Realis 27: The Skipping Stone 01

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Opening Narration

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]

Five travelers have marched across—marched through—the ill and distended moon of Sapryc. Each steps with a unique gait—how could they not, given their differences in form and physique. And yet, they walk astride and apace and, despite it all, aligned.

The journey has been long and fraught for our five travelers, yet any other group fleeing the burning city of Krater would have scattered and slowed to a fatal crawl before they'd even met the delusory softness of the Velutines.

Five travelers. Is that right? The Unnamed Band, after all, has only four members. Flemming, Sacea, Gaje, Jud. Is everyone on this expedition truly "traveling"? However large the manor, does one *travel* from bedchamber to kitchen and back? Or is such a loop too routine for the word?

How did the poem go again?

Gather up the pieces / They fit together so / Four across the moons / Or is that really so? / Hidden in plain sight / How would you ever know / Gather up the pieces / And toss it ‘cross the pond / A skip, a skip, a skip, a skip, a skip, a skip, a skip, a skip, a skip, a skip, a skip and then you’re gone.

Introduction

Austin: Today we are continuing our game of Realis, which prizes passivity except after wisdom gained, recognizes friendship’s strength but rewards solitary achievement, shifts in scope and scale according to the needs of the story and the whims of its tellers, demands honesty in consequence, but care at the table.

Our foundation Sentences have remained throughout this story that “our story never depicts sexual assault or sexual violence,” “our story always shows you where the sword goes, but never shows you what it does,” and “our story always errs on the side of maximalism.”

We should go over characters and we should do a quick summary of where we are because it’s been longer than I think any of us would have liked since our last session. Jack, do you want to go over your character stuff?

Jack: Yeah, absolutely. I’m playing Jud. My class is the Struggler. Jud’s pronouns are he/him. I am from the Sphere of Stories, which means that I benefit by “responding to an epic problem with everyday Means.” The short equivalent of Jud is that he is an unfortunate boy who became a cannibal out of a sort of fit of revenge and seizing power in a moment where he could take it. And he is being pursued by a sort of future- and past-seeing cannibal cult. He has never had a nice time at any point in his life.

Darcy: [laughs]

Jack: And while it has occasionally seemed to be looking up for him, the trend continues.

Austin: Mm. Mm-hm. Great. Janine?

Janine: Yes. I am playing Sacea Duodevicesima. Sphere is Stagecraft, impulse is “respond to a personal/private problem through performative/public means.” I am a Pomesse. Did I forget something? I did, it’s just name, Sphere, impulse, Class.

Austin: Dream.

Janine: Dream. My Dream is “I will purge the miasma which corrupts the Thousand Moons.”

Austin: Wonderful. Flemming. Or, sorry, Darcy.[1]

Darcy: Same diff.

Jack: Diff!

Darcy: Yeah, I’m playing Flemming. Pronouns are he/him. Flemming is a Thaumaturge, which is of the Sphere of Sorcery. And that pushes me to “respond to a mundane problem with magical means.” And my Dream is that “I will craft a spell rigorously tested and perfectly consistent enough to enter the great spell books.”

Austin: Incredible. And Sylvi.

Sylvi: I am playing Gaje. Pronouns are he/they. Class is Berserker. From the Sphere of Sph—the Sphere of Spiel! The Sphere of Steel, “respond to a peaceful problem with violent means.” And my Dream is “I will find transcendent clarity in the midst of battle and become my truest self.”

Jack: Whoa!

Austin: Love it. Where we last left things off, y’all had just passed through the center of the moon of Sapryc. You had specifically passed through an area called the Globate Cataract, which was a sort of magical liquid metal orb at the center of the moon, inside of which there was a full color open air pasture that had a Stonehenge style rock

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

formation in it, part of which came to life and tried to kill y'all because Jud wandered over to it and tried to do some stuff, if I'm remembering correctly.

Sylvi: [laughs]

Jack: Sounds about right.

Sylvi: Yeah, that sounds right.

Austin: I do have some questions that I don't remember exactly. Like, what happened to the Sapryc Knight? Sorry, not the Sapryc Knight. The Cicatrix Knight? The Knight of Cicatrix?

Jack: The Cicatrix Knight, who is my beloved…

Janine: He couldn't fit on the thing, right?

Jack: No, no, no. He's here. But he got, I think, beheaded? Or—he's alive. So, the important thing is the Cicatrix Knight can't die.

Austin: Uh-huh.

Jack: But he got beheaded—

Austin: Unless it eats something else. Sometimes.

Jack: Yes. Or obliterated. So such that like what remains is like a shoulder and a head or something. As I'm remembering this, the sort of the… The Cicatrix Knight got shot by Gaje, or stabbed straight through the chest, I think, early on.

Sylvi: Bit of both.

Jack: Bit of both. And then, you know, was sort of doing okay, because again, cannot die, categorically, unless he eats something. But then I do think that he got blasted by this sort of awful golden beam from the… From the Stone Talos? From Stonehenge?

Austin: Right, yeah. It has a name. It's a Ejecta. Ejecta. A sort of…

Darcy: Ejecto seato, cuz.

Sylvi: I was—yep.

Austin: Ejecto seato, cuz, exactly. Ejecta is a volcanic, the material that's thrown out of a volcanic eruption or a meteoric impact or stellar explosion. And that's what this thing is.

Jack: Yes. So, I am comfortable to say that the Cicatrix Knight is now like a chunk of guy that is mostly head.

Austin: That sounds right to me. And I'm happy to roll with it.

Janine: I have a question.

Austin: Yes.

Janine: About the mechanic—this is sort of an unnecessary question. I don't think it'll come up, but I'm intrusively curious about it.

Austin: Mm-hm.

Darcy: Mm-hm.

Janine: If… Okay, does he have to choose to eat something, or like if something gets in his mouth and he swallows it.

Darcy: Oh, like what if a fly flies in his mouth?

Austin: I think that would be it. I think that would do it.

Jack: I think that would be it. Part of why it is scary.

Austin: Mm. Hmm. It's written as "until their next meal." So really, we could get semantic-y about the word meal.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Janine: So, one fly wouldn't do it, but 16 flies might?

Austin: Right. If it's just like a little fly snack—

Jack: Well, I feel like one fly would do it if he was a frog.

Darcy: I feel like meal implies like intention though.

Janine: See, this is what I'm saying.

Darcy: Like you're sitting down to have a meal.

Austin: Yeah. But you could end up, you could sit down to snack and realize you've eaten a meal. So, you gotta be careful. You know what I mean?

Jack: There are moons in which they've tested this.

Austin: For sure.

Janine: [laughs]

Austin: For certain.

Janine: Anyway. Thank you.

Jack: The Cicatrix Knight is like in the cart or is like attached to Scrundle now, I think.

Austin: The remains of the Cicatrix Knight. The still living remains of the Cicatrix Knight.

Jack: And living just as fine as he was, you know?

Austin: Right.

Darcy: Does he hurt?

Austin: That's what I was about to ask!

Jack: Um… That's a really good question. When I was thinking about the Spoon of the Exhalate—it's a horror item, right? It is like, you know, the thing that immediately came

to mind was like, oh, you can create starved armies. You know, you can create armies of men who will fight for you and will never die because you're starving them. And so the, what is scarier here? I think what is scarier is this. He would hurt, were he not the Cicatrix Knight.

Austin: *The* Cicatrix Knight. Yeah.

Jack: An undead knight that had been guarding a barrow, you know?

Austin: Right. Yeah. Yeah. The irony here is that there is actually a, you have kept the Cicatrix Knight alive using your spoon. It's a spoon and not a fork, right? I'm not wrong about that?

Jack: It's a spoon. Yeah.

