Realis 26: The Wound Way 02

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Recap

Austin: Realis is a science fiction and dark fantasy series that contains discussion of violence, injury, slavery, cannibalism, and disease. This campaign never depicts sexual violence, always shows you where the sword goes, but never what it does, and always errs on the side of maximalism.

["Sapryc" by Jack de Quidt begins playing]

> Jack (as **Jud**): Yeah, so, here's the thing. We've been talking and we're not, you know, 100% sure Mirador's on the up-and-up.
>
> Darcy (as **Flemming**): Oh, absolutely.

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> Austin (as **Mirador**): All of us are moved by the words that we are composed of, that will us, and that we will into reality! And… Most people don't know what they're composed of. They're—they're like a run-on sentence, they just keep going. But, ah… Some people get mastery over themselves. They learn what they're good at. They learn who they are. They even change who they are.

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Austin: I do have to know if anyone here can counter the most important sentence I've ever read: "I always get up to hijinks with my friends."

Jack: [laughs] Oh, no!

Sylvi: What?

Darcy: Ohhh.

Austin: A little guy rolls up in front of you, and is little

(as **Little Guy**): [little guy noise]

Austin: But like rockier than that.

(as **Little Guy**): [rocky little guy noise]

Sylvi: [laughs]

Austin: It's a little pile of rocks with arms and legs.

Darcy: Yeah, I wanna ask them. What can they tell us about this weird waterfall that we're approaching?

Austin: Speaking back to you in their Cobbling language, they are, they say that it's very scary. They say that it hurts to go through, or to touch. They don't go through, they don't through it, don't go there. They tell you no, don't go there! Don't go there.

The tunnel opens up to a sort of orb-shaped pit that goes between this side and the other side. There is no walkway around the pit. It is just a pit, and in the middle of it is in fact a giant orb made of liquid metal. And this is, of course, the Globate Cataract, and it is just constantly churning. Now, in front of it, and still on this of it, is a knight in glistening armor. A helm, guard facing down, standing effectively in attention with a broadsword down at their feet. Almost in perfect statue, like in a perfect statue form. Just waiting. No one has issued challenge to you, there is no immediate threat. There are fifteen Cobblings behind or around you. [laughs]

Jack: [laughs]

Austin: [laughs] There is an undead tree scar knight. You know, you got the whole clique, Scrundle is here.

Darcy: [laughs]

Austin: Ain't nobody fucking with my clique. You know?

Darcy: Yeah.

Jack: [laughs] Yeah, we really assembled the second party in addition to our own. The second unit has shown up—it might be us.

Austin: What if I was like, all right, all right, now I'm gonna need the rest of Friends at the Table to get on the call to reveal that the whole time they've been waiting to play the Cobblings, the Cicatrix Knight and Scrundle?

Sylvi: That would be great, are you kidding?

Darcy: That would be great.

Austin: That would be fantastic.

Darcy: I just don't know who I want Keith to play.

Sylvi: Cobblings.

Austin: Oh, Keith—all the Cobblings? All 15 Cobblings?

Darcy: But I don't, I think Scrundle could be an underrated choice.

Sylvi: That's true.

Darcy: Maybe Art's more of a Scrundle, though.

Austin: Mm. Damn.

Jack: Art would make a good Scrundle.

Austin: Art would make a good Scrundle.

Jack: Um. Does the Cicatrix Knight respond at all to this knight?

Darcy: Ooh, great point.

Austin: Interesting. Like in any sort of, yeah, I see what you're saying. To be like, oh…

Darcy: "I know that guy."

Austin: Are you asking like a specific "I know" or—I guess you're asking how does the Cicatrix Knight respond.

Jack: Yes.

Austin: Only like they're seeing another knight, not like they're seeing someone they know.

Jack: Okay. Not kin.

Austin: Not kin.

Jack: Oh, man.

Sylvi: Unless someone's gonna stop me, part of me—this feels like it's, oh, what I got brought here for, was to deal with whatever this is.

Austin: Mm. Interesting.

Sylvi: And maybe there's even a direct asking of Mirador, like,

> Sylvi (as **Gaje**): Is this what—should I handle this one? Is this…?
>
> Austin (as **Mirador**): Not necessarily. Ideally, we just walk by. Or, get permission to walk by. Would love not to do any more damage to the Hollow Heart.
>
> Sylvi (as **Gaje**): All right, then let's go talk to the statue.

The Knight

Sylvi: It's a statue knight, right? Where did I get that from?

Austin: I described them as standing as if in perfect, you know, as a statuary form, you know, an unmoving, perfect posture, the sort of posture that only a statue or a saint could hold, you know. And this, of course, is a saint. This is Saint Calemi, who is the Gallant of the Hollow Heart. And she, as you approach, says simply,

> (as **Saint Calemi**): Who arrives?

Austin: And I think Mirador steps forward and says,

> Austin (as **Mirador**): My name is Mirador Cantata. I'm here with a group of my friends and guardians and some Cobblings, also, here. And we simply want to pass through the… Through the core, through the Cataract.

Austin: And Calemi says,

> (as **Saint Calemi**): Do you find yourself worthy?

Austin: And Mirador is like,

> Austin (as **Mirador**): Ah… Worthy. I find myself capable. I find myself present. I really gotta know what you mean by worthy.
>
> Darcy (as **Flemming**): Mirador. [sighs] Now is not the time to be humble.
>
> Austin (as **Mirador**): It might not be the time to lie, either. We've traveled a long way. We just want to go the rest of the way. We're happy to pay a tithe if that's what you need.

Austin: And Calemi says,

> (as **Saint Calemi**): I do not need tithe. I need worth. Who can prove their worth?

Austin: Does anyone step forward here?

Darcy: I'm down to try, but I also feel like it has been a Flemm-heavy session. So, I want to give other folks a chance.

Sylvi: You hate a phlegm-heavy session.

Darcy: [laughs] You really do.

Austin: Aw. Aw.

Darcy: You know, spring's coming, allergies are back.

Austin: Mm-hm. Mm-hm. Sometimes you just gotta go and record it anyway.

Sylvi: I wanna, like, know what it… I mean, it's purposely vague, right? We're in the land of fairytales and such.

Austin: She is being vague. Yeah, she is being purposely—yeah, we are in that realm. You know, we've definitely shifted as we've gotten closer to the other side of this planet.

Darcy: Yeah, Mirador, it is annoying when people are vague and they ask you questions, huh?

Austin: [laughs]

Sylvi: You're not playing Jud, Darcy.[1]

Darcy: [laughs]

Jack: [laughs]

Sylvi: I could step up to the statue here. I feel like after Mirador being like, well, ideally we just walk by. I don't know if I'm going to… Looking at what I have, the only—I am considering making a cup of tea, because I have the Tea of the Hollow Heart, but that's literally the only non-violent thing I have.

Austin: Oh, that's fun. What's that do again?

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[1] The name in the audio recording is no longer in use, hence the audio/transcript discrepancy.

Sylvi: “The Tea of the Hollow Heart always calms a troubled soul.”

Austin: Oh, that’s fun.

Darcy: Oh…

Sylvi: And for some reason, the idea of Gaje, instead of stepping up to fight this statue, being like, let’s share a drink together.

Austin: God.

Sylvi: It’s fun.

Austin: Yeah, do you just ask for the kettle and like put a little fire on?

Sylvi: Yeah. I don’t think anybody catches on to what I’m doing until the, it’s actually going. Like, there’s like a moment of, oh God, he’s not going to use the kettle as a weapon, right? We need that.

Austin: [laughs] Right. Do we basically do like, is it, you know, Flemming and Mirador off like, okay, what do we want to, what’s the thing? And then Gaje is just like, I have this tea. I’m going to walk up and offer tea to this knight.

Sylvi: Yeah. I think like, cause we, it felt like we were debating in character, like we were—and out of character, debating what to do for a while, so like.

Austin: Yeah, totally.

Sylvi: Using that as a, to fly under the radar sounds great.

Austin: I love this. What do you say as you approach—do you approach with one cup, two cups, the kettle, or like the whole…

Sylvi: No, two. Well, I approach with one because I can only hold one right now.

Austin: Sure. Well, you could have it on like a little platter or something to carry it.

