallway on the way in. If you fell from one to the other, but then it climbed above, would you have fallen below? The world is not organized such. In the simple ways that you understand.

Art (as **Nicky**): I feel like you asked if people would like tea or coffee and then you didn't really wait for responses.

Keith: [laughs]

Sylvi: [snickers]

Austin (as **Gnova**): I absolutely wait—I absolutely waited! You asked me other questions!

Art (as **Nicky**): I didn't ask you anything.

Janine: Yeah, criticize the service, that's good. [laughs]

Keith: [laughs]

Austin (as **Gnova**): Waylon, I understand what you were telling me now.

Keith: [laughs loudly]

Sylvi: Oh great.

Dre: Mm.

Art: This guy...

Jack (as **Elena**): How do we leave?

Austin (as **Gnova**): Oh, you move forward. Simple as.

Jack (as **Elena**): You just spent five minutes saying that these directions weren't important, what do you mean forward? Point.

Austin: Points to the pair of doors at the far end that are kind of hidden behind a number of shelves. There is another—I'm gonna reveal more of this map—there are two doorways that point out of this—the cosmos observatory here. One is marked with a—

Jack: [laughs] Woah! It's a little guy!

Austin: It's a little guy! One is marked with the moon, one is marked with the sun again.

Dre: Mm. Do we—do we get this person's name?

Austin: You do not. You never asked, I don't think. Maybe you asked when you first met them and they said they couldn't tell you yet.

Jack: We know, but—

Austin: Yeah. Oh, you know from—

Keith: Yeah, I thought they said they would tell us—

Austin: You know from—three of you know from the diary that you found. The journal that you found [**Dre:** Ohh.] in the western half. This person's name is Gnova [nova], G-N-O-V-A.

Keith: Oh yeah.

Jack: Gnova. [guh-nova]

Austin: Mhm.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Why did we have to go through all that to get here if we could just leave?

Austin (as **Gnova**): Well, the door was locked.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): But you—you had—it's your door.

Austin (as **Gnova**): Well. It's the door of my home, but I don't carry the keys.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): You let Wayland in.

Austin (as **Gnova**): First of all, his name is Waylon, with an N.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): I only just met the guy.

Ali: [laughs]

Austin (as **Gnova**): And second—

Keith: Hands up.

Austin (as **Gnova**): I didn't let him through the door, I teleported him in.

Sylvi: Well yeah, duh.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Okay then, why didn't you teleport us just to here?

Austin (as **Gnova**): Because—

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Can we—can we stop for a moment. We are at what appears to be an intersection of space and time and all possible realities, why are we quibbling about who came through the damn door, when the secrets of the universe are right here??

Sylvi (as **Caoimhe**): Thank you, Jonathan.

Janine: This is how the trickster sorts get you.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Well we were on the Dragon Path, we were already in the intersection of space and time.

Austin (as **Gnova**): Oh, you were in—you were in the pathway around the intersection, but I am afraid that your friend has the right of it. The intersection began here.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): How long have you been here? Or is that a question that even matters at this point?

Austin (as **Gnova**): How long do you—how do you count time between time?

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

Dre (as **Jonathan**): [sighs] Figured it would be—yeah, yeah, I figured.

Sylvi: [laughs] Looking—Caoimhe and Jonathan looking at each other and just nodding, like yeah.

Austin (as **Gnova**): No no no, I mean what unit?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Oh, uh a year?

Austin (as **Gnova**): Of your type or the Dragons' type?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Ooh. Our type.

Austin (as **Gnova**): Oof.

Sylvi (as **Caoimhe**): Yeah, I think we could only really understand our type.

Keith: Do I know the conversion between Dragon Years and years?

Jack: Seven, like dogs. [laughs]

Ali: [laughs]

Austin: No, I—[**Dre:** laughs] I believe you've heard—I believe the western party maybe learned this in the Dragon Temple early on. A Dragon Year is one cycle of Perpetua.

Dre: Oh right.

Austin: And so that, they can give you very quickly actually.

Jack: Oh, I would be interested in knowing that, but Elena's mad as hell so she's actually not going to say anything.

Austin: Yeah, totally.

Dre: But Jonathan would.

Austin: Sure.

(as **Gnova**): I have been here for 70—

Austin: I just wanna make sure I get this right, one second. I have to make sure I actually get this right. It's more than 72. I have to do some math, one second.

Dre: Mhm.

Austin: I thought I knew this off the top of my head, but I actually do not because of the way math works.

Keith: So Gnova's been—Gnova?

Austin: Hm?

Keith: Gnova is their name?

Austin: Gnova is their name. G-N-O-V-A. Yeah.

Keith: Yeah. Gnova's been here longer than a lot—maybe, seemingly, from what I remember—a lot of the gods have been around.

Jack: Uh yeah—uh, yes.

Austin: Yeah, much longer. A hundred percent.

Keith: Okay.

Jack: The gods are like, young in celestial time.

Art: And if you want to spend any of this time while you're doing this math, describing the cup of coffee that I—that Nicky gets, I think we would all find that pretty appropriate.

Jack: [laughs]

Sylvi: Oh we've been here for a cup of coffee, that's it!

Austin: How do you take—yeah, yeah, you're here for coffee. What type of coffee are you looking to get?

Art: Black and sweet.

Austin: Yeah! I think—I think simply draws a line with their brush and a little pot of coffee kind of skates down the line to you with a cup and pours itself. It's like—

Keith: Shout out to Epic Mickey.

Sylvi: Oh, I—

Austin: It's a little Epic Mickey, it's a little—

Keith: [laughs]

Sylvi: Shout out to Kirby's Canvas Curse.

Austin: It's a little Kirby's Canvas Curse, it's also a little, um. What's the sketch rider? What's that called?

Sylvi: Oh! Line Rider.

Janine: Line Rider?

Austin: It's a little Line Rider, even. Yeah, yeah.

Sylvi: Oh!

Art: It's important to remember that when it's happening like this, it's Epic Nicky.

Keith: [laughs]

Jack: [laughs]

Janine: Ahh...

Sylvi: Ahh!

Austin: I see!

Janine: Can—can—

Art: Now everyone has to like that joke, I'm sorry this is—

Sylvi: Or else it's anti-Italian discrimination. [laughs]

Art: [laughs] It's anti-Italian discrimination.

Austin (as **Gnova**): 809 Dragon Years.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): [heavy exhale] Hohh!

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

Janine (as **Brontë**): Hello, I'm sorry, could you make me a puppy?

Sylvi: [laughs]

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

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

Austin (as **Gnova**): I couldn't make you a puppy. I'm not—not like the animal.

Janine (as **Brontë**): [sadly] Oh. Not like the coffee?

Austin (as **Gnova**): The coffee was up there already, I'm sorry to say my dear.

Janine (as **Brontë**): Oh. Oh...

Dre (as **Jonathan**): [heavy sigh]

Austin (as **Gnova**): I could give you a stuffed puppy, I have one of those!

Janine (as **Brontë**): No, I wanted it to like play and gambol about and stuff.

Sylvi (as **Caoimhe**): Can you turn him into a puppy?

Janine (as **Brontë**): [sharply] No! That's okay, thank you!

Keith: [quietly] Gamble?

Janine: Gambol! [laughs] G-A-M-B-O-L.

Dre: Oh.

Keith: Oh.

Janine: [laughs]

Austin (as **Gnova**): A gambling puppy seems like a waste of money.

Keith: [laughs]

Sylvi: This dog loves Wordzin!

Dre: Take that puppy to the track, yeah.

Keith: [laughing] I was like, to play poker.

Janine: Famously they do love poker, but no, that's not—

Sylvi: It's true.

Austin: [laughs] They do.

(as **Gnova**): I have that one!

Austin: [laughing] Points up to the painting.

Dre: [laughs]

Sylvi (as **Caoimhe**): Oh, did you do that yourself?

Sylvi: [laughs]

Janine (as **Brontë**): I thought it was like a magic thing and you could just make stuff and then I could have a puppy. Anyway, continue.

Ali (as **Veile**): I was gonna ask what you know of the Cycle?

Austin (as **Gnova**): As much as I suspect there is to know! Yours is drawing near the end.

Jack (as **Elena**): Can it be prevented?

Austin (as **Gnova**): No. The Cycle or the Particular?

Jack (as **Elena**): The particular, I suppose. Can Perpetua not be destroyed?

Austin (as **Gnova**): It can be extended. You've seen the High Masque of Alteros.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Mm. So did those places connect to you or did you connect to them?

Austin (as **Gnova**): Oh, I brought them in. Like driftwood, and built a home.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Do you know what's happening to the magic?

Austin (as **Gnova**): The magic?

Austin: And a little—

Sylvi (as **Caoimhe**): The Sourcerot.

Austin: The eyes, the like eyes on the mask, turn a little sideways like a grin.

Austin (as **Gnova**): Yes, come with me. [amused] The magic. Come up.

Conversation in the Observatory [0:26:47]

Austin: And begins to float away. Up the observatory.

Keith: I follow them.

Austin: There is no stairwell.

Ali: [laughs]

Keith: Oh, I figure out how to climb up, I guess?

Austin: There is no—there is not—I mean you can try it, I g—you know what yeah, fuck it! You can try to do like a little platforming puzzle up the two dozen floors to the top.

Keith: Sure, yeah.