Austin: Yeah. But we—this hasn't come up, but the Cicatrix Knight also just has a Sentence about surviving. "I always survive with scars." And that hasn't come up. I don't know why that hasn't come up, but it is a Sentence that they have, which tells me that they live in painful states probably pretty often. Right? This is not… The Cicatrix Knight is the Cicatrix Knight. The Cicatrix Knight is the Knight of Scars. And so, this is not an unfamiliar position to be in. You know? To some degree. So.

Jack: I love that guy, and we look out for each other.

Austin: That's right.

Jack: Found Family except it's the story of a knight who gets less and less… of him. [laughs]

Darcy: Gets less found as he goes.

Sylvi: Just a little head and a neck.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvi: Yeah. [laughs] We keep losing parts of him.

Austin: Uh-huh.

Sylvi: [laughs]

Austin: Exactly. Cool. Well, I hope that that is—I think it's a useful answer to have, Janine, so thank you for asking that question. All right. So, yeah, what I think happened was you got through that area, and everybody made it to the other side. I want to say you no longer have the little Cobblings. The Cobblings did their bit to help.

Jack: Those guys!

Darcy: Oh, yeah.

Austin: The Sapryc Cobblings. And now they've rolled themselves away like little boulders, I believe? Apologies if we're getting this wrong. Assume it happened off screen, if not. Likewise, if the Sapryc Knight didn't get reduced down to some sort of weird semi-corpse body thing, that happened off screen. Don't worry about it.

Sylvi: Yeah, don't worry about it.

Austin: You know? But I believe the Cobblings left. And the last thing I remember is Mirador turning on a lantern to reveal that you are in the southern half of the Wound Way, the worm-bitten tunnel that runs through the core of the moon Sapryc. And it is back to being black and white here. It is no longer a big, bright, colorful place like the middle of the core of the moon was. And your journey continued or began to, you know, continued on basically. Any other questions about stuff?

There was a bigger conversation with Mirador Cantata about where you were going and there was, you know, maybe a little more, a *little* more clarity, a *little, little, little* more clarity, but still not much.

Jack: He offered us, I think, something that was… We are getting closer to the point at which he is going to tell us what we need to know, he says.

Austin: Yes.

Jack: And for much of the party, until Mirador did his favorite game, which is a donkey-like stubbornness that he learned from Scrundle, people were like, well, you can tell us now. And he was like, if I tell you now, I will put you in danger. To which I think the general response at first was, you know, danger, schmanger, we're trapped in a wormhole crawling through the center of a planet. But he stuck to his guns, and like a lot of arguments inside this party, it was just a lot of people nursing their own bitternesses and sulking, I think.

Austin: Mm-hm. Yeah, I think that that is right. And so yeah, the promise has been made, at the very least, that you will get more shortly. Ah. I'm just double-checking my notes and things to make sure I'm not missing anything else.

Jack: Top level, for the people who are listening, this is probably something you know, absolutely, but Mirador has hired us to travel first to the north to take a conveyance, to go to the south, where we will find something that will sort of move the world. Metaphorically or literally, hard to say. We now know what the conveyance is. It's a hole through the world.

Austin: Right. Correct. And it was a big elevator, also. That was also part of the conveyance, right? Which has now broken. It does not go on this side of things. This way forward, again, the tunnel at this point is flat for you, but at some point, it will become a vertical tunnel again, and you'll have to climb or find some other way of conveying yourselves upward, through the rest of it, presumably. So that is in front of you, right? As you have to now dig your way out or climb your way out of the tunnel this time instead of lowering yourselves into it via elevator. So that's important to know. Give me one second as I look at a Sentence and how it's written so that I know how this is going to come up. One second. Okay.

Journeying On [15:30]

Austin: The journey for the next few hours, maybe the next day, is largely uneventful. You travel through a tunnel. You snack on rations, except for the Cicatrix Knight, who's very careful about snacking, for reasons already established.

Sylvi: Well, is a snack a meal? We can do another half hour on this.

Austin: [laughs] Yeah, exactly.

Jack: A snack is not a meal. It would not break. [concedes] It would break the thing. It would break—

Austin: I don't think it would. I don't think it would. But I think that the line between a meal and a snack is just very scary for someone who doesn't want to die.

Janine: One peanut versus 16 peanuts.

Austin: That's right. Exactly.

Jack: Sorry, Sylvi.

Sylvi: [laughs]

Austin: If you have three of those little bags of peanuts on a plane, that's a meal. You've replaced a meal with peanuts, for sure.

Sylvi: I would be like the Cicatrix Knight if I did that.

Austin: Don't do it!

Sylvi: Where I would die right after. [laughs]

Darcy: Yeah, don't do it.

Austin: And soon, at some point, you know, after this travel, Mirador pauses and says,

> Austin (as **Mirador**): Ah. All right, I think we need to wait for a little bit.

Austin: And just begins to take off his backpack and set up a—he sets up a little camping chair to sit in. You know, one of those ones that's almost like a director's chair. The little fold-out ones, you know what I'm talking about?

Sylvi: Yeah. Does it have a little cup holder?

Austin: [laughs] It has a little cup holder. Puts it down. Is like,

Austin (as **Mirador**): All right, I'm going to sit down here. Whew.

Jack: We're just in a tunnel?

Sylvi (as **Gaje**): Can you tell us what we're waiting for?

Austin: You're just in the middle of the tunnel.

Austin (as **Mirador**): Yeah, yeah, I can tell you this. This I can tell you.

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

Austin (as **Mirador**): If you look and squint, you can see a little bit of light. We can't go when there's a light.

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

Austin (as **Mirador**): So, there's going to be a, a thing is going to come and block the light for a little bit, and then we can go.

Jack (as **Jud**): What's wrong with the light? Is it something looking at us?

Austin (as **Mirador**): The light isn't, but the light would let something look at us. It could see in the light, you know?

Janine (as **Sacea**): And you don't think any of us could do something about that?

Jack (as **Jud**): He doesn't think we can do anything, really. He's got very low faith in us.

Austin (as **Mirador**): No one can do anything about the light of Realis Itself.

Jack (as **Jud**): Oh, well.

Austin (as **Mirador**): So, we're going to wait.

Sylvi: [laughs] Shut Jud up real quick!

Austin (as **Mirador**): And when the, hm, it's blocked, we can keep moving. It'll be about, I think, a half hour. So. Packs off. Everyone feel free to stretch out.

Sylvi (as **Gaje**): How in a hurry are we going to be when this window is open? Like, is this a quick blocking out of the light, or like?

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

Sylvi (as **Gaje**): Should we stay, like, on our toes in case it suddenly changes, or is this thing on a schedule?

Austin (as **Mirador**): I gotta tell you, I gotta be really careful about this. We can't play 20 questions about it.

Sylvi (as **Gaje**): I'm sorry. I'm not trying to be snotty.

Austin (as **Mirador**): No, I'm gonna answer—no, no, no. I know. I know, I know. We can, um. We're gonna have a window to move, and then we're gonna have a window where I… You're gonna have to cover me up. I can't get hit by the light.

Sylvi (as **Gaje**): All right.

Jack (as **Jud**): We'll cover you up with like a sheet or like a cloth or something.

Austin (as **Mirador**): Something thick is my thinking. None of it can get in. It has to be… It's gotta be dark.

Jack (as **Jud**): And the light can touch us.

Austin (as **Mirador**): Should be fine. It might get a little warm. The closer we get.

Sylvi (as **Gaje**): I can handle that.

Austin (as **Mirador**): Yeah. We're close, I promise. We're close! The climb is gonna be the tough part. I'm hoping that there's some sort of… I'm hoping there's

something that can get us out of here quick, but we're… I'm being upfront with you. I don't know anything from this point forward.

Jack (as **Jud**): Flemming, have you got, like, flying spells?

Darcy (as **Flemming**) [sighs]

Jack (as **Jud**): Up, up spells.

Sylvi: Flemming, can you cast Uppies, please?