Sylvi: That's true. I guess I just don't know what mirador's got in the cart. If there's something—

Austin: Yeah, there's a little tea set with a platter that you could, you know, palm and carry over that way. I think.

Sylvi: I think it's like… I like the idea of this being like, Gaje just like sets it down like in front of the knight, takes a seat, and grabs his own cup and then starts being like,

> Sylvi (as **Gaje**): So how long have you been guarding this place?

Sylvi: In a real, like, two guys shooting the shit about the line of work they have in common type of way.

Austin: All right. So, you are going to use this. Are you going to use a token?

Sylvi: Yeah, I think—

Austin: What is your intent? Your intent is to prove your worth.

Austin: Yeah, because one, this came from the Cloister of the Hollow Heart. I figure, my thinking is there's a connection there, showing that I'm on at least some level of good terms with the monastery that this is associated with. And then also it's like, Mirador said we shouldn't fight, this is my other idea. I don't think sharing a cup of tea with this statuesque knight is going to get my head cut off, and if I'm wrong, I'm wrong.

Austin: If you're wrong, you're wrong. Do you spend your token?

Sylvi: [breathes in through teeth] Yeah.

Austin: You have no idea what the Sentences here are.

Sylvi: I have no idea what the Sentence even is. So. I feel like I am so token happy while playing this.

Austin: Yeah, sure. But that's the hope, right? You spend it, you get it back. You spend it, you get it back.

Sylvi: Okay, then yeah, I'm going to spend it. I've spent it on my sheet, and I've marked the use of the Tea on my Ephemera.

Austin: All right.

Jack: This happening in the heart of a moon is really good.

Austin: It's good.

Jack: Not necessarily a break in Gaje's character, but a different interpretation of the way Gaje thinks about the way they're able to act taking place in the very center of a moon is really cool.

Sylvi: Yeah, it definitely… The stuff with Lanz last session kind of started pushing me down this way.

Jack: Shout out to Lanz.

Sylvi: Lanz is great. I also thought it would be fun to… I think it's always fun, when given an opportunity, to do the inverse of my impulse.

Austin: Right.

Sylvi: Because this is something that, you know, it's a guardian. You kind of would expect to react by fighting the boss. We talked about the fog door joke, you know, like, and then instead doing this, I was like, oh, that's a fun way to play.

Austin: So, when… When you, you know, hand that sheet, the sheet, Jesus, because I'm looking at the word sheet. When you offer the cup, she takes it from you and then lifts the visor of her helmet. And this is old armor. This is armor from, I mean, this is armor from the age that the lift was built, right? And the lift came down. And when they set up this strange, the Globate Cataract, this liquid metal waterfall orb, they also left behind Saint Calemi, Gallant of the Hollow Heart. In fact, Calemi may have been key to making this place, a thing that you understand as she lifts the visor and her whole face, her whole head is made of this liquid metal. It is pouring down, her face is a constantly

flowing, shining liquid metal but she still has the sort of like indentations for lips and the nose and eyes and et cetera but it's all perfectly, you know, it's like running water, except the water is mercury. And she takes the cup. This is you overcoming the Sentence "when my true visage is revealed, I always demand holy awe." And you hold your steel, you know, you have the mettle necessary to face this somewhat divine being. And, you know, she sits with you and sips the tea. You'd asked how long she'd been here. Is that what you said?

Sylvi: Yeah, I think that's how he starts the conversation.

Austin: Yeah. And I think she says,

(as Saint **Calemi**): Nearing a millennia.

Sylvi: I'm not going to whistle on mic because that's just like a mixing nightmare.

Austin: Like [whistles very quietly] yeah, just do the, whoo!

Sylvi: But Gaje does one of those where it's just like,

Sylvi (as **Gaje**): Damn. Worst I ever had was a four-year gig somewhere.

Austin: She smiles and says,

(as Saint **Calemi**): It is good work. Dutiful. Pure.

Sylvi (as **Gaje**): Those are always the best jobs.

(as Saint **Calemi**): It is good to be at the heart of something. But I will admit, I have curiosities. How does Sapryc fare today?

Sylvi (as **Gaje**): [heavy inhale] It's seen better days.

Sylvi: I could—I don't know if I, Sylvi the player, has the faculties to give a whole rundown of things in character, but if we want Gaje to be like, yeah, here's what happened to Krater, here's our trip here, and you can tell me what you think of Sapryc because of that.

Austin: Totally, but you're honest. You say it. You explain the situation. You say it.

(as Saint **Calemi**): Then the Cloister could be in need.

Sylvi (as **Gaje**): Oh, yeah. I mean, the Empest is, I think, threatening them. I don't know. It could be right now. It could be two days from now. But we definitely had some drones.

Darcy (as **Flemming**): We heard fighting when we were coming down, right?

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

Austin: I think that she sat down to share this tea with you. I'm imagining both of you sitting. And I think here, you know, she pours you another cup of tea and stands and says,

(as Saint **Calemi**): Sir Gaje, you have done well to come call me home. I hope the rest of your journey is less troubled than what has brought you here.

Sylvi (as **Gaje**): Best of luck up above.

Austin: And she nods to you and closes her visor and then turns and walks past you and then the rest of the group. Some of the little Cobblings go to follow her for a little bit. And then she stops and turns and looks at them. And then they like…

(as **Cobbling**): [little guy noise]

Austin: Roll back over to y'all.

Darcy: Shooshes them back over there.

Austin: Yeah, and she just walks off into the dark towards the lift to take her away.

The Cataract [16:50]

A Sunny Day [16:50]

Austin: And when you look back the other way, a sort of path has extended forward, of rock, has kind of like built itself out towards the flowing liquid metal orb. And a small tunnel has been kind of produced inside of like just a sort of, you know, the liquid metal is kind of pouring on each side of a tiny tunnel that's just big enough for all of you to walk through. And you see that it is a sort of a curtain of water more than it is a completely enclosed orb, because on the other side of it, you can see it opens up into a thing that cannot be, which is like a beautiful sunny day in a field somewhere.

Jack: Huh.

Darcy: Huh.

Austin: So, if you imagine—

Jack: In color?

Austin: In color, yeah, green grass, blue sky. I mean, I think Mirador just immediately starts moving forward, and gives you the back pat, Gaje. And is like,

> (as **Mirador**): Damn good work.
>
> Sylvi (as **Gaje**): Honestly, I just needed a break from you and Flemming bickering all the time.
>
> Austin (as **Mirador**): Yeah, fair enough.

Austin: And Scrundle and Mirador begin heading forward into this sunny pasture. That's inside of a big liquid metal orb.

Darcy: Mm-hm. Inside of a tunnel built by a giant worm eating a moon.

Austin: Yeah, inside of a black and white moon. Uh-huh.

Jack: Yeah, I mean, following, but yeah, definitely following with that thing of like looking over my shoulder the whole time back into the black and white tunnel on the other side of the… There's a kind of a weird thing happening where Mirador is so… obstinate and focused. I mean, he would probably say I'm focused and I have a specific reason for the way I'm acting. But there is something about that obstinacy that, as frustrating as it is to Jud, there's a sense of like, well, he knows where he's going, you know? He knows what he's doing. He has not been smart or generous enough to offer that to us. But if this isn't phasing him. It's the whole, like, look at the flight attendants thing, you know?

Austin: [laughs] Yes.

Jack: If the flight attendants are calm and relaxed as the plane goes into turbulence, you're like, okay, yeah, it's fine.

Austin: Yeah. God, I had a flight recently where they were not calm, and it was the only time I've ever actually been scared on a plane, I think. Since being a child, maybe.

Darcy: Oh. Yeah, I bet.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: I feel fairly calm when I see them sit down and strap themselves in, because that is a kind of calm. You know, them going like, all right, look, we can't move around here. My favorite is when there's turbulence and the flight attendants are just like bebopping around.

Sylvi: [laughs]

Austin: [laughs] Yeah, they're like, this ain't nothing.

Jack: Giving people coffee. They're just like.

Austin: Uh-huh. Yeah, do you want a hot drink? Like, no! How would I ever have a hot drink right now? They don't—it seem like it's no big deal.

Darcy: It'll spill.

Austin: Yeah, exactly.

Jack: I just moved up and down in my seat and you're offering me pretzels!

