

Perpetua 45: Escape the Rumbling Castle! 05

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Announcement

Ali: Hi, everyone. We're starting here with a very brief announcement, and I am going to make it as brief as I can. On July 14, which was the 10th anniversary of the first episode of Marielda, we had a little Twitch anniversary party, one could say, and we are also giving away a couple of copies of the Marielda Special Edition vinyl big release with Lost In Cult that I hope that you know about. [laughs] Anyway, if you go to tinyurl.com/winmarielda—that is W-I-N-M-A-R-I-E-L-D-A, win Marielda, tinyurl.com/winmarielda—you can put in your information and be eligible to be one of the three people who are going to win the Marielda anniversary vinyl set. We had four copies to give away. We gave away one during that Twitch stream to make that fun and exciting for the people who were there. But also just for a wider audience who, you know, perhaps the Marielda vinyl was, you know, not in the budget for you or something, go enter the giveaway. This is an option for you to have access to this very cool thing that Jack and the folks at Lost In Cult worked really hard on. And yippee; happy anniversary, Marielda. And again, tinyurl/ [laughs] Wait. Tinyurl.com/winmarielda. Just, you know, put in your name, your address. I think there's a little funny question there. And you're either going to win or you don't, but yeah. Thanks for supporting *Friends at the Table*, and enjoy this new episode of Perpetua.

Recap

Sylvia: We pinged a gem to the northeast.

Ali: Yes.

Austin: Yep.

Sylvia: And then we pinged Big Money to [**Ali:** Yeah.] basically directly east from us.

Jack: Well, it used to be.

Janine: What the fuck was that?

Austin: Yeah, it's Big Money, Maybe. I'm going to add "Maybe" on the map. Maybe.

Ali: Right. It was there was some money here at some point. [laughs quietly]

Austin: That's right, but it seems like maybe it's somewhere else now, not here.

Sylvia: Big Money Maybe is putting out some really lackluster mixtapes lately. [laughter]

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

Austin: All right. There is a low tonal hum coming through the air. I need everyone to roll Willpower + Willpower, difficulty 12. Everybody who got under a 12, which right now is everybody but Elena...

Sylvia: Ha!

Austin: You can feel yourself being swayed into the rhythm of the hum, as if you're dancing the steps of a song. You're being hypnotized.

Jack: Oh, phew.

Austin: Veile, you can't help but remember what happened to the Iron Trigon, your initial escorts. [Jack chuckles]

Ali: Yep.

Austin: Who killed each other instead of escorting you to your destination.

Ali: Sure did.

Austin (as **Shieldmaiden**): Halt. Who are you? What have you done with Fares?

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Him? This guy?

Austin (as **Shieldmaiden**): That's right.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): We found him passed out next to a pile of burning money, and we saved his life.

Art (as **Nicky**): Yeah, we saved Fares.

Austin (as **Fares**): They did. They did save me. They did save me,

Austin: He says.

(as **Fares**): But they're also being really suspicious.

Keith: I like run away. I was just about to suggest run away.

Art: Aren't they just going to follow us?

Dre: I mean, yes, probably.

Keith: I'd rather fight eight people in a narrow hallway. But I think that we could figure something out.

Austin: At this point, having not found you that way, they've started to spread out across the area, and there are four people in this main room, in this main big plaza here, along with you looking down at them.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): I don't trust them. I think that they had something to do with what just happened in here. I'm really glad that we're not more severely hurt than we are, but that was bad. I didn't— That felt terrible.

Jack (as **Elena**): Yes, it did feel terrible, but, you know, they were... They were acting out of defense. They didn't know whether or not we meant them harm. It's a...

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): We just walked in the room. We didn't do anything.

Jack (as **Elena**): Maybe they're territorial.

Janine (as **Brontë**): But that's not a reason to not do the thing that is being discussed.

Jack (as **Elena**): This looks like a puzzle, Veile.

Ali (as **Veile**): You think so?

Jack (as **Elena**): Yeah. I mean, it tells a good story.

Ali (as **Veile**): Yeah, I suppose I'll jot down these figures.

[song ends]

Springsong [0:05:03]

Austin: Give me a— I'm going to need another— I'm going to need a damn d8 here, as you move into the next room, as a Travel roll again.

Sylvia: I could do it again, but if someone else wants to, I will happily step back. I feel like I've been doing a lot of these for us.

Jack: I think you should go ahead. I'm happy with that.

Sylvia: Okay. Everybody else good with that?

Janine: Yeah.

Ali: Yeah.

Sylvia: Okay. I rolled a 3.

Ali: Aw. [laughs]

Austin: No, that's good. You want low.

Jack: No, we want low, don't we?

Sylvia: We want low, right?

Austin: Low is good. Low is good in the Travel roll.

Ali: Oh.

Janine: Yay!

Austin: Yes. In fact, a 3 is a Minor Discovery. You come to the entrance of a vault, and it strikes you now [**Jack:** Ohoho!] that the room you've passed through was the first line of security to the big vault of the Springsong Temple and that the first line of security was you have to know how to harmonize with these flowers, otherwise they will turn you against your party, preventing any sort of intruders from coming in. And so that's why they were— They were, in fact, territorial. They're meant to. They're protecting something of potentially great value behind this vault, this vault door. This room is a kind of huge rounded room with walls that have been beautifully mosaiced. The floor is covered in cool blue tiles, and there's a lot of light from sort of big round windows on the north and south walls here. These big curved walls have beautiful kind of stained glass windows. There are four...what I can only describe as scaled ostriches that stand in the kind of northeast, southeast, northwest, and southwest kind of sections of these rooms.

They don't seem to respond negatively to you when you come in. They seem to be kind of regal, robotic? They're not of the same make as the creatures that you fought before, but there are some, like, part similarities. There are some, like, material similarities. You remember the turrets and the flying robot hawk.

Jack: Yeah, the flower.

Austin: There's a clear distinct difference in design. Like, the aesthetic is very different. But it strikes you that it feels like the hawks borrowed pieces from these, potentially, you know? The hawk and the flower and stuff like that. As if someone had, like, scavenged parts from some of these. Not literally these ones, which seem to be just standing completely still. The opposite wall that you've come in on has a long relief across what looks at first to be a wall but you realize is a door. The relief is filled with figures from myths striking heroic action poses. Veile, you immediately go like, oh, those are, you know, the sparked ones or whatever, those are the Heroes of Spark, you know? [laughs quietly] They're sparking up right now.

Sylvia: The sparked ones, yeah.

Austin: Yeah, uh huh.

Sylvia: 420.net, uh huh.

Austin: 420.net, yeah, yeah, yeah. At the center, a pair of them reach towards each other, and you realize that there's some sort of split down the middle of the relief and that it's not a wall; that it's a pair of massive vault doors that would open from the middle outward, kind of sliding away into the walls. In front of them are four big plates, which I can just quickly add. But you know, like four big kind of rectangular spots. I'm going to just copy one and do the same one each time; that way they're actually the right size or whatever. There we go. So four of these in front of this door. And on those kind of plates, there's a little bit of sand on each one of them. And with a Minor Discovery, I think you notice a couple of things about the relief in front of you. There are, mixed in with the kind of figures of myth and legend, there are a number of those elemental sigils but not all of them. There are only the air, earth, fire, light, and bolt ones. Breeze,

mountain, hearth, and sun, and lightning—for their world—are represented there. And you can see that some of them seem to be, like, embedded in each other. So like, you'll have the square of hearth, and then inside of that will be the, like, breeze curved S's, you know?

Jack: And these plinths are just covered in sand.

Austin: Just covered in sand, as far as you can tell.

Jack: And what are the combinations of symbols shown in that mural?

Austin: There's a bunch of them, as far as you can tell. Like, give me a Study Check.

Jack: Oh, sure. Yeah, okay.

Sylvia: Do you want some, like, assistance with this?

Jack: If you—

Austin: Yeah, tell me what this looks like.

Jack: Is this just sort of like stepping back to get a full view and kind of folding her arms and trying to steady herself after, first, the disappointment in the bar and then [laughs quietly] the sort of excitement and frustration of the sit-up contest. This is like, “All right, Elena, you know.”

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: “Really try and take this in.”

Austin: I love it.

Jack: I would be happy to take some help. My Study is pretty strong, but you know, I'll always...

Sylvia: Before we continue, just scrolling up, this is unrelated to the critical success Veile got studying this, right?

Austin: Yeah, this is related. Yeah.

Sylvia: Okay. Okay, so does that give us something on this roll? Or...

Austin: Veile, what did you end up picking from that? Was it a bonus forward, right?

Ali: Yeah. I believe it was the +4 one.

Austin: I think that's right. Yeah.

Sylvia: Cool.

Jack: Do you want to take this Study, then, Ali? To, like, carry forward the line of Veile investigating this?

Ali: I mean, I'll assist you.

Jack: Yeah, all right.

Austin: Yeah, you should assist. It's you or an ally, so...

Jack: Okay.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: So Veile's +4 bonus will happen on this roll because of that.

Jack: Whoa. Okay. So I'm going to roll it?

Austin: Well, is anyone helping first? Let the people help you first, yeah.

Sylvia: I'm gonna. Yeah, let me roll an assist here.

Ali: Yeah, I will too.

Sylvia: I got a 14.

Jack: Whoa!

Austin: That's at least a +1.

Ali: This is just an Insight + Insight?

Austin: Insight + Insight.

Ali: [laughs sadly] Oh no.

Austin: That's a 2. That's a critical fumble.

Sylvia: Wow!

Austin: But thankfully you cannot fumble on a helping roll. And you're still giving a +4 from the previous crit. [laughs quietly]

Ali: Yeah, so...

Sylvia: It's great that your last two rolls are a crit and a fumble. I love that.

Ali: That's just life of Veile.

Jack: So I'm getting a +5 on this?

Austin: I believe, unless Caoimhe has Bonds with you. Does Caoimhe have any Bonds with you?

Jack: I don't think so.

Sylvia: I don't think I do right now, no.

Austin: Hey!

Jack: Oh, beautiful.

Sylvia: Wow!

Austin: Wow! That's pretty good. That's pretty good.

Jack: That's a 20.

Austin: That's a 20, so I will maybe walk you through this a little bit. [Jack laughs] At a 20, you've learned a lot of things, right? I mean, the first thing—

Jack: The GameShark turned on.

Austin: [laughs] Yes. The first thing you noticed is like, oh, these symbols are tied to the various figures around the mural, and you note— God, at a 20, I guess I'm going to give you a lot here, right? So you look at one of these figures. There's a woman who is summoning a sort of blast of lightning into one of her hands and has a sword lifted into the other one, and she's in like a robe that's, you know, waving in the wind, you know? And this is a really cool relief. I'm calling it a mural, but what it is is, you know, a relief, so there's like depth to this in a really cool way. And so she has a series of four kind of of these symbols in a row, or not symbols, but four of these like symbol units. The first one is just the wavy lines, right? The second one is the hearth symbol, the square, and then the circle inside of the square. The third one is the wavy lines again. And the fourth one is the triangle, the kind of mountain triangle inside of— oh, and the lightning inside of it. And you look at it for a while, and you're like, "Hmm, what is this?" and you're like, oh, this is a name. This is her name. These are the names of the people here. And so what you think now is— I mean, with the 20, I'm just going to give you this little translation. Her name is Amal. A-M-A-L.

Jack: Huh.

Austin: And again, I'll give you that what it was was: wavy lines, which is the breeze. Do you want me to give you them in symbol, or do you want me to give you them in symbol? In, you know, uh... [Sylvia and Jack laugh] Hmm. Symbol or in element?

Jack: Um...

Sylvia: Oh.

