

Perpetua 37: The Castle Eschatonica 05

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Recap

Austin: You are an invite of House Deadwind.

(as **receptionist**): Ah, your invitation allots you four proper masks. Your attendants will need to wait here or wear servants' veils, you understand.

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

Jack: Uh, Elena looking at Jonathan.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): What?

Jack (as **Elena**): Only four masks are available.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Yeah, I don't need nothin' fancy.

Jack: Oh. [laughs] I hadn't even considered this as an option!

Ali (as **Veile**): Well, I mean, are we entitled to a plus one? [Sylvia laughs]

Austin (as **receptionist**): You're getting four masks. That's the... [Art and Ali laugh] No. That's plus three.

Austin: Says the receptionist.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): [quietly] Think we're gonna have to sweet talk 'em if we want extra masks.

Austin (as **receptionist**): There aren't any extra masks. You're the final guests to arrive. We assumed that, like normal, House Deadwind wouldn't be arriving in number.

...

Austin: As if lifted up by an outside force, returns to its feet. It has an ability called Just A Puppet, and you see why. In the little bit of light that is coming from the very top of this place, down through each of the layers of the hive, you see a thin, thin web that is puppeting this Strange Hornet. There is something else in here with you, and you hear it cackling in the dark.

Keith: Look, I hate to say it: I'm happy to kill the Wicked Weaver.

Art: I'm not unhappy to kill the Wicked Weaver. I'm just saying, in the event that that becomes untenable, I am open to fleeing.

...

Austin (as **door**):

Oh, tap your casks and trade your masks to celebrate the year.

Backstab or bray, prey on or pray to lift up your career.

But do not assume you'll see this room without a feat of wisdom.

You must display you know your way around our honored system.

Jack: Okay.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Well, Elena, you're the dungeonier. That make sense to you?

Jack (as **Elena**): I mean, there's some sort of riddle being worked.

...

Austin (as **dancer**): I thought you said that you hadn't danced yet.

Janine (as **Brontë**): Not here. In my life, quite a bit.

Austin (as **dancer**): I see. When would you find time for dancing in a year like ours?

Janine (as **Brontë**): [sighs] You work it into the everyday routine. It's not always an affair like this. Sometimes it's just a pleasant little step on your way down the road.

Austin (as **dancer**): But your duties with the Hexes.

Janine (as **Brontë**): [chuckles] Well, other people take care of most of that.

[song ends]

High Masque

Tier of Spirit [0:02:49]

Austin: All right. Veile, what are you getting up to over here?

Ali: Hi. I have two out-of-character things really quick. I forget, what's the Tier of Spirit, again?

Austin: There seems to be some sort of altar there and some, like, meditation. Someone is guiding meditation, someone in robes.

Ali: Oh, okay.

Austin: Robes and, like, a laurel crown.

Ali: Huh. I see. [laughs] I was like, the other ones of these are kind of obvious, but I forgot about spirit. The second thing is that I said that I was googling Gaia Online, but I forgot a really important thing about Veile's wings, which is that where they're purple, they glow, obviously.

Austin: I mean, obviously. Yes.

Ali: And there's the kind of pixel effect of, like, glowy bits coming from the bottom.

Austin: Oh.

Ali: Obviously. Duh. I mean, come on.

Austin: Fun. Obviously. Yeah. [Ali laughs quietly] I guess I should go back. Maidenhair fern had brown wings, like deep dark brown. All right, Veile.

Ali: Okay. Yeah.

Austin: I have to remember wings. NPCs have wings. NPCs have wings. I'm saying it to myself. I'm hitting myself on the head with my fingertips. All right. [Ali laughs]

Ali: Okay. So, this is interesting, because I was originally, before the clarification, I was thinking that Veile would be most interested in the Tier of Art, [Austin: Mm-hmm.] because it's just kind of this showy most distracting part of this and also a thing that she likes to engage with. But I feel like the Tier of Spirit is professionally compelling.

Austin: Oh yeah.

Ali: So I think of her actually, like, maybe kind of waffling in this right middle. Wait, my hand on an arrow. [laughs quietly] Kind of hovering and waffling right at the intersection of the two of them.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Ali: For people at home, it's like a circle divided into six pieces.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: And the Tier of Art is like 12 to 3, and Tier of Spirit is, what is that, 9 to 11?