Austin: Yes.

Jack: That's fine.

Sylvi: That would calm me down, having pretzels, I think.

Austin: Yeah.

Darcy: Yeah, sure.

Austin: So, you've made your way. Everyone goes inside of this orb.

Jack: Is it warm? Is there a sensory experience?

Austin: Yeah, the sun is on your skin.

Jack: This is lovely.

Austin: I think Mirador takes off an outer jacket and puts it up on Scrundle's back or into a pack or something.

Jack: Scrundle eating the grass.

Austin: Yeah, Scrundle is stopping to eat the grass. And there is a, like a, I think Mirador says,

> Austin (as **Mirador**): I'm glad we didn't stop back at the shitty dormitory. This might be a better place for a little rest.
>
> Jack (as **Jud**): Are we still on Sapryc?
>
> Austin (as **Mirador**): I think so—

Austin: Looking around. Apprehending the world a little.

> Austin (as **Mirador**): I think so.
>
> Jack (as **Jud**): Huh. Is it safe to stay here?
>
> Austin (as **Mirador**): Now that I can't answer. Stay is one of those words, you know? You want to stay for a day? Or do you want to stay? I wouldn't do the latter.

Jack: Does the meadow continue sort of indefinitely, or does it hit a metal wall?

Austin: No. You can see the liquid metal, but it's not all the way up into the sky. It's like a liquid metal fence. Or like a stonework… Imagine like a stonework… In fact, it's a lot like her face, where her face had all the definition of a face. Here, around this whole meadow is a stonework wall. No mortar, just piled stones. You know what I mean? Except all of it is cast in this flowing liquid metal, this almost like flowing mercury sort of thing. And here in the middle, it's this open pasture. And then off in the distance between you and the exit, the other side of, you know, the wall kind of comes to a gate on the other side opposite you. And in between the two of you is a henge with standing stones. And some sort of, you know, some maybe burial mounds or mounds of other types. You've seen henges like this, you know, or maybe not—each of you has not seen henges like this. But, you know, people be putting stones up for mysterious reasons. Obviously. And this is—

Jack: Historically.

Austin: Historically. All around the thousand moons, you'll find a henge. And I know that there's other words, I know henges—[sighs] I know there's other…

Sylvi: [laughs]

Austin: Janine, you know, this stuff, right? Am I fucking up, is there another word for a thing—are henges only certain spaces, certain distances or something?

Janine: Uh. I don't know.

Austin: You know what I mean? This is not a thing that I have like—I've definitely heard people be like, oh, well, maybe not Stonehenge literally but like other stoneworks, stone circles and stuff are like, well, that doesn't count as a henge because it's only, blah blah blah blah blah.

Jack: A Neolithic or Bronze Age structure found in the British Isles consisting of a large circular earthenwork often enclosing an arrangement of standing stones, wooden posts, mounds, or burial pits. Okay. A prehistoric enclosure in the form of a circle or circular arc defined by a raised circular bank and a circular ditch usually running inside the bank with one or more entrances leading to the enclosed open space.

Austin: Yeah, that's what it is. And…

Darcy: [laughs]

Austin: Yeah, that's what it is. It's that. And there are these kind of standing stones in sort of a circle around the kind of middle of this place. And then there are some standing ones in the middle of it too, but like it's a pretty clear circular thing, you know, there. And I think Mirador, you know, kind of looking at that is like,

> Austin (as **Mirador**): If we're going to rest, we should do it here and not close to that thing.

Jack: Oh, yeah. Yeah. No resting inside a henge, I think, historically.

Austin: [laughs] Yes.

Darcy: Pretty good call.

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: I'm, like, obsessed with this picture of a henge that is on English Heritage's henge landing page.[2] Just because it's very Realis to me. It's very menacing.

Austin: Oh, look at this. Holy shit.

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[2] Illustration was created by Peter Lorimer.

Jack: Holy shit.

Austin: This is real? Is this real?

Jack: Is this a wood henge?

Austin: It's a wood henge.

Jack: This is, like, a series of…

Janine: It's like a visualization.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: Right, I see.

Jack: It is a visualization of, like, a Neolithic site, and it is, the easiest way to describe it is a… almost like telephone poles, carved wooden with the branches stripped away, but still circular.

Janine: Cabers.

Jack: And there must be, hmm, cabers, yeah.

Janine: Cabers.

Jack: And there must be, like, 150 of them, just arranged in this sort of, like, circular structure. They look a lot like the, um… Chris Burden lamppost sculpture outside LACMA in Los Angeles, except it's wooden poles and in a circle.

Janine: Also, there are a bunch of crows.

Austin: There are a bunch of crows.

Jack: Oh, yeah.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah. Um, I guess that's a thing, right? There's insect life in here. There might be bird life in here and little critters. Um, but there's life in here.

Darcy: Hmm. Are the Cobblings still here with us?

Austin: Oh yeah. They came right through with you.

Darcy: Okay.

Austin: You didn't get rid of—you haven't cashed in on that yet, is the thing. You sung them the song, but you haven't asked the favor.

Darcy: Hm. Okay, what can they tell us about this henge?

Austin: They don't know shit about this, they've never been here.

Darcy: Okay. Okay.

Austin: This is it. They're like, you know,

(as **Cobblings**): [curious little guy noise]

Austin: You know?

Darcy: Okay.

Austin: They want to go check out the henge. [very emphatically] They want to go check out the henge!

Jack: Gaje has a pretty good method of learning.

Austin: [laughs]

Sylvi: [laughs] Let me—"fuck this henge," and then start smashing it through extreme violence.

Darcy: Oh, I thought they were going to eat it.

Jack: We could sacrifice something, but I have no real reason to, you know, sacrifice something. Just saying that if we wanted henge knowledge. But Mirador and Scrundle seem pretty interested in resting.

Austin: Well, you know, I think that they're just tired.

Jack: They didn't rest earlier and…

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Me, that's what I say when I'm tired. I'm interested in resting.

Austin: I'm interested in resting right now.

Jack: Resting is one of my interests. God, resting is one of my interests broadly.

Austin: Yeah.

Darcy: Uh-huh.

Jack: Let's see. Oh, Austin.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Would you give me my token back if I evoked "I am always under threat"?

Sylvi: [groaning] Oh, god…

Darcy: [laughs]

Austin: Yeah, of course. Yeah, of course I would. Yeah, that to me would be triggering a Tragic Success. You use one of your Means to lead the Band deeper into chaos. When you do this, describe something consequential and undesirable caused by one of your Sentences, then recharge your token.

Jack: It's been a while since Jud has kind of gone off.

Darcy: Oh, boy.

Jack: And it can't be that bad to go and look at the henge, can it? It's not like I'm sleeping on it. You know. The party's sort of resting.

Austin: Yeah. You find your way. What are you—are you just looking at the henge? Are you touching anything, or are you—

Jack: I'm 15 years old. There's a henge. I'm walking in it. Cicatrix Knight sort of behind me.

Austin: Yeah. Mm-hm. You're going to hide behind a stone and smoke where no one can see you, like? [laughs]

Darcy: Hell yeah, bro.

Jack: Well, it's also like the stone is old and there's like lichen and it's flaking away. And I think I sort of pick at a little bit of the slate. It's not slate. That'd be a really weird thing to make a henge out of. And, you know, a little bit of the stone falls away.

Austin: You've never seen stone like this ever in your life. It's not stone from any of the moons you've been to. It glimmers strangely. The Cicatrix Knight—wait, did you walk away from the Cicatrix Knight, or you said you have the Cicatrix Knight with you?

Jack: The Cicatrix Knight is coming with me.

Austin: Okay, I think that as you get close to one of them, maybe as you touch it, the Cicatrix Knight puts his hand on your shoulder. And like shakes his head to be like, this is dangerous, you know? But you have gotten your token back, haven't you?

Jack: I have gotten my token back. Do I also check—what would cause me to check that Sentence, "I am always under threat."

Austin: You would fail it. Or you would, you see, there's kind of—which you haven't done. You've succeeded with it. You've done a Tragic Success, you see.

Jack: Yes.