Jack: Either is fine, right? They seem about as useful.

Austin: Yeah, I just don't know what would be easier for your brain. Do you know what I mean?

Jack: Symbol, I think.

Austin: Okay. So then it is... [typing] I'm calling breeze "wavy lines", right?

Jack: Yep.

Austin: Then it is square, or I guess it's circle inside of square. Then it's wavy lines. And then it is bolt. What do we want to call—? Lightning? You can't call the symbol lightning. Zigzag inside of triangle. I'll paste that, and I'll say Amal equals that.

Jack: Interesting.

(as **Elena**): It's some sort of alphabet.

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

Austin: And, you know, with a 20, I can maybe give you one more. I'll give you one more.

Jack: Yeah, okay.

Sylvia: You got a good roll.

Austin: Someone describe a cool... Veile, since you were the one that got that crit before and seemed to be really interested in the heroes of this place, describe to me a cool hero from the world of Springsong.

Ali: Whoa. Okay. Are they necessarily bolt-aligned every time?

Austin: They are. These are all bolt-aligned people.

Ali: Okay.

Austin: These are all spark-aligned people.

Ali: Okay. Okay. Okay. I think it's like a cool elf lady with maybe, like, a butch haircut and metal armor, and then there are lines in the armor that kind of glow.

Austin: That sounds so sick. All right. Let me give you her name. This is a really funny one. Okay. It's actually not a really funny one. Let me give you a good one. Let me give you a simple one. Let's see. Oh yeah. Okay. This gives you some extra information, which is good. It is a... let me look at my own translations here. Inside of the square, there is the zigzag, so that's square plus zigzag. Then there is zigzag inside of circle. So I'm going to do square plus circle. And then there is another three-part one, which is wavy lines plus circle plus zigzag. This is the first time you've seen the zigzag and the wavy lines cross, and they're crossed inside of the circle. And then there is air plus earth plus bolt, which is of course zigzags and wavy lines inside of triangle. I'll post this again in a second. I wrote "zigziag," which is not it. So that's...

Jack: That's the evil wizard.

Austin: That's, yeah, Zigziag, the evil wizard. [Sylvia laughs] This is wavy lines plus zigzag inside of... I'll just say plus triangle. you can understand that any time it would be one that could have something inside of them, it is inside, you know? So like, the breeze and the bolt are never outside of the earth or the hearth or the light. And this is Nour, N-O-U-R.

Jack: Square in zigzag.

Ali: We know what O is now. That's good.

Austin: I mean, you know what all these letters are now. You know what N is.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: You know what A is.

Ali: Well, right.

Jack: Square and zigzag.

Ali: But, no, assuming that we need to figure out what "open" is...

Austin: Mm.

Jack: Oh. [laughs quietly]

Austin: Why do you think it's open?

Ali: [weakly] Because it's a door. [Ali and Sylvia laugh] It's a four letter word!

Jack: And we have four panels?

Austin: You have four panels.

Jack: Although...

Sylvia: No, I like the theory crafting. [Ali laughs]

Jack: Yeah, I can't shit talk this theory crafting too much, because as soon as you said it, I was like, "Oh shit. Yeah, we do want to open the door." [Ali laughs] Just double checking: Nour is square and zigzag and then square and circle?

Austin: Square and zigzag is the N.

Jack: Yep.

Austin: Yep.

Jack: O is square and circle?

Austin: O is square— oh no, sorry, did I write that wrong? I wrote that wrong.

Jack: Zigzag and circle.

Austin: It's zigzag and circle. Let me delete that and rewrite it. Sorry, zigzag and circle. Good catch. Square and circle. Square and zigzag. Or no, it was zigzag and circle. Is that what I just said? Zigzag and circle.

Jack: Yeah. And then wave and zigzag in a circle.

Austin: No, wave and zigzag in a square, and then wave and zigzag in a triangle.

Jack: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Hmm.

Austin: All right.

Ali: Do the flowers know the answers?

Austin: The flowers... You can talk to the flowers if you want to.

Jack (as **Elena**): Well, I mean, we stayed on good terms with them, I suppose.

[Veile sighs]

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Be my guest.

Jack: What are the flowers doing in the other room, Austin? Have they quieted down, or are they still...?

Sylvia: Being untrustworthy.

Austin: They're doing their little low hum like they were before you, like when you first walked in.

Jack: But they're not going to try and hypnotize me.

Austin: It's almost like the sound of the air in the distance, you know? They aren't what?

Jack: Yeah. They're not going to try and hypnotize me on me reentering the room.

Austin: I don't think so.

Jack: It's not like hitting an enemy trigger again and...

Austin: That's correct, yeah.

Jack: Glancing back kind of nervously at Caoimhe, sort of like, “Well, let’s give it a go.”

(as **Elena**): Noble flowers. [Sylvia scoffs] Can you assist us?

Austin: Give me a Persuade? You've actually forgotten something, which is they already gave you a little assistance, remember? Didn't they? They sung to you, once you harmonized with them, and you also have a +1.

Jack: Yes. But this was because...

Austin: I'm just noting that means you got a 21 and not a 20.

Ali: Wow.

Jack: [laughs quietly] Yeah, that’s true.

Sylvia: Blackjack.

Jack: Although we've spent that.

Austin: We've now spent that, yeah.

Jack: Yeah. Okay, I'm going to roll the Persuade.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Come back to the flowers to persuade them. This is Insight + Willpower.

Austin: Yeah. Hey, that’s a 16. You know, they're not... They are not sapient beings. They don't... You're not going to mindmeld with them. They're not going to, like, give you the password. But I think, you know, they sing back to you in a way that, I think the help you're getting here is you are reminded that, one, you're reminded that singing is important here in Springsong. Two is you remember that everyone zapped each other with their spells and did a little rhyme associated with each of them.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: And three, you are... Yeah, I think at a 16, the key really here is, like, oh right, the control of magic is the control of power in this world in this way, you know?

Jack: Huh.

Austin: You gotta do some spells here, is what you...

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: You leave pretty confident of that.

Jack: Yeah.

Ali: Oh. Wait, okay.

Janine: Does that mean the thing's going to be an *Ocarina of Time*, like, it's not a word but you have to go, like, [singing different notes] "doo doo doo doo," or some shit?

Jack: This is what I'm wondering.

Sylvia: Yeah, I feel like we're going to have to spell a word with magic, considering how these correspond to spell, like, elements, right?

Ali: Yeah, but some of them are like...

Sylvia: Yeah, well, I think that it's probably going to be, like, a multi-person job or something. I don't know.

Ali: And we also...

Sylvia: Or it's like the order or something that you have to— because some of these are like circle inside of square, so it'd be like light and then fire, going inside out, or you could do fire and then light, outside in.

Ali: Right.

Sylvia: I'm making a whole thing right now, trying to scribble this together, so like...

Austin: You're doing a Kurapika powerpoint. [Jack laughs]

Sylvia: Yeah. I'm in character, is what I am.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jack: [*Hunter × Hunter* narrator voice] Caoimhe Wake has realized that in order to get through the... [Austin laughs]

Sylvia: Uh huh.

Jack: I wonder also if there's a— and this is out of character, because I don't think Elena knows this exists in the world. I wonder if there's also a kind of a mastermind thing about it. We should try casting some spells and see if we get feedback that's like, that's the correct spell but in the wrong position or something, you know?

Ali: Well, out of character, [laughs] we don't have any MP, because we thought that we wouldn't have any, and some of these elements are things we don't have access to, or at least I don't have access to, so now it's like a...

Jack: We have Elemental Shard IP stuff, although we also don't have a lot of IP.

Sylvia: I think I have enough IP to get my mana back, and I have a lot of elements that I can do stuff with?

Ali: Yeah, you're probably the most needing of spell, yeah.

Sylvia: And then there's also Elemental Ritualism I can use too, which sort of lets us fudge things, [Ali: Oh.] specifically in terms of like, I just have access to bolt, fire, wind, and earth, that one?

Janine: Also worth asking: could we just start a fire?

Sylvia: True.

Jack: [laughs] Yeah, that's true.

Janine: It doesn't work for everything, but like, you know.

Sylvia: Leave it to the one non-mage to be like, [Janine chuckles] "Wait a minute, guys. You know we could do other stuff."

Janine: "How do we get fire? I just, I don't know how we do the fire." [Austin and Jack laugh]

Ali (as **Veile**): It's going to be so difficult. I don't know if I should use my shards or my remedy.

Sylvia: I am really quickly going to do that, so I can get my MP back.

Jack (as **Elena**): I think it's spellcasting based. I think we have to spell something out. *Spell* something out.

Jack: Elena, sort of brittle grin.

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

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Ohhh!

Jack (as **Elena**): Spell something out, and the door will open. Something like that. The flowers weren't terribly helpful.

Ali (as **Veile**): And be lyrical in some way?

Jack (as **Elena**): Oh, all magic is lyrical, Veile.

Ali (as **Veile**): Mm... I suppose. [Ali laughs quietly] Well, I guess, do we just go down the list like you suggested, Elena?

Jack (as **Elena**): Maybe as a first step. I don't know that we're going to get it open, but we could see what happens when we cast.

Ali (as **Veile**): Yeah, maybe these boxes will glow or some sort of pedestal will appear or some sort of ray of light.

Jack (as **Elena**): That's exactly what I'm hoping will happen.

Sylvia: Hmm. I don't know if it would be helpful right this second, but I am going to have the— Austin, can I have the magical Reagent out now to see if it starts behaving weirdly to anything we start doing?

Ali: Oooh.

Austin: Yeah. Totally.

Sylvia: Cool. You know.

Janine: Reaging, if you will.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: Uh huh. Yeah, I think it's fair to say that it is reaging. It is doing... There is something magical already happening here, for sure.

Sylvia: Yeah. I kind of just want to keep it visible, so when we start doing this, I can see if it, like, does something unexpected as we try and fill in these four slots.

Austin: Yeah, that makes sense to me.

Sylvia: Cool.

Jack: I'm going to try and make an O appear.

Austin: How are you going to do that?

Jack: I am going to sing a verse. I am going to—

Austin: Well, what are you— Are you trying to cast a spell?

Jack: Are verses spells?

Austin: You should sing your verse.

Jack: [laughs quietly] Okay, sure. I know that dances are not spells in certain circumstances, and songs are not spells.

Austin: Oh, sorry, when you said verses, you literally meant are your things called Verses spells.

Jack: And I think the answer is no.

Sylvia: Yeah, and “Are Verses Spells” sounded like a court case. [Austin and Keith laugh]

Austin: Are vs. Spells. What are your—? That’s a great question here. Where was our rule, Janine? We decided that it counts as a spell for certain things for dances, right?

Jack: For, like, one thing.

Janine: Yeah, dances we decided—purely because it’s cool—that they would count as spells in terms of letting me teach one to someone to use in the next outing.

Austin: Yes.

Janine: But in terms of every other application of spell, they don't count.

Austin: I think that here, in Springsong, the place where, like, the hero uses their creative spark, [**Janine:** Yeah.] both verses and dances count for this type of magic. They're not attack magic still, you know? But for, like, activating a ritual thing that needs magic, it counts. If it's, you know, to the degree that it is doing— you know, and we'll see. What are you doing? What is the Verse you're doing?

Jack: I am going to target one of these... It's difficult here, Austin, because my Verse targets creatures. I can't, like, draw it onto a spot on the ground, you know?

Austin: Oh, that's interesting. Right, yeah.

Jack: So I could try and target one of these tiles, if you are up for it, but Verses have to be attached to somebody or something, generally.

Austin: Something has to hear you.

Jack: Something has to hear me.

Austin: Right.

Jack: And, you know, I don't have a spell that I could cast on an ally that would specifically use the light effect.