Austin: What? Wait.

Ali: 10:30?

Austin: Oh. I see what you're saying. [Ali laughs] You're saying in terms of clocks. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: But a thing to remember though, sorry. The Tier of Art is lower. These are like big giant multi-floor steps.

Ali: Ohh.

Austin: So the Tier of Art is only really touching the Tier of Feasting. Then you have to go up a whole other set of—

Ali: Okay, okay.

Austin: Like, imagine like five floors for each of these tiers, you know?

Ali: Okay, but if you, for instance, had wings and [Austin: Yeah.] were floating in the air, looking at one but feeling like you should go to the other. [laughs]

Austin: That would totally work. You could be up at the Tier of Spirit and be looking down at the Tier of Art very easily, yes. Yeah.

Ali: But I think she does end up sort of fluttering down onto the sort of pizza pie edge of the Tier of Spirit.

Austin: Uh huh.

Ali: Letting her boots kind of tap on the stone.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: And yeah, I don't know. It seems so presumptuous to, like... I mean, imagine that she would even be interested in or, like, think that she would come in on one of those meditations. But in the, like, mingle party sense, I wonder if she's treating this like the museum, [Austin chuckles] the way that she would have with the art space.

Austin: Yeah. The angelic figure leading this meditation, who is walking through both kind of centering chants, that seem to not be in a language that you understand, but then also occasionally, like, posing a question. These aren't kōans. These aren't the sort of open-ended, force you to think about a strange, you know, idea or situation. These are questions like, "To whom are you most loyal?" and, you know, "Do you prefer the sun or the shade?" So they're meant to provoke you to think about stuff but in a very particular specific way. And that person is not wearing a mask. The person who is wearing this kind of laurel crown is not actually wearing a mask and seems to be wearing more what you can recognize very quickly as religious robes, even though you do not recognize the types of robes these are at all. This is very clearly someone from a different religion than you completely, you know?

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Austin: As you are hearing this, though—and I think you're maybe the first one who notices this, and I don't know if this is going to come into play here, but it is true about this world—can you roll 2d9 for me?

Ali: Why not?

Austin: Yeah. As you center yourself spiritually and learn something new about the way Alteros works. A 5 and a 9. Okay. I need you to take either a resistance or a vulnerability—you can pick which is which—of the fifth element and the ninth element. So that's one, two, three, four. Earth and, I believe, poison. You can be resistant to one and vulnerable to one while you are here.

Ali: Whoa.

Austin: This is Elemental Lineage. Every time that you are under this law. Like, this is

true for you in the realm of Alteros. You can decide which is which, but yep.

Ali: Resistance or vulnerability?

Austin: I have said gain resistance. You get one resistance and one vulnerability.

Ali: Okay.

Austin: As I've written it, it's resistance to the first and vulnerability to the second. I think when I first originally thought of this, it was you decide. I'm happy to have you decide. I think it's fun to let you decide which is which.

Ali: Sure. Yeah. Hmm. I think that I am going to be resistant to poison, because game sense. [Ali laughs]

Austin: Oh. I see. And then therefore vulnerable to earth.

Ali: I think so. Yeah. I think that there's, like, because I've been increasingly trying to get myself Caliginiapilled [**Austin:** Ah.] slash think of...entropisy?

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Ali: Entropis— whatever. [laughs] I think a lot of the study of that magic is like study of fate in general, and that's why it's a lot of time-based stuff, because it's like, what fate is is what fate is, so you might as well find these, like, tension points in it. You know what I mean? So, all of this to say that I think Veile getting the limestone mask and then being vulnerable to earth is like some sort of weird thing that's happening.

Austin: Oh, fun. Yeah. Yeah, interesting. All right. Are you taking part in any of the chanting, or are you just kind of observing and trying to piece together some stuff?

Ali: Yeah. Is there somebody who also seems, like, kind of not as locked in as I am? [laughs]

Austin: Yeah, you could— yeah, I think that that's fair. [Ali laughs] Give me a d12 and a d30.