Austin: So having it get countered, using it as a Sentence to try to succeed at something that then gets countered would have it crossed out. Or you could do an Illuminating Failure, which is once per session, each player may frame one scene in

which a chosen Means fails against uncertainty or opposition. The Means chosen for Illuminating Failure is countered until the end of the next scene that the PC is in, though realization can allow it to be used again as normal. It's sort of like you can be like, I'm going to do something. I'm going to train and fail, right? Or I want to frame a quick scene. The example that I end up giving, I think, in the book is like a real zoomed out campaign where they're like, oh, I'm going to go lose some battles, you know? And I want to frame that, I want to lose that, and then like the next scene I do, I'll have that Sentence countered. But having failed those battles and having wrecked my reputation has made me learn something about, you know, the Sentence that I used, right?

Jack: Who I am.

Austin: Yeah, totally.

Jack: This is Master Roshi beating, what's that little guy called?

Darcy: Krillin?

Austin: Krillin?

Jack: No, no, Goku.

Darcy: Oh, god!

Jack: To be like, you know, I'm the only person in the world who could beat you and I'm gonna illuminate failure for you.

Austin: Right, or it's the other way around, right? It's like, it would be the author, it's Toriyama writing an Illuminating Failure for Goku, right? Goku has a Sentence that is "I always win in the tournament," and says, this Sentence fails for me, right? So, this would be like, Jud, if you had said, for instance, I want to do an Illuminating Failure of "I always find somewhere to rest." To counter it, you would not find somewhere to rest, but you would get to counter it. You know what I mean? You would get to add a mark on it by that way. But you're doing the other thing, which is recharging a token with Tragic Success. And so, as you've touched this thing, you pull your hand away and there is a

little bit of the like glimmer on your hand, still. And then running down from the—it's like touching— what is the material that like you have to be careful with because it'll cut you? Oh my god.

Janine: Fiberglass?

Austin: Fiberglass, it has that sort of fiberglass thing.

Jack: Oh.

Darcy: Oh.

Austin: And you're like, oh, fuck I—and it's not fiberglass, to be clear. This is some sort of weird space metal. Because the thing that stands up behind you, the massive thing, which is the size of a *Breath of the Wild* Stone Talus, is in fact a living comet, a living meteor, is metal from before the Thousand Moons, when in fact there were thousands on thousands on thousands of stars, not just the one Corpse Moon—or not just the one Corpse Sun left red and dying, but instead a universe filled with suns. This is a remnant of that era, and it is alive, and it is angry that you have disturbed it.

The Ejecta [31:50]

Austin: This thing is called an Ejecta. It is a living… I'll actually read the description here, which is not a thing you would know, necessarily. In fact, I don't know that it's a thing anybody here may have ever encountered. Maybe, again, maybe Jud, maybe Sacea has heard of it.

"Unspeaking beings of rock and star. Formed when living comets from a time long past come crashing into the moons. Once they land, they take humanoid shape and begin their work: the rock-by-rock construction of intricate henges. Left alone, the Ejecta continues to expand their earthworks indefinitely, and any who dare trespass are met with fury."

Now here's the thing. You know this thing didn't just fucking land here. Someone moved it here. Someone put it to work here at the center of the moon Sapryc. Probably the monks.

Jack: [laughs] The monks who have also been instrumentalizing worms are like, we could do the same with a meteor.

Austin: [slight laugh] A living meteor who, and at this point, I need to know if you can counter the following Sentence, "I always belch out the heat of the stars." Because this kind of larger, it's larger than, it's a different shape than the Cobblings. It's not as like cutesy round. It's much more angular. It's like a being that has been kind of, you know, has some of the angles of the henge stones, but it is a single big slab come to life. And it's this kind of glistening black, you know, stone or metal or ore. I went to the Natural History Museum last year, which is, let's say, a fraught place. And there are some fallen meteors that you can touch there. Meteorites? Meteoroids? What's the one that makes it all the way down?

Jack: Stalagmite.

[laughter]

Sylvi: Ah, yeah.

Austin: There you go. There you go. There you go. A meteoroid is still in space. A meteorite… Maybe it is a meteor. Maybe a meteor actually can make it all the way. But you can touch it. And it's just like… The meteors that they have there, which have incredible names, one of them is called Woman. One of them, I think, is called Dog. And these are their traditional names from the indigenous people from the region who, because of the sizes of what they are, right? These are folks who lived in Greenland where they fell originally, which, and they were used, they're iron, right? They're big iron meteors, and they were used—or meteorites, and they were used as an iron source for generations and generations and generations. I'll send you all some pictures really quick. And it was like a pretty wild thing to see. These are, it's hard to see the scale

here, but they're gigantic and they're just out. You can just go touch them. And they're older than earth, is the thing.

Darcy: Wow.

Jack: God, yeah.

Austin: They're, you know, millions and millions and millions of years old. And they were a source of iron for indigenous people who live nearby who would show up and, you know, managed to create their best knives and harpoons with this like, star metal, basically. Like I said, this museum, to me, is fraught. Really wonderful moment to be able to see this. Also, boy, is New York not the indigenous spaces of the, or the space of the indigenous people of Greenland. Who are, I believe, the Ahnighito people, if I'm reading right.[3]

But yeah, that is the sort of thing you are looking at, a thing from before Realis. And it is gigantic and living, and at this point, spewing living star matter at you from a sort of strange orifice where its mouth would be. Can you counter the Sentence that I read a second ago and I've since minimized? Here it is.

Jack: "I always spew the heat of the stars."

Austin: The stars, "I always belch out the heat of the stars." Yeah.

Jack: Boy, can I. I don't know that I can! Let's see. "I always fight my way to safety in the dark." Stars famously are creations of spectacular brightness. "I always find somewhere to rest" is interesting. And that Sentence is ready to be… That Sentence is primed, so I can maybe do something there. "I always protect those traveling with me from the Death Procession."

Austin: Ah, wow. Yeah.

Jack: Very situationally useful, but not… This is a moment where a Sentence getting stronger also, you know, demonstrates that in becoming more specific, it has grown

[3] The people of the area where the meteorite fell are the Inughuit.

weaker. And then the “I am always under threat.” Hm. Okay, I am going to… It’s tough, right? Because my first impulse was to change the Sentence “I always find somewhere to rest” to “I always find somewhere to take shelter.” But I don’t think that that is a sufficient enough restriction.

Austin: I think that’s just changing the definition.

Jack: I think that that is just changing what the Sentence is about.

Austin: I think that’s not enough of a change.

Janine: “I always find somewhere to rest when I am” blah, blah, blah? Like, add a pressure element there?

Austin: Yeah. Like, “under immediate threat” or something. Which is very funny, because “rest” is such a different word, you know?

Jack: It’s using the word rest differently. It’s using rest in the sense of, like, “the spinning object came to rest” rather than “I had a restful night.”

Austin: Yeah, I’ll read from the book one more time here, which is… So. “A change in verb to make something more specific. ‘I always catch my prey’ could become ‘I always locate my prey,’ or ‘I always kill my foe’ could become ‘I always wound my foe.’ There is often some degree of ambiguity during realization. After all, in the final example above, is ‘wound’ really a restricted form of ‘kill’? Discuss such changes at the table. If the shift feels like an exciting change for the character, bringing them further away from the archetypal and abstract and closer to the particular and concrete, then that’s probably a good change. The only rule about realization that you must always follow is that Sentences be restricted, not expanded. The Liminalist’s ‘I always know how to enter or leave the Drift’ might become ‘I always know how to enter or leave the Drift when piloting my Orphan Vessel,’ but it can never ever become ‘I always know how to enter or leave the Drift and other mysterious realms.’” Right? It can’t just broaden. So yeah, I would say as long as we don’t do “I always find”—the first thing that you said, “I always find shelter.” I think that we’re fine, you know? “I always find shelter when I’m under

threat" might be fine, though. You know, "when I'm under immediate threat." Something that really emphasizes a particular situation instead of a generic one.

Jack: Pull the time scale in. "I always find somewhere to rest for a moment."

Austin: Mm. Right, sure. That's a good restriction. That's not a night of sleep. That's a catch your breath.

Jack: Yeah, I'm going to do that. So, I'm going to put this to Sentence 1. I'm going to uncheck all of these.

Austin: And where is it that you find?

Jack: I'm going to go behind a stone and smoke. [laughs]

Austin: Oh, okay.