Austin: Which you need for O. Which you believe you need.

Jack: Well, I would need to combine it with...

Austin: Yeah, you need bolt and light.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: I'm going to say, give me... This has to be just you. You don't roll anything for your Verses, right?

Jack: Nah, they just happen.

Austin: I think give me Insight + Willpower, because I'm going to do, like... I think that this is hard. I think it's going to be hard for you to make it effect something that isn't a thing that can hear you.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: But here in Springsong, in the Celestial Echo of Springsong, it might be possible. You just don't know how to do it, [**Jack:** Yeah.] because you've never done it before. But in a world where the flowers sing back, where song seems to be key to the way the world works, it might be doable here.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: So give me an Insight + Willpower. The difficulty here is 13.

Jack: And just before I do, for listeners who haven't been looking at my character sheet for like a year or whatever, the way it works is that I choose a volume—you know, low, medium, or high—and then I choose a tone, and those tones are sort of like spells with open slots in them like mad libs or something. So, for example, I could sing with a haunting tone, and each target would suffer a key status effect. The keys are things that I can pick up that have this big stack of stats assigned to them. So, for example, the wind key's type is air. It's status effect is slow. It's attribute is Insight, et cetera. And I use these kind of combinatrix to build the spells, which is why it's kind of tricky to just cast a light spell or something. But I'm going to roll an Insight + Willpower and see what happens.

Austin: Yeah, difficulty 13. Hey.

Jack: Ooh!

Austin: That's a 15. You can do this. Here, you can— What are you targeting? The plate?

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: The plate is listening.

Jack: Concerning.

Austin: I think, as you do this, you're also like, oh those four lizard ostrich robots are definitely listening too, but you're not targeting them, so it's okay.

Jack: Yeah. And I'm glad I'm not targeting them, because I am going to target a single target, [**Austin:** Mm-hmm.] that is to say, the first thing. That has a cost of 10 MP.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Jack: I am going to target them with the frantic tone. Each target suffers key type damage equal to twice your Willpower die size. [laughs quietly]

Austin: Jesus. You don't do this in combat that often, huh?

Jack: No. I did the cost maths. In terms of targeting multiple creatures and things, stuff like my Glacies spell or my Iceberg spell do sometimes work better.

Austin: I see.

Jack: There are certain times when this is effective and certain times when it's less effective.

Austin: Can I tell you one thing that's really good about this?

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: You don't roll to hit.

Jack: No.

Austin: You just get the hit.

Jack: No, yeah.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: It is a default hit.

Austin: I just want to make sure that that's in your back pocket for situations where you're like, "I can't fucking hit this guy."

Jack: Yeah, definitely, yeah. Although I had a similar moment a couple of arcs ago, where I was like—

Austin: Or like, we've just got to do 7 HP to this guy, you know?

Jack: Yeah. I was like, "Am I underusing this?" and then I worked out the math. But you're right, the guaranteed hit is effective.

Austin: I also just want to make sure that we're clear on something important, which is it says it's twice your Willpower die size.

Jack: Mm-hmm.

Austin: What's your Willpower die size?

Jack: 10.

Austin: All right, so that's 20 damage.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: It's not roll 2d10. Okay, I just wanted to make sure.

Jack: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: Okay.

Jack: But I mean, even something like...yeah. My other big ice spells do things like high roll plus 25 damage.

Austin: Totally.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: I just want to make sure that, as I build fights going forward, I want to make sure that you know that you can do 20 damage for 10 MP of any— maybe not any. You don't have every attribute [**Jack:** No.] or every key, right? It's only the keys you have.

Jack: And I can't, at this point. There are, like, some locked out to me.

Austin: Right, right. Yeah. I just want to emphasize that, as fights continue.

Jack: Yeah, yeah, yeah. [Sylvia laughs quietly] And it's going to get even better, because when I'm level 20 or higher, it does 10 extra damage. [laughs quietly]

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Sylvia: This is what we in the business call foreshadowing.

Austin: No, we're in the business called you just died in a fight, [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] and the round you died in, you had to do 1 damage to one turret. That's all.

Sylvia: Is that true? I didn't know it was 1 damage.

Austin: Yes! All of the enemies in that fight had 5 HP for three rounds or something.

Sylvia: Man. Okay.

Jack: Yeah, this was a real, uh...

Sylvia: That was a real low point.

Austin: It was tough.

Jack: That was a real player issue here.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: But I'm kind of saving this up until someone can simulcast a lightning spell or something, I think.

Sylvia: Okay. I can do that now.

Jack: Because we want to get bolt in...

Sylvia: I just learned one of those.

Jack: Yeah. Well, I'm ready to go. [laughs quietly] I don't need to roll.

Sylvia: Should I just roll that, then?

Austin: Sorry, you're doing frantic, and you're doing...?

Sylvia: Me? Oh.

Austin: What's the element you're doing?

Jack: It's in the key of radiance.

Austin: Which is?

Jack: Light.

Austin: Oh, right, because the book is wrong. The book is wrong. The books says radiance is bolt.

Jack: Yeah. Mm-hmm.

Austin: Right. Okay, sorry. I've been looking at the book, and I forgot that the book is not correct.

Sylvia: Songs in the key of radiance.

Janine: Key of Radiance is my fifth favorite *Genshin Impact* clone. [Austin and Jack chuckle]

Jack: It's terrible.

Sylvia: Oh, I was thinking Stevie Wonder album.

Austin: Yeah. It could be that. Okay, you have light ready to go, which means you need someone with bolt ready to go, in your testing.

Sylvia: I would be, but I accidentally closed Roll20, and its taking forever to open for me. I'm almost able to push the button.

Austin: Well, wait. What are you doing?

Sylvia: Thunderbolt. My new spell.

Austin: Okay.

Sylvia: Am I targeting the same thing as you for this, to make this letter?

Jack: Yeah, I believe so.

Sylvia: Is that how this works? Okay. Actually, what I could do here... I guess it

depends on how this works, because I have these spell orbs, and I'm wondering if doing some sort of Elemental Weapon thing here could save me some mana by just doing, like, a lightning strike with my sword. You know what? I'm not going to mess with it. I'll do the spell, and if this bites us in the ass in a combat later, it'll bite us in the ass in a combat later. Whatever.

Jack: Oh my god.

Austin: Caoimhe, you go to do this spell, and you're not able to summon the energy.

Sylvia: Oh, right. I have to say, like, a little whimsical thing, right?

Austin: It doesn't have to be whimsical, necessarily.

Keith: Necessarily. So it *can* be whimsical.

Austin: It could be whimsical.

Sylvia: Uh...

Austin: This is in character.

Sylvia: [laughing] Thunderbolts and lightning, very very frightening.

Austin: If you're going to say it like that, I don't think it counts.

Sylvia: Galileo! What? No, I'm Bohemian Rhapsodying.

Austin: You can't just laugh your way through it. The magic won't come.

Sylvia: Okay, okay.

Austin: You gotta believe it.

Sylvia: I know. You're right, you're right, you're right. Sylvi is letting Caoimhe down here.

Austin: Also, wait. *We* know this is true.

Sylvia: Yeah, she doesn't know this is true.

Austin: Elena, have you explained this to people?

Sylvia: Actually a very good point.

Austin: Because, Caoimhe, you go to cast it. Nothing happens. You can't seem to—
Again, your Reagent should be reacting simply to you summoning the magic, and it's not.

Jack (as **Elena**): That's not going to work, Caoimhe; I'm sorry. You have to—
There has to be an element of the lyric.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): I have to sing?

Jack (as **Elena**): Well, or speak.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): Uh... Does it matter what?

Jack (as **Elena**): I believe it should be connected to your spell.

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

Sylvia: Now Sylvi's got the little loading icon [Austin laughs] in her brain, so like, just give me a second.

Austin: Uh huh.

Jack (as **Elena**): I mean, remember when everybody lashed out in that first room.
The words that were spoken seemed to be as important as the magic that was being cast

Sylvia: Uh...

Jack (as **Elena**): It's okay. I'm sure you'll do fine.

Sylvia (as **Caoimhe**): No, I have it. I have it. I have it. I have it. Thunder and

lightning in the dark, calling down a violent spark.

Jack (as **Elena**): That's poetry.

Austin: What's it look like?

Sylvia: Well, this spell's called Thunderbolt, so I have actually been picturing Pikachu's Down B from Smash Bros.

Austin: [laughs] Yeah, okay. [Keith laughs]

Sylvia: So like a little cloud appears, and then a lightning bolt comes down from it and strikes.

Austin: It strikes this surface. It strikes this little pedestal thing, this plinth. And when it does, the sand—which does not go everywhere, which you think it would—begins to reshape itself. The plinth starts to, like, reverberate, as if with sound, and like when you pour sand on top of a speaker, it begins to take a shape, and it takes the shape of the lightning bolt symbol. You've all seen that at some point.

Janine: Describing that like it's a thing we've all done.

Austin: You know the thing I'm talking about, right? [Janine laughs]

Sylvia: I think I know what you mean.

Austin: You all have seen...

Janine: [sarcastic] You know when you pour sand onto a speaker, and it takes a shape. We did this in kindergarten.

Austin: You've all seen that!

Sylvia: I have seen that.

Keith: Yeah, I know what you're talking about.

Jack: [sarcastic] Yeah, I did it at sand pouring camp.

Austin: Okay. Well, let me link a video so that everyone can see it.

Janine: [cross] I know what you mean, but it's my survival strategy to—

Keith: [cross] It's the do-at-home version of ferrofluid.

Janine: It's my survival strategy to recognize when a thing is not a common experience, [Janine and Sylvia laugh] despite the way it might feel like one to me.

Austin: Okay. Yes, that's fair. That's fair. I've linked a video of someone pouring, I think this is salt, on top of a— I guess this is probably not even a speaker. What is this? Is this some other sort of tone generator?

Janine: Sound box?

Jack: It's like a resonance table or something? Yeah.

Austin: Actually, this is a metal plate attached to a speaker is what it is, and it's generating different...

Jack: God, it's so cool.

Austin: It's so cool! I've linked a video called "Amazing Resonance Experiment" by brusspup, so go look that up. It's cool. So this is happening, and the lightning bolt symbols have appeared there. But like, the whole thing seems to be kind of charged, at this point. But they're doing it, it's doing it, and there's, again, a kind of low, like, *hmmmm*, at this point.

Jack: You know, I'm going to raise the ice wand and sing one of Elena's horrible open notes, and the sound kind of forms itself into light in front of her mouth and goes streaking off towards the listening pad.

Austin: What's the sound like?

Jack: We've spoken about this—

Austin: No, I want to hear it. We're in Springsong.

Jack: Oh god.

Austin: It doesn't have to be good. It doesn't have to be sustained.

Jack: [plays offputting woodwind screech]

Austin: Great.

Jack: And it goes pouring out onto the plate.

Austin: And it does. And at this point, the circle for the sun, for light, appears around. You know, some of the sand sprinkles off or kind of bounces away from the bolt to form the circle of the sun around it, and the plate lowers into the ground, and it goes, *crrrrr-kuh*.

Jack: Nudging Veile.

(as **Elena**): This is exactly what we were hoping for!

Austin: And one of the four little ostrich robots seems to, like, stop vibrating with concern. All right, let's go over to the other side.

Armidirge [0:38:53]

Austin: Jonathan, Antistrophe, and Nicky. We left you looking down on this kind of church courtyard on one side, with a bunch of weird interiors or buildings that you can't see inside of, and then to your north, an airship dock where *Adventure Beckons*, the airship, is docked and anchored. As a reminder, it has a bunch of— it's kind of tied down. It's anchored to the castle. It's like moored to the castle. And your good good friends the Agonies have said that if you can get them [Sylvia laughs] safely inside of the Creed of Oracles barracks where there's a stairwell down deeper in, they can do their little mischief and get the airship untied.