Ali: Okay. Yes. Yes, indeed. 1d12. That is— nope. [laughs] I have to say roll as well. That's an 8.

Austin: Okay.

Ali: Roll 1d13. And an 18.

Austin: 8 and an 18. [chuckles] Okay. Let me make sure this is right. Make sure I have not fucked this up. Yeah, okay. This person has a mask with kind of bright yellow flowers on it, with where the eyes are are filled in with kind of dark centers, but you can tell by their posture that they are not very comfortable here. This does not seem to be their jam. I think specifically this is a pretty tough-looking guy who has some sort of ceremonial weapon, like a sword at his side. Maybe on his back. It's like a big two-handed sword. But he's like, he really wants to lock in, and he can't quite figure out when to, like, come in on the chanting, and he's kind of fluttered away from where he was before. He has big dark kind of like vulture wings on his back.

Ali: Whoa! [laughs quietly]

Austin: And, yeah, the type of plant that he has is he has the flowers of a Jerusalem artichoke. So if you do a search for Jerusalem artichoke, you will see these bright yellow sunflower-looking flowers, but they're smaller than that.

Ali: Wow. Okay. Yeah. I think that this is a swift opportunity for comfort for Veile, as somebody who, like, is sort of engaging with confessional type things or, you know, people coming by wanting to talk to somebody. So I think, like, recognizing somebody kind of struggling with this. Like, this is her, like, way to provide religious guidance and also to just, like, be a nice weird person like she is. [laughs]

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: To be like, "Hey, man. How are you doing?" She doesn't say, "Hey, man. How are you doing?"

Austin: What's she say?

Ali (as **Veile**): Pardon me, sir. Would you like to speak for a moment?

Austin (as **warrior**): [deep gruff voice] Ah, I guess so. [Ali laughs] Not having a good time. Not...yeah.

Ali (as **Veile**): I recognized a bit of discomfort, and I wanted to confess that I was feeling a bit out of place as well. So, perhaps a bit of conversation might mend that?

Austin (as **warrior**): You're out of place? Miss Limestone, aren't you all about this stuff? I see the staff. I see the mask. You're Hexes and such. That's only cousins to spirit. Prayin', chantin'.

Ali (as **Veile**): [awkward quiet laugh]

Austin (as **warrior**): I don't know nothin' about none of that. They keep telling me it'll make me better, you know, in battle, if I center myself and prepare to die because I know I'll be one with the Fifth Wind, but I don't know about any of that.

Ali (as **Veile**): Yes. I mean, um...sorry. [laughs quietly] Do you feel it's a sense of regret that keeps you from acceptance or something else?

Austin (as **warrior**): Regret. [uncertainly] I don't *think* I have regrets. What's it feel like to have a regret?

Ali (as **Veile**): Oh. Um...

Ali: [laughs] Veile being like, do I regret that I took that wrong sandwich from the—? Like, what does Veile have in her life that she regrets? [Austin, Jack, and Ali laugh]

Sylvia: Oh my god.

Dre: I mean, your mentor person is, like, shot and in a coma after you tried to do magic on him, so.

Ali: Yeah, that's fair. Yeah, that's fair. [laughs] Yeah, Veile who does not consider the

emotional weight of that very often. [laughs]

Austin: Yeah.

Dre: Well, fair. Hey, Jonathan's in no place to judge, you know?

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Ali: Veile, the avoidant person. Like, yeah. Anyway. What would she actually say here?

(as **Veile**): Well, the reason I ask, and I thank you for sharing, because I realize it's quite personal. I just think, in my experience in speaking to people who have difficulty accepting the finality of their lives, typically consider it from places that are quite similar despite different situations. Regret is quite possible—or popular at least—because people feel as though when they come to it they'll feel as though they didn't do as much as they could.

Austin (as **warrior**): No, I did everything. [Ali, Dre, and Keith laugh] There's nothing else I could have done.

Sylvia: Nah, I'm built different.

Dre: This guy rules.

Austin (as **warrior**): It couldn't have gone different, so I don't have to worry about that. [Ali laughs]

Ali (as **Veile**): Well, then...