Sylvi: Yeah, the guy in the heaviest armor here.

Austin: Yeah yeah yeah.

Jack: [laughs] With both shields.

Keith: The heaviest armor in the world.

Austin: I think this is a dex check, difficulty 16—

Keith: [sarcastic] Yeah, great.

Ali: What if—

Austin: To do this yourself.

Keith: No fucking way.

Austin: You could crit!

Keith: I could crit. Uh, I guess I won't pass up a—

Austin: That's—that's a 3.

Keith: That's a 3. Yeah.

Austin: You can't make it up this without—you can't, I mean, you tried it. Maybe as a group?

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): [from a distance] Uh, I can't get up! There's no way up there!

Austin (as **Gnova**): Oh! Of course. Of course!

Austin: And, again, swipes their staff brush around the objects here and like builds a long staircase out of bookshelves and beds and little moons and et cetera. It's like—[laughs] it's like looking at Getting Over It with Bennett Foddy or one of the 3D, you know, [**Dre:** laughs] climbing—

Jack: Oh, asset store games. [laughs]

Austin: Yeah, yeah exactly. The asset store games, they've built you a little asset store game [**Sylvi:** Ohh.] climbing tower.

Keith: Great.

Sylvi: The Unity-mancer.

Austin: It's—it's long. It's really—it's a really tall building, you know.

Keith: Alright, I start trucking up.

Sylvi: Yeah, same!

Austin: Alright!

Dre: Sure, yeah.

Art: Yeah, mhm.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvi: Happy to—

Austin: Give me a—give me a group check.

Sylvi: Be up front.

Austin: To see how tired you all are. Who's taking the lead here? Who's your leader on this?

Keith: It depends what we're rolling.

Sylvi: [snorts]

Austin: I think it's Antistrophe.

Keith: Okay, what am I rolling?

Jack: [laughs]

Austin: I think this is like—well, everybody else is rolling too cause this is a group check.

Keith: I think this is might, right?

Austin: I think it's might, willpower.

Keith: Might, willpower, sure.

Sylvi: Okay.

Austin: I think you're stomping and you're just trying to keep your head straight.

Keith: Endure? Yeah, that makes sense.

Austin: Yeah, endure!

Keith: Sure.

Austin: Yeah, so everybody else do an endure. You're looking for a 10 to help. So far none, okay there's one from Elena.

Keith: One.

Austin: Who does not have any bonds with Antistrophe, I believe.

Jack: Uh, no.

Art: Some pretty bad rolling.

Austin: Some pretty bad rolls, you're shaking 'em out. Okay, well there's— **[Keith:** Ooh!] it doesn't crit, it doesn't fumble. It doesn't fumble.

Keith: It's okay, it's okay, it's okay.

Austin: Cause it's a help.

Keith: It's just embarrassing.

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: [laughs]

Austin: Brontë rolled a two. [laughs]

Sylvi: Brontë's just really sad about the dog situation.

Austin: [laughs] That's right.

Keith: [laughs]

Janine: Yeah...Brontë's definitely—I was waffling, like does Brontë even go up? I was like no, I need to be a team player right now.

Austin: Wow.

Sylvi: He can still sulk.

Janine: But he's probably like tripping on some bedsheets.

Keith: Everybody rolled, yeah?

Austin: Seems like it. You get one from Elena.

Janine: [laughs]

Austin: And you've rolled a 7.

Keith: I'm gonna reroll that 1.

Austin: Okay.

Keith: I rolled a 1. Let's see...I have my, uh—ah fuck, I hit the wrong button. I have one Fabula Point!

Sylvi: Yeah, make sure everybody's got one Fabula Point if you had zero at the start.

Keith: Climbing the stairs...

Austin: You just reroll the 1 or are you gonna reroll the 5 and the 1?

Keith: I'm gonna reroll the 1.

Austin: Okay.

Keith: What do I need to beat?

Austin: Mm, I think a 13. Ah, I'd say it's open—let's say it's a 10 and I'll give you more if you get a 13.

Keith: Okay. [cross] Ah, I'll reroll the whole thing.

Art: [cross] You should roll both. Yeah.

Austin: Hey!

Keith: 10.

Austin: There's your 10. There's your 10, a 10 is fine. You manage to lead the group up, you pace yourselves well. It's, you know, two dozen, over two dozen flights of stairs. You know? It's a long trek up here. And it's hot. Like, I don't want to undersell this, this room is hot and it gets hotter as you're climbing because you're getting closer to the tiny suns that are in the room. They also have like a kind of captivating aura. They're bright, but they're not so bright you can't look at them. Which is strange, and you find yourself looking at them and needing to be very careful on your way up not to make a mistake. There's no bannisters on these stairs, it's like—it's a little ver—vertiginous? Is that the

right word for this? It's—it's scary to look down and it's somehow just as scary to look up for most of your way.

There are also still objects, you know, floating around. Not every object was used to build this stairwell, but eventually you do make it up to the kind of like, bottom layer of the observatory part of this, which has a proper, you know, bolted into the wall—it's like being up in the rafters a little bit. It has like a solid floor, you can, if you choose to, look down and see all the way down. You can see that this kind of—this is like their actual workspace. There is a desk here, there is a private shelf of books.

And then there is the huge telescope which goes up a number of floors even higher. That goes—kind of comes down to one of the kind of work floors of this observatory section. And they are there looking, and trying to move the telescope to a certain spot. They're like,

(as **Gnova**): Ah yes! You've made it just in time, I've just about found what you're looking for. Take a peak.

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

Austin: And you see the Dragon Path and there's something sparkling? But it's hard to make sense of what you're looking at. There's kind of like a blue sparkle.

Dre: Hm. Can I make a study roll?

Austin: Yeah! Yeah, that's 10. That works for me. You see that the spark—the sparkle isn't really a sparkle, it's like a burning. The Dragon Path is burning or something the Dragon Path is built on is burning. It's like a blue, kind of a light blue, you know, fire. And you can see that there's part of it beyond where it's burning that still exists, but instead of the kind of bright purple and these kind of like, kind of garish colors of the Dragon Path, it is like desaturated. You know? It's like a softer color. It's not as in your face. And so it's like it's not burning the thing, it's burning through the—it's burning off something. You know? The thing that it reminds you of, Jonathan, is what you saw with the cows.

Dre: Mhm, okay.

Austin (as **Gnova**): [brightly] And that's what's happening with magic.

Austin: Gnova says.

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

Austin (as **Gnova**): Hard to say. I haven't seen it before.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Mm. Is it spreading?

Austin (as **Gnova**): It is.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Does it have, uh, inter-cyclical implications?

Austin (as **Gnova**): I haven't seen it before. So I have no clue!

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

Austin (as **Gnova**): Perhaps this will be my last, after all that. I can only tell you what I know. And what I know is...it is trouble. But I have lived for many many many years, many more than I thought I would. And while once I had some spare hope of stopping the cycle and preventing future destruction, I've come to learn the impossibility of such a goal. And the joy of simply watching it all tumble and tumble and tumble and tumble. And picking up what pieces remain.

Ali: Veile's so angry she's like squeezing her skirt. [laughs]

Austin: [lightly] Mhm.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): So, [sighs] are you gonna try and stop us if we want to try and stop it?

Austin (as **Gnova**): No! Of course not.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Okay. Didn't think so, but y'now, always good to ask.

Austin (as **Gnova**): [amused] I've just seen so many others try.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): No, I believe you.

Austin (as **Gnova**): Be careful you don't only save yourselves. And be careful that— [chuckles] well. If one of you gets to make a choice, you bring forward the right thing. This is what I brought forward. And I have to say—

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Good choice.

Austin (as **Gnova**): [laughs lightly] In ways you don't quite understand. That you see anything here, that you've heard any echo of any other world is because this place exists. It was not my intent, I was selfish in wanting this. A place of my own, a place to watch what came after my turn was up. But in creating this place, I necessitated that the ruins were not obliterated. That there would be echoes. A place for them to rest! Who knows how many worlds there were before mine was destroyed? Countless! I suspect. Whereas there have only been eight hundred and nine since.

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

Sylvi: [quiet laugh]

On the Cycle [0:35:24]

Jack (as **Elena**): Where do the destroyed worlds go?

Austin (as **Gnova**): Well they're all around us, what's left of them.

Jack (as **Elena**): [sighs] And the people of those worlds?

Austin (as **Gnova**): Oh, they're dead. It's history, my dear.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): So those are ghosts, basically?

Austin (as **Gnova**): Ghosts? Sorry, do you—oh, you meant the people who are here!

Jack (as **Elena**): No, I meant the people on the worlds.

Austin (as **Gnova**): Yes, it's a violent process. Geologic, cosmologic, astrophysical. Chemical—

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

Austin (as **Gnova**): Mystical.

Jack (as **Elena**): I just, I knew the world was going to get destroyed and I think there was a bit of me that was hoping there would be some sort of process. That, you know, the gods can experience a transposition and I thought that maybe the citizens of Perpetua would be transposed into the citizens of the new place, but they die. It's death.

Austin (as **Gnova**): Oh my dear, the gods die too. They simply live a little longer.

Jack (as **Elena**): Well they get longer than we do. They get longer than we do.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): I don't think they live past the Cycle though.

Austin (as **Gnova**): They live past the Cycle.

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

Austin (as **Gnova**): Each god gets nine.