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Austin: You were being pursued by a bunch of guys, but you seem to have lost them by breaking into a library and then getting from the library—or like a study—into a secret hallway, a secret tunnel that then brought you up and around to here.

Art: A couple things. How dare you imply that something might be not on the up-and-up about my close personal friends, the Agonies? [Austin and Keith chuckle]

Keith: “What moiduh?” Remember that guy?

Austin: Yeah, what moiduh?

Art: And two, would you say that the airship is beckoning? To us?

Austin: That’s the name of the airship.

Art: Right, but like, you described it as appealing. I’m just...

Austin: Well, Jonathan knows that’s his airship.

Art: I’m just giving you a chance to say... Okay.

Austin: To avoid the beckonings?

Art: To describe the ship as beckoning us.

Austin: Oh, I see. Eh, I don’t know if it’s beckoning to you. I know it’s beckoning to Jonathan, because it’s Jonathan’s. I don’t know what you think about an airship. You ever been on an airship before, Nicky?

Art: Absolutely not, no.

Austin: That’s not true. You’ve all been— The two of you have been, because you were on the Valte one above Casltega.

Art: Oh, that’s right.

Dre: Mm.

Austin: Antistrophe, have you ever been on an airship?

Keith: Well, I know that we have airships.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: Because of the...

Austin: Prelude, yeah.

Keith: Prelude.

Austin: Yeah, you sent someone over there.

Keith: But no, I don't think I ever have been. I think I've seen them.

Austin: Mm.

Keith: But not like, I think this is big comparatively.

Austin: Are you beckoned?

Keith: Uh, no. I think it feels mundane.

Austin: Mm.

Art: All right.

Keith: Am I misremembering that there was four guys down here?

Austin: There are four guys here, and the other group seems to have— the rest of that group seems to have broken off.

Keith: Searching for us somewhere else?

Austin: Searching for you somewhere else, yeah.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: And you're not sure if there are people inside of these structures or if these structures are connected to other places in the castle or what.

Dre: But basically we do need to get back outside and deeper in, in order to get the Agonies to where they need to go.

Austin: They need to get to a staircase down, [**Dre:** Right.] to the next level down, basically.

Dre: Okay.

Keith: To here.

Austin: To here. I'm pinging a spot inside of the barracks. See, that's...

Keith: Okay.

Austin: This barracks, the more narrow the stairs go, that's lower, right? And then they go up.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: So the Creed of Oracle barracks is, like, halfway up, and then all the way up is back at the Gallery of the Agonies. That's, like, above all of this.

Dre: Mm.

Keith: Oh, okay.

Austin: And then there's another stairwell down in the barracks going down deeper.

Keith: Sorry, I was misunderstanding where we were. They need to get— We want to get them in this door, so that then they can get to this staircase.

Austin: That's what they told you.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: Maybe there's other ways of getting them down to a lower level, you know?

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: I mean, of course there are.

Art: Drop them off out the airship.

Keith: Yeah. Fighting four guys seems pretty straightforward to me.

Art: Yeah.

Dre: I mean, I do feel better about fighting four guys as opposed to nine, [laughs] or however many it was last time.

Keith: Yeah, it was nine.

Austin: I think it was eight. It was eight.

Keith: Eight plus a cook.

Austin: It was seven plus a cook.

Keith: Oh.

Art: And this, frankly, seems trivial.

Austin: No, it was eight plus a cook. It was eight plus a cook.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah, I would say that this is— It's two of the infantry from before.

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Austin: It is one of the Pyroclastics, and it is the one who was praying under the light.

Dre: Oh.

Keith: Kind of seemed kind of scary.

Art: Oh, this is a subset of the group.

Austin: Oh yeah.

Art: Oh, uh oh. That means that the other, the ones who chased us could get here.

Austin: I mean, they—

Art: Wait, now that I'm looking at the map, it's very obvious how that group could get here.

Austin: Yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: Right. Through the barracks door.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: Through the barracks door. All right. So we have to do speedy violence.

Dre: Yeah, turbo rules apply.

Art: So you're saying that me putting all the levels I've gained since we got here into chef skills instead of fighting skills might not...

Austin: [chuckles] I don't know.

Keith: I can't explain why you did that.

Dre: You know, those are your words, Art, [Austin chuckles] and I would never take your words from you.

Art: Okay. Well. [Dre laughs]

Keith: I'm ready to get the drop on these guys.

Dre: Yeah, let's do it.

Austin: I muted myself. What's that look like? I'll put some tokens down in a second. Give me a second. So that we just have, you know.

Art: We should really blitz the light one. That's going to be the hard one. That's the...

Dre: The praying one?

Art: Yeah.

Keith: You don't want to take down the infantry first?

Art: No. I've...

Keith: Because they might try to run away, and then we'll lose our XP.

Art: But what if one of those prayers gets answered?

Dre: Sure.

Keith: Better hope they do.

Dre: If we get rid of the trash first, we just start taking more turns more quickly, though.

Keith: That's true, yeah.

Art: But what if God shows up?

Dre: Well, then I don't know if there was a way for us to win in the first place, then.
[laughs]

Austin: Hmm.

Keith: Yeah.

Art: Mm. That's a bummer, but I hear you. [Dre laughs]

Keith: I look to Jonathan and Nicky, and I'm like,

(as **Antistrophe**): Do you guys have any sort of, like, thing you do before a fight?

[ambivalent noises]

[Art and Austin laugh]

Austin: Like, in general? Like...

Sylvia: That's kind of personal.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): I don't want to just jump down there if you're going to be like, "Oh, wait! I got a thing!"

Dre (as **Jonathan**): I don't have, like, a call sign or a theme song. [Austin laughs]

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): No, I meant, like...

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Does the fancy dancin' boy have a theme song?

Art (as **Nicky**): No, we hum the theme song. Don't lie to the guy.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Okay. Do the theme song.

Art (as **Nicky**): [hums heroic tune] It's like that.

Keith: I think Antistrophe sort of earnestly tries to get amped by this, [Dre laughs] and it doesn't work, but I'm nice about it.

Austin: Now, wait a second. Maybe it works. Let's make sure it doesn't work, first of all.

Keith: All right. Let's make sure it doesn't work.

Dre: That's a good call.

Austin: Give me some sort of roll, Nicky. [Keith chuckles] I think that's an Insight + Willpower.

Art: What do I roll for fucking with someone? I don't understand. [laughs quietly]

Austin: Insight + Willpower.

Art: Okay.

Austin: Difficulty 13. Aw, it's only a 10. You tried really hard, though.

Art: Yeah.

Sylvia: I'm really looking forward to that showing up as a leitmotif during the final battle, though. [Austin and Jack laugh]

Art: Sorry, Jack.

Sylvia: Sorry to give you more work, Jack, yeah.

Austin: God.

Jack: [laughs] It's okay. It's my equivalent of the "put that in the Clapcast" for Ali. [Austin and Art chuckle]

Austin: All right. I've now revealed these four tokens.

Art: If you need a clean version of it, I can do it again.

Jack: Just send it over later.

Art: Okay. Yeah. [Austin chuckles]

Conflict Prep [0:46:36]

Austin: All right. What do you do?

Keith: I'm just going to jump down from the balcony.

Austin: Are you charging in at them? What's your first—? You've got the drop on them right now.

Keith: Well, I'll tell you what, like, in a... There's two things. One, I want to jump down to

initiate the fight. Two, I am going to use a move, which is Quick Assessment: At the start of a Conflict, you may spend 5 Mind Points, twice. For every 5 Mind Points you spend this way, choose one option: choose a creature you can see to reveal a trait or name a damage type and choose a creature you can see to reveal an affinity towards that damage type.

Austin: Sure. Sorry, an affinity? And also, who are you choosing?

Keith: I'm going to reveal— What are the Traits, again? Why am I blanking on Traits?

Austin: Traits are like little one word adjectives for each of them.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: Which are things that theoretically they can use if they happen to have Ultima Points, in the same way that you can use yours.

Keith: Okay, so—

Austin: But they're also things that you could theoretically take advantage of in non-combat actions, you know?

Keith: Mm.

Austin: If you're like, oh, you know. I'm going to look at a really old character. I'll look at Malathornia, Wicked Weaver, who had Craven, right?

Keith: Right.

Austin: So it's like, if you could have tempted Malathornia, it would have worked, or you would have had advantage on it or something, because Malathornia is Craven.

Keith: Got it. Yeah.

Austin: You know, or you could have scared Malathornia, and so Malathornia would have been like, "I'm going to get out of here. I'm actually secretly a real scaredy cat," you know?

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Austin: “I’m going to cover my own ass.”

Keith: And so there’s two infantry, there’s the light sitter, and then who is the fourth one?

Austin: The light sitter. I was like, “Wait, what?” The Pyroclastic, the flamethrower hover ones.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: You now— Actually, you didn’t see them hovering before, but the flamethrower one actually has a familiar looking thing to Nicky and Jonathan. It has one of the Valte flying backpacks.

Keith: Mm.

Austin: The one that, Nicky and Jonathan, you wore once.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Art: Mm-hmm.

Austin: And that’s weird. They’re not from that world.

Keith: Right.

Art: Yeah, that’s really weird.

Keith: And it’s, like, the same.

Austin: It’s the same.

Keith: Okay.

Dre: It’s also very useful for people who need to get down somewhere fast.

Austin: That's true.

Keith: Right, because we can see the ship from here. It's just too low.

Austin: No, the ship is high. I don't have it drawn, right? But like, the ship is high. It's anchored downwards. Does that make sense?

Keith: Oh, got it, got it. Okay. But it is that anchor and the ship are both, like, visible from this courtyard.

Austin: The anchor is below you. The anchors run— Again, it's tied down is what it is, right?

Keith: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

Austin: I'm just going to write. It's called the *Adventure Beckons*, right, Dre?

Dre: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Austin: It's here. This north thing is the, like, dock, you know?

Keith: Right.

Austin: So maybe it's actually like...

Keith: Specifics aside, I guess what I'm saying is, like, the ship is in open air, and so are we.

Austin: That is right. Yes. Yes.

Keith: It is just geographically separated from us.

Austin: That is correct.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: And it's not even that far separated from you. You could go get on it right now.

Keith: But it would be anchored.

Austin: That's right. Yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: It'd be tied down.

Keith: Okay, so that's good to know. So, I have Quick Assessment. I have 2 SL, which means I can use it twice. I'm going to do that. I'm going to spend 10 MP to do that. And does anyone have, like, a specific element that they're using a lot? I think we're a very physical group here.

Dre: Yeah.

Art: I have some stuff that does dark damage, if you can...

Keith: Okay. Yeah, can I actually reveal, for the one who's in the beam of light, their physical affinity and their dark affinity?

Austin: Sure. So you're naming a damage type and choosing a creature you can see. You're choosing that one. They resist, she resists physical damage, [**Keith:** Hmm.] and she is vulnerable to dark.

Keith: That's great. I'm glad I did that.

Art: Wow, that was good to learn.

Keith: Yeah, because I'm doing physical damage, but guess who got some poison damage to do recently? That's me.

Austin: Mm.

Art: What a weird way to phrase that. [Austin and Dre laugh]

Keith: Yeah, because I didn't give anybody time to guess. Stupid!

Austin: Yeah. [Dre and Keith laugh] Antistrophe, you have the drop on them. What are you going to do here? This is before we even get into Initiative and stuff. This is you have— and you could ambush them, at this point. You have the high ground, and they have not spotted you yet. I think you're up on, like, again, like a kind of raised balcony that you're able to keep a little peek over without them spotting you.