[all laugh]

Darcy (as **Flemming**) Yeah, yeah, that shouldn't be a problem.

Austin: Claps his hands together, and is just like,

Austin (as **Mirador**): This is, I do have faith in you. I do. This is why I have faith in you.

Jack: [cross] The donkey can fly.

Austin: [cross] Are you doing anything interesting for their little—sorry, go ahead.

Jack (as **Jud**): The donkey can fly, Flemming.

[everyone pauses]

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

Darcy (as **Flemming**) What?

Austin (as **Mirador**): Huh?

Jack (as **Jud**): If we're flying up here, you can make Scrundle fly too, right?

Sylvi (as **Gaje**): Oh. [laughs]

Janine (as **Sacea**): Oh.

Darcy (as **Flemming**) Yeah. That's…

Sylvi: It sounded you were stating that.

Janine: Yeah, I felt like we all thought we forgot some really important Scrundle lore.

Sylvi: Remember when Scrundle grew wings?

Jack: Oh, right, yes, Scrundle can fly.

Austin: Yeah!

Jack: Scrundle—important Scrundle—I have important Scrundle lore in my head. I have a Scrundle theory.

Janine: Scrundle's a touring addict.

Sylvi: Oh!

Jack: No.

Darcy: Scrundle theory.

Austin: You have a Scrundle theory?!

Jack: Yeah, yeah.

Austin: What's your Scrundle theory?

Sylvi: Wait, I want to know!

Darcy: Yeah, I want to know too.

Janine: Is it that Scrundle is the real guy and the other guy is just like a puppet?

Jack: No, no.

Austin: That's fun.

Jack: It's simple Scrundle theory. I think that Scrundle and Mirador can talk to each other.

Austin: Oh.

Darcy: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jack: I think that Scrundle is very much like a, and like talk to each other in like a legitimate, you know, like they are business partners, as it were, or they are like—you know, Scrundle and Mirador are like "these fucking guys!" when everybody else has gone to bed.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah.

Jack: I am, what am I doing? I'm in a tunnel. I'm picking up small rocks and I'm throwing them at bigger rocks.

Darcy: Hell yeah.

Austin: Just to see what happens.

Jack: Yeah, pretty much.

Sylvi: I mean, it's safer than when I was doing it in the elevator. So.

Austin: That's true. That's true. Yeah, it is safer.

Darcy: Oh, I forgot about that.

Austin: Yeah, yeah. I guess as a reminder, this tunnel is, like, big. This tunnel is wide.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: The giant space worm ate through this whole place, and so it's not, like, a tight little tunnel. It's like a big, wide, you know, chasm, almost, that you're walking through. And it's not even, especially on this side. Parts of the other side where you walked, as a

reminder, had been paved. There had been candles put up or other types of lights. This is not that. This has not been arranged in that way.

Something else which I have not said, which I realize now I should… And maybe this is the moment actually that it happens, that you notice it because of how big this tunnel is. When you throw those rocks, you're throwing those rocks, and at some point, instead of, you know, you hit the smaller rock and it rolls or it falls or whatever and lands on something and there's a squish sound. And what it has landed on is the body of a dead, Empest drone, one of these imperial bug monsters, one of these, you know, kind of locustal swarm beings, these soldiers. It's dead. It's been dead, seemingly, for quite some time, but the body is still here. And there's a hard exoskeleton with a soft interior. And you hear that from the way the rock falls on it.

And then, you know, I think we get the shot of someone raising the lantern to look and realizing there's actually a bunch of these bodies here throughout the tunnel. It's not like a graveyard. It's not a battlefield. It kind of has a battlefield vibe, but not like, it's not, it's not dense with bodies, but they're common. You know, every few hundred feet, there's another one.

Jack: Huh.

Darcy: Gross.

Jack: Oh, my God, body music.

Austin: Anyone else doing anything in our little 30-minute rest?

Janine: I'm asleep, but I'm standing up.

Austin: Oh!

Darcy: Oh.

Janine: I'm leaning on my stick.

Austin: Interesting. Do you do this a lot, or is this the first time they've seen you do this?

Janine: I think this is probably a thing that Sacea does to pass time sometimes.

Sylvi: She's time skipping.

Janine: She's kind of like, you know, like, I think like both—

Austin: Like in a video game?

Sylvi: Yeah!

Austin: Like, the Witcher is like, [Witcher voice] "I need it to be a little later in the day."

Sylvi: Yeah, literally!

Janine: Yeah. Yeah.

Jack: Wind's howling.

Janine: Sure. Yeah. She's, you know, she's got both hands on the sort of top of her walking stick and is sort of like hunched a little bit, like she's sort of putting her center of gravity on it.

Austin: Right, sure.

Janine: And just napping a little.

Austin: Yeah, I love that. It's the opposite of "something happened here," Witcher voice. It's like, [Witcher voice] "The person I need isn't here yet. I guess I'll wait." And then you get the zoom out and the fast motion day cycle happens.

Darcy: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: And now, all of a sudden, it's nighttime.

Jack: Yeah, it's like, [Witcher voice] "Argaleth said evening." And then…

Austin: [laughing] Exactly. Sorry, did you say Ugleth?

Jack: Yeah, Argaleth.

Austin: Oh, Argleth, yeah. Ugleth is actually a great, that's *The Witcher* to me. Ugleth the Ugly. The worst town, the worst village chief you've ever met.

Darcy: [laughs]

Sylvi: [laughs]

Jack: Yeah, he shows up and he's just like, [Ugleth voice] "I'm a right bastard and I beat all my subjects."

Austin: [Ugleth voice] "But I'm noble, isn't I?"

Jack: [Ugleth voice] "Isn't I?" [laughs]

Austin: [laughs]

Jack: And Geralt says, [Witcher voice] "Hmm, not for me to say."

Austin: Yeah. [Witcher voice] "I can't have an opinion about this, actually."

Janine: [Ugleth voice] "Just love me dog so much."

Austin: [laughs] Yeah, exactly!

Jack: [laughs] [Ugleth voice] "I remember when I saw the roses down by the stream!"

Sylvi: Getting more pirate-y each time.

Austin: [Ugleth voice] "Anyway, bring me a woman and a knife."

Jack: [Ugleth voice] "Separated from me ship for 50 years!"

Sylvi: You know what? Maybe Ugleth is real as fuck. I'm asking that all the time.

Austin: [laughs and sighs]

Jack: Anyway, that's what Sacea's doing.

Austin: Now wait a sec.

Darcy: [laughs] Word for word.

Austin: Gaje?

Sylvi: Yeah, I don't know.

Austin: If not Gaje, Flemming?

Sylvi: Yeah, go Flemm first and I'll try and think of something.

Darcy: [like a bro] Flemm first!

Austin: Flemm first. #FlemmFirst.

Darcy: Well, now that I have been tasked with making the party fly, I'm probably preparing what I need to do that.

Austin: That's interesting.

Jack: What do you need to do that?

Darcy: I am whittling wands and then carving runes into them.

Austin: Ooh.

Jack: Have you done this before?

Darcy: Sure.

Jack: Okay. Sure. You've made people fly before and stuff.

Darcy: Yeah.

Jack: Okay.

Austin: Yeah, Flemming's a Thaumaturge.

Jack: Under what circumstances?

Darcy: Various.

Jack: Okay, asked and answered.

Austin: Okay, I'm excited to see how this goes.

Sylvi: I think I figured out what I'm doing, and it's I borrowed a hunting knife or something from Mirador's pack, and I'm using it to clean off the stake in my arm.

Austin: Oh, sure.

Sylvi: If we're going to be fighting up there, I want to make sure that this thing's easy to move.

The Light of Realis [26:10]

Austin: Yeah, that makes sense. All right. The 30 minutes passes, and again, if you squint, you can see that the light ahead has dimmed back to nothing. There's just the lantern light now. And Mirador says, like,

> Austin (as **Mirador**): All right, time to get moving.