Austin (as **warrior**): If things had gone different, then, you know, it would be...you know, they'd still be here, but they're not, so it just couldn't go different, 'cause I did everything that I could in the situation. So I don't think about it, like, at all. [Ali laughs] But thank you. That does—I get what regret is now. I didn't understand. I heard people say that to me before, that I had to let go of it or whatever. But I don't have it, so.

Ali (as Veile): Are you speaking of a specific instance?

Austin (as warrior): Of course. Yeah, the third battle against the East Wind, six months ago. When my unit was decimated. He's here now. He wears a scythe on his face. It seemed he wore a scythe that day too, at the head of the ship. We never should have engaged on the open sea. House Rain has supremacy there, they always have. But I convinced my men that we could beat them, for we are the strongest of all the houses. We did not anticipate the waves. We were tossed to and fro as the clouds gathered above us. They died to a man and tossed me into the sea, where my blood drained out of me. Lucky. They called me lucky for surviving. It was months ago. And a new year begins, and there will be new battles.

Ali: [laughs quietly] I just have to say a quick aside, out of character. I'm going to increasingly get fatepilled if I rolled a dice and I got Canderous. [Austin and Ali laugh] It's just working out for me, that's all. Anyway.

Austin: Deeply unintentional. None of that was prepped. That's not... [Ali laughs] I didn't know this guy existed until you fucking—

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Until I had to decide what a guy wearing a Jerusalem artichoke mask [Ali laughs] who doesn't know how to pray good might look like.

Ali: Alas. Here we are. Here we are. What a lot of information to take in. [Austin and Jack laugh]

Sylvia: God bless.

Jack: But he hates scythe mask.

Ali: I feel like, yeah, it's... I feel, needing to contextualize this for Veile, who both feels out of place but is a fan of stories.

Austin: Mm. Yes.

Ali: And it's such a weird thing for her to, you know, the sort of, like, with her journaling before, because she was like, "Oh, adventurer's journal," the sort of, like, this imagination of herself in something uncanny because she fell into a hole. She fell into a bubble hole and met a bunch of weird people and is now, you know?

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Ali: So. [laughs] I think that there's a sort of, like, you know, a perhaps inappropriate wide-eyed wonder [Jack chuckles] but also genuine interest and sympathy in what he is saying. Like, I don't know if it would be... Again, with the confessional thing, it's not like he's like, "Oh, I regret it, and it was bad," so I don't know that she would, like, put a hand on his shoulder or whatever. Maybe it's just more, like, kind of nodding respectfully than something as forward as that. And I think that she, like, I think there's something in being like,

(as **Veile**): Do you find it difficult sharing a space with the man with the scythe?

Austin (as **warrior**): I want to wring his neck, but there is to be no true violence here, only duels, honorary and impermanent.

Ali (as **Veile**): Mm. If I could be as forward as you've been with me, I must admit I know nothing of this place or those battles, besides saying that I'm happy to share this moment with you and feel you are lucky to have survived. I'm sorry.

Ali: [laughs quietly] I don't know, I'm sorry you've been put in this situation? I don't know, man. [laughs]

Austin: Oh, okay.

Sylvia: Wow, that's crazy.

Ali: That sounds tough. I don't know, man. [Ali and Austin laugh]

Sylvia: Fuck!

Austin: No, you don't have any guidance for this guy?

Ali: God. Well, I don't know. What does the Ennead believe about anger? There's a fire guy. People like fire, right?

Austin: People do like fire. The Ennead does have Cinner, Soldier of Ash and Fire.

Keith: I like fire.

Austin: That's good.

Ali: Yeah. To weave out of character and in character, because it's hard to **[Austin:** Yeah.] keep talking a little bit. What is she trying to say? I think, well, part of being like, "I don't know, man. I'm out of place here too," but also being like... Maybe the place to get to in a good player way and also that feel in character is sort of, you know, this sort of, like, I don't know what you're talking about, and I'm sorry that this, [laughs quietly] you know, you feel like you want to attack this guy but you have to be here because of rules.

(as **Veile**): Because of my misunderstanding, could you perhaps explain the value of those rules? Not to suggest that you shouldn't follow them or that **[warrior:** Mm.] this is a place of violence, but knowing why you would hold yourself back...