Jack: Except smoke because I'm…

Sylvi: [giggles]

Austin: Because the grass all around you has instantly become eviscerated, has caught fire and become smoke in the air.

Jack: I'm going to crouch beneath the altar in the—oh, wait, no, because the whole henge is gone.

Austin: The whole henge—well—

Jack: The henge has risen.

Austin: No, no, no, no, just the center stones have risen as the—the outer stones that you were like touching and stuff just glowed briefly when you touched them and shimmered and then the center stones rose to reveal that they were one big stone guy. But the outer henge is a henge. It builds the henge, right?

Jack: Yes. Yes. I am going to—

Austin: What you see quickly here, by the way, the star stuff eventually seems to like cool and become the stone, right, the glimmer stone that the henge is made of. So, it's like producing that inside of itself somehow.

Jack: Yeah. I'm going to—there is like a little scrape or like not even a burrow, like a tiny sort of like hole in the ground, a small little hole in the ground at the foot of each outer stone, and I think it was, you know, presumably put there as part of some sort of process by which the monks moved the thing, because in each of these are, you know, little skeletons of animals, you know, little… Something to, some ritual magic. And so, it's just Jud taking shelter, you know, hands clapped over his ears next to, like, the skeletons of, like, four or five little birds in this tiny scrape in the ground.

Austin: Love it. Great. So then, yeah, it ejects all this star stuff all around you. You manage to not get hit because you're curled up like a little baby inside of this hole or this little alcove or whatever. Everybody else, you hear and see this.

Jack: Oh, I overcome that Sentence with that +1, because it's a…

Austin: Oh yeah, +1 overcomes it. Yeah, this is a +0 Sentence, right? That you're being…

Jack: This is part of why Realis is fun, because I'm a 15-year-old idiot from another planet.

Darcy: [laughs]

Jack: And this is a star.

Austin: And you have overcome "I always belch out the heat of the stars." Yeah, yeah, yeah. And it does sound sort of like a belch, right? Like, it is that rumbling, deep stomach. Like, what if the biggest bear you've ever seen in your life, you know, belched really loud. And then also, you know, the raw heat stuff of the sun came out. Everyone hears this. Everyone can see what's happening. I guess the first to act here is actually probably the Sapryc—not the Sapryc, the Cicatrix Knight.

Jack: Oh, who was near me at the time.

Austin: Who was near you.

Jack: But also, doesn't matter if it got obliterated, because it can't die.

Austin: It can't die. Well, it can't die. Not dying doesn't mean it can't be obliterated.

Jack: It can be obliterated, but it will survive. In one form or another.

Austin: Yeah, well, what's the Sentence say? Yeah, in one form or another.

Jack: "Any who are eat…" No. "Any who eat are always unable to die until their next meal."

Austin: Yeah, so I think seeing you attack thus, it charges ahead to try to attack the Ejecta. And I think the Knight of the Cicatrix is using the Sentence "I always protect myself with wooden armor." It's not a great one here.

Jack: No.

Austin: And it will be, and here's a thing that here, note to self that I should write out some, or—that's the wrong thing. Where the fuck is, where is our Cicatrix Knight at here? Did I put it on the Band and—where did I put our, did I not, have I not shown you any Cicatrix Sentences? Maybe I haven't.

Jack: I don't think so.

Austin: Interesting. Maybe it just hasn't come up. Okay, well, I know where to put them. They're over here now. The Knight of Cicatrix, they're on your NPCs 2 list is where they are. I've definitely said them before because I've definitely said "I always inspire with my blossomed self."

Jack: Yeah, I encountered one when I fed him some of my arm. I think.

Austin: Right. That sounds likely. And then "I always protect myself with wooden armor." And, you know, charges forward with this armor, and is, straight up

loses—begins to get burned through, is attacking the Ejecta as best as it can, and is barely making a dent. Does manage to separate—there's a point at which the Cicatrix Knight gets a, there's a sort of like a sword that, like it looks like a sword, but the Cicatrix Knight actually like grows out the sword into a spear. So, it's like a super long-headed, long, like the metal tip is super long, but the rest of it is this recently grown new wooden like haft to the spear, and uses it as like a… As a lever to kind of lever open the Ejecta or lever off one of its arms. But the—and it kind of lands.

And then the Ejecta reveals a second Sentence here. And that is "with enough unmarked rock, I always mend my wounds." And simply, you know, despite having lost one of its limbs, reaches down and reattaches itself from one of these other stones in the henge.

So that fight is happening over here. And unfortunately, I do think the Cicatrix Knight catches fire.

Darcy: Ooh.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: You know, and is burning. And will live because of the Sentence that you have on display here. But there's lots of ways of living, and some of them are not pleasant.

Jack: No.

Austin: Sacea, Flemming, Gaje, what are you doing? I think Mirador says,

> Austin (as **Mirador**): You've got to be kidding me.

Jack: [laughs]

Darcy: [laughs]

Jack: I feel like we have, you know, we have a lot of kid characters on Friends at the Table, and I think we do a pretty good job playing kid characters. I feel like we don't

often do extremely annoying teenager. America's Playground, a bit, but they were overshadowed by the other stuff that was going on there.

Sylvi: [laughs]

Austin: Yeah. Yeah.

Darcy: Hm.

Janine: I'm going to help. I'm going to go over and help.

Austin: Yeah? What are you going to do?

Janine: Yeah. I'm all about protecting Jud.

Austin: Yeah, what is your Jud Sentence again?

Janine: "Without my attentions, Jud will die on the vine."

Austin: Ah! Well!

Jack: This asshole!

Austin: Here we are again!

Janine: Yeah. Uh-huh.

Jack: I didn't even go like… This is my, easily my least distant problem-causing. I'm 15 feet away on the other side of a meadow.

Janine: Can you describe…

Austin: More than 15 feet, but, yes.

Jack: The whole time.

Janine: Describe the Ejecta again for me?

Austin: It's a big stone. Think of a Stone Talus from *Breath of the Wild*, except it's made of a black, shimmery metal, or black, shimmery star stone. And I think maybe a little more angular than that. Like it has the—it appears like it's maybe built by a couple of these, made up—it's a central body but then its arms and legs feel like they are part of the, made from the sort of same structures as the stones in the henge.

Janine: Mm.

Austin: Kind of worked over in that way. Oh, in retrospect, I guess I don't really remember what the Stone Talus's limbs look like. No, they look more just like big boulders and that's not right.

Janine: Yeah, it's just—yeah, because they throw them at you and stuff.

Austin: They throw them at you. Yeah, this is more shaped.

Janine: Hm, okay. Where are the—what do we know about it so far? What page is that on?

Austin: It's on NPCs 2. Ejecta: "with enough unmarked rock I always mend my wounds" and "I always belch out the heat of the stars." The latter is a +0, you don't know about the former.

Janine: Hm. I can certainly guess, but yeah. Okay. [sighs and laughs] Okay. I'm going to try throwing a wooden potato at it.

Sylvi: [laughs]

Austin: Excuse me?

Darcy: Fuck yeah, dude.

Austin: You do have that wooden potato still, huh?

Janine: "I always surprise others with my suspiciously realistic wooden potatoes"?

Austin: What is your intent? What are you trying to do by doing this?

Janine: Just buy a few seconds. Just distract it a little bit.

Austin: We've got to get to a dramatic intent.

Janine: Okay.

Austin: That is the rule of the game. The game just doesn't work without it.

Janine: Yeah, I just wanted to buy Jud some time to get away.

Austin: That you could do. Yeah, if your goal is, like, get Jud to safety from a safe place.

Janine: I can do something more dramatic.

Austin: Okay.

Janine: I… Okay. I'm going to… Some smoke happens. It's, like, really thick smoke. Like, like pea soupy, kind of smoggy smoke. It's the kind of smoke that's so thick that if you breathe it and you can kind of taste it like coating your throat.

Austin: Ew.

Janine: So, it's very thick and it's, you know, it's like milk dispersing in water, kind of like very opaque. And as—Sacea's like ambling quickly over, but she's not a runner, really. And this cloud is sort of like clinging to her and growing. And then eventually it starts to clear and there is another Ejecta where she was.

Jack: Ooh!

Austin: Ooh!