Austin: And gives Scrundle a little back pat, and Scrundle begins going again, and the group continues on. It is about six hours of additional travel before you can see that the light is coming again. And it's coming like down the big tunnel, you know, like you can almost like seeing the day approach, you know. And this time Mirador says,

> Austin (as **Mirador**): All right, we got some time. We got to figure out a way to make me disappear. And then we'll get a real rest, because it's going to be a little bit of a longer wait this time.
>
> Darcy (as **Flemming**) Hmm.

> Austin (as **Mirador**): We could take the stuff out of the cart and put the cart upright, and I could just kind of stand behind that if we can make sure there's no holes in it.
>
> Sylvi (as **Gaje**): I could use my cloak to help cover up some of the holes. I'm tall. It might be big enough. I don't know.
>
> Austin (as **Mirador**): Yeah.

Austin: Any other thoughts on how to prevent light from touching Mirador in this moment?

Darcy: Could Sacea make a lot of smoke?

Janine: Yeah. I was going to see if anyone else had stuff, because I feel like I do make a lot of smoke a lot.

Austin: Yeah. I think…

Sylvi: You're good at it, though.

Janine: I could also turn myself into a tarp, but you know.

Austin: Damn.

Jack: [laughs]

Darcy: Oh, wow.

Austin: The tarp tech in Friends at the Table has gotten advanced.

Sylvi: We're always innovating.

Janine: The most expensive tarp yet.

> Austin (as **Mirador**): This is gonna… I don't want you to overexert yourself. This is going to be a full day of rest for us. We can't move until the light goes away

> again. And until that happens…. That's the cycle here. It's about a day, and then we're going to get six hours of it. And then it'll be another, you know… So that's the rhythm from here.
>
> Jack (as **Jud**): What should we be worried about if the light does touch you? If the cart stumbles or if the cloak falls?
>
> Austin (as **Mirador**): Remember those folks in the ruins?
>
> Jack (as **Jud**): Sure do.
>
> Austin (as **Mirador**): Yeah.

Jack: We're talking about the people who we had early called the Death Procession.

Austin: Correct.

Jack: But it becomes clear that they are sort of alien hunters?

Austin: Yeah. That seems accurate.

Sylvi: They're Predator?

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah. That's kind of…

Jack: Sort of like, what if the Predator was Catholic?

Sylvi: Oh, no!

Darcy: [laughs]

Austin: Oh, the final boss of Friends at the Table is here.

Jack: What if the Predator…

Darcy: [laughing]

Sylvi: The alien's Protestant. That's why they're fighting.

Austin: That's why they're fighting.

Jack: Oh, that's why they're fighting.

Austin: Uh-huh. Uh-huh. Yeah.

Jack: Okay.

Austin (as **Mirador**): And this is also why I can't tell you about where we're going.

Jack (as **Jud**): Yeah. Yeah. We've been through that, but…

Sylvi: Jud is still seething over that, huh?

Jack: Yeah. "I've got a good reason for not telling you," "you'll all die." Okay. Okay, I'd be prepared to try turn the cart up combined with a cloak. Sort of build a little…

Austin: This is a… Yeah. I need a Sentence here. It's not a pose, but it is uncertain if you can make some sort of enclosure to make sure that the light of Realis doesn't reflect at all onto Mirador Cantata for, what did I say, twelve hours? Sixteen hours?

Jack: Six hours.

Austin: Six hours is how long you have to move, but then it's like a day. I might have said eighteen hours because I added up to twenty-four in my head, but actually I don't know that we know that it's actually twenty-four hours. But it's like a dozen hours.

Jack: And then Mirador has to go into his darkness room. Okay, so, I mean, I have the Sentence "I always fight my way to safety in the dark," which is kind of, on the face of it, perfect for this. But as I poke at it, it is kind of complex, because I would need to be the one…

Sylvi: What about the one two down from that?

Jack: Hmm?

Sylvi: What about the one two down from that, given that we know who we're hiding from?

Jack: Yeah, I do also have, "I always protect those traveling with me from the Death Procession."

Austin: Well, there you fucking go.

Sylvi: Yeah. [laughs]

Darcy: Seems good.

Jack: Now… It's not opposed, you say?

Austin: It is not—well, it's… The question for me, the thing that's… There would be a thing that would need to be opposed if Mirador was hit by the light, right?

Jack: Okay, right.

Austin: I'll just lay it out to you. That group has a Sentence that would trigger if Mirador was hit by the light. But they can't trigger it unless Mirador is hit by the light.

Jack: Okay, we can try really hard to avoid that. I just want to make sure that, for example, I would not be putting a reality 1 Sentence against a Sentence of the planet Realis.

Austin: No, this is general—there is a situation, and the situation is, you know, I'm going to briefly sketch something very ugly on this. Oh, wait, I need to make this, I need to fill this in with the light. I'm going to draw a really ugly thing on the map really quick, which is, let's say… There we go. Let's say that that, can you see this blue part?

Jack: Mm-hm.

Austin: Let's say that that's Realis, right? It's not that close, but it's not so far away. Let's say that's Realis. I've drawn the kind of like top of a wavy orb in blue. Realis Itself is there. Then let's say that the tunnel pops out, you know. Oh, that's the wrong color.

Oh boy. Let's go back. Let's get this nice…. terrible blood color that I had. The tunnel pops out here, right? Something is blocking the tunnel from—Realis from the tunnel. Something is passing either over or between the exit of the southern tunnel at the south pole and the light of Realis Itself for some amount of time, right. It must be big enough that it's blocking it from, you know, it's blocking it. It's really, it's blocking even from other angles, right? Which is, again, why this is not to scale, right? Because it wouldn't work if it was actually this close. Realis would be able to do whatever. But it's pretty close, right? And so, the shadow of that thing is blocking the direct light from Realis, and then it passes by, right? I think it's fair for you to guess that it is some sort of object in space. Whether that is a space station, an asteroid, who knows.

Jack: It's another moon. They've got a lot of them here.

Austin: There's a thousand, in fact. It's true.

Darcy: Could be a big monster.

Austin: It could be a big monster. It could be the corpse of the worm.

Jack: God, it could be the corpse of the worm, but it would be weird for it to be drifting back and forth. Unless it was doing a full orbit.

Austin: It's doing a full orbit.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: That is what is, I mean, that's the rhythm that Mirador is explaining. But Mirador feels—it seems like Mirador is avoiding saying the words I am saying out loud.

Jack: Yeah.

Darcy: Sure.

Jack: And in fact, he said we can't play 20 questions. [laughs]

Austin: Uh-huh. [laughs] Yes. There is a real “when is a snack a meal” thing happening with the information about where you’re going. And Mirador is afraid that by giving you too many snacks, you’ll have had a meal.

Jack: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Absolutely. Okay, so if I know I’m in theory rolling unopposed here, I am going to sort of say the Sentence “I always protect those traveling with me from the Death Procession.” I, you know, just start pulling stuff out of the cart and either putting it on my back or handing it to Gaje or, you know, like loading it, tying it badly onto Scrundle and then, you know, sort of stand by the cart waiting for help to like turn it on its side.

Austin: All right.

Jack: God, this is going to suck. You know, it’s going to be so irritating to have to move this cart and then, or rather to, you know.

Austin: Empty everything out.

Jack: Empty everything out, turn it over, make sure no light can get in.

Darcy: Mm. Just to clarify, we’re still at the stage where, I guess, could we move as long as the light doesn’t touch?

Austin: You could.

Jack: It’s risky, though, because then moving is happening.

Austin: Uh-huh.

Jack: But we could build Mirador a little…

Austin: But you could. Yeah.

Jack: Couldn’t we just, in theory—he said thick. It needed to be thick. Could we not just wrap Mirador up in a sort of bundle?

Darcy: Yeah.