Austin (as **warrior**): No, I understand. Mm. [sighs] They say that life is holy, the most holy thing. And yet, this is the only place all year where such beliefs seem protected. I was raised to do war. It's what I do best. And there is much of it to be done. Month after month, until the eye closes, and we come here. And here, it seems all of the truth of life is diminished into mockery. There is no true fight here. There is only the duel. There is no real meal here. There is the feast. Even the art here is, mm, arrived at with this place in mind. I have seen real art. It is what we sketch in the hull of the boat on the way towards our deaths. It is what the Cloud Weavers make above the temples: temporary, impermanent, lost in hours but full of devotion. Even the way they announce entrance. [disgusted sigh] The only announcement I have for the rest of the year is when I call my own

name as I lift my blade. Here, they played trumpets. I hate this place, for it is untrue. But attending is the only way I live. And living, they say, is the most holy thing.

Ali (as **Veile**): There is some truth in that, about living, at the very least. There are ways that people do performances, you see, to feel as though they're experiencing more than they are. So, I appreciate you letting me know that this is quite a sad place. But I think that they're right, what they say about centering yourself, at the very least.

Austin (as **warrior**): Mm. Will you meditate with me?

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

Austin (as **warrior**): The priest won't let me ask him questions, and so I feel... It's as though something has changed in the talking.

Ali (as **Veile**): Well, yes. Yes, of course.

Austin: All right. I need some sort of meditation check. [Ali laughs] And this person is— There's a -1 to this roll for you.

Ali: I bet. [Sylvia laughs] A meditation roll.

Austin: What is that? That's probably Willpower, something? Willpower + Willpower? Insight + Willpower?

Ali: Yeah. I think it's, you know. It could just be...yeah. I don't have to go into the whole rant about it, but you know, I think there's Willpower in the, you know, ability to let thoughts move through you and also to, like, focus.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Ali: And then there's also Insight in the, like, you know, ability to engage. But they're both the same number for me, so it's not like it matters. Okay.

Austin: Yeah. Let's do it.

Ali: Insight...

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: [typing] Meditation check.

Austin: You are looking for—again, -1 on this—I'd say 10 is the minimum, but you'd really love a 13 here.

Ali: Okay. Okay. [laughs] That's fine. I can get, out of a 20, and I have other things to have happen to me. Ah, that's a 6.

Austin: That's a 6. Uh huh.

Ali: That is a 3 and a 4 minus 1? Wait, that's not a 3 and a 4 minus 1.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah, it is. 3 and a 4 minus 1.

Ali: Oh, duh. Okay, sorry, sorry. [laughs]

Austin: Yeah. Yeah. You got it. So you're going to Fabula, I'm guessing? What Trait are you drawing on?

Ali: I think so.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: Yeah, I think so. I think I'm going to go with my Identity as a chosen priestess, because that's kind of my whole deal. I'm going to go back to the Conflict page and say meditate. [typing] Meditate two. -1. That's a 17.

Austin: That's a 17!

Jack: Wow.

Ali: You just have to lock in.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: You just have to, like, really lock in.

Austin: You gotta fucking lock in sometimes. [Ali and Jack laugh]

Art: Yeah.

Sylvia: Get it twisted.

Austin: Get it twisted. [Ali laughs] You can feel the tension leaving both of your bodies, maybe, in this moment. The chanting continues. And I don't think he would ever say that he has worked through some regrets. I don't think he would ever say that he has come to understand the sanctity of life. But he does feel looser, and his first thought is not strangling someone else at this party right now, though he may still find his way into a duel later, you know? [Ali laughs] A proper, honorable, non-lethal duel later. And in this moment, he, you know, after this kind of round of the chant ends, he looks over to you and bows his head and says,

(as **warrior**): As it is our way, would you exchange masks with me?

Ali (as **Veile**): Oh. Your mask is so lovely. Are you sure?

Austin (as **warrior**): Absolutely. It is not my face. It is only a mask. They'll never take my face from me.

Ali (as **Veile**): [startled] But of course.