Jack (as **Elena**): [aghast] Nine cycles?!

Austin (as **Gnova**): Yes. It's a drop. In the scale of all reality.

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

Jack (as **Elena**): [disparaging] Oh sure...

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): How did you do this?

Austin (as **Gnova**): It was my final wish when my time was done on the Ennead.

Sylvi (as **Caoimhe**): So—

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Final wi-? Why did you—why do you—?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Wait, wait, hold on. When your time was done on the Ennead—

Austin (as **Gnova**): After my ninth! My ninth cycle, I'd served my due.

Ali (as **Veile**): You were...a member of the Ennead?

Austin (as **Gnova**): I was a member of the Ennead! For nine whole cycles. And it was good. It was—it was good.

Sylvi (as **Caoimhe**): There's been over eighty Enneads since your world ended? Am I doing my math right, here?

Austin (as **Gnova**): That's about right, yes.

Sylvi (as **Caoimhe**): You said eight hundred and nine years?

Austin (as **Gnova**): Well each new—ah, each new celestial configuration first has to build its first Ennead which takes nine cycles of course. That first one with no one to worship, no one to help you make sense of it, is always dire. But remarkable. And then one joins, and then another and then another, until there's nine and you have another full set of cycles. A full ninety, and then ah, it continues such.

Sylvi (as **Caoimhe**): [weakly] I need to sit down...

Austin (as **Gnova**): And then the new configuration appears, which we're approaching soon.

Sylvi (as **Caoimhe**): After this cycle ends, right?

Austin (as **Gnova**): Something like that. If my math is right. But that's not to worry you.

Sylvi: [laughs] Doing long division on my—on my notebook.

Austin: Yeah.

(as **Gnova**): It is—it is not without pain. But I can't imagine what comes next.
Just as I can't imagine how many worlds there were before mine.

Jack: When he's¹ talking about celestial cycles, is this connected to the thing we learned last time? That like, Perpetuan cycles sort of move in these blocks, right? I'm trying—I'm trying to—

Austin: Yeah, that's right.

Jack: Figure out how to articulate it. [**Austin:** Mhm.] It's like, what we think of as—I, at least, have been thinking of the Perpetuan cycle as like, there's Perpetua [**Austin:** Yeah.] and then Perpetua is gonna blow up and then there's like a new world. There's like Redolencia, but instead—

Austin: Right, and what you're learning is that there were like ninety Redolencias.

Jack: Yes. And we are—

Austin: And there were ninety Ichorias.

Jack: Yeah.

Janine: It's like the firepit more than the fire, right? Where it's like—

Jack: Yeah!

Austin: That's right.

Janine: You make a thing for your fire when you're camping for a week and then you, you know, you're always burning new stuff on top of the ashes of the old stuff and then eventually you change campsites and make a new fire.

¹ Gnova's pronouns were previously stated to be they/them. Future misgenderings will be marked with [sic].

Austin: And make a new fire, yeah. And what they're telling you is, before them there were some unknown amount of these, of firepits, right? And when—I mean, they've signaled a few things here, but one of the things they've signaled is that at the end of your time in the Ennead you can kind of like make something permanent, or that's what they did. You get a wish. And their wish was to create this place.

Jack: We heard about this earlier.

Austin: Yeah, and their wish was to create this place and a side effect of creating this place is that there are remnants of the worlds before your Perpetua that are able to pop into—

Jack: Yeah, this is where—

Austin: The world as you know it.

Jack: This is Celestial Echoes.

Austin: It's Celestial Echoes, exactly, have been enabled by [**Jack:** Yeah.] the existence of Eschatonica and the existence of the Dragon Path. It's not clear if the Dragon Path predates Eschatonica or not, but certainly Eschatonica is the sort of lever by which or maybe the valve by which parts of these old ruins filter through to your Perpetua.

Jack: I think Elena recuses herself from the conversation. She is red and angry, there are sort of like, you know, angry tears in the corner of her eye and she goes and sits down in one of the chairs in the thing.

Keith: I think that Antistrophe isn't so concerned about the cycle stuff. That's not his mission, [**Austin:** Mhm.] we've been investigating the Sourcerot.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: I come from a place that's understood about the cycle and the end of the cycle for a long time.

Austin: Well, I mean the place you come from spent a hundred years trying to solve the cycle and then gave up in a way that—

Keith: Yeah, but that's—to Antistrophe, that's my whole life.

Austin: Right right right, I'm just saying the Western Continent has known about the cycle for hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of years. You know, where Brontë is from has known about the cycle forever ever.

Keith: Right, fair. Yeah.

Austin: And so just wanna put that in—you would have known someone who spent their whole career trying to solve the cycle and didn't do it.

Keith: Right.

Austin: And part of your—we haven't talked a lot about what your life was like, but part of what you were doing was not focusing on only that, right? And focusing on **[Keith: Right.]** doing other types of cool magic shit, as far as we've talked about. We haven't dug too, too deep into Antistrophe, the magic scholar.

Keith: Right, yeah.

Austin: So maybe correct me if I'm wrong about that. What was your day to day like before losing it?

Keith: Well because of the way that the Hundred Burroughs, or at least parts of it, were changing because of the understanding around the cycle, things have gotten worse there. And so **[Austin: Right.]** Antistrophe was a—who would have been maybe a more traditional scholar in the academy at another time, was instead—is instead a—we talked about how he's what's called a tenant **[Austin: Mhm.]** which is like you sort of get—you're sort of a contract substitute basically.

Austin: [laughs] Right. A tenant mage, yeah.

Keith: And so as someone without, like I don't have my own class or I have a bunch of classes that I teach. So Antistrophe is someone who ends up being kind of like an unsatisfied jack of all trades in magic.

Austin: Right, mhm.

Keith: And so like without being—someone who is denied a specialization.

Austin: Mhm.

Keith: Because of the way that the academy changed over time.

Austin: Yeah, that's interesting. Cool. I think Gnova actually seems to take some pity on you, Elena, and there's a moment where you can tell they are going to like—or the camera can tell they are going to go like prod you on like, "well why do you feel bad about this?" But then their eyes, I think probably some subset of their eyes go from grinning to sad looking. Their mask eyes, their mask painted eyes. And, you know, spin away from you to face the rest of the group.

Jack: To look into the eyes of Veile, who is also— [laughs]

Austin: Yeah, seeing now Veile's angry face.

Ali: Yeah, yeah I'm having difficulty [laughs] squaring where Veile is. With this right now. There's a part earlier in the conversation where they were talking about like [sighs] this is what I did when my time was over and yadda yadda and Veile sort of being like, well the Ennead's power is absolute, so like I'll just solve this by speaking to the Ennead. [laughs]

Austin: [chuckles] I see.

Ali: And now, hearing them be like, "Oh, I was a member of the Ennead." [laughs]

Austin: Mhm.

Ali: I don't—I think she's split between like so bewildered that she thinks that this is some sort spell joke dungeon place?

Austin: Sure.

Ali: They're being like, very sacrilegious. But also knowing that—the worst part of the position that she's in is the lack of guidance. So I don't—[laughs] I don't think that like—she is going to sit quietly and listen to other people ask questions and like gather as much information as she can? **[Austin:** Mhm.] But I don't think that she can like contextualize the questions that she wants to ask. And don't know that if she did she would ask them in front of everybody else.

Austin: Yeah, yeah. That makes sense.

On the Ennead [0:45:05]

(as **Gnova**): In any case, if you'd like to continue I can open the doors and you may walk on.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): What would happen if we stayed here?

Austin (as **Gnova**): Oh! Well, I would enjoy the company for a while and I suspect you would, if the past has any indication, find yourselves bored here eventually. Or guilty. [warmly] You wouldn't be the first fated adventurers who came to spend their time with old Gnova and, in the end, felt they hadn't done enough to stop the inevitable. And there are no words I can say to ease such guilt.

Ali (as **Veile**): Others have come?

Austin (as **Gnova**): Of course.

Ali (as **Veile**): In similar circumstances as ours?

Austin (as **Gnova**): Yes. Oh, it's so funny you say—you say this.

Ali (as **Veile**): [laughs weakly] I don't find it very funny, sir.

Art (as **Nicky**): Yeah, funny how?

Ali: [laughs]

Sylvi: [laughs]

Austin (as **Gnova**): Some of them were just like you. Full of pep and vigor and the surprise at how big the world is. And yes, some were of course canny and cunning and craven, but most of them were like you in more ways than you know. There are members of the Ennead who first visited me in previous cycles.

Jack: Have we heard something about civilians getting, like, added to the Ennead? It's like ringing this weird bell for me.

Keith: We have, yeah. Is it—was it Castine?

Austin: Castine, absolutely. Castine, who is [**Janine**: Yeah.] the—the one that I think you've had the most direct contact with, [**Keith**: Mhm.] Living Metal up in Cenn, described a life that he had lived during his own time. I don't think he gave—went into deep detail, but you know, I'll—[laughs] I'll give you a little bit now just for the sake of fun cause I don't think—I don't remember exactly what came up and I don't remember if—

Janine: I wanna say there was an impression that he had lived in a world where he knew of the Ennead preceding him? [**Austin**: Mhm.] And talked about it in the way of like, you know, like a mortal person talking about the gods of their time, you know, but—

Austin: Yeah, yeah totally.

Janine: This time being a god themselves.