Austin: You can try. How much light gets there?

Janine: And then put him on Scrundle. A little Scrundle bundle.

Austin: A Scrundle bundle

Darcy: A Scrundle bundle!

Austin: Uh-huh. Yeah.

Jack: Wow. Um… Well, it would mean… Austin, will we benefit from doing this quicker?

Darcy: Yeah, I think that's the thing.

Austin: Sure. Yeah. As a reminder, there is a sort of ticking clock here, which is like, the last thing that you know from the north is that the Empest had successfully—or had begun to attack the Cloister of—the whole northern continent, but including the Cloister of the Hollow Heart. There had been that magical beacon from Gaje. That blast of energy that brought everyone here.

Jack: That pale blue magic.

Austin: So, they are theoretically behind you by a little bit. You know? And they were looking for you in the tunnel. And you managed not to gain their attention. But it might be a matter of time before they like, through the force of being a capital F Faction in the Thousand Moons of Realis, are able to force their way through this tunnel, past even the Globate Cataract, through sheer violence, you know?

Jack: Yes. Okay, so what about combination of Mirador bundle in, first, Gaje's cloak and then various, you know, bedrolls, sundries, plus obscuring cloud from Sacea, plus Jud's "I always protect those traveling with me from the Death Procession." I guess by marshalling these forces. How would we feel about—

Austin: And looking for like, things—looking for the cloak to come undone here or there, and being, now wait a second, I have to rewrap you a little bit here.

Jack: Yeah, yeah. Well, I was a squire, right? It's that, like.

Austin: True!

Darcy: Ooh.

Jack: That, like, fiddly, nervous, I have to make sure everything's, you know, make sure that the bridle is tight, make sure that the master is doing okay.

Austin: That's very fun, actually. I love that.

Darcy: Hide discreetly, my lord.

Austin: [laughs] Oh! There we go.

Darcy: Looking very delicious today!

Darcy: [laughs]

Austin (as **Mirador**): Now you keep that spoon the hell away from me, okay?

Jack: Oh, that's not a joke that Jud finds funny. So just scowling, but tightening the thing around him.

Austin (as **Mirador**): I'm kidding, kid. I'm kidding.

Austin: So yeah, you do this. And Mirador trusts you and goes along with it for now, right? I think there was a little bit of like,

Austin (as **Mirador**): You're sure this is going to work? All right.

Austin: And you're able to make moves and keep a good lead on the Empest behind you. And then the thing that you expect to happen begins to happen. And there's an incline. And for the first couple hours of walking that incline, it's exhausting, but it's not impossible. It's not climbing. It's simply walking at an incline. But at some point, it becomes a climb. And now I do need to know if someone can counter the Sentence—I'm looking at your sheets instead of mine, here we go—if anyone can

counter the Sentence “the southern Wound Way is always treacherous to climb out of when bathed in the light of Realis Itself.”

Darcy: Oh, that sounds so specific.

Janine: That sounds like a plus two, right? Is that Sentence written down somewhere just so we can visually review it?

Austin: It is. I’m going to re-drop it in the chat for us for now. Boop. There we go. And I’ll give it question mark reality. There we go. “The southern Wound Way is always treacherous to climb out of when bathed in the light of Realis Itself.”

Darcy: And it’s, if we’re opposing with +2, I can’t remember how like the tie effects…

Austin: Yes. Yes.

Darcy: Okay, I know we don’t know, but, yeah.

Austin: If it is a tie, then ties are, this is “prizes passivity except in wisdom gained,” this is, you know, if you go over to the right on your screen, it should say over there. Maybe it doesn’t, actually. But, but yes, if they’re equal, the counter succeeds.

Flemming’s Spell [39:55]

Darcy: Okay. I think I have a thing, but I also want to make sure nobody else does.

Janine: Do your thing.

Sylvi: If you’ve got something, I’m good for you to go.

Austin: Let’s go.

Darcy: Okay. All right. Well, I’m going to use the hone.

Austin: Okay.

Darcy: I think the Sentence I want to hone is “I always know a few showy tricks to protect the party from direct threats.” That’s already a +1 Sentence.

Janine: Ooh.

Austin: Yeah.

Darcy: Well, maybe. Because I have to make this more specific. And so, the first thing that came to mind for me was like, “I always know a few showy tricks to protect the party from direct threat from the light of Realis”?

Austin: That’s very specific, that would work. It’s *very* specific.

Darcy: I know, that’s why I’m worried about it.

Jack: But you would only be locking it out for this session which is, you know.

Janine: You could also like make the focus a little more broadly environmental.

Austin: True.

Darcy: Yeah.

Jack: “While traveling upwards.”

Austin: “While in the tunnels of Sapryc,” “while traveling upwards.”

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: You could make it more restrictive in terms of who it’s protecting. “I always know a few showy tricks to protect Mirador Cantata from direct threats.”

Jack: [laughs] You could always…

Darcy: Gross. No way.

Austin: Well, I’m giving you options.

Jack: “I always know one showy trick.”

Darcy: “I always know a few showy tricks to protect Scrundle. From *anything*!” [laughs]

Sylvi: Uh-oh. I don’t know if that’s gonna work out, though.

Austin: I always know a few showy tricks to protect—sorry, the thing that Jack just said is fun. “I always know a showy trick to protect the party” is really fun, because it’s really restrictive. It’s the one thing you would do. But.

Darcy: Yeah!

Austin: But that would be a restriction. There’s lots of, you know, there’s lots of directions here.

Janine: Also, for the record, it would—I think protecting Scrundle would work because you’d be protecting Scrundle from the grief of losing Mirador.

Austin: Aw.

Sylvi: [laughs]

Darcy: That’s true, that’s true.

Austin: True.

Janine: Protection from anything.

Austin: Yeah, uh-huh.

Janine: Grief. Loss.

Darcy: Yeah. Okay, I do like, what was—it’s basically it’s like I don’t know a few tricks, I know one.

Jack: Yeah, I just took the S off.

Austin: “I always know a showy trick.”

Sylvi: [laughs]

Darcy: Yeah!

Austin: And so, the thing to do here, let's make sure we copy that somewhere.

Darcy: Yes. Hold on.

Austin: And then what you're gonna want to do is, the way it's written here in the temporary version of this rule is mark the Sentence, like as if you advanced it, or as if you failed actually, mark it, and then write the condition in parentheses so it's clear that it's temporary/honing. You cannot do this to a primed Sentence. A primed Sentence always draws itself towards realization. So, this advances by one, so I'll tick that thing. And then I think it's fine to have just written it like that. It's, yeah, yeah, we're good. I would in fact not write that in parentheses. The thing I was thinking of here is more like, let's say you were changing "I always project an image of authority" which is a level 1 or rank 1 reality Sentence. If you were changing that to like—or honing it to become "I always project an image of authority when I wear my fancy hat."

Sylvi: [bursts into laughter]

Austin: I was imagining you would put "when I wear my fancy hat" in parentheses.

Darcy: Yeah, yeah, yeah. That makes sense.

Austin: [chuckles]

Sylvi: [still laughing]

Darcy: So yeah, if we had done my original idea, which was—

Austin: That really got Sylvi.

Sylvi: I don't know why, just Flemming with a good hat really got me!

Austin: Yeah!

Darcy: Yeah. I think Flemming, we talked about Flemming having a hat.

Jack: Yeah, totally.

Austin: I think so.

Jack: Yeah, we talked about various different kinds of Flemming's hats.

Darcy: Yeah. But yeah, I get what you're saying.

Austin: Yeah, so this is fine for now, but, you know, yeah.

Darcy: Yeah.

Austin: All right. What is the showy trick you have to protect the party?

Darcy: We're gonna fucking fly.

Austin: So, you—wait, but how does that protect it from the light of Realis and—oh, I guess, sorry, you're right. I see what you're saying, you're saying the flight is making it safe to climb because you're not climbing, you're flying. Yeah.