Ali: [laughs] Sure, man.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: And he gives you this mask with the big yellow flowers on it. Kind of sunroot, wild sunflower mask. And let me write your name next to it so I remember where you are here, and I'm going to put him over here. Weird warrior. Weird sad warrior. [Ali

laughs quietly] There we go. His face really fits the limestone mask. He takes his mask off to reveal a face that is rocky and scarred and, you know, he has the forehead of a two-and-a-half-decades-long professional wrestler who's done a lot of getting his head cut open. He's gigged a lot, you know? He's out here. [Ali laughs quietly]

Sylvia: God, you found New Jack.

Austin: Yeah, he's got New Jack forehead, for sure. Yeah, and exchanges masks with you.

Ali: Yeah. I think it is maybe at this, after the exchange of masks, that Veile is willing to, like, put her hand on his shoulder or maybe his elbow, if he's— I don't know why I'm thinking of him as very tall and menacing over her, but. [laughs]

Austin: He is. He's like Guts Berserk. Like, he's like a warrior in that very classic model.

Sylvia: Okay.

Ali: Uh huh.

Sylvia: He's Gaje sized.

Austin: He's Gaje sized. Yeah, from Realis. 100%.

Ali: Yeah.

Sylvia: Listen to Realis.

Ali: And she says,

(as **Veile**): I thank you for your time, sir, and I hope you continue to value your time in life.

Austin (as **warrior**): You as well.

Ali: Yippee.

Austin (as **warrior**): You should be proud of who you are.

Ali: Damn. All right. [laughs quietly]

Austin: And he flies away.

Door [0:31:54]

Austin: You spot Elena and Jonathan across the room, standing in front of a weird door.

Ali (as **Veile**): Hey, guys! There you are.

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

[unreleased music begins playing]

Austin (as **door**):

Oh, look! A pair, these masks of air.

You've shown a little pluck.

But do you *know*? Or might you show

less knowledge and more luck?

[song ends]

Austin: Says the door.

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

Keith: This guy's a dick.

Jack: So we got, what, we got quince mask that the door seemed to like straightaway.
And we've got...

Dre: Sunchoke mask.

Jack: Jerusalem artichoke mask, yeah. Okay. I don't understand why... It's tough to sort of A/B test this, because the only, like, object mask that— Jonathan was wearing a servant's mask.

Dre: Not me. Oh, yes. Yeah.

Jack: It wasn't like we had two object masks in front of the door at first, right? But I don't know why it liked the quince straightaway and it also likes the sunchoke.

Dre: Is it plants? Like, fruits and vegetables?

Jack: It could be, but the riddle says specifically... I mean, I think, you know. We're trying to keep this in character, and I think it is very Elena to be having this in character, [Austin chuckles] to be trying to figure out the mask puzzle.

(as **Elena**): It said, uh, faces which I,

Jack: Points at the door,

(as **Elena**): —the door—adores, though they,

Jack: Gestures widely,

(as **Elena**): abhor. [Sylvia laughs quietly] Did it seem like they disliked the person who originally wore your mask, Veile? I don't know even who “they” are. Really, I've just arrived and I got suckered into talking to the door.

Ali (as **Veile**): Well, yes. I met this strangely intense man.

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

Ali (as **Veile**): And he seemed kind enough, but the troubles here seem difficult.

Jack (as **Elena**): There are troubles?

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

Jack (as **Elena**): Again, sort of door straightaway for me. I was on my way up to the musicians' room.

Austin: Yeah. At "The troubles here seem rough," I actually want a hard cut back into the Ruined Hive. [laughter]

Sylvia: Yeah, I like that.

Ruined Hive

Conflict Round Two [0:34:12]

Austin: How's it going? Round two! Round two. It has higher initiative. You did not win Initiative, you might remember.

Sylvia: Yeah, it goes first.

Austin: It goes first.

Sylvia: [sarcastic] So, it's going great.

Austin: It's going great. And with its opening maneuver, it is going to use Back to the Shadows: Malathornia skitters back into the shadows of the Ruined Hive. Flip a coin or roll 1d2. I'll roll 1d2.

Jack: Oh my god. It's going to fuck with its clock.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: And erase...

Art: Well, it has to hit a 1 to get all the way invisible again.

Austin: What?