Austin: Yeah. And this is the detail that I don't know if I specifically gave up before, but I think is really fun is that Castine was um, was just like a robotic servant. Was like a Star Wars droid effectively.

Jack: Oh we did know this! I think.

Austin: Okay, okay. And that—that he won a contest. I don't know if I told you what type of contest it was.

Jack: Rock paper scissors in a mall. [laughs]

Austin: Rock paper scissors in a mall. No, it wasn't, it wasn't.

Keith: [chuckles]

Austin: I'll just say this cause I don't know that it will ever come up again, but he won an art contest to become a god. To ascend to godhood.

Jack: [laughing] Oh I hate this so much.

Austin: An art contest at the end of time.

Keith: Huh.

Austin: And was the one who collected—

Keith: Hosted by?

Austin: We don't know the details. That's as much as I will give you as like a thing I would have given you as Castine that I can't remember if I gave you specifically but are in my notes.

Keith: I—wha—so what was the way that we were looking at the fire on the path?

Austin: There was a telescope.

Keith: Telescope?

Austin: Big telescope pointed out to the—to space, to the Dragon Path.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): You really don't know anything about that?

Austin (as **Gnova**): It's new!

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Eight hundred and nine cycles? It's new?

Austin (as **Gnova**): Brand new!

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Isn't that crazy?

Austin (as **Gnova**): Yes!!

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): How often is there a new thing?

Austin (as **Gnova**): Well all the time.

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

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

Austin (as **Gnova**): The cycles repeat, but even inside of a celestial configuration there's great difference.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Could you rank it on one to ten for how weird it is?

Austin (as **Gnova**): Oh I've never seen anything like it before, it's a ten.

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

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

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Can we check it out or something?

Austin (as **Gnova**): You can look at it from here.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): From here??

Austin (as **Gnova**): Yes.

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

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Can't get closer?

Austin (as **Gnova**): I can't leave this place.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Ah. Part of the deal?

Austin (as **Gnova**): [softly] Part of the deal. Many of the Ennead will choose to build themselves a little home as their final act. Most of them create a poor duplicate of the world they remember as home. A little moon to live on, forever. I made this place.

Janine (as **Brontë**): You're the one who made the rat cage?

Austin: Oh I don't remember—

Janine: [laughing] The rat room.

Austin: [laughs]

(as **Gnova**): [amused] I'm—I did not like any of the Enneads of Genesika. I think that place was a nightmare, frankly! But entertaining to watch from a distance.

Janine (as **Brontë**): Hm...

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Hm. Is there any way we could ever come back here?

Austin (as **Gnova**): Sure! Now that you've been here once, I'm sure you could find your way again. Hard to miss once you know to look for it. You'd have to get very comfortable traveling the path, ignoring the beckonings and that. But I'll be right here! Until the very end. Sooner or later, or sooner.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Or later!

Austin (as **Gnova**): [hums quietly]

Janine (as **Brontë**): I do have a question.

Austin (as **Gnova**): Yes, prince?

Janine (as **Brontë**): Is there—[laughs quietly] if someone wants to ensure they're never in the position to have to make this choice that you've made, what would be the best way—

Janine: [laughs]

Sylvi: [laughs]

Janine (as **Brontë**): To avoid it?

Austin (as **Gnova**): Oh, I would have assumed a scion like you would have been eager to ascend the throne! Is that not a wish of yours?

Janine (as **Brontë**): No. Exceptionally not, no.

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

Janine (as **Brontë**): That is the last thing in the world.

Austin (as **Gnova**): I see, I had you all wrong.

Sylvi (as **Caoimhe**): Huh.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): He's not really into the responsibility stuff.

Austin (as **Gnova**): It will become clear in the final moments that someone will make this choice, this sacrifice. Simply do not make it. Do not be the one.

Janine (as **Brontë**): Got it.

Austin (as **Gnova**): And please, move with caution. I dare not interfere with your fate further than this, but not all who move in my circles, if you will, are so open with their own limitations. I cannot save the world and I don't believe I can help you do it either.

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

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): What about—could all nine do it? Like all together?

Austin (as **Gnova**): Oh, if you could get them to [laughs] agree on anything, maybe. But I have my doubts.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Doubts that they could do it or doubts that they would agree to do it?

Austin (as **Gnova**): The latter, certainly not. The former, I think eh, I have never seen it tried. It would be a new thing.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Huh. Something new.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): A second new thing.

Austin (as **Gnova**): But I suspect it would all burn away.

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

Dre: I think as we're talking about the Ennead all doing things, Jonathan is looking meaningfully at Veile.

Ali (as **Veile**): Is it not within Lucenna's power?

Austin (as **Gnova**): Well... it is interesting. I've told you that I built this place with my final act, yes? There is also—there is also a moment when you rise. When you join the Ennead for the first time that you put into place something for your reign, into the configuration. The current alignment of things. Like adding another meal to the buffet, another—another meat. What people choose reflects them greatly. Perhaps Lucenna used this opportunity to create a failsafe.

Ali (as **Veile**): And do you know of the White Lectern? Or at least the legend thereof?

Austin (as **Gnova**): Mm, yes. It is that place that she built. Perhaps—

Ali: [laughs]

(as Veile, jokingly): Can you tell me where it is?

Ali: No. [laughs]

Austin (as **Gnova**): Of course.

Ali: [laughing]

(as **Veile**): Can you draw me a map?

Austin (as **Gnova**): Of course!

Austin: And like spins the wheel, and like spins the huge, circular gear wheel thing and the whole of the telescope spins and spins and spins and points eventually in a different direction like back towards the sort of front of the place and asks you to come look.

Ali: Cautiously.

Dre: Yeah!

Austin: You look in and you can see from a far distance, as if looking through satellite imagery, a big island. A big empty island. Or not empty, but you know, there's not like a big city on it. And it is of course the huge, unnamed island in the south.

Ali: Oh so like—I mean, I—[laughs] I don't know how much geology somebody knows as like a— [laughs]

Austin: You—maybe the view is wide enough out that you can recognize the—in the southwest of it, just off the coast you can see pieces—

Ali: Right, I can recognize what—I've seen a map of—

Austin: Yes.

Ali: Okay, and I can recognize the shape. The way that I like, I know the shape of America, you know.

Austin: Yes. And I don't know that you do know the shape of this place like that, but you do eventually come to recognize that like, oh that's the—like to the west of it across the big sea that's the southern—that's like the southern half of Tidaline, the western continent. So you're able to put together, oh that must be an island to the east. Maybe you have even seen the Capnae mountains in the northwest, you know.

Ali: I—yeah, cause I went—we were all just kind of in the muck of the eastern coast of the west.

Austin: Yeah, you are all here, exactly.

Ali: Yeah yeah yeah, okay okay.

Austin: Which, again, that ocean is too wide to—you can't see that island from there, but you know—you have maps of Tidaline such [**Ali:** Right.] well-mapped that you would be like oh, well that's—

Ali: I've been seeing a ton of maps that like—fuck, I'm on hand and not arrow.

Austin: Exactly.

Ali: I would have seen maps that look like this—

Austin: Yes, a hundred percent, yeah.

Ali: So if I saw that I would—okay.

Austin: Yeah. Ali is clicking on parts of the eastern [**Ali:** laughs] kind of seaboard of the western continent. You know.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah. And it's south of the Valte islands, right? So, yeah.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): We're gonna need a bigger Snail...

Austin: [laughs]

Sylvi: [snorts]

Keith: [laughs]

Art: [chuckles]

Janine: What does—hang on, wait, the Snail isn't here right? The Little Snail?

Ali: No no no no.

Austin: The Snail is not here. The Snail is—

Dre: It's parked back at—

Austin: It's parked back at home, yes.

Ali: It's at Jonathan's house, basically. [laughs]

Austin: Jonathan's house, yeah yeah yeah.

Janine: Okay, so the thing—the thing that was just said makes no sense to me, okay.
[laughs]

Ali: [laughs]

Austin: That's right, correct. Yeah, uh huh.

Sylvi: Yeah, we're—all three of the east party are just like, the fuck?

Janine: Like, what? [laughs] Bigger snail?

Keith: Yeah, you've also—none of us have seen Jaws either.

Ali: [laughs]

Austin: [laughs]

Ali: I mean—

Keith: So we don't get the reference and we also don't know what the snail is.

Ali: Y'all don't know what the White Lectern is either. I'm just [laughs] yapping to this guy.

Dre: Yeah, that might be the more important thing. [laughs]

Ali: [laughs]

Keith: Just for my—

Janine: Yeah, but you know, sometimes a priestess says some stuff and like yeah.

Ali: [laughs]

Keith: Yeah. Remind me—

Art: No, I think you should see Jaws. I think that's number one.

Keith: [laughs] Remind me that—okay, um the—ah fuck. Okay, so Ali was talking about Lucenna and Veile is talking about Lucenna all the time and remind me, Lucenna has shown up several times? To Veile? And like, seems scary and mean. Right?

Austin: Mm, you might be thinking of—

Ali: That's Caliginia.

Austin: Caliginia.

Keith: Caliginia, yeah right okay.

Austin: Yeah, yeah.

Ali: Caliginia, Caliginia.

Austin: Caliginia, Fated Darkness.

Keith: Okay, gotcha.

Austin: Is the darkness goddess.

Keith: Got it, yes.