Keith: Mm-hmm. Yeah. I need to, like, figure out a great way to... I guess I don't have to worry about the physical resistor, because we're going to take out the small guys first. So I don't have to deal with that right now, and instead I'm going to, like— You know in a video game, when a boss shows up, and you know, you enter a clearing, [**Austin:** Mm-hmm.] and it's open, and you walk in, and the camera pulls back and someone appears on a cliffside, and they jump down, and it's like, *boom!* And it's like, oh, this is going to be a big fight. I want it to feel like that from the infantry perspective.

Austin: Oh, are you trying to, like, intimidate them?

Keith: I wasn't trying to intimidate them. I was just trying to say how it would feel to have Antistrophe jump off of a balcony down onto the clearing in front of you.

Austin: Sure. Yeah.

Keith: But if someone would be intimidated by that, which I think is natural, then I guess I am trying to intimidate them.

Austin: This could be a Hinder, you know?

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: You're performing a Check to give them Dazed, Shaken, Slow, or Weak.

Keith: Yeah, sure. [Art laughs]

Austin: You should read that, Sylvi.

Sylvia: Keith wants this to feel like he's Lu Bu and they're *Dynasty Warrior* grunts.

Dre: Mm.

Keith: Yes. Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: You don't have a particular ability for this, so I believe the Hinder action is one person. Let me double check that that's true. You force an opponent, buh buh buh...your target. Yeah, I think because my guess is—and maybe I should just double check this really quick—my guess is there are abilities that would let you do this to multiple people at once, but maybe not.

Keith: Mm-hmm. Yeah, maybe not.

Austin: There might just not be that, in which case...

Keith: It would affect the closest one.

Austin: It would definitely— You know, that would actually make a lot of sense, for it to affect the closest one. That feels deeply appropriate, which would be the Pyroclast, the flamethrower one.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: So let's do that.

Keith: All right.

Austin: And your difficulty here is only 10. Hinder: very useful.

Keith: Hinder. That doesn't have a specific die attached to it, right?

Austin: I believe it depends on what you're trying to do, which feels like Might something for you?

Keith: Feels like Might + Might or Might + Willpower.

Austin: I think probably Might + Willpower. I think we still want some version of an emotional...

Keith: Yeah, mental.

Austin: Yeah, mental, exactly.

Keith: Yeah. Or Intimidate is literally on this sheet, which is Might + Willpower, so.

Austin: Oh, let's do that. That makes sense.

Keith: Right next to Endure. Yeah.

Austin: Yeah, that's where we would have come down probably anyway. Difficulty 10.

Keith: And I don't have a modifier for this.

Austin: No.

Keith: Oof.

Austin: That's a 9.

Keith: That's a 9.

Austin: Do you want to boost it?

Keith: You know, why not?

Austin: Is this our first Fabula?

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: All right. Let's mark it.

Keith: It feels, when there's seven of us here that need to spend Fabula Points in order to get that bonus one, it almost feels like "Ah, I get this done."

Austin: [laughs quietly] That's right.

Keith: Make sure that I don't, like, not have an opportunity to do it.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: I accidentally got... Meta, Fabula Point, reroll...

Austin: Are you using a Bond or are you using a Trait? Are you rerolling, or are you just adding?

Keith: Oh, I can just add, right?

Austin: Yeah. What Bond are you using?

Keith: I forgot about just adding.

Austin: Do you have a Bond with Nicky or Jonathan yet?

Keith: I do have a Bond with Nicky.

Austin: Which, what is that one?

Keith: That one is Admiration.

Austin: Is your Admiration for Jonathan making you want to do good by this?

Keith: Admiration for Nicky

Austin: Sorry, by Nicky, not Jonathan. Sorry.

Keith: Yeah. I think that the Admiration Bond came out of— I think it went both ways, and I think it came out of, like, we were in a combat for the first time, and we both, like, did really well.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: And it was like, you know, two guys who are fighting kind of similar to each other, no nonsense. You know, not wasting time dancing around. [Sylvia and Keith laugh]

Austin: Jesus christ.

Keith: Just, you know, just a big shield and a big fork.

Austin: You said that—

Sylvia: Antistrophe's about to have a heated adventuring moment. [Keith laughs quietly]

Austin: Yeah. Just to be clear, for the record, Janine just said, "I need to go AFK for a second, but I'm still listening," so could not counterpunch here.

Keith: Oh. [laughs] I was surprised that I didn't hear Janine say something.

Austin: Yeah, well.

Keith: And that's why. I didn't see that. And let me spend that Fabula.

Austin: All right, well, what are you giving to this flamethrower guy?

Keith: Oh, that's caps by accident. I'm not mad about it. [Sylvia laughs]

Austin: Oh.

Sylvia: The caps are for intimidation purposes. [Jack laughs quietly]

Austin: You said, "ADD TO INTIMIDATE." Great.

Keith: Okay, so I can give Shaken, Dazed, or what?

Austin: Shaken, Dazed, Slow, or Weak. Any of the ones that affect one thing and not the two that affect two things, basically.

Keith: I'm going to use my video game knowledge to give the flying fire guy Shaken to reduce the Willpower size.

Austin: Interesting. All right. Done.

Sylvia: I'm drawing on the Trait "Gamer".

Austin: The gamer trait. Well, you've done this, and you're going to get ready to draw

on some other gamer traits. [Sylvia laughs] Nicky and Jonathan, have you dropped down here too with Antistrophe?

Art: Yeah.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Austin: You charging in? All right. As you do this, you know, the four of the Creed of Oracles members turn and look at you, and as they do, I think you hear the voice of the Pyroclastic who got scared. Actually, probably not the Pyroclastic. I think the Pyroclastic, like, briefly lands for a second and falls backwards into a waiting hand from the Conduit, which is the title that Ushala—the one who was praying in the light—has. And she says,

(as **Ushala**): Be brave. They're more honorable than they seem.

Austin: Noting the fact that you did not just, like, hit them in the back of the head without them noticing. You did announce your presence.

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Austin: And then she says,

(as **Ushala**): We evoke the Valorous Guard Coliseum.

Austin: And something special happens here in Armidirge, a place you've never fought before.

Keith: Uh oh.

Austin: A sort of, like, an energy...or like, energy suggests sci-fi more than this, but a sort of like divine shield appears around the three of you and the three of them, and you can only fight two on— actually, it's one-on-one here, because you're only three of you.

Keith: Whoa.

Austin: You're doing a Pokémon fight.

Keith: Oh my god. [Jack laughs quietly]

Sylvia: [quietly singing combat music]

Austin: Only one of you can be in the fight actively at a time, and you have to tag out if you want to tag out. Who is starting? This is one of the Celestial Laws of Armidirge.

Dre: Ooh. Who's our best, like, debuffer or just outright damage dealer?

Austin: I'm going to move the three of you back, and you can kind of put one person forward. [cross] I think because you got the drop on the Pyroclast, that person's starting first for them.

Art: [cross] Do we know who they're starting with?

Austin: Sorry, say again?

Art: Who are they starting?

Austin: They are starting Jonea, Hovering Pyroclastic, and the other two that are in for them are Chanan, first Oracle Infantry, and Paolo, the other Infantry. The Conduit is staying out of this fight, at this point.

Art: Is this going to be like the airborne thing where we can't hit them?

Austin: This person is flying, yes.

Art: Can anyone handle that?

Dre: Uh, yes?

Keith: Yes.

Art: Well, then it looks like it's you.

Keith: I did get, I should note, I got a special "can attack for free melee against flying people" from— This is a perfect matchup for the trumpet guy.

Art: Oh, right. So maybe you should go first.

Dre: Yeah, go for it.

Keith: Yeah, I think this is the—

Austin: You did kind of announce your presence in that way, right? So.

Keith: Yeah, yeah. I think that this is a perfect Trumpet Toss thing. And I'm closest anyway.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: Let's see.

Austin: And I think that what it is is there's, like, a little divine bubble shield around this kind of center area where the fight is happening, and then, Nicky and Jonathan, you have both been, like, attached to that bubble by divine light, basically, that's like reaching out from that bubble, this kind of shimmering bubble that's attached you to it. So you're able to move around and stuff, but who knows what would happen if you tried to, like, move too far away or hurt somebody who wasn't attached to it or try to hurt the other people who are not in it yet, you know?

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Austin: But I wanted to paint that image.

Art: I assume I'd be crushed into a tiny ball.

Austin: That might happen. [laughs] Yeah, exactly! Where you have to live. But no worry, you love it. You love to fight also. It's in your blood. You love it when you're fighting.

Conflict: Jonea [1:00:36]

Austin: All right, let's do Initiative here. What is your Initiative score?

Keith: -3, I think?

Austin: All right, give me your roll. Your difficulty here is 9. And we're going to count the rounds, like the— Ooh, that's only a 6. They are going to go first. Jonea, Hovering Pyroclastic is going to go first with a 9 initiative.

Jack: You don't want that in a Pokémon fight.

Austin: You don't want that. You want to have a high speed, see if you can set up Tail Wind or Trick Room, you know?

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Anyway, you're going to go second. We're going to count rounds as every three turns, in terms of the XP gained thing, since, you know, [**Keith:** Right.] you have three of you normally, and there's three of them, right? So.

Keith: Because our turns are tripled.

Austin: That's right, exactly. All right. Jonea, Hovering Pyroclastic sees you and, let's see.

Keith: If we had gotten the drop on them in a more violent, sneaky, underhanded way, [**Austin:** Yeah.] would they have discarded these rules?

Austin: No, they would have activated these rules, but you would have gotten a hit in on them first, and they would have come in with whatever hit you did to them.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: So. But yeah, no, this is how they fight, in their minds, you know?

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Let's see.

Art: So maybe that nine person fight wouldn't have been so bad.

Austin: [laughs] This is the thing, right? Well, except they would have just jumped you again after, right? [Sylvia laughs] But you may have been able to 1v1 them all the way down. That is, like, a classic Pokémon fight, right?

Keith: Yeah. Totally.

Austin: It's like my favorite part of Z/A was actually, can you do this? Or really any...

Keith: Like the restaurant thing?

Austin: Yeah, the restaurant stuff. Yeah, exactly.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Or even like the Elite Four in a way is sort of like, can you push through this? you know?

Keith: Yeah. Yeah.

Art: Yeah, it depends what kind of, like, time to do items in between we get.

Austin: Exactly. All right.

Keith: I now understand why you almost were like, [cagily] "Maybe you should, I don't know, [mumbles] try to fight eight on three."

Austin: Yeah. [laughs] You see what I mean? Yeah. But it does seem hard, and there's other stuff that you don't know yet that would make it hard also, is what I would say.

Keith: Yeah, it does. Yeah.

Austin: All right. Jonea, Hovering Pyroclastic removes one of these— I described these last time, but the kind of hovering flamethrower guys have little, like, volcanic rock orbs at their belts.

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Austin: And with a gloved hand, they reach down and grab one of these and tosses it at you. What is your Physical Defense, again?

Keith: 15.

Austin: Okay. Ah, only a 14. So close. [Keith whistles] Misses with Volcanic Charge. If this had hit, it would have done 12 physical damage to you, and then, more importantly, the rock would have stuck to you.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: And would have exploded if you had been hit after that, doing extra damage to you and transferring some of your life to the enemy's.

Keith: By the way, see that Willpower die that went down? That's important.

Austin: I do see. That's it! There it is, right there.

Keith: Yeah.

Dre: Mm.

Austin: There's that Willpower die that went down, 100%. Janine, do you want to read what you posted in the chat? [Dre, Jack, and Keith laugh] Mm.