Darcy: Yeah.

Austin: Okay, absolutely. This makes perfect sense. Absolutely.

> Darcy (as **Flemming**) All right, everyone. Take one of these. Tuck them behind your right ear.
>
> Jack (as **Jud**): [gremlin-y] This is very exciting!

Janine: Sacea snorts a little bit.

> Austin (as **Mirador**): Can someone get into the cloak and put it behind my ear for me?
>
> Jack (as **Jud**): Yeah, I'm there, I'm there.

Austin: I don't know how this works! I don't know what the visual is!

Sylvi: Just unwrap him a little and slide it in.

Janine: So, it's a wand? It's a wand with runes that we're putting behind our ear?

Austin: Yeah.

Darcy: I've whittled them down. They're not full wand size anymore.

Austin: Okay.

Janine: Okay, it's like a golf pencil.

Darcy: It's like a short stubby pencil.

Sylvi: Put a little cigarette behind your ear.

Austin: Put a little cigarette behind your ear. Exactly.

Darcy: Yeah, yeah. Uh-huh.

Austin: When does this come out in the future? Runic cigarettes. Put that in Fabula. Okay. Thank you.

Jack: Oh, wow. Yeah.

Austin: They're just little wands that you smoke. And the runes light up when you inhale.

Janine: Oh, I love that.

Sylvi: Oh, my God!

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvi: Yeah, wait. I kind of need one.

Austin: [laughs]

Darcy: Okay. We've all tucked the wands behind our ear.

Austin: We all tucked the wands behind our ears.

Darcy: Yeah, no, that makes you fly. Yeah, you're good.

Austin: That's it. You just begin to lift off. Do you have to do something?

Jack: No, it's not showy enough.

Austin: No, that's not showy.

Darcy: Oh, you're right.

Austin: That's in fact, you've made it.

Jack: A subtle trick.

Austin: Simple. Yeah, a subtle trick.

Janine: Yeah. What if we have to balance it on our noses like seals?

Darcy: Okay. Oh, this is tricky.

Sylvi: You could do something to activate them. You could do something flashy.

Darcy: Well, okay, yeah. Oh, that's a good idea.

Janine: What if it does something to our ear?

Darcy: I was going to say, oh, that's. That's better.

Sylvi: Don't put it in my ear!

Darcy: I was going to put it in my ear.

Austin: Yeah?

Sylvi: What?

Darcy: I was going to put it in my ear, because then the wand can touch my brain—

Everyone: Ew!!!

Darcy: And then I can translate my magic through my wand to your all's wands.

Jack: Now, I hate to say it again. This is not showy. This is gross.

Darcy: That's true.

Janine: This is Homer Simpson crayon nose.

Darcy: This is not my hand-created book of terrible spells.

Austin: Yes. Both of the things that were just said, yes.

Darcy: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: Ew. Ah. I'm feeling it in my face.

Darcy: [laughs] They say don't put your Q-tips in there, kids.

Sylvi: This is your life using Q-tips. Yeah.

Jack: [laughs]

Austin: Showy. It has to be showy.

Darcy: It has to be showy. You're right. You're right.

Sylvi: Do a dance!

Janine: Turn our ears into some fun ear stuff!

Jack: Janine in the peanut gallery.

Darcy: Oh.

Janine: Glowing ear.

Jack: “Turn our ears into something!” [laughs]

Darcy: I know what it is. Everyone’s head turns into a bird head and we all sprout wings.

Jack: Oh!

Sylvi: Whoa!

Janine: [laughs]

Jack: Wow!

Darcy: You get to pick what bird you are. This is the new personality test.

Austin: All right.

Sylvi: Bearded vulture.

Austin: Wow. Instant answer. Love it.

Sylvi: Yeah.

Austin: Someone’s going to need to carry Mirador if this is how it works. Maybe two of you.

Sylvi: I got it. I’m big.

Austin: Because.

Darcy: You think I didn’t put a wand for Mirador?

Austin: Well, if the wings are touched by the light.

Janine: Yeah.

Sylvi: Yeah, he’s wrapped up.

Janine: He’s going to get zorped or whatever happens.

Austin: I'll get zorped. I'll get slurped.

Darcy: Sorry. I got Scrundle and Mirador mixed up in my head.

Janine: [laughs]

Austin: Scrundle can turn into a Pegasus donkey for sure.

Darcy: Okay.

Janine: But can Scrundle balance something behind his Scrundle ear?

Austin: I have a question. How does anyone balance it? Does it go away when you have bird head?

Jack: Great question.

Janine: Oh.

Austin: Because bird heads don't have ears.

Darcy: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: It just kinda like…

Janine: Does it become just like a single long feather sticking out of the side of the head?

Austin: That's fun.

Darcy: Ooh. I was going to say, because you said it wraps around the ear, Janine. It wraps around your ear, down to your face, and that's what becomes the beak, and then the rest of you changes.

Janine: Did I say that it wraps around the ear? What?

Darcy: Maybe someone else did. I don't know.

Austin: Someone said it, I guess.

Janine: I hadn't thought of that.

Animal Googling [47:32]

Austin: Yeah, sure. What type of bird does Scrundle become?

Janine: I have to do a really important Google search for the phrase "donkey bird," just to make sure it's not already a thing.

Austin: It might be.

Darcy: What's… Oh.

Sylvi: Doing Eddie Murphy's "you ain't never seen a donkey fly" from the beginning of Shrek.

Janine: Horned screamer?

Austin: Donkey bird literally sounds like a donkey.

Janine: Is that the horned screamer?

Austin: Maybe.

Sylvi: What a name.

Darcy: What was the… Man.

Janine: There are three screamer species.

Darcy: Was it Rescuer?

Janine: The other two being the southern screamer and the northern screamer.

Darcy: Was it *Rescuers Down Under* that had some big bird?

Austin: *Rescuers Down Under*. It had a big bird.

Darcy: That's what I'm thinking of that Scrundle becomes.

Janine: Yeah, it has a big golden…

Darcy: Not the big golden bird.

Janine: Not golden, but it was like brown.

Sylvi: An ostrich. Oh no, it can't fly.

Darcy: I think this is from the not *Rescuers Down Under*, the other rescuers or the adventurers. I forget what it was called. Because they flew on like a big, I don't think he was a stork. Hold on.

Janine: No, the rescuers down under had a bird. It was like, oh, *The Rescuers Down Under* did have a big golden eagle.

Austin: Yeah.

Darcy: Yeah, that's not the one.

Austin: Are you just thinking of the albatross?

Jack: And also, they had an al—are you talking about the albatross?

Darcy: Yes, I am thinking of Wilbur the albatross.

Austin: That's funny, because I looked up albatrosses. That was the first place my brain went, Darcy. When you said everything turns into a bird, I first thought Scrundle could turn into an albatross. Or an albatross head. So, I think that we've locked it in. Albatross head.

Janine: I'm doing shoebill stork.

Austin: Oh, love that. That's the big—

Sylvi: What type of bird is this, Jack, that you've posted?

Jack: This is a… [laughs] If you click on it, if you open the link fully, you will see the name of it in the URL.

Sylvi: Oh, that's…

Austin: Why won't you read it to us?

Janine: Why does he look wet? Is he wet? Or is that how he really looks?

Jack: It is "wet fledgling European sparrow bedraggled small bird."

Sylvi: Yeah, that's perfect.

Janine: [laughs] Aw.

Jack: Austin, oh, that's an albatross, right.

Austin: That's an albatross, yeah. I love this little bird.

Jack: Wow. Those things in the middle are actually its real eyes, Austin.

Sylvi: I hate that.

Austin: Uh-huh, yeah.

Janine: Well, then it just looks like a vulture.

Jack: Yeah, it does.

Austin: True.

Janine: Which is fine, anyhow.