Austin: Lucenna, Bringer of Light, is the one who's—

Keith: They're opposites.

Austin: They're opposites, yeah. They're the classic opposites. And you—**[Keith:** Yeah.] and you, Keith, you might remember Cali—or Lucenna, because Gleaming Fortress Lumai is the kind of light magic elven city and that was where **[Keith:** Mhm.] you were going. Which is tied to Lucenna because there's a giant white sun above it that is Lucenna's—Lucenna's moon is this kind of beautiful white sun that, **[Keith:** Yeah.] you know, just like Castine's was like the iron orb. And that was where you were chasing Thereus Aegir to try and find Kley Kaina, Caoimhe's friend.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Keith: Right, yeah.

Austin: Which is where you were going through the painting. So there is a connection.

Keith: I just got the names mixed up and I was like, **[Austin:** Yeah.] god, Veile really talks very positively about this scary woman.

Austin: [chuckles]

Ali: [laughs]

Keith: [laughs]

Ali: The Ennead's power is absolute!

Austin: Mhm.

Ali: You can be rude—[laughs] Veile, obsessed with the rudeness, was like well if you're a god it's fine.

Austin: Yeah, uh huh.

Ali: [laughs]

Sylvi: The Ennead's power is absolute, except for in like 900 years when they retire.

Austin: [quietly chuckles]

Ali: Mmm. I'm trying to help them. I believe that I can help them [laughing] stop it for some reason. **[Dre: Mm.]** Some guy told me.

Keith: Some guy told you. Some guy that you sort of know told you and then died.

Ali: [laughs]

Dre: He's not dead!

Keith: And then sort of died.

Austin: He's not dead.

Dre: He's sleeping.

Keith: He's just mostly dead.

Austin: He's sleeping. Yeah, Caliginia has him is actually— [laughs]

Dre: Mhm.

Austin: He's in like a stasis mode. You know? He's in sleep mode. [laughs]

Ali: Can I ask about that actually? Can I be like— [laughs]

Dre: Oh!

Ali (as **Veile**): Oh...if only Vinnor were here, I think he would understand this better than I could. If—

Austin: Uh huh!

Ali: [laughs]

(as **Veile**): If you have such an understanding of the world, do you know—mm. Where do the Ennead rest? If not with—

Austin (as **Gnova**): Generally, they rest in the element that they call their own and on their moon.

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

Austin (as **Gnova**): Vinnor was your mentor, yes?

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

Austin (as **Gnova**): Yes. He is quite alive, albeit in a state of...stasis. Being held by Caliginia. Is it true you'd like him back?

Ali (as **Veile**): Well yes of course!

Austin (as **Gnova**): Mm. Perhaps you could bargain? Certainly Caliginia must want something.

Ali (as **Veile**): Mm. Well yes, but it's matters of divinity. Well I suppose I—

Austin (as **Gnova**): Are you not a priestess?

Ali: [laughs]

Austin (as **Gnova**): Aren't those your matters?

Ali (as **Veile**): I don't believe that she works against me, I just...maybe don't understand the method of the guidance.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): So she kidnapped your boss?

Ali: [laughs]

Austin (as **Gnova**): You're more right than you know, young Veile. Funny name.

Ali: [laughing] Fuck you!

Sylvi (as **Caoimhe**): Alright, there's no need for that.

Ali: Have you not heard of a podcast called Friends at the Table? It's actually a really good name, thank you.

Austin: [laughs]

Follow-up Questions [1:00:37]

Dre: [chuckles]

(as **Jonathan**): Gnova, could I bother you for a small trifle?

Austin (as **Gnova**): Like the food?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Oh! No, um—

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): I'll take one.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Like a favor. I got this book and nobody seems to know what the heck it is.

Austin: What's the—what's the book?

Dre: This is the—in my inventory [**Austin:** Mhm.] I have it written as “magical???”
Question question question mark [**Austin:** Yep.] book in Dragon Script.

Austin: Yeah!

Dre: We got this all the way back at the Dragon Tower. Importantly, it has a drawing of the end of the world in it.

Austin: It does, yeah.

Sylvi: That's a big thing, huh!

Austin: Well, [laughs] it's actually pretty—it's actually—yeah. I think that they come over and they take a look at it and they go,

(as **Gnova**): Oh! Yes, this is—this is in the Dragon Script. This is the liturgy of the Dragon Watchers. They are quite interesting.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Who are the Dragon Watchers?

Austin: Well you know that. You know that already.

Dre: Oh okay, okay.

Austin: They're the people who have that tower, that's what—

Dre: Mmm!

Austin: You just called for one to come show up and help you, you may remember.

Dre: Okay, yeah yeah yeah. Yeah yeah yeah.

Austin: Yeah.

(as **Gnova**): It's their—it's their book of prayers, it's their book of history, theology. I'm not saying it's worthless to you—you should learn the Dragon Script, someone like you! I can tell that you love to puzzle and to learn. I can give you some guidance? Give me a moment.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): That would be wonderful.

Austin: And like steps over to a shelf and produces a sort of like, text on learning the Dragon Script and hands it to you. You could do a project to learn Dragon Script.

Dre: Nice.

Jack: Okay, are we done here?

Keith: If we're trying to stop the magic thing, the Sourcerot, the new thing.

Austin: Mhm.

Keith: Should I go out and take a look at that stuff?

Austin: What stuff?

Keith: The fire stuff. I just—

Austin: It's like really far away. Maybe I'm not communicating—

Keith: It's really far, okay.

Austin: You have to look through a telescope to see it. [cross] To see it as like a spark in the sky.

Keith: [cross] Okay, it's a—I knew we were looking through a telescope, but I wasn't sure if it was hard to—

Austin: I'm not saying you—again, you could go try to affect it there. [**Keith:** Yeah.] It would just require you to learn how to like, fly through the Dragon Path. Which is a potential goal!

Keith: Mhm.

Dre: Mm!

Austin: Y'know. But it's not, there's no door you can open here to like, get there.

Keith: It's not out—it's not just out the door and then like a mile down the road.

Austin: That's correct. You're looking through the telescope.

Keith: Yeah, that's—

Jack: It's not like, here.

Austin: The, like, astronomical telescope. You know? Yeah. You have to go through space ma—you have to go through the ether magic space, outer space, to get there. Yeah. Which is not impossible, you know. If you had the right type of vehicle that could move through here or if you learned how to navigate this place safely, you could trek across the world like that for sure.

Jack: In theory could Gnova—couldn't Gnova give us a rainbow—[laughs] rainbow bridge?

Dre: A rainbow road??

Austin: Rainbow—

Jack: A rainbow road?

Sylvi: [singing Rainbow Road theme]

Austin: Gnova could bring people here. That is what they built.

Jack: Oh, to the Eschatonica. Okay.

Austin: That is right. They did not build—

Jack: Yeah, I didn't know if their—

Austin: They can't leave and they can only bring stuff here.

Jack: Their rainbow slide [**Austin:** Yeah.] was—it's a one directional slide.

Austin: Yeah, I think they could build a slide, but you'd have to try to climb it and it's probably like real high DC to climb the rainbow slide reverse, you know? You could give it a shot.

Jack: Yeah. Running on Snake Way except if Snake Way was like vertical and slippery.
[laughs]

Austin: That's right. Yeah, yeah.

Dre: Mm.

Austin: It's like playing Chutes and Ladders except you're trying to go up the chutes, you know? Sorry, Snakes and Ladders. Is that what it's called in the UK?

Jack: It is called Snakes and Ladders in the UK.

Keith: I think those are two different games.

Jack: Oh—ohh.

Janine: What? No.

Sylvi: Noo.

Art: No.

Keith: Those are two different games.

Austin: No.

Janine: No.

Sylvi: Absolutely not.

Keith: We have both.

Austin: Okay, but it's the same game.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Keith: It's the same game. The US—I know the US has both. So there is—they have to be—

Austin: Oh, there is—I have not seen Snakes and Ladders in the US, but sure yes. But it is the same game.

Janine: Oh, I grew up with Snakes and Ladders. I mean, I'm not in the US.

Austin: Interesting.

Jack: It's a terrible game.

Janine: I had like a 3D one with marbles, it was really good.

Sylvi: Woww!

Austin: Wow, fun.

Janine: Yeah.

Jack: All respect to 2nd century ancient India, [laughs] but it's a bad game.

Austin: Yeah, it's not great.

Jack: They should've made a better one.

Art: As we always say on this show.

Austin: [chuckles]

Jack: Yeah. At the top of this—are these two doors at the top of this tower?

Austin: They're at the bottom. They're down, all the way down at the bottom again.

Jack: Okay.

Dre: Mm.

Jack: Oh my god...

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Well before we go, you got any tips on how to save a dying dragon that's being murdered by a horrible person?

Austin (as **Gnova**): Oh, I'm—

Sylvi (as **Caoimhe**): That's very specific...

Jack: [laughs]

Austin (as **Gnova**): It's already—

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Yeah, that's what we were up to before we—

Sylvi (as **Caoimhe**): I thought you guys were cow journalists.

Art (as **Nicky**): Yeah, that's what we were doing before we came down here.

Austin (as **Gnova**): It was dead by the time you were here, my friends.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Yeah... [sighs] I was worried about that.

Austin (as **Gnova**): I'm sorry. Things like this I've seen before. These...attempts to rot away bits of the world. I've just never seen it applied to something as big as the Dragon Path or magic itself. The good news is that in the grand scheme there will be more oxes in the next cycle.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Good for them.