Janine: And it is like a purple kind of glittery version of this creature. And I'm using "I always shift the truth of my form with my smoke."

Austin: And are you trying to attack it at this point? Are you trying to…

Janine: Yeah, I'm going to bully it.

Austin: What is your, what is your out—yeah. What is the, what is the ideal outcome from doing this for you?

Janine: The ideal outcome is that the thing gets intimidated and is like, okay, I'll back off, man. You know?

Austin: Okay. Uh, what, what—

Janine: I didn't realize they were with you. It's, I'm good. We're good.

Austin: What is, this is a +1 Sentence?

Janine: This is a +1.

Austin: And you are not using your token. You don't have a token.

Janine: I do not have a token.

Austin: All right. You are going to get a new Sentence revealed here.

Janine: Uh-oh.

Austin: Unfortunately, you're going to get that Sentence countered. As you get close to it, something about being in the henge makes your form less… I mean, I guess, first, a question. When you do this, your form genuinely shifts and changes, right? It's not just an illusion.

Janine: You know, the line is "I always shift the truth of my form with my smoke," which kind of…

Austin: I can read that either way, honestly.

Janine: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah.

Janine: It's one of those things where, like, I wonder if it's the degree of success determines that, where you have to, if it's a really, really good cast, then when you throw a punch, your smoke hitbox will be correct. And if it's a bad cast…

Austin: Well, it is not correct this time. Yeah. And specifically, as you move into the henge, you can feel yourself begin to become less dense, right? And when the fist hits the Ejecta, it does not, it completely goes back to mist, and you fall to the ground. "Inside of the boundaries of my own henge, I am always unassailable in melee combat." A +2 Sentence from the Ejecta.

Janine: Ah. So, I should have thrown the potato.

Austin: You should have thrown the potato. [laughs]

Jack: [laughs]

Darcy: [laughs]

Janine: Goddammit.

Austin: But yeah, and you fall to the ground here. Gaje and Flemming. Oh, you can look, now that you're up close: the Cicatrix Knight? Yikes.

Darcy: Not looking good.

Jack: Yikes how?

Austin: Burning away more and more.

Jack: Mm.

Darcy: Yeah, yikes sounds right. Okay. Hm. Well, my thought in response to that Sentence is I guess we destroy the henge.

Jack: We could try and get out. This could be a flee situation.

Darcy: True.

Austin: Yeah, this is not a you get XP from killing the boss game.

Darcy: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jack: We might get Ephemera, though.

Austin: Yeah, it's true.

Darcy: Yeah.

Jack: Although, you know, it's so dangerous.

Austin: And you'll get Sentences marked as you've both seen. Or as, I guess, only at this point, only Sacea has seen, but still.

Jack: I'm also wary of, like, kill the star stuff at the center of a moon. Star stuff placed there by the monks is, you know.

Austin: Sure.

Jack: There's concerns there. Yeah.

Darcy (as **Flemming**): Let's just run. Let's get the fuck out of here!

Jack: [laughs]

Austin (as **Mirador**): I like that idea.

Sylvi (as **Gaje**): I mean, if this thing keeps, if this thing can repair itself, I think I'm on board for running.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah. We gotta try and get the Cicatrix Knight out, too.

Austin: And Sacea, who is now up in melee range, or was up in melee range.

Janine: Yeah, I'd love if someone could just give me a hand back to my feet.

Darcy: Mm. Sure. I mean, I'm not going in there, but I'll cast a spell that'll levitate you back on your feet.

Janine: Mm. Great…

Austin: What are you casting? What are you using? What's your intent? Is it to get the Cicatrix Knight and Sacea levitated out of there?

Darcy: Yeah.

Austin: Okay, what are you using to do it?

Darcy: Um, hmm. I don't think this is "terrible spell."

Austin: No, it would have been "grand spell," but I don't think it's "terrible spells."

Jack: No, yeah.

Darcy: Yeah. So I think instead, this is probably more of a showy trick.

Austin: Are you going to realize that Sentence or are you going to leave it primed?

Darcy: Buh… I should probably prime it, just based on what we have seen otherwise.

Austin: Yeah, I mean, I'll just be very specific here. You know it will use the plus, you can guess it will use the +0 Sentence "I always belch out the heat of the stars" to try to interrupt you, right? Or to continue, or to kill Sacea and the Cicatrix Knight, right?

Darcy: Right.

Austin: To counter your ability to save them by just burning them to death.

Darcy: Right. And since it's countering, it gets to win.

Austin: And it would get to win. So you would need that to be a +1 Sentence to overcome that.

Darcy: Yeah.

Austin: And then you know it can't count—I mean, come on. I can't counter that with "I always mend my wounds." That doesn't make sense. And then it's not in melee combat, so it wouldn't be able to use "inside the boundaries of my own henge, I'm always unassailable in melee combat." So yeah, you would know it can't use those, but you do have to worry about that "heat of the stars."

Darcy: What about "I always know a few showy tricks to get us out of a jam"?

Austin: I think that's too broad. I think to get us out of a jam…

Darcy: Because I'm thinking, like, I have used that before as almost like a catch-all, of like oh, this is like, I can roll a charisma check with this move.

Austin: Totally, you have done that. Yeah.

Darcy: And I think that Sentence doesn't allow me to do that anymore.

Austin: But my question is, are those not moments…

Janine: What about, like…

Austin: Are those moments when it's a jam still, though?

Darcy: Sure.

Austin: A social jam.

Janine: What about like "to prevent a calamity" or something where it's like, it has to sort of hit a certain threshold. Like, a calamity isn't going to be the guy you want to persuade to do something is like, "Nah, I gotta go." Like, that's not a calamity. But calamity is like, yeah, someone's going to die.

Darcy: Yeah. What about "I always know a few showy tricks to protect the party."

Austin: Sure. I think that's, again, as long as we're talking about protecting them from, you know, you know, directly protecting them, not protecting them in the sense that, like, aren't I really protecting the party if I convince the bartender to extend happy hour by 15

minutes because we got here a little late? You know? [laughs] Aren't I protecting the party's pocketbook in that case? As long as we admit that to each other I think that's fine.

Darcy: What do you think sounds better, "to protect the party from harm" or "to protect the party from threats, direct threats"?

Austin: I think "harm" is fine.

Darcy: Okay.

Austin: Or "from direct threats" is actually pretty good.

Darcy: Okay.

Austin: I think "direct threats" is cleaner, you know?

Darcy: Yeah. Okay.

Austin: All right. Cool. So, you do that.

Darcy: Yeah, but now that this is realized, I'm not levitating them.

Austin: Oh, what are you doing?

Darcy: They disappear in a flash of light, and then they reappear next to me.

Austin: Love it. Great. And you do it just in time because the Ejecta was "belching out the heat of the stars." I'm going to mark that Sentence as having missed once, or having been countered here. So, it cannot do it again. It has expended whatever its internal contents of that were here. So, it can't pull that trick again on you, which is nice, right? In some ways, that's like, you've got one up on it. On the other hand, you know, it's still a big piece—it's still a big old stone living thing. It's hard to deal with, so.

Darcy: Yeah. Is Jud capable of running away right now?

Jack: I think, given that I've been in my little nook, and given that it has exhausted its thing, I think I time a maneu—it uses its star attack and then following that, I, you know, just come charging out.

Austin: Yeah. But yeah, Jud, it's been a moment. You're probably out of somewhere to rest at this point. Or you're out of a moment. So, I think with nothing else left, it's going to turn to you. And it is going to try to smash you with its big, you know, stone arms, or big stone hands. It's kind of found you and is bringing them down on you. And again, it is using the Sentence you now know from it, "inside the boundaries of my own henge, I'm always unassailable in melee combat." It's initiating this melee combat.

Jack: Huh. Okay. Let's see.

Austin: Which is a, you know this, a +2 Sentence.

Jack: It is a +2 Sentence. Um, hmm.

Sylvi: Would I be able to use my Bond here to just put myself in peril instead or is that too…?

Austin: Anybody can try to counter, yeah, a hundred percent. Yeah. So, you could use your Bond, you could use another Sentence.

Sylvi: Well, my Bond is the one that jumps out to me as the one that makes the most sense here, which is "Jud's weakness is clear as day. He'll die without me to protect him."