Janine: I said, "It's a shame there isn't a handsome dancer with 4 Initiative and a move that lets him get a free action at the start of combat and also a dance that lets him alter turn order. Hmm, interesting." [Austin chuckles]

Jack: Hmm.

Austin: Kind of a classic.

Janine: Seems like a dancer might actually be pretty good for a fight. Like, I don't know how you— I guess I don't know.

Austin: Yeah. Brontë's kind of the Incineroar.

Keith: What's your Physical Defense, by the way?

Art: Did said dancer want to come this way and was somehow denied?

Janine: No, it just didn't happen. My Physical Defense is fine, I'll have you know.

Keith: Is it higher than 14?

Austin: Very few is, you know? What do you...

Janine: It's 13.

Austin: Yeah, uh huh. All right.

Janine: That's respectable for a guy— I don't wear any martial armor. Listen.

Keith: It is. It's very respectable. It's very respectable. It's really good.

Austin: It's very respectable. It is. All right.

Keith: My turn?

Austin: Your turn.

Keith: All right. Okay. I am going to do... Is Jonea hovering currently?

Austin: Jonea is hovering currently. That is correct.

Keith: And counts as ranged.

Austin: And counts as— uh, that was a ranged attack.

Keith: Okay. So, but like, I can't just— I have to use Trumpet Toss right now.

Austin: That is correct.

Keith: Okay. Melo—

Austin: Well, or you could do something. You could do an Elemental Shard. You could

do, you know?

Keith: Right. I'm going to start with this, because I think it's cool.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: "Melo wakes up and releases a blast of air from his trunk, sending you flying across the battlefield. You may immediately perform a free attack with a melee weapon you have equipped. This attack may target creatures that can only be targeted by ranged attacks. If you use a weapon belonging to the brawling or spear category attack, this deals 5 extra damage," which I do. "When you hit a flying target with an attack—"

Austin: Yeah, are your shields brawling weapons? Is that what they are?

Keith: Yes, they are.

Austin: That's what I thought, yeah.

Keith: "You may force them to land immediately." So I'm going to roll my Dual Shield Bearer. It also does extra damage equal to my SL and Defensive Mastery, so I'm going to get 9 extra damage off of this.

Austin: I mean, if you hit.

Keith: If I hit. If I hit.

Austin: Yeah. [sighs]

Keith: Oof.

Austin: That's only an 8.

Keith: That's such a bad roll.

Austin: That's such a bad roll for you.

Dre: Woof.

Keith: Yeah. It is.

Austin: Do you have any Fabula Points left, or was that it?

Keith: That was it.

Austin: Wow! Oh, kind of brutal.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: All right. You charge down, you try to make this hit, and I think just dodges out of the way, just kind of sidesteps you here.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: All right, do they stay in? I think they're going to try to push their— Oh, hmm, hmm, hmm. Hmm. This is interesting. I'm thinking in different ways about the way that combat has to work here, you know?

Dre: Hmm. Now, when you switch out, does that cost your turn?

Austin: Yeah. That costs your turn! Yeah, you got it!

Dre: Okay, okay, okay, okay.

Austin: It's like that.

Art: Oh, that's...

Austin: And I didn't give any of them U-turn or any of that, you know what I mean? So. I do think what they're going to do is... I have to look at another character really quick. I think... Yeah, okay.

Keith: *Pokémon* fans are screaming. "Hell yeah, U Turn!"

Austin: [chuckles] They are.

Dre: I mean, yeah.

Keith: Volt Switch! Yeah! We're screaming!

Art: If there is a single *Pokémon* fan listening to this and not screaming “hell yeah,” I'm beside myself. [Austin laughs]

Austin: Jonea here turns and faces...what is this one's name? Paolo, the one to the kind of right, the back right behind them, and kind of fires a blast of fire—“fires a blast of fire”—releases a blast of fire at the ground [**Keith:** Mm-hmm.] underneath them or in front of the, and a bunch of ash covers them. And what they have done is buffed their Might by one size and given them a resistance to fire damage.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: And that's their turn.

Keith: I'm going to just quickly do the exact thing I just did and hope for a better roll.

Austin: Well, that's, now we're talking.

Art: Yeah, now we're pod racing.

Dre: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Austin: Now we're talking *Pokémon*.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah, just do that again.

Keith: Just do that again. 13.

Austin: 13 hits.

Keith: 13 hits. Great.

Austin: 22 physical damage?

Keith: So that actually does 31 physical damage.

Austin: Whew! 31 physical damage. They are in Crisis.

Keith: Great.

Austin: So that's the second round done. All right, third round.

Keith: Oh, and they've also landed, and they...

Austin: Because you've charged them again with the flying attack thing.

Keith: Yes, I've forced them to land immediately.

Austin: All right, they are landed now. And I think is going to try...mm...yeah. I think is going to try the same thing that they tried on you once before and try to hit you with their second volcanic sticky grenade. Your Defense is 14, right?

Keith: Does not hit.

Austin: Yeah, that does not hit. All right.

Keith: 15, 15.

Austin: 15. Jesus christ. Yeah, that does not hit.

Keith: No.

Austin: So that's their third action. Back to you.

Keith: All right. And now that they're landed, I don't need to use Trumpet Toss again.

Austin: You don't. You don't.

Keith: And I think I can maybe finish them off with one more [**Austin:** Phew.]
Shieldbearer strike.

Austin: Well, you can with a crit you can!

Keith: Critical success!

Austin: God damn! Gollee! [Sylvia laughs]

Keith: Which does 28 damage.

Austin: Yeah! 28 total, huh?

Keith: 28 total.

Austin: Okay.

Keith: Yeah, after my bonus 9. And let me open up that...

Austin: Let's see what your Opportunities are, yeah.

Keith: Let's see.

Austin: That does not kill them. That does not knock them out. They are not KO'd.

Keith: Okay. All right.

Austin: Yeah, importantly, this is not a world where crits just do extra damage or something.

Keith: It's true. Okay. Your actions earn you someone's support or admiration. Choose a creature present on the scene; they make a compromising statement.

Dre: Oohooohoo!

Art: Oh!

Keith: You create a bond.

Austin: That's interesting. Yeah.

Keith: I mean, Faux Pas is always interesting.

Dre: She already complimented you once, bro. I mean, you know.

Keith: The next Check performed by you or an ally will receive a bonus +4. That's what

we saw on the other side.

Austin: That's true.

Dre: Mm.

Keith: Okay. Just to talk it out a little bit, I'm always curious about Unmask, because we actually don't really know anything about the Agonies or about this church [**Austin:** Yeah.] or what they're— Like, why are they here? Why are they fighting? Why are they mad about the Agonies or why are the Agonies—? Why are they bullying the Agonies, I guess?

Austin: Yeah. You can do that.

Keith: So, I'm thinking that. Yeah, 'cause there's nothing here that's like... I can bring their die back down. I can give them Dazed or whatever to bring their Might back down to 10 from 12.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Keith: And it's like, that would be nice, but I kind of would like to know what is going on with this church.

Austin: Sure. So yeah, what is this...? Do you say something to try to generate a response here?

Keith: Yeah. I assume that the enemies that are still in their Pokéballs, they can talk still.

Austin: Yeah, no one is actually in Pokéballs. Everyone is standing around.

Keith: No one's in... [chuckles]

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Keith: We are in spheres, though.

Austin: You're in one big— You're in like a— Yeah, you're in like a giant bubble shield, you know?

Keith: Okay. Yeah.

Austin: Like from video games? [laughs quietly]

Janine: Or like a blitzball sphere.

Austin: Like a blitzball sphere, exactly. Different game.

Jack: This is the most violent minigame yet.

Austin: [chuckles] It kind of is.

Keith: It's true. Yeah.

Austin: And it's the most popular RPG on the planet. [Jack laughs]

Keith: And it's for kids, and it's about dogfighting.

Austin: [laughs] And it's good. It's about dogfighting or cockfighting. It's fine.

Keith: But it's fine. The dogs *need* to fight because of their trust in humans.

Sylvia: They like it.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Austin: That's right. [laughs]

Keith: And every game is going to only be about that.

Sylvia: It's an expression of their love.

Austin: It's true. But also you can do their hair sometimes and put them in little outfits, and that's funny.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: Before they fight.

Keith: Every once in a while they do a contest to win a cute competition.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: And you're breeding them! [Austin laughs]

Keith: And you're breeding them. [laughs]

Sylvia: Whoa.

Keith: I think that when I make the hit and I see that the hovering pyrocaster—or whatever they're called—is kind of on her last leg, that I kind of take the opportunity to just be like,

(as **Antistrophe**): Who are you people, anyway?

Austin: Outside of the circle, Nicky and Jonathan, you hear, [muffled mumbling], so they can't hear you, which gives Jonea the ability to speak freely as you fight, and they say,

(as **Jonea**): My name's Jonea.

Austin: And we're doing Pokémon battle type shit, right? Where you're, like, bouncing around the little zone, you know what I mean? And like, dodging attacks.

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Austin: But now we're also doing kind of, like, *Dragon Ball* things where you're talking as you're fighting, you know? Or like, *Yu Yu Hakusho*, you know?

Keith: Yeah. Yeah.

Austin: And Jonea's like,

(as **Jonea**): It wasn't supposed to be like this! Not until— not until we started

getting new commands.

Austin: And, like, releases a blast of fire that you dodge. We can just kind of be in convo mode for a second.

Keith: Right.

(as **Antistrophe**): New commands?

Austin (as **Jonea**): Our goddess returned to us.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Is this why you were going after the Agonies?

Austin (as **Jonea**): The Agonies were just in the way. There's something really powerful here that we're looking for.

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

Austin (as **Jonea**): Some sort of gem. And if we get it, then we get to leave this cursed place. We finally get to go home.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Home to where?

Austin (as **Jonea**): Home. Back away from the front. I'm from a little village called Burkin. Where are you from?

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): I'm from a place called the Hundred Burroughs.

Austin (as **Jonea**): [scoffs] Never heard of it. [Sylvia laughs]

Keith: Austin, I assume that Jonea's, like other characters that we've met, kind of not really fully aware that they are in a sort of ghostly afterimage of a destroyed version of the world?

Austin: I'm so glad you asked that, because like, the answer was yes.

Keith: Until this goddess came back.

Austin: Until, it seems like something has started happening here, in terms of connecting this person to the rest of your reality. Does that make sense?

Keith: Which is why there's a Valte backpack.

Austin: Which is why there's a Valte backpack. Yes. They were seemingly given that Valte backpack, you know? In fact, maybe says as much. Says like, you know,

(as **Jonea**): We got this backpack, and that's where that ship came from, probably.

Keith (as **Antistrophe**): Where did your god come back from?

Austin (as **Jonea**): Through our Conduit.

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

Austin: And kind of nods behind themselves, back to Ushala, the one who was praying.

Keith: Okay.

(as **Antistrophe**): The world you're trying to get to, I don't think it's the same world as the one that you left.

Austin: And now finally, I think, charges forward. This is round four, I believe, right?

Keith: Yeah. Three?

Austin: Which is actually the end of round one. No, because they've gone... [typing] They've gone three times. You've gone three times.

Keith: Right. Oh, okay, so yes. End of round one, because we've...

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: We're in round three of round one.

Austin: We've finished round three of round one, just now.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: That's the end of your critical success. As you say, like, "I don't think it's the world that you're trying to get back to," they say,

(as **Jonea**): Well, it isn't war,

Austin: And just charge at you outright, to try to just... You know, I guess actually they turn on the flamethrower and just try to blast you with it as they charge forward.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: With a 6, they are not going to succeed.