Jack (as **Elena**): Why would someone try and rot the world?

Sylvi (as **Caoimhe**): I don't know if it's—

Austin (as **Gnova**): Oh, wonderful question. How low have you been? In your heart?

Sylvi (as **Caoimhe**): Pretty fucking low.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): [snorts]

Sylvi: Picturing Kley in a prison cell right now, like [**Austin**: Yeah.] pretty low.

Austin (as **Gnova**): Low enough to hurt someone over it?

Sylvi (as **Caoimhe**): Intentionally or unintentionally? I mean I think the answer's yes, but.

Austin (as **Gnova**): Intentionally. Low enough to hurt an innocent?

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

Austin (as **Gnova**): Perhaps not low enough then.

Sylvi (as **Caoimhe**): You might have me there.

Austin (as **Gnova**): Some people are driven so deep into desperation that they just start making the loudest noises they can.

Sylvi (as **Caoimhe**): Is that what the dragons are doing?

Sylvi: I'm thinking about the mole here.

Austin: Mhm.

Janine (as **Brontë**): Well if I, now putting myself in the shoes of someone who had something to gain at the end of a Cycle, like a wish, then there would be benefit to making stuff fall apart.

Sylvi (as **Caoimhe**): [quietly] Oh my god—

Janine (as **Brontë**): Or if someone wanted to be in that position, wanted to ascend to that position and they were aware of the same things that we're aware of, then I suppose if you were—

Sylvi (as **Caoimhe**): [angrily] Aegir!

Janine (as **Brontë**): Depressed and self-interested you could accelerate that process. Right?

Sylvi: Caoimhe's freaking out right now cause she thinks she just figured out what the head of the Hexcloaks is up to.

Austin: [quiet laugh]

Janine (as **Brontë**): I don't know, just an idea.

Keith: Are we—I mean, are we clear on how someone gets to be in the Ennead from—?

Janine: The world ends and you win a contest or something. [laughs] No?

Keith: What—well what contest is Aegir gonna win?

Janine: Asshole contest?

Sylvi: I don't think it's—I mean he'd [**Austin**: laughs] win with flying colors.

Art: Aw, I'm gonna be real upset if the world ends and they have an asshole contest right away.

[All laugh]

Keith: Come one, come all.

Austin (as **Gnova**): It's not always a contest.

Austin: Says Gnova.

(as **Gnova**): Sometimes it's a trial, or a crucible, or a dungeon. Sometimes—

Janine (as **Brontë**): Those are different words for contest.

Austin (as **Gnova**): Sure, there's always a—there's always a challenge. Sometimes you have to fight a great evil and then you're the only surviving

member of your party. Sometimes you've been alone the whole time and it's only in the end that you find friendship and allies and then you ascend through that. Sometimes you go on a great journey, you see the mountain and you traverse it. And you climb it as the sea rises at your feet. There are many different ways to ascend, but there is only ever one.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Seems complicated.

Sylvi (as **Caoimhe**): I hate this.

Austin (as **Gnova**): [sighs heavily] It is, it is. It gets less complicated around cycle 100.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): What did you do?

Austin (as **Gnova**): To ascend? Or to...?

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

Austin (as **Gnova**): I was part of a—I was part of a small group who fought against tyranny. I wasn't—[laughs] I wasn't anything special, I was a wizard and a student of knowledge and I happened to be the one who lived. I haven't—I haven't thought about them in a little time.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): It drive you fuckin' nuts being in here all that time?

Austin (as **Gnova**): I'm quite sane. Perhaps the sanest.

Art (as **Nicky**): No one says that.

Keith: [laughs] Yeah.

Art: That's—that's a s—that's a bad sign if you're saying that.

Keith: [laughing] If you go to sane school, they tell you not to say that.

Austin (as **Gnova**): I simply have perspective that very few others do. In fact I have a unique perspective.

Jack: Yep, same.

Sylvi: [laughs]

Art (as **Nicky**): [skeptical] Uh huh.

Austin (as **Gnova**): If you had my perspective you would act just like me. Maybe you'd be less funny, but otherwise...

Sylvi: You'd be wondering why everyone's so serious.

Austin: [laughs] That's right.

Dre: [laughs]

Austin: Do you wanna know how I got this mask?

Sylvi: Yeah, exactly.

Jack: [laughs] These—and these seven extra eyes.

Austin: That's right, yeah!

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Yeah, how'd you get those seven extra eyes?

Austin (as **Gnova**): Oh I—I made this mask when I ascended. One of my companions had been a painter and I admit, I had always been jealous of her talent. And so in reinventing myself, between one of my earliest cycles—between two of my earliest cycles, I adopted the skill. No one called me by my name anymore. God of Distant Color and Light.

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

Austin (as **Gnova**): Gnova does fine.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Mm. Explains the telescope.

Austin (as **Gnova**): Quite enamored by things in the distance. It's why I'm so taken when someone like you visits. In any case, it seems you'll be going? I can't convince any of you to stay for a year or two?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Ah—

Sylvi (as **Caoimhe**): No I—we have places to be. Well, speaking for us at least. I don't know about the—our new friends here.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): There's a part of me that wishes I could stay, but I think I'm unfortunately one of those who'd feel pretty crummy about it a few months in.

Austin (as **Gnova**): I don't doubt it for a second. Well—

Dre (as **Jonathan**): But we'll come back to visit.

Austin (as **Gnova**): I'll be right here!

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Thanks for saving our lives and everything, I suppose.

Austin (as **Gnova**): Oh well, you have further to go in Eschatonica still. Thank me when you're on the other end.

Jack (as **Elena**): Can you teleport us to the end?

Austin (as **Gnova**): No...you'll find a way to return to where you came at the end of the path.

Ali (as **Veile**): Is it that you are able to but you won't?

Austin (as **Gnova**): Mm...the limits of my powers are confounding sometimes. I can only bring people in.

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

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Getting out will be fine. Shouldn't be too hard.

Ali: [laughs] That doesn't mean that you can't, a—out of character. That doesn't mean you can't transport us to like, the exit.

Austin: Yes, it does. It literally does.

Ali: Okay.

Austin: They can only bring people towards them.

Ali: Ahh, I see, I see.

Austin: Literally towards them.

Ali: I see, I see, I see.

Keith: So it's not a teleportation ability within the limits of the castle, [**Austin**: Correct.] it is just, you know, a nucleus.

Austin: That's right. Now, could they have done it to bring you right to the observatory? Yes. And that they chose not to do, except they did it for Waylon.

Ali: Mhm.

Dre: Mhm.

Sylvi: That's fine.

Dre: Yeah, that's fine.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: I mean, I—I would appreciate if they—[laughs] they could help Waylon out, but such...

Austin: Mhm.

Sylvi: Yeah, maybe Waylon can stay.

Jack: No, he's—no.

Dre: Noo.

Jack: He's culturally very important. [laughs]

Sylvi: Oh yeah, the cows or whatever.

Dre: No, he's got a picture to take.

Jack: No, he's actually very unrelated to the cows. [laughs]

Keith: You guys—you mistreated an old important turtle?

Austin: [laughs]

Dre: We did.

Jack: We didn't mistreat—we didn't—

Keith: [laughs]

Sylvi: He's kind of a jerk though.

Keith: He's been being mistreated!

Art: Mistreat is—mistreat is comically overselling it.

Down the Stairs [1:12:38]

Jack: I'm gonna set off down the stairs.

Dre: Yeah, sounds good.

Jack: Down past—

Austin: I'm not making anyone roll to walk down these stairs even though, again, it is hot and scary down here.

Sylvi: Can I in character ask, like you guys said you had something important to do and never really elaborated on that. Or am I misremembering the conversation we just had?

Austin: Never elaborated.

Ali: Yeah.

Keith: They said, "we're important," is what they said.

Ali: [laughs]

Austin: Veile—

Janine: They're trying to find some sort of white thing.

Austin: Yeah. [laughs]

Janine: Like a white pedestal or something, right?

Ali: [laughs]

Sylvi: Yeah, I think I'm gonna try and ask about it. Maybe I follow after Elena?
Or—cause Veile doesn't seem like she's—she seems grumpy right now. [laughs]

Ali: [laughs] More than Elena??

Sylvi: I mean I g—yeah, that's a good point. I don't know, I like—I like—

Ali: There's like—

Sylvi: I like Elena's hutzpah. I like her attitude.

Ali: Yeah. I bet there's something you recognize in like, righteous fury. In terms of being like, I can probably get this person to open up. [laughs]

Sylvi: There's a real like, "ah, you remind me of me a while ago" going on.

Dre: [laughs]

Sylvi: Yeah, so I think I catch up to Elena and it's like,

(as **Caoimhe**): Hey, ah listen, if this is like top secret whatever, don't—I don't wanna pry too much, but you guys said you had something important going on? And I'm just—I wanna just know—in case there's a reason we were all brought here together—like what it is. If—you know, be up front, we're trying to figure out what's going on with the Sourcerot, this has obviously helped a lot! I'm just, y'know. Do you think—do you think you can just give me, like, a picture of why you guys ended up here? Because every detail I get makes it more confusing. Cause it sounded like you guys were doing a bunch of odd jobs and now all of a sudden there's some important quest you're on.