Jack: Sylvi, you have become—

Austin: Gaje.

Jack: I think Gaje has become…

Austin: Oh yeah, bearded vulture.

Jack: Rupert. Rupert the bird.

Sylvi: Right! Rupert is a bearded vulture! I forgot about that!

Janine: No. No.

Jack: Rupert is also a cock of the rock.

Austin: Cock of the rock and—

Janine: Cock of the mock.

Austin: Cock of the—right, because it's also.

Jack: Cock of the mott.

Austin: Cock of the mott. That's correct. You know who this is.

Sylvi: Okay. Thank God.

Austin: I do know who this is, though.

Jack: Is this Kitcha Kanna?

Austin: This is Kitcha Kanna, bird leader of Advent.

Sylvi: It is Kitcha Kanna. Yeah.

Jack: [laughs] Bird leader of Advent.

Sylvi: I just think they're the coolest type of bird.

Austin: They're really cool.

Jack: Oh, Friends of the Table's number one bird fascist, Kitcha Kanna.

Sylvi: They eat bones.

Austin: They do eat bones.

Janine: They look kind of like they'd be in the Kingdom Hearts organization, whatever.

Sylvi: Yeah!

Darcy: Mm!

Austin: Oh, a Sri Lankan bay owl. Hello!

Darcy: I've never heard of this before in my life, but this is a scary looking owl.

Jack: This owl…

Austin: And this is what you have become, Flemm.

Darcy: Yeah.

Jack: Is pretty creepy, isn't it?

Janine: I want to drape a piece of pizza over his face.

Darcy: Yeah!

Jack: Yeah, it's got a spot for the pizza exactly, hasn't it? And then two sort of mushroom slices on either side.

Janine: Yeah. Oh, I don't like it. This is one of those owls where you tell someone, hey, there's a theory that when people see aliens, they're actually seeing owls. And then they're like, that's bullshit. Aliens don't look anything like owls. And then you pull this picture out and you're like, uh-huh.

Darcy: Yeah.

Sylvi: I'd believe it, honestly. Owls scare the shit out of me.

Darcy: I love them, but they can be very scary if you don't expect them.

Austin: Yeah. We're missing Sacea?

Janine: No, I already said shoebill stork.

Austin: Oh, I want a picture.

Janine: I didn't put a picture. Okay, fine! One second.

Jack: [laughs]

Austin: And do we need a Sapryc Knight? [laughs]

Jack: Oh.

Janine: Is he just an egg?

Sylvi: A hummingbird because he's just a head.

Jack: Well, no, we're also lifting the cart with us, right?

Austin: Right, so yeah. Well, I guess, is Scrundle carrying the cart as a flying donkey?

Jack: Sure.

Sylvi: I'll help Scrundle.

Austin: That's heavy. I guess everybody could lift part of the cart.

Sylvi: Yeah, I figured I'd at least help.

Austin: And like Mirador could be in the back. Yeah, there we go. Love this thing. These things are big, right? These are like big, big birds.

Janine: Yeah. Yeah.

Jack: Oh, they make such an awful sound.

Sylvi: I love them.

Austin: They're good.

Janine: People always say they look evil, but sometimes they look like they're having a good time, and I like that

Sylvi: They look like Jim Henson made them.

Jack: They do, along with… I can't remember the name of this bird, so I'm just going to search "weird-looking bird." Give me one second.

Austin: Yeah, I'll see what you get. Birdteen Minutes over here.

Jack: The first one… Yeah. Weirdly, it's 15 minutes long.

Austin: Birdie Minutes, like it's 30 minutes, but you talk about birds.

Sylvi: Oh, there we go.

Jack: It's the potoo frogmouth is the weird looking bird that looks like Jim—this is a, now this is a bird that looks like Jim Henson made it.

Janine: Oh yeah.

Austin: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, for sure. For sure, for sure, for sure.

Janine: That bird is like very Rizzo adjacent.

Jack: Yes. Yes.

Janine: Got a New York accent.

Jack: Oh, you know what movie's great?

Janine: Yeah.

Jack: That Muppet movie we watched where they all go to someone's house for Christmas. That movie is way better than it has any right to be.

Janine: Yeah, Muppet Family Christmas.

Austin: Muppet Family Christmas. It's out there. People should watch it. All right. You've taken off. You begin to fly upwards. What's flying feel like?

Jack: Oh, amazing. I'm 16 years old. [laughs] This is the dream.

Austin: You've always wanted to fly.

Sylvi: Jud is understanding what Lana Del Rey songs are about.

[all laugh]

Austin: Has anyone here done this before? Genuinely, this feels like a big deal.

Sylvi: No, what?

Darcy: Oh, yeah, I have.

Janine: I suspect I have turned into a bird.

Austin: [laughs]

Sylvi: No, I have not turned into a bird before!

Austin: My favorite Kafka story begins "I suspect I have turned into a bird."

[all laugh]

Sylvi: God, I love this potoo bird.

Austin: It's really good. It's really good.

Jack: I also love this shoebill stalk that Janine, the caption is "shoebill crane throwing a duck out of its way."

Darcy: [bursts into laughter]

Jack: And the image is this shoebill stalk picking a duck up seemingly fairly gently. And the duck is just sort of going like, what?

Janine: [laughs]

Darcy: [laughs]

Austin: [laughs] This is the most I've ever understood how they got to Daffy Duck. Because that duck has huge Daffy Duck energy.

Sylvi: yeah.

Jack: Oh, great. But yeah, I'm loving this and I'm hiding it.

Austin: Incredible. And you are flown… This is going so well, I love it for you. You are flown to the, through the, for the next however long—how, like does it get tiring to fly?

Jack: Yes.

Austin: Are you?

Sylvi: I mean it would have to be, especially if we're helping carry a cart, right?

Austin: A cart, yeah.

Darcy: Yeah.

A Pause [54:40]

Austin: Yeah. Then let's say maybe you get to the last place upwards, where you could theoretically stop without it just being vertical, you know? Or maybe you get up to where it is totally vertical, but there is like an outcropping that you can land on to take a break. And just in time, too, because the shadow has appeared again, allowing you to stop for a little bit. Exhaling, breaking, letting Mirador out to breathe.

Jack: Poor guy.

Austin: Yeah. Not that Mirador was holding his breath, but like, you know, I wouldn't want to be wrapped up like a mummy for 12 hours and flown around. That doesn't sound good. Flying is already hard, you know? TSA joke.

Darcy: [chuckles]

Jack: [chuckles]

Sylvi: Yeah, don't I know it.

Austin: [laughs] So, yes, you get to a place where you can rest. And this time you can actually, looking upward, you know, the thing above you is a little more clear. The thing that's causing the shadow, you're close enough now that you can make out the shape of it at least. It looks like a long, almost oblong stone. It seems smooth. It's far away, so it's hard to say. It seems smooth the way—this is a goofy comparison to make, maybe, but you know how planets can look smooth, like Jupiter kind of looks like a marble? You know what I mean?

Jack: Yes. Yes. And it's a trap because…

Austin: Right, correct.

Jack: It will mess you up and you shouldn't go there.

Austin: Correct. And that is…

Janine: Atmosphere.

Austin: Right, well, yeah.

Janine: Right, it's, yeah.

Austin: Well, yeah, I mean, that is, but it looks like that, and it does look like a thing you could touch, but is it? I don't know.

Darcy: Mm.

Jack: And it's far, or is it in the sky? Is it in the atmosphere, or is it in the sky?

Austin: It is hard to read, because you don't know how big it is, right? It could be the size of a large spaceship, you know, a city-sized spaceship, or it could be the size of a quarter of this whole moon, but further away.

Jack: Does everyone here know about Orphan Vessels? We must do, right? Some of us have come from the other, you know, we all know of the existence of spaceships.