Keith: I wonder if it's worth trying to get them to give up. I guess I don't know... I don't know if I have the answer to this. Like, if I kill them, am I killing a real person? Like, is this...

Austin: I mean, it's all real people.

Keith: But is it a person who's alive, and if I kill them, will they die? Or will they just still be in here?

Austin: You've never met a person in this game that isn't real, I don't think. Unless we've done, like, a dream sequence.

Keith: So at that party, if someone has killed someone at that party, [**Austin:** Yeah.] they wouldn't, like, wake up at that party again later. They would be dead.

Art: In like a *Shining* situation.

Austin: I see what you're saying. Uh, I don't think so. No, I think they would be dead.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: Or they might also be in a—

Keith: Yeah, I mean, I—

Janine: I'm laughing, because this is, like, famously the kind of question that Austin puts. I'm thinking of Twilight Mirage and shit, of just like...

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Janine: Yeah, there's always someone whose life doesn't count, question mark? But it does count, question mark?

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: But you figure it out. Do you feel like you're killing them?

Austin: Yeah, what do you think about the situation? You know, Bluff City is a classic one of these too.

Keith: I don't want to stop them from going to our world.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: Like, I'm not, "We have to stop them from getting to..."

Austin: I mean, we should be clear too. You don't have to kill them to win the fight.

Keith: Well, in *Pokémon*, they pass out. [Art chuckles]

Austin: Well, and I think here even, the rules are very clear about what winning a fight is, and you can decide if you've killed someone when you've put them down to 0.

Keith: That's true. In the game that we're already playing, that's true.

Austin: That's right. Yeah.

Keith: Yeah. Okay. Well then, I don't have to worry about it, and I'm going to hit them with my shields. [Sylvia laughs]

Austin: I'm going to double check that, but yeah.

Keith: I'm going to keep bonking until they can't fight.

Dre: Mm.

Keith: 13.

Austin: That's enough. That'll do it. They were at 1 HP.

Keith: Does 30.

Austin: And I think—

Keith: They were at 1. [laughs]

Austin: They were at 1 that whole time. Yeah, you dropped them to 1 with that second hit, so they had that whole conversation with you. It's a good thing that that crit didn't do extra damage flatly, you know?

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Austin: So, yeah. I think there you go. Knocks that one out, and Jonea kind of falls to the ground, and the bubble shield does, like, an energy grab and pulls them back and puts them next to the Conduit and then pulls in Paolo, the one who got buffed before.

Conflict: Paolo [1:18:38]

Austin: And I guess, what did you roll on your speed? Was it a 6?

Keith: It was a 6, yeah.

Austin: They are faster than you still. But—

Keith: Now, in *Pokémon*, when you defeat an enemy, you get a free swap.

Austin: You mean when you lose a Pokémon, you get a free swap, yeah. This is a free swap.

Sylvia: You can also swap—

Austin: This is a free swap.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: You don't then get a hit in on this person as they come in. Yes. What were you going to say, Sylvi?

Sylvia: I was going to say, like if, in *Pokémon*, you could like tag out to, like, Jonathan.

Keith: Yeah, you get...

Austin: Oh, I see. You're saying...

Keith: Both sides get a free swap.

Art: Do we get a free swap.

Austin: You get a free swap. Yeah. If you want to swap, you could swap.

Keith: So, I'm fine to stay in. I didn't take a hit at all on that. [Sylvia laughs] I'm also happy to swap. You know, it's whatever. There's four of these guys. Whatever we're feeling.

Sylvia: Antistrophe's going to solo.

Art: In *Pokémon*, I would leave in a person who hadn't taken a hit, and also you have plenty of MP in case you need to use another Agony?

Keith: Yeah, yeah.

Art: Yeah, I think as long as you're good, you can stay in.

Keith: Yeah, I'm good to stay in.

Dre: Okay.

Jack: Let me solo her.

Austin: [chuckles] Yeah. [quiet laughter]

Keith: Which one is this?

Austin: This is Paolo, Oracle Infantry. This person has on, like, light—

Keith: Not the Conduit.

Austin: Not the Conduit. The Conduit is not attached to the bubble shield at all.

Keith: Okay.

Dre: Oh.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: Oh, so it's three-on-three.

Austin: It's three-on-three. Yeah. It's three-on-three, one at a time, which is the way the current singles format is going in *Pokémon*.

Keith: Okay.

Jack: And also in *Pokémon*, you have the one person who is channeling a god in the background who doesn't participate in the fight.

Austin: That's right.

Sylvia: The trainer, yeah. [Keith laugh]

Jack: Oh, right, yes.

Austin: The trainer, yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah, they have a kind of light armor with some kind of loose robes and stuff, and they have a rifle with a bayonet attached.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: And they're covered with this kind of ash that is giving them extra Might, extra

power.

Keith: Hmm. Now, this is interesting. My gut instinct is that in—

Austin: Oh, and they're going first, because duh, right? Because their speed is— unless you're changing— oh, are you changing out?

Keith: No, no, no. I'm going to stay in, [**Austin:** Okay.] and they are going to go first.

Austin: Okay. So as soon as they step in front of you, they say a little prayer and put their hands together in a prayer motion, and there's like a beam of light from above. By the way, the sky here is just— you're just in the Dragon Path out here. It's not a fake sky. It's just the weird purple orange, you know, garish Dragon Path all around you.

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Austin: And the beam of light comes down from somewhere and hits them, and they get magical platemail attached to them, [Sylvia laughs] and now they resist physical.

Keith: Fuck.

Sylvia: Should've tagged out.

Keith: [laughing] I was just about to say I don't think that they are going to resist physical, because they're just a normal infantry, [**Austin:** Uh huh.] and now they're an Oracle Infantry that resists physical.

Austin: Uh huh.

Dre: Mm.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: And they weren't, until they did that spell.

Keith: Yeah. I'm still good. It's fine. [Austin and Jack laugh]

Austin: Your turn.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: I just have to say really quick: you've only seen one of two the Celestial Laws of Armidirge, but I spent, like, weeks trying to crack what the Armidirge laws were, and I had all sorts [**Keith:** Yeah.] of other more complicated stuff. The other one is complicated in a different way. But I was like, "Could we do distances? Could we do cover? Could we do like it's a tactics fight with like..." [Jack chuckles]

Dre: Ooh.

Austin: You know, it's *Valkyria Chronicles*, because clearly Armidirge is partly, it's like *Valkyria Chronicles* but if there was, like, more religious magic in that game than there already is.

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Austin: And eventually I was like, "Oh no. What if they're all obsessed with weird rules?" which you saw last time.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: And I went: what if they're all obsessed with and can literally enforce Pokémon battle rules? And that's just better. It's just funnier for the guy with the bayonet to basically be a Pikachu, you know? [Sylvia laughs]

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: That's the problem with all these *Pokémon* clones. They're all just trying to include Pokémon, like fake— like *Temtem* is just "what if we did a *Pokémon* with our own Pokémon?" and they should be doing, like, guys with guns. [laughs quietly] And not Pokémon with guns.

Jack: God, they should.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: No, just guys.

Keith: But you still capture them?

Austin: I don't know, maybe. Yeah, I mean—

Sylvia: I've played *Metal Gear Solid*.

Jack: It should be *Pokémon* and it's like—

Austin: MGS5 but you then get to do Pokémon battles [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] with the guys you bring back to base.

Dre: Ohh.

Sylvia: [cross] Their farting weasel!

Jack: [inaudible crosstalk 1:22:59]

Art: [cross] Wait, there was a *Metal Gear Solid* that was *Pokémon*, right?

Austin: Sorry, say that again, Art?

Art: There was a Metal Gear that was *Pokémon*. You, like, generated dudes by going to different WiFi?

Sylvia: You're thinking of— There's a mode in Portable Ops, yeah.

Austin: In Portable Ops, yeah.

Art: Yeah.

Sylvia: I think it's Portable Ops.

Austin: Which eventually kind of cashes out in MGS5, when you can bring guys back to your base.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: “Dave, I choose you.”

Austin: [chuckles] Exactly. Anyway.

Jack: I'm sending out Lance Corporal.

Keith: “Dave, use gun!” [Austin and Keith laugh]

Sylvia: He would be Laughing Dave. Like, you need the adjective in there.

Austin: He would. Yeah. [chuckles]

Sylvia: Glittering Harvey. [Dre, Keith, and Jack laugh]

Jack: Useless Rachel. [Austin laughs]

Austin: It's your turn. What are you doing?

Sylvia: Oh, and Funny Ross, yeah.

Austin: Oh, I see.

Jack: Oh!

Austin: I've caught on. [Sylvia laughs]

Keith: [imitating *Friends*] Could I *take* any more damage?

Austin: Oh my god. [Sylvia and Keith laugh]

Keith: Okay, so, I have a couple things that I could do here. I've never used an attack that isn't my shield, but I did recently get a sword called the Breaching Stone Steel sword, which does earth damage and ignores resistances, so sounds great to me.

Austin: You have to switch your weapon, I believe. You can't just— Yeah, that's the

Equipment action.

Keith: It's true, but I thought that when I got this, we talked about it, and it is not... It doesn't take a whole turn to swap, is I thought what we landed on. But I could be wrong.

Austin: It definitely, definitely— Well, sorry. Read me what it is, again?

Keith: The Breaching Stone Steel Sword. Martial, DEX plus Might, one-handed.

Austin: It definitely—

Keith: I roll +10 earth damage. It takes a whole turn?

Austin: You have to use the Equipment...

Keith: Oh, no, sorry, not about this. I was asking— I just remember, in a past episode, being like, “Does it take a whole turn to switch weapons?” and someone said no.

Austin: It does. It fully—

Keith: Okay.

Austin: There's a specific action called the Equipment Action. When you use this action, you may store any number of your equipped items in your backpack, and you may take any number of items from your backpack and equip them. The only thing you can't equip or put away is armor. There's simply not enough time for that during a single action.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: You can spend several turns on it. But yeah, you have to spend an action on equip, unless you have something special.

Keith: I gotta look in Tinkerer and see if there's a swap fast skill somewhere in there, because there is a “use an equipment as a free action,” as long as it's about potions.

Austin: Right, yeah, yeah.

Keith: Okay. So I'm not going to do that, at least not right now. I do, though, have one other thing that I can do, which is Devil's Breath: up to three creatures; you unleash a searing barrage against your foes, conjuring flames out of thin air. Each target hit by this spell suffers fire damage. Opportunity: each target hit by this spell suffers Enraged.

Austin: Ooh. I love that we are playing the Pokémon, and you are summoning Persona.

Keith: Yeah. [Keith and Dre chuckle] I mean, these guys are kind of like Pokémon.

Sylvia: I mean, *Shin Megami Tensei* is, you know...

Austin: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, I know, yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: It is kind of the Pokémon with guns we were talking about, now that I think about it.

Austin: It is. You're right. It is.

Keith: Is this *Final Fantasy VIII*? Is this what *Final Fantasy VIII* is about?

Sylvia: Oh, it's your GF.

Austin: Yeah, mm-hmm, mm-hmm. [chuckles]

Keith: This is my GF.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Janine: *Pokémon* would also just be better if you had to, like, bribe them.

Austin: It would be. It would be!

Janine: Yeah.

Dre: Mm.

Keith: Mm.

Austin: They asked you really annoying questions that had, like, non-deterministic answers. [Jack chuckles]

Janine: Yeah. Yeah.

Austin: You weren't really sure why they did the things they did. Yeah.

Keith: Here's my question. Devil's Breath says that it's high roll plus 10, but a roll of what?

Austin: What's the...?

Sylvia: High roll plus 10 is like your— that would be your hit roll.