Jack (as **Elena**): I'm not—I'm not really allowed to talk about it. I've talked about it in the p—I've run my mouth and they tell me off every time. I'm sorry.

Sylvi (as **Caoimhe**): Okay well, they're not h—you're—there's a good chance we're never gonna see each other again and you saying this to some randoms who are a continent away—

Jack (as **Elena**): This is the problem! I keep thinking it to some randoms who are not gonna be important and then—and I'm just looking for more information!

Sylvi (as **Caoimhe**): Mhm.

Jack (as **Elena**): And then they—they snap at me! Nicky snaps at me. Because—

Art: This happened one time! You're acting like I'm some sort of monster.

Jack: [laughs] Are you here?

Art: No, I'm—this is me, yelling at you. [chuckles]

Jack: It stuck with Elena.

Art: Ah.

Sylvi: I get it.

Jack (as **Elena**): It's— [sighs] we're on a divine quest.

Sylvi (as **Caoimhe**): From which god?

Jack (as **Elena**): From Lucenna, I think. Although it's hard to tell, Veile's sort of got some—I don't know. Veile's a strange one.

Sylvi (as **Caoimhe**): Yeah— [sighs]. Listen, I don't know her very well, I don't want to comment on that. Would make a lot of stuff make sense though!

Jack (as **Elena**): Veile was with an adventuring party and she was sent to go to this place called the White Lectern to plead with Lucenna to try and get Lucenna to save the world. And then in the middle of the night one night her party they all just—they attacked each other! And they—and they all died except her!

Sylvi (as **Caoimhe**): [quietly] Oh...

Jack (as **Elena**): And then we ran into her and we've taken up the banner and we're sort of trying to escort her to White Lectern, but we don't know where—well, we didn't know where it was. And we've been running into all this—all this trouble. All this trouble. And the cow thing, that was—that was separate.

Sylvi (as **Caoimhe**): Yeah—

Jack (as **Elena**): The cow thing was—

Sylvi (as **Caoimhe**): I've learned that now.

Jack (as **Elena**): We all have these gems that talk to us and Nicky had a gem but he sold it and we didn't have any money so we were trying to—and we were in

Jonathan's town and Jonathan's whole family is like, they all hate each other or something?

Sylvi (as **Caoimhe**): [sighs] Listen, I'm—[laughs wryly] I'm just coming off dealing with some hometown stuff myself, I get it.

Jack (as **Elena**): And we were being pursued by a sniper for a really long time. This sort of like mafia sniper who seems to be working with our enemies like on a divine level?

Sylvi (as **Caoimhe**): Okay... I—okay, well I think I've kind of figured out the thing we have in common is that we keep getting mixed up with gods.

Jack (as **Elena**): Did you say—

Sylvi (as **Caoimhe**): We got here after following a—sort of a direction laid out by Castine.

Jack (as **Elena**): [heavy sigh] You said there was a mole?

Sylvi (as **Caoimhe**): Dragon mole, yeah. Nobody believed it except for me. And then it was right.

Sylvi: Smug look on her face.

(as **Caoimhe**): Anyway, besides the point. Just, y'know, for the scoreboard.

Keith: [laughing] It's also a lie.

Ali: [laughs]

Keith: It's not true.

Sylvi: Yeah, I know. I know, but it is in her head! Listen.

Keith: [laughs]

Dre: [laughs]

Jack (as **Elena**): Don't tell them I told you all of that, right?

Sylvi (as **Caoimhe**): No, of course not.

Jack (as **Elena**): If Nicky says what do you know about our—our whole deal?

Sylvi (as **Caoimhe**): You're cow journalists.

Jack (as **Elena**): Yeah, although they'll take issue with that as well.

Sylvi (as **Caoimhe**): I know, but it's funny.

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

Sylvi (as **Caoimhe**): Listen, the off chance we do run into each other again, maybe we can compare notes on the various gods we run into? Because it seems like doing some mediation between them might end up being our best chance for saving Perpetua.

Jack (as **Elena**): Yeah. [sighs] Yeah, that might be a good idea.

Sylvi (as **Caoimhe**): And like—

Jack (as **Elena**): What is—silly question. Maybe this is more for Nicky.

Sylvi (as **Caoimhe**): [snorts]

Jack (as **Elena**): What is soda?

Sylvi (as **Caoimhe**): You never—? We gotta get you out east. We went to—there—

Ali: Oh my god, please. [laughs]

Sylvi (as **Caoimhe**): Down by the—we got ice cream with great flavors—

Jack (as **Elena**): Oh we have ice cream too.

Sylvi (as **Caoimhe**): We can get you an ice cream float. It's—

Jack (as **Elena**): Wha—a what? [laughs]

Sylvi (as **Caoimhe**): It's sort of like a bubbly drink? That's flavored and then you put the ice cream on top. It's quite nice.

Jack (as **Elena**): I don't see—I don't get the vision yet, but I'm gonna—

Sylvi (as **Caoimhe**): Just trust me on it.

Jack (as **Elena**): I'm gonna turn it over.

Austin: Do you have—wait. Do you not have bubbly drinks in the restaurant you were a hostess in?

Jack: I don't think so.

Austin: Wow.

Jack: Maybe we have—maybe we have like fermented wines and stuff?

Janine: There's like naturally carbonated springwater and stuff sometimes right?

Ali: They didn't figure out adding syrup to it.

Jack: I think—

Ali: It's just seltzer.

Austin: I see. It's just seltzer.

Jack: Yeah, it's— [laughs]

Ali: [laughs] They're stuck on seltzer and wine spritzers.

Jack: Yes, the transition from seltzer to soda, that's a big one.

Austin: You're about to bring—you're about to, you know, bring a new whole flavor to the western continent.

Jack: Well cause it would've happened historically in our world at one point right? Carbonation—people would've had fizzy drinks for a long time and then they would've gone: well hold on.

Austin: Could put something in this.

Jack: What if we put loads of sugar and syrup? [laughs]

Austin: Phew, wow.

Jack: It's gonna be good stuff. When was soda invented?

Austin: I'm looking into it.

Keith: The 1800s?

Sylvi: I don't—yeah. Could've been a ginger beer thing?

Austin: In the medieval Middle East a variety of fruit flavored drinks were widely drunk such as sharbat and were often sweetened with ingredients such as sugar, syrup, and honey, [Dre: Hm!] but this doesn't really get into the—the carbonation. Yeah, without carbonation. Here, carbonated drinks. Late 18th century important progress was made using—in replicating naturally carbonated mineral waters...

Dre: [laughing] Important progress!

Austin: Hey listen!

Jack: [chuckles]

Keith: 1835, first flavored bottled soda produced in the US.

Austin: Wow. 1767, Joseph Priestly, an Englishman Joseph Priestly first discovered a method of infusing water with carbon dioxide to make carbonated water.

Jack: That's where we're at I think, on Tidaline.

Austin: I see, you've got soda water.

Keith: What about this—

Jack: And sometimes we'll put—we'll put grapes in it.

Keith: Johann Jacob Schweppe founds the Schweppes company to sell bottled carbonated water, 18—sorry 1783.

Sylvi: [quietly] Schweppe...

Austin: That's where they are out east. That's the damn ice cream boys.

Sylvi: Yeah, yeah.

Austin: Uncle Schweppes, you know?

Jack: [laughs]

Sylvi: Oh my— [laughs]

Jack: This is also, once again, the long shadow of the Hellmann sisters from America's Playground.

Sylvi: [laughs]

Austin: It really is, it really is.

Keith: [laughs]

Austin: In a way the dessert boys are really just an echo of the Hellmann sisters. If you haven't listened to America's Playground yet, you're listening to this, you gotta go back.

Keith: That's one of the most fun things I've done in my life.

Austin: It's—pew.

Sylvi: It's classic.

Jack: They're trying to make it carbonated as well, right??

Austin: I think they were. [laughs]

Art: Mhm.

Keith: [laughs loudly]

Austin: Weird!

Sylvi: It always comes back to bubbly drinks.

Austin: It always comes back to bubbly drinks.

Jack: [laughs] Bubbly mayonnaise.

Keith: I mean what could be better than biting into a burger [**Jack:** laughs] slathered with fizzy mayo? What could be better than that??

Austin: Bleh! Ugh.

Keith: It tickles your tongue! Beautiful.

Sylvi: Dude, we gotta move—okay. Alright.

Keith: Pickle juice running down the side

Austin: You make it down [laughs] the stairs!!

Sylvi: I had one last thing to say to Elena before—

Austin: Go ahead, do your final—yeah.

Sylvi: It was just, um, Caoimhe just kind of takes a second and is like,

(as **Caoimhe**): And by the way, this might seem a little weird coming from me, but if you guys ever run into other Hexcloaks, don't trust them.

Jack (as **Elena**): Hm, why?

Sylvi: This is also the first time she's hinted to the other group that she is a Hexcloak cause she has not been wearing her cloak this entire time.

Austin: Oh, true.

Sylvi: But the whole conver—she's real wary about what the aims of the Hexcloaks are now. I mean she always has been this entire campaign, but now she's like, oh god is this dude trying to become part of the next Ennead.

Jack: Yeah

(as **Elena**): I mean, they're not terribly well liked where we're from. You tend not to see them unless something very bad is going down.

Jack: That's right, right Austin? Hexcloaks will like, infiltrate the west?