Austin: Totally. It's a +1, right? Bonds by default are +1.

Sylvi: Yeah. I don't think I'm… Like, straight up, I don't think I'm winning this. I'm just trying to keep… I mean, like, I don't think I have the resources.

Jack: Oh. Its intent is to kill Jud.

Sylvi: No, I know.

Austin: Okay.

Sylvi: Like, I'm trying to… Okay, maybe I'm wrong about what I'm… Ignore that.

Austin: No, what are you…

Sylvi: No, it's all good.

Austin: You don't want to die here.

Sylvi: No, I don't. And I don't, like, have another idea.

Austin: Okay.

Sylvi: And I don't have my token.

Austin: You don't want to blow your last Violet Blaster shot?

Sylvi: I could.

Jack: I could, you know, I could use the Spoon of the… You could come in and rescue me.

Sylvi: And you feed me?

Jack: I could use the Spoon of the Exhalate, and you could take the blow.

Sylvi: Jesus.

Jack: I can't eat myself.

Austin: I think this is too…

Sylvi: No, we're…

Jack: That's too many…

Sylvi: Too many steps.

Darcy: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: I have my token, which is interesting. I could use that to boost a Sentence. I could use it to… Even if I were to add a Moon Sentence, a +0 Moon Sentence, it wouldn't work.

Austin: That's correct.

Jack: Because, you know, this is a +2 Sentence that we're going up against. And we don't have any +2 Moon Sentences either.

Austin: Remember, you are countering here, right? So, you only need a +1 that you could then boost to +2.

Jack: But it would have to be one of my own Sentences. I couldn't boost a Moon Sentence.

Austin: No, you can boost a Moon Sentence.

Jack: How?

Austin: Using the token.

Jack: No, using the token is what lets me use the Moon Sentence in the first place.

Austin: Oh, you're right. You're right. You would need someone—yes, you're right. You're right. You're right. Yes. Sorry.

Jack: Um…

Austin: Remembering an era when players used to have more than one token is what was happening there.

Darcy: Mm.

Jack: It's just token nightmare. [laughs] Token nightmare.

Austin: That token meeting. God. Jack and I had a long meeting about tokens eight months ago now.

Jack: I saw a tweet that was like the… "I've tried all sorts of different game design, but the easiest way to get a player to stop using mechanics in a way you don't want them to is to kill them."

Austin: [laughs]

Darcy: Ah, yeah!

Jack: To which Yuri, the lead designer on *Signalis*, a game which has, like, a six-item limit that players got really mad about, says, "if the player picks up a seventh item, I should have killed them immediately."

Austin: [laughs]

Jack: And this is me thinking about tokens.

Darcy: [laughs]

Austin: Mm-hm. Mm-hm. Yeah.

Jack: Okay, so the bad thought, the first thought, worst thought here, is playing with, "I always fight my way to safety in the dark," with, like, Jud closing his eyes and scrambling. And I think that that is a pretty uninteresting image at this point in the campaign. I think we can do better than that. I just used "I always find somewhere to rest for a moment," so I don't want to evoke that again.

Austin: You don't have to, like, I get that. I get your desire to mix it up. You know, dance with the one who brought you. Like, you just realized that Sentence. If it will work for you here, you should use it. I don't think we need to get too precious about… You know, the

idea of Jud, like, bouncing from restful space to restful space is not a bad one, you know?

Jack: That is, yeah. Okay, here's what I'll do. I'll spend my token, boost that to two for this moment. But the way I'm going to characterize it is Jud scrambles out of his thing and freezes. I'm using rest here in the sense of rests like a deer rests in front of the headlights. Except it is Jud's, you know, the Ejecta was anticipating movement from Jud.

Austin: Further movement.

Jack: It was anticipating further movement. And so struck in the place that Jud would be. But his, you know, sudden stop in horror and fear caused it to strike, you know, ahead of him.

Austin: Right. No, it didn't. It's something else here. Because it counters the Sentence. It strikes, maybe it's ahead of you, but it's like the left of you or something. And it strikes in a way that it knocks one of its own stones away, breaking the circularity of the henge. And thus, because you've countered the Sentence, remember?

Jack: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: So, it can't use "inside the boundaries of my own henge, I'm always unassailable in melee combat" anymore. For the rest of this scene, right?

Jack: Looking at Gaje, looking at the burning wreck that is the Cicatrix Knight. All right, lads. Big boys.

Austin: The Cicatrix Knight is not getting back up, Jack. I hate to tell you this. There ain't no legs left, my friend.

Jack: It's okay. I've got thoughts about that. We'll figure that out.

Austin: But looking at Gaje? And I think the shimmer shakes off of the stone when the henge has been broken.

Jack: I mean, this is an opening. Or we could just run.

Austin: Or you could just run.

Darcy: I think we should just run.

Sylvi: I'm kind of on Team Get the Fuck Out of Here.

Jack: Yeah, we should probably just run.

Sylvi: All right.

Janine: Yeah, let's go.

Austin: The team is on run. You begin to run past, you like run around the henge, those of you who are still on the other side of it, presumably?

Darcy: I'm not going in there.

Austin: I mean, again, the henge is broken now, in a way, so it's not a henge anymore, according to the rules I've just decided on. And, yeah, you can make your way around it. It is kind of, you know, throwing its fists at—not literally throwing—it's throwing, you know, punches at the ground and stuff but you're able to move around it. It doesn't have that Sentence anymore, right. And so, it's unable to land hits as the whole crew, including the little Cobblings, roll past it or walk past it or run past it, and you get to the kind of far side of this pasture and to the wall of the silver, the liquid metal.

Through the Cataract [1:06:25]

Austin: Which, it kind of, this is the one part where it goes up enough to be like, oh, we have to build our tunnel through on the other side. You know, the Saint, Saint Calemi opened the side on that side, but on this side, the kind of southern or the, yeah, I guess the southern side of the tunnel, you need to go, you need to open your own hole through the kind of silver metal orb again.

Darcy: Ew.

Austin: Sorry, the Globuate [glob-you-ate] Cataract. Apologies, I didn't, you know, I should have said that—or the Globate [globe-ate], the Globate Cataract.

Jack: Calemi—you sure it's not Globuate?

Janine: What did I eat?

Austin: You ate a Globuate Cataract, yeah.

Janine: Oh no, ew.

Austin: The Globate Cataract. I'll just tell you the Sentence because it's pretty clear. "The Globate Cataract always instantly destroys magically unprotected organic matter that passes through it" is the Sentence that is in place here. The Sentence that is very dangerous to have to deal with. And so that is in front of you. And I think as soon as you get towards the end of the southern end of this pasture, the Ejecta is going to go back to try to fix the broken henge, right? Seeing an opportunity to kind of begin to repair itself in the henge. But again, it has to be in the henge to kind of be at maximum strength, right? So. But that's what it's doing. But yeah, I guess the rest of you are at this wall. What do you do?

Darcy: Hm. No nice knight person here to open it for us, huh?

Austin: No, not on this side. [laughs]

Austin (as **Mirador**): What do we got?

Austin: Says Mirador.

Austin (as **Mirador**): Nothing?

Jack: This is one for the mages, right? I don't…

Darcy: Probably. [laughs]

Janine: I'm not a very shieldy, barrier-y kind of mage.

Darcy: What's the… What's the Sentence again, Austin?

Austin: I put it in your Moon Sentences. It's one of the Sapryc Sentences. "The Globate Cataract," which is the name of this liquid metal waterfall shield, "always instantly destroys magically unprotected organic matter that passes through it."

Darcy: Boy, that sounds like a good Sentence.

Austin: They weren't fucking around, those monks.

> Jack (as **Jud**): I can get one person through.
>
> Darcy (as **Flemming**): Oh?
>
> Austin (as **Mirador**): I might be able to get us through, but it would be… ah… [laughs] No more arguing with me after this, because I don't know that I'll have any words left.

Jack: Oh, no, he…

Darcy: Wait. Hm. Okay. Hold on. It's organic matter. What happens if I… Okay. Is there… Is there like a rock I can pick up off the ground?

Austin: Sure. Yeah.

Darcy: What happens if I just touch a rock up against the…

Austin: You can feel the pull of it downwards, but it doesn't get turned into nothing, you know?