Austin: You know the existence of spaceships, you know the existence of Orphan Vessels. There are small shuttles that sometimes can hop between moons that are very close to one another. But for any sort of long travel, you need to take something called an Orphan Vessel, which is a sort of living spaceship, the descendants of these grand vessels of old that were living partners in society in some sort of way, TBD, depending on how you want to run your Realis home game. But in this world, I think everyone's forgotten whatever the original vessels were, but they do know we have these Orphan Vessels still, which are living spaceships and are rare and expensive. And the Empest have some, but they're like corrupt undead versions of them, you know? Stuff like that. Normal space stuff.

Darcy: Mm-hm.

Jack: [sighs] I mean, it's hovering there, it's not moving. Or rather it's moving slowly?

Austin: It's moving slowly! You're gonna have six hours of shadow.

Jack: Slowly enough that—yeah.

Austin: Yeah. Which, interestingly, now, you've flipped the rhythm that Mirador expected. This is now rest time instead of movement time.

Jack: Oh, yeah, totally.

Austin: Right? Did anybody make a meal? What do you do with your six hour break here?

Jack: What is around us as we've kind of emerged from this hole?

Austin: No, you're still in the hole.

Jack: Oh, we're still in it. We just have a clarity on… Right, I see.

Austin: Yes, you're high enough up that it's become a vertical—because, again, we're looking at the map and we're towards the southern end now of this thing, of this tunnel. But that means that you are—it has become vertical where you're climbing it, even though we're going to the south, because it is—you're closer to the surface. And so, it stops being horizontal. It starts feeling vertical to you. I mean, literally, the way that it's working is that you have—it has become, you know. If on the other—on the northern end, this is where you were taking the elevator down.

Jack: Yes.

Austin: Except this time, you've begun flying and you've found just enough of an outcropping that you can put down the cart and Scrundle and everybody else. But it's not like a big area and it's not a purposefully carved out like rest zone. So, it's a little bit like being on the edge of a cliff. There's just a natural part where the big worm that kind of chewed through this moon happened to chew a bite out such that there's enough of a little escarpment that you can stand on. Is that the right word? You know what I mean.

Jack: Yeah. I don't know if that's the right word, but I do know what you mean.

Austin: But you know what I mean. Yeah.

Janine: Is there any kind of like, like scrub life, like plant bits or?

Austin: [sighs] Great question!

Janine: Stuff other than rock?

Austin: I think this high up, this high up, what you're starting to get is… Hm, the thing that's left here… How are you looking around for it? You're just like, hey, is there anything here?

Janine: Eh, poking around with my stick, probably.

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: Poking some rocks over.

Austin: You don't see anything alive, alive here. I guess maybe there's some mushrooms. You find the shed skin of one of the little wormlings that you saw up on the northern end of this, and then not too far away from it you see the wormling is dead. Seemingly killed by the light of Realis. Dried out, a husk.

Janine: Are those things toxic? Do we know anything about worm meat?

Austin: You ate worm meat.

Jack: Oh, no, not toxic at all, we ate a bunch of it.

Austin: You ate a bunch of worm meat.

Janine: Oh, right, right, right. Right.

Austin: Totally.

Janine: Okay, cool. I'm gonna gather up some dried out worm meat.

Austin: Okay. You—wait, so what it seems like is this thing left behind some worms, but because they get exposed to the light of Realis here in this tunnel, they don't—and on this whole southern end of the moon, they can't grow enough to where they can become a threat, you know? Realis's light seems to just kill them. So. And that's the other thing here. It's getting hotter the closer you get to the exit. It's not humid, but when the light is on you, it has gotten hotter and hotter, and you have one more big push to go. So maybe you do end up wanting to use some of the shade to move in, up to you. But yeah. You can totally gather up—

Janine: I want to make worm borscht.

Austin: Okay.

Janine: Like a cold worm soup.

Austin: Like a cold—how are you getting the cold?

Janine: Well, it's just not hot. It's like…

Austin: Room temperature worm borscht.

Janine: It's like we're going to stew it really, really low and then let it cool off before eating it.

Austin: Mm-hm.

Janine: And you're all going to like it. And you know why you're all going to like it? Because I have a +1 Sentence that says you're all going to like it.

Austin: Wait a second.

Sylvi: [weakly] Okay, Gam-gam!

Darcy: [weakly] Okay!

Jack: Gam-gam is a worm.

Janine: "I always exert my will over the senses of others with my perfumes."

Austin: [amused] Oh, okay!

Janine: I'm going to light a censer that makes this taste amazing.

Austin: Oh, you're going to air up it.

Janine: Yeah, I'm going to air up the worm soup.

Austin: You have to use the special spoon—actually, we do have a special spoon. Don't use that special spoon.

Jack: Do not.

Austin: I mean!

Jack: It won't work.

Austin: No, it has to be your own flesh, not worm flesh.

Jack: However, this meal does give me a violent pseudo-trip of worm history.

Sylvi: [laughs]

Austin: Oh, right. It would do that, right? Because we talked about it happening to you.

Jack: It has previously. Every time I've eaten worms. Yeah.

Austin: Yeah, and in this case, it's a short, simple life, and it's what I already explained, and now you know that in character.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: It was one of many worms born here throughout the walls of this place. Some of them stay in there and are able to live for a little bit longer, but the second that they need to move into a place where they can get food that isn't just other worms, they get zapped by the light of Realis. Or they try to go downward…

Jack: God, it does suck how that happens in nature sometimes. You ever see like a David Attenborough documentary where it's like these little creatures live a short and unpleasant life and any time they try and act for their own benefit, they're instantly killed by the ocean or something.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: [sighs]

Sylvi: Damn, they're just like me for real.

Darcy: [laughs]

Sylvi: I've been really feeling that.

Austin: Nature. It's out to get you sometimes, you know. There's not much wiggle room.

Sylvi: I mean, worms tend to do a lot of wiggling.

Austin: [whispers] Oh, yeah, they do, that's…

Janine: Yeah, they get all the wiggle room.

Austin: That's what happens. You eat the borscht. The borscht is good?

Sylvi (as **Gaje**): Damn, Sacea, this borscht is good as hell.

Janine (as **Sacea**): Thank you.

Jack: Jud, eyes rolled back in his head, experiencing worm life.

Janine: [laughs]

Sylvi: Speaking in tongues.

Austin: Damn, Sacea, where'd you get this?

Jack: [laughs]

Austin: Oh, from the worm corpse? Okay, yeah, I see.

Jack: Oh, all right, asked and answered.

Janine (as **Sacea**): Are you enjoying your soup, Flemming?

Darcy (as **Flemming**): Yeah!

[all laugh]

Sylvi: Yeah, totally! Yeah!

Jack: Oh, we're also all—

Darcy: We're so close to the end. I'm not gonna fight over soup with you.

Austin: Yeah, yeah.

Janine: Birds love worms.

Austin: God, this is just like a nice little road trip now, we made it, we made it past all the hard stuff. I think Mirador is like smiling right now, like, "I picked the right people," you know? Like, Mirador is like, "It all came—"

Janine: To sacrifice to the sun or whatever the fuck I'm gonna do. [laughs]

Austin: [laughs] Well, you're not going to get sacrificed! We'll see. We'll see.

Sylvi: [laughs] My t-shirt that says "I'm not going to sacrifice you to the sun" is raising a lot of questions.

Austin: Hey everybody, I got everybody team t-shirts. Yours all says "I got sacrificed to the blue weird sun and all I got is a t-shirt." And mine says "I'm the sacrificer."

Darcy: [laughing] Sacrificer…

Sylvi: I thought it was going to be "I traveled through the Wound Way and all I got was sacrificed to the moon of Realis."

Jack: And Mirador's says, "I took them through the Worm Way to sacrifice them."

Austin: The Worm Way, uh-huh. Yeah. Exactly.

["Sapryc" by Jack de Quidt begins playing