Sylvi: Yeah...

Austin: They have a—[**Jack**: Yeah.] they have a—like a secret base on the western continent. I think that they are probably very effective at not being picked up out west. So whether or not they only get involved when bad things are happening is unclear to you.

Jack: But like, seeing a Hexcloak in uniform out west would be like seeing an American soldier in uniform in a non-American country.

Austin: It'd be like seeing an American—

Jack: Like if I was in Swinden.

Austin: It'd be like seeing an American CIA operative [**Sylvi**: Yeah.] in uniform.

Jack: Yeah, then you'd be like, oh my god. [laughs]

Austin: Yeah, but again importantly, that doesn't mean the CIA isn't working nearby all the time. [laughs]

Jack: Oh, no.

Austin: So yeah.

Sylvi: This is more just to like: they are out west, warning, be careful.

Austin: Yeah yeah yeah.

Art: But like no one knows what a CIA uniform looks like [**Austin:** That's right.] so they'd have to be wearing a t-shirt that says CIA agent, right?

Jack: It looks like Mulder and Scully.

Austin: They're the FBI.

Art: They're FBI, come on.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: They dress the same.

Austin: No, well, hm.

Jack: I think actually CIA agents look like—look like a cool guy but turned slightly wrong. Like off-kilter. Cool in the wrong way.

Austin: Cool evil. Yeah, uh huh.

Sylvi: Yeah. Cool, derogatory.

Austin: Yeah. Cool like cold, [laughs] y'know?

Sylvi: Yeah.

Jack: [laughs] You're a cold guy!

Leaving the Observatory [1:23:33]

Austin: Alright, you've made it down to the base level, the ground level, the ground floor of this place, of this observatory and library. Again, there's like bookshelves around and once you're all off the kind of ad hoc stairwell, it returns to being a collection of objects floating around. And Gnova, you know, rides down on the brush again and says,

(as **Gnova**): Before you go, is there anything else you need? If not, I'm going to sleep.

Keith: Um, I don't know. When you find a guy that has a lot of information, you really wanna like, pump it out of them, but.

Jack: [laughs]

Ali: Woah.

Keith: I don't know if I have any good questions left.

Ali: Um.

Janine (as **Brontë**): Can we get those wings back? Maybe we can have wings?

Art: Nope, that's exactly how you say that.

Austin: [laughs quietly]

Keith: Yeah, you pump someone for information!

Sylvi: Uh huh.

Keith: They have information, you have to pump it out of them!

Sylvi: Not that type of game, man.

Austin: [laughs quietly]

(as **Gnova**): Ah, unfortunately I can't give you the wings. The wings are tied to Alteros.

Janine (as **Brontë**): [sadly] Awe.

Austin (as **Gnova**): I could give you some that don't work!

Janine (as **Brontë**): In what way don't they work? Are they still nice looking and...?

Austin (as **Gnova**): They'd be beautiful. You could even, you know, fluff them a little.

Janine (as **Brontë**): Mm...

Austin (as **Gnova**): But you couldn't fly with them.

Janine (as **Brontë**): They would probably look a little bit silly if I was on the train.

Sylvi and Keith: [laugh]

Austin (as **Gnova**): I suspect—

Jack: Classic wings problem.

Janine (as **Brontë**): That's a shame. Unless they fold up. If they fold up very compact—but they probably don't.

Austin: [laughs]

Janine: Oh, I should—I should ask if there is some sort of, um, hmm. What is a way Brontë would ask this that makes sense? I think it's been a little—well, I think it's been a little while since Brontë has remembered to get a souvenir for his little sister.

Austin: It has been, yeah.

Janine: And I think he would maybe— [sighs] is there something that would—if there's like— [laughs] I mean it's a library, there's not gonna be a wall of baubles. But—

Austin: No there are, cause remember there's like the huge orbit of baubles above you.

Art: [laughs]

Janine: No—yeah there's stuff and like fire and like things, but you know. [laughs] Like, is there a way I could like roll to see if there's a little thingy that catches Brontë's eye [Austin: Yeah!] as this person, as they're like asking—

Austin: Do you need anything.

Janine: Need anything else?

Austin: Yeah, give me a study check. Which is insight, insight.

Janine: Okay.

Austin: And the quality, you know 7, 10, 13, as normal. It's open ended, whatever you roll is like, how good the thing is that you spot.

Janine: Okay...

Austin: It's a 7!

Janine: 7. [laughs]

Austin: [laughs] Uh, hmm.

Jack: Flip flops.

Austin: I have a—I have a [laughs] random object generator in front of me.

Janine: Uh huh.

Austin: I've put 7 into it and I've hit roll.

Janine: Uh huh.

Austin: I'll read you the list and you can pick one, okay?

Janine: Okay.

Austin: Banana. [laughs]

Janine: [laughs]

Keith: [laughs]

Austin: [laughing] Spool of string.

Keith: [laughs]

Janine: [skeptically] Mm.

Austin: Plush dinosaur.

Ali: Woah.

Janine: Okay!

Sylvi: Ohh!

Austin: Flag. Sand glass. [**Janine:** Huh?] Plush unicorn! And sunglasses.

Dre: Oooh.

Janine: What's sand glass?

Austin: Yeah, like an hourglass.

Janine: Oh okay.

Sylvi: Ooh.

Janine: Sunglasses, you said?

Austin: And sunglasses, yeah. [laughs] Banana, spool of string, plush dinosaur, flag, sand glass, plush unicorn, sunglasses. Thank you to the useful generators list.

Janine: Oh, can I pick two? Can I have two things?

Austin: [laughing] No!

Sylvi: Banana, sunglasses.

Janine: [plaintively] Why not?

Keith: [laughs] You want both plushes?

Janine: No one else is taking stuff! Okay wait, can I get one thing and maybe like ask Caoimhe to get another thing? [laughs]

Austin: [snorts] Wow.

Sylvi: Yeah sure, why not.

Janine: Would that work?

Art: I really feel like there's a ring ring ring ring banana phone—

Sylvi: [sings Bananaphone tune]

Art: For banana sunglasses but I can't come up with the like, word for it. I just wanted to like say that out loud.

Janine: It'd be like a pen pineapple pen kind of song probably.

Sylvi: Ohh!

Art: Ohh!

Austin: I don't know—people just say things sometimes.

Ali: [laughs]

Janine: You know: they have a pen, I have an apple, I have an apple pen.

Sylvi: [singing PPAP tune]

Janine: It was a Japanese viral song.

Austin: I see.

Sylvi: I know it. I'm with you, Janine.

Janine: Yeah yeah yeah. Uh, [laughing] the thing is—the thing is I really want the sunglasses for Brontë.

Austin: Uh huh.

Janine: But I want the unicorn for his sister.

Sylvi: Awe! If—

Austin: Brontë's gonna be like, hey you should take that plush unicorn then—

Dre: Guess you're gonna have to make a choice.

Austin: Yeah, uh huh.

Keith: Wow.

Sylvi: If you said that to Caoimhe, she would go along with your plan to help get you it. If you mention the unicorn is for your sister, that would be enough to get her to roll her eyes and go along with your plan.

Keith: To also have sunglasses is the plan?

Sylvi: No to take the—don't we each get to pick one or no? Did I misremember what—?

Austin: No, that's—yeah.

Janine: That's the thing is that—yeah, no, the thing is that like, we also need Austin to approve the idea of people taking more than one thing—

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvi: Oh, you're right.

Janine: Because Brontë is just—

Austin: You could take more than one thing, but you're starting with this set of seven things and that's—that's the seven things that you could get, I guess. So yeah, you could each take—

Keith: Does Caoimhe not need her own roll?

Sylvi: Sunglasses?

Austin: No, we're gonna keep—we're gonna work on these seven things.

Keith: Gonna keep the roll.

Austin: We're gonna keep the roll. Could've been a group roll, didn't do a group roll, that's okay.

Janine: Yeah, these are just the things that were noticed.

Austin: Maybe they're the things that were lowest to the ground so it's not like you're climbing—you're asking for the staircase to get built again, you know?

Janine: They're in a—they're in a take one, leave one box. [laughs]

Austin: [laughs] That's right.

Dre: [laughs]

Janine: I mean, well in that case I think Brontë would first ask,

(as **Brontë**): I really like these dark glasses, but also I think my sister would really like this unicorn. [laughs] Can I have them?

Austin (as **Gnova**): [heavy sigh] Fine, but ask nothing else of me.

Ali: [quietly] They're mad after the wings thing. [laughs]

Janine (as **Brontë**): Okay.

Ali: [laughs] First you want wings and now you want a unicorn...

Sylvi: [laughs]

Janine: Well it's not a full size unicorn, that would be a different story.

Sylvi: His greed is sickening.

Janine: I would—I—

Keith: This guy's had a billion years to collect stuff, but he's [sic] mad about losing a unicorn. [laughs]

Janine (as **Brontë**): I would enjoy the wings, I just, you know, being on a journey you have to think practically. It's very awful, it's a kind of torture if you think about it. Being practicality is—practical is a burden, but sunglasses are very practical and also look good on. So. Thank you.

Austin (as **Gnova**): Of course. Well, onward. There are two ways to exit here. I wouldn't worry too much about who goes where, you will end up together again eventually, but there will be a little time when you are separated from each other.

[["The Castle Eschatonica"](#) by Jack de Quidt plays]