Darcy: Right. Okay.

Austin: [laughs] Uh-huh. Sorry, I thought of a solution.

Sylvi: Oh no.

Darcy: I have an idea, too. It's not using the Cobblings as shields or anything horrible.

Austin: Oh, mine was using the Cobblings as a shield. Yeah.

Darcy: No! That's horrible. No, mine is I turn us into inorganic creatures.

Austin: Right. Yes. Yeah. I mean, that's a similar plan. But yeah.

Sylvi: [laughs]

Austin: I guess the question is to be like, what is organic in a world where there are rock people? But you know what I mean. Right? And I know what I mean. I'm talking about, you know, a carbon-based life form or whatever.

Jack: You know what I mean, and I know what I mean. I'm talking about rocks. I'm talking about…

Austin: Inorganic means rocks.

Jack: Metal!

Austin: I'm talking about chemicals!

Jack: I'm talking about water!

Austin: Yeah, and not the chemicals that make up flesh! I know those are also…

Jack: Different chemicals!

Austin: I know it's all chemicals!

Jack: Carbon, sometimes!

Austin: Yeah, carbon, but not in the… In this case, I mean carbon in a different way. I don't know. I don't know enough. Please don't write in!

Jack: Listen, we know you've got scientists listening! We respect you! We are not scientists!

Austin: You know science. I know Michel Foucault's *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, which is why I know that when I say the word organic and inorganic, I am instantly falling into many linguistic traps that fundamentally serve power.

Jack: [laughs] Friends at the Table closing theme plays.

Austin: Uh-huh.

Jack: We could do Cobblings. You could turn us into some inorganic stuff. That might be fun.

Darcy: Yeah. Well, here's—

Jack: I could do some cannibalism and send one person through who could then find the switch on the other side.

Austin: The switch on the other side…

Darcy: Yeah, my proposal was that not only do I turn you into a stone person, you probably need to die for a few seconds.

Austin: Oho.

Darcy: Because even if you're a stone person, you're still organic.

Jack: This raises an interesting question. Can you bring things back from the dead?

Austin: In Realis? Or can Flemming do it?

Jack: Can Flemming. If Flemming is saying you're going to need to die for a second…

Darcy: Hey, okay. I have an idea.

Jack: [laughs] Doesn't answer the question.

Darcy: This is a big Sentence that we're… countering?

Austin: You would be… No.

Jack: It would be countering.

Austin: It would be countering with this Sentence. Because you're trying to change the status quo, which is being on this side of it.

Darcy: Yeah.

Austin: This is the dilemma.

Darcy: So, I feel like this is a thing where it's like… God. Ughhh.

[pause]

Austin: It ain't good.

Darcy: Here's my proposal, but I'm worried this wouldn't even be enough to get me through. I wanted to propose triggering a Tragic Success. I would cast this spell on myself. I would die. And when I would die, I would turn into a statue. And then I would need someone to basically throw me through the door. and then hope that the spell I cast also resurrects me at the other side. I'm trying to figure out a way that this would be triggering a Tragic Success.

Austin: That would get you through, but you didn't see a lever on the other. There's no… Jud suggested a lever on the other side. If there was a lever on the other side…

Darcy: Or a nice knight person.

Jack: Yeah, no, this is not how it works.

Austin: Yeah, this is not… Yeah, I guess you're assuming maybe they have a knight on both sides. I think you have good reason to suggest that maybe there is no knight on the—I don't know, maybe you don't have that.

Darcy: Right, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: Maybe that's me showing my hand too much, but.

Darcy: Hmm. Yeah, because there's like a thing of like, how do, it's almost like, how does the last person get over?

Austin: Why? Say again. Tell me how.

Darcy: I'm overthinking it. I don't know. Forget it.

Austin: Yeah.

Darcy: But yeah, okay.

Austin: I guess there's two ways to think about this, right? Broadly. One way is get a Sentence that's +4, right? Because it's going to, this is probably a +3 Sentence, right? But that's one way. The other is to figure out a way through or around it that makes it so it doesn't trigger. Because it needs all this stuff for it to trigger, right?

Darcy: Right.

Austin: It needs, which is the direction that you're already thinking about here, right? It "instantly destroys…"

Darcy: Yeah, that's the direction I'm taking with making us inorganic.

Austin: "Magically unprotected," "organic matter," "that passes through it." Right? So, all you got to do is not do one of those things. You got to be, either you need to be magically protected, or you need to be inorganic matter, or you need to not pass through it.

Darcy: Sure. So, I guess like where I'm confused with what you're saying is, is that I guess I think I'm thinking of it in terms of—me then, so if I did "I know a few showy tricks to protect the party from direct threats."

Austin: Yep.

Darcy: To cast magical protection on us.

Austin: Then it couldn't use that Sentence.

Darcy: Oh, okay. I figured it would be countering.

Austin: No, because you would be magically protected then.

Darcy: Okay.

Austin: Right?

Darcy: Yeah.

Austin: That's it. It can't trigger. It doesn't get to trigger unless its conditions are met. And this is the thing about realization, right. The level 1 version of this might have been "the Globate Cataract always instantly destroys organic matter that passes through it." But it needed—when it gets leveled up more, when it realizes more, it gets weaker, even though it gets more pluses, you know, to where the reality rating is higher. But now there's this weakness that it has, which is that magically protected stuff can go through it.

Darcy: Mm. Okay.

Austin: Simple as.

Darcy: Well, let's do it. Yeah.

Austin: All right. What's that protection look like? So yeah, and you're using that Sentence. You're using your +1 "I always know a few showy tricks to protect the party from direct threats."

Darcy: Yeah, I'm looking at a list of inorganic compounds to decide what I'm covering us in.

Austin: Sure.

Darcy: Let's just, just some kind of metal.

Austin: Okay.

Darcy: We all turn into Metal Mario.

Austin: Oh, everyone turns into metal? Well, that's kind of fun, right? Because it's like, it sort of has a Metal Mario vibe too, right? You all end up looking like, however briefly, the Gallant, whose name I've just forgotten, Saint Calemi, Gallant of the Hollow Heart, that same similar sort of, everyone takes on the metallic liquid metal form. I will say, this might not protect your stuff, right? I guess some of your stuff might not be organic, right?

Darcy: Mm.

Austin: But food would be.

Darcy: Woof.

Austin: I guess if the food's in a case and the case is inorganic, it should be fine.

Darcy: Yeah.

Austin: All right. You push through. There's nothing here to stop you from pushing through. Again, your intent, I'm guessing, is to safely get through this uncertain situation, right? You do, but it's strange because you're walking through—it's like walking through a waterfall that keeps going. It's like walking through a, you know, a hundred foot long waterfall. It takes a lot of muscle strength not to just get pushed down into the dirt, you know, or the walkway that you're walking across, basically. It's hard going, but you do have this protection, and maybe the protection doubles as a sort of armor or a sort of like, you know, protection from the weight of the liquid falling down on top of you.

And you emerge to the southern side of the tunnel. And there are no torches here. There are no amenities. The monks of the Cloister of the Hollow Heart did not build a little welcoming station here.

Jack: Little beds.

Austin: There is no knight in statuesque pose. There's no, yeah, yeah, yeah. There's nothing like that. There is darkness for as far as you can see. And worse than that, in the distance, there is the sound of chittering.

Darcy: Gross.

Austin: But Mirador says,

> Austin (as **Mirador**): This is it. Final stretch. We stay quiet. We make our way out of this place. And then we're there, and then I can tell you everything. And then you can… You can do some pretty incredible things.

Austin: All right.

Jack: All right. Oh, we're still in black and white. I mean, now we're—

Austin: You're back in black and white.

Jack: It's just dark.

Austin: It's just dark here. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jack: Yeah, I have a perfect Sentence for this.

Austin: I mean, Mirador maybe lights like a little torchlight to see by, but that's it. And it's black and white. Like, yeah, everybody crosses through and then you get through the other side of it and there's a kind of, you know, the glistening liquid metal, but then the darkness kind of picks up after that.

["Sapryc" by Jack de Quidt begins playing]

And there it's like… Mirador has a little lantern that lights everybody's faces up, but in the black and white again.

Jack: Mm.

Austin: Yeah.