Austin: Yeah, but what's the roll, is what Keith is asking.

Keith: Yeah, it doesn't tell me what to roll.

Austin: [typing] Let me find it. It should be Insight + Willpower.

Keith: Okay. Not the end of the world.

Austin: Yeah. And again, this is like the second time you're doing this in a fight. You haven't cast a spell like this before, but it's drawing on your MP.

Keith: Which fundamentally is— and the same thing happened when I was using Study via Quick Assessment.

Austin: Yeah. Mm-hmm.

Keith: It's like the person who made my shields and a couple of other people have told me that I have magic that I can't use.

Austin: Yes. Yes.

Keith: But I'm like, "But I don't feel that I have it."

Belated Ruin Checks [1:27:34]

Austin: Keith, we forgot to roll your Ruin Check last time.

Keith: A couple times, yeah.

Austin: Can we do those?

Jack: Oh no.

Keith: I remember that it's been...

Austin: Can we do those? Do this attack—

Keith: Right now?

Austin: Uh, yeah. Let's do them first. Let's do them first, and then you can do the attack.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: We missed two of them or three of them?

Keith: It's either two or three.

Austin: Let's do two.

Keith: It's definitely more than one.

Austin: It's definitely more than one.

Keith: It's definitely more than one, and so I want to reread it, because... So, you're supposed to do it before you level up, and sometimes we've done it after, and so I think that I'm supposed to be... It's 2d20, and so I think that it's gotta be under...

Austin: It's before assigning XP, but it's the end of each session. It's not only when you level up, right?

Keith: Let's say 11. Sorry, uh...

Austin: Have you leveled twice in the last two sessions? No.

Keith: No, just once. I said 11, but I meant 13. 13, 13, 14?

Austin: Yeah. Well, yeah. Are we doing three, or are we doing two?

Keith: Yeah. Uh...

Austin: You think it's three. I think it might be three.

Keith: I think it's three.

Austin: We haven't done it in a minute. Yeah.

Keith: I know. Yeah.

Austin: 13, 13, 14. Let's do it. Roll 2d20. Try to get— you're trying to get above this.

Keith: Yes.

Austin: Yeah, I think that's right. 13, 13, 14.

Keith: 27.

Austin: Safe.

Keith: Safe.

Austin: Safe. 20. Safe. One more. And this is the one that needs to be above 14. Ohhh.

Sylvia: Oh!

Keith: 7.

Austin: That is a 7! [Jack chuckles] Advance your clock by one! It's level 3 now.

Keith: Level 3.

Dre: How many levels can it get?

Keith: 10?

Austin: I think it's 10. 9.

Keith: "When your Ruin advances for the ninth time, [**Austin:** Yeah, okay.] you lose this Quirk, and your Ruin comes true, [**Austin:** Yeah.] manifesting into the world as a Supreme Villain."

Austin: Keith, you feel it this time.

Jack: Don't we see— Yeah.

Austin: You just said you don't feel it.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: You can feel the magic welling up inside of you at this moment. And for Nicky and Jonathan, the sort of divine bubble around this fight catches fire when Antistrophe does this spell. And it feels like Antistrophe is doing the spell, as much as Ira, the little cherubic demon imp is doing it. You know, watching it feels like watching a JoJo stand more than it feels like watching a separate being doing it.

Keith: Hmm.

Austin: Which it didn't feel like that watching the trumpet attack from a second ago.

Keith: Yeah. Melo was doing the trumpets.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: The spell is Antistrophe punching really really fast over and over again. [Austin and Keith chuckle]

Conflict: Paolo [1:30:02]

Austin: That's right. All right, so give me the actual spell. It's very funny if you do this and miss. [laughs quietly]

Keith: It was Insight + Willpower, you said?

Austin: Insight + Willpower, yeah. This targets Magic Defense.

Keith: That's a 10.

Austin: That is a 10. That is going to hit.

Keith: Oh, thank god.

Austin: What is your high roll, there? It's a 5?

Keith: It's a 5 plus 15, so that's 20 fire damage, and also Paolo suffers Enraged.

Austin: Only if it was a crit, which it isn't.

Keith: Oh, is that—? I totally missed that it was only on a crit.

Austin: Yeah, the Opportunity thing there is if it's a crit, you get...

Keith: Oh, Opportunity because that's what they're called when you get a crit.

Austin: When you crit. Yeah, exactly.

Keith: Okay. So it adds an Opportunity.

Austin: That's right. Exactly.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: All right. You set Paolo on fire here. You don't actually. There's no, like, "enflamed" thing. But yeah, you do the— you burn Paolo. You burn Paolo.

Keith: Okay. I burn Paolo.

Austin: That's turn four? Turn five. That's turn four. Round, still...

Keith: That is round two, turn total four.

Austin: Turn total four. Yeah. But not round. Yeah, okay. All right. Paolo is going to open fire at you.

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Austin: What is your Magical Defense?

Keith: 12.

Austin: God, you're tough as hell.

Keith: I know.

Austin: That's only a 10. That is not going to hit.

Sylvia: Damn, bro, you're yoked. [Dre chuckles]

Austin: You're so yoked.

Keith: I'm pretty sure I'm impossible to hit.

Austin: You're really hard to hit. Lowers the rifle and, you know, pulls a trigger at you, you know, trying to fire through the incoming blast of Devil's Breath.

Keith: Can it just plink right off?

Austin: Yeah, these beams of light just, like, plink right off of you, at this point. And they plink right off of you in the way that is, like, kind of ominous and scary. They plink off of *you*, in a way that they—

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Like, one of them hits you in the cheek and plinks off of you. It's because the Ruin is, you know, moving through you.

Keith: I got too much magic right now.

Austin: You know, and I think Paolo is— Paolo is doing the “It’s Lu Bu!” thing. “It’s the Gundam!” you know? [Sylvia and Dre laugh]

Keith: Yeah. [Austin chuckles] This was a perfect time—

Sylvia: Antistrophe’s on the Red Hare all of a sudden?

Austin: [laughs quietly] That’s right. That’s what I’m saying.

Keith: I’m going to say this now, when it’s not relevant, so that someone can use it as an argument if it becomes relevant. Let’s see. “When a rule or ability requires you to spend Hit Points, Mind Points, or Fabula Points, you may instead let your Ruin advance to completely ignore that cost.”

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: After just having brought on the Ruin and having it impact the fight, it would be a good time to let myself do that for the first time.

Austin: It would be.

Keith: It would be.

Austin: It would be.

Keith: I’m just saying, in case it comes up. [Sylvia laughs]

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: If there’s a really good moment for it.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: Now, when there’s no stakes to that thought, I’m like, “Yeah, maybe.”

Austin: Because it’s already happening in your mind. Yeah, yeah.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: You've activated the deep well of Ruinous power that's running through you.

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Austin: It's your turn.

Keith: It's my turn. I have two hits left on Devil's Breath before I'm out of MP.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Of course, I could do some half damage with my sword, if I wanted.

Austin: You'd have to switch to it, but yes.

Keith: No. Sorry, I said—

Austin: Your shields.

Keith: I meant physical attack, and I meant shields.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I gotcha. Yeah. Half damage because Paolo now resists physical?

Keith: Right. But I'm going to try again with Devil's Breath.

Austin: All right.

Keith: Because it worked. I rolled two 5s.

Austin: It worked. Didn't resist it. Yeah, you rolled two 5s. Worked just fine.

Keith: Didn't resist it. Although, two 5s on two 8s, that's a tough...

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: Who knows how low the Magic Defense is, though?

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: But we'll see. I'm going to roll. I rolled Interrogate just because it's easy.

Austin: Oh, I'll tell you. Their Magical Defense was 8.

Keith: 12.

Austin: You beat them last time by a bunch, so yeah, go ahead. So, ooh, 8 plus whatever the— What is it? It's 8 plus 15?

Keith: 8 plus 15.

Austin: Whew. 23. They are into Crisis. Not a crit, so you don't have that Opportunity. But at this point, they are just going to— I'm just going to keep it moving. We're going to move right into turn total five. That was turn total five, so this is the second. This is turn total six. This will be the next one. They are going to just try to charge at you with their bayonet.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: They're doing Forceful Flurry. They are a little better at this, but I think you overestimated what their Might is before, because their Might is, in fact, only now 8. It's traditionally 6. Oh, but they crit you!

Keith: But they crit!

Austin: Hoooly!

Sylvia: Wow.

Dre: Wow!

Austin: All right.

Keith: 6, 6.

Austin: So that is, yeah, 6, 6. Look at that. And it's HR plus 15.

Keith: I'm fine. I literally haven't been hit yet. This is my first hit that I've taken.

Austin: Okay. This is 15 damage. Or, sorry, it's not 15. It's... What is it? It's 6 plus 15. It's 21 damage, not 16, because this is one of those ones that it's plus 15 and not plus 10.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: After this attack is resolved, regardless of if it was successful or not, this NPC cannot perform actions or free attacks until the end of their next turn. This is like a big heavy hit from them.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: But they did get a crit, didn't they?

Keith: They did.

Austin: I think—

Keith: If they had, just for scale, if they had hit me with that same attack again, I would only just barely be in Crisis.

Austin: Unbelievable.

Dre: Humble brag.

Austin: Right?

Keith: [inaudible 1:35:36] brag.

Sylvia: Nothing humble about it. Nothing humble about it!

Dre: Yeah, that's true.

Austin: Their Opportunity. They're giving you Weak here.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: They are battering you over and over again. And you're able to defend it, but they're like weakening your arms as the hits come in. You know, that's the Forceful Flurry.

Keith: Okay. Which one is Weak?

Austin: Weak is the...

Keith: Weak is that one. Okay.

Austin: Yeah. The little confusion symbol. To me, that reads like weak.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: So just drop your Might to 8.

Keith: Got it.

Austin: And now it's your turn, and that'll be the end of the second full round.

Keith: All right. Since that was dropped anyway, since my Might was dropped anyway, I was actually thinking about trying to finish Paolo off with shield attacks.

Austin: Mm.

Keith: But now, it won't help, because I'm rolling 8s no matter what, so I'm going to use my last bit of MP to use Devil's Breath again.

Austin: Okay.

Keith: Since they're not going to resist it, and because probably their Magical Defense is lower than their regular Defense. 10.

Austin: That's a 10. That, I believe I said, hits. I think their Defense is 8.

Keith: That hits, yeah.

Austin: What is the damage?

Keith: That's 22.

Austin: 22, because it's 7 plus 15.

Keith: 15.

Austin: That's 22. Yeah. All right. Paolo takes 22 damage and is knocked out.

Keith: Phew. Thank god.

Austin: And again is zipped back out of the way, and Chanan comes forward, and we're going to jump over to the other side at this point, but I'll note: [typing] round two done. All right. Nicky and Jonathan, what's it like seeing Antistrophe go the fuck off?

Art: This rules.

Austin: Oh, okay. Yeah, simple. No notes.

Keith: No notes.

Austin: What's it like seeing the Ruinous magic flow through him?

Art: Oh, you know, less good.

Austin: Okay. Okay.

Art: I think that's less... I'm less... [Dre chuckles]

Keith: They don't hang out with me. They don't know it's Ruinous.

Austin: No.

Dre: Yeah. This just seems cool and normal.

Austin: No, I want to say something really clear: they know it's Ruinous. [Sylvia laughs]

Keith: But do they know *how* Ruinous?

Austin: Maybe not, but they feel it in their hearts. There's a quaking in the heart at seeing this. Something feels off, you know?

Dre: Mm.

Keith: Right. So we can say scarily impressed.

Austin: Oh, yeah. [chuckles]

[["The Castle Eschatonica"](#) by Jack de Quidt plays]