Art: Which we will note it did not do.

Austin: What? No.

Sylvia: You mean it has to hit a 2?

Austin: You seem to have misunderstood how this clock works, Art.

Art: It's visible at four segments.

Austin: It's visible *above* four segments.

Art: No, it didn't say— Hold on. I'm scrolling back. [Jack laughs quietly]

Austin: Am I wrong about this? I might be wrong about this. But that's how I remember reading it, this ability.

Art: "Unless half or more."

Austin: Okay, half or more. This is half. So, yes, it is still visible. You are right. Yeah.

Sylvia: Oh, thank god.

Austin: Your turn. Yeah.

Sylvia: Can I go? Okay, I got a new spell.

Austin: Ooh.

Sylvia: I leveled up, and I got a new spell to use in this exact circumstance.

Austin: I guess I'll signal, really quick.

Art: You have some sort of demon spider spell?

Sylvia: I have a light spell.

Austin: It is trying to skitter back into the shadows of this space, after having come out and attacked you.

Art: Fucking, it better.

Sylvia: I got another crit.

Austin: Look at that. You got another crit. Holy shit.

Sylvia: I got another crit, so it's also dazed.

Dre: Damn!

Keith: This is like opposite world.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: Okay, but...

Sylvia: So, I used Lux, which is my new spell.

Austin: Yep.

Sylvia: You focus your inner energy into a barrage of blinding soul rays. Each target hit by this suffers HR + 15 light damage.

Art: Woo!

Sylvia: I'm only targeting one, so that only costs me 10 mana.

Austin: Love it.

Keith: I was so excited when I heard this was a demon, because I was like, "There's no way this demon isn't weak to light."

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: And I remember from last time when I was like, "Oh, maybe Sylvi can use her special spell thing [**Sylvia:** Uh huh.] to do light damage to a thing that probably is weak to it," and you were like, "No, I'm taking that next. I don't have it yet."

Sylvia: And then I leveled up.

Keith: And I went into this knowing that you probably had taken this.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: All right, so, wait. Can you read me what Lux does again, and you said, because you critted, you get something special.

Sylvia: Yeah. You focus your inner energy into a barrage of blinding soul rays. Each target hit by this spell suffers HR + 15 is the base, but the extra 4 is from my Spellblade bonus.

Austin: Yep.

Sylvia: So, HR + 19 light damage. Opportunity: Each target hit by this spell suffers dazed. And I did 27 damage.

Austin: Which means you did 54 damage because of doubling it.

Sylvia: I sure did.

Jack: Whoa!

Austin: The Opportunity is a choice. You get access to that Opportunity.

Sylvia: Okay.

Austin: You would do a different one if you want to. But dazing will reduce its Insight die by 1.

Sylvia: I would probably go back to filling the clock again by 2, because that means it can't just hide again.

Austin: This is true. And you've done it by...

Sylvia: And I think...

Art: That would be very useful.

Austin: And it's really flavorful.

Sylvia: I think it also makes, yeah, it makes sense with a blinding ray of light hitting it from my sword.

Austin: Yeah, tell me what Lux looks like.

Art: But are we sure we don't want to think about Faux Pas?

Sylvia: I'm always thinking about Faux Pas, Art.

Keith: Always thinking about Faux Pas.

Art: Like, is there something they could do that's so embarrassing...

Keith: It put the salad fork where the dinner fork goes.

Sylvia: Oh my god. [Jack chuckles]

Austin: No, that's for the Tier of Feasting. You're in the...

Keith: [sarcastic] Oh, are we in a different kind of place?

Austin: Yeah, you're in the...let's see here. The Larval Hatchery of the Ruined Hive.

Keith: Mm.

Sylvia: Oh, it hatched too early.

Art: Well, what if they're so embarrassed that they skitter off to the party and someone over there has to do something?

Austin: Oh. It's a little far, I think. [Keith laughs]

Sylvia: I like fighting in this game, so like...

Austin: Yeah.

Art: All right.

Sylvia: What was that, Austin? How does this look?

Austin: Yeah, tell me what Lux Spellblade looks like. Especially because you've never—

Sylvia: I really like the idea—

Austin: Also, how did you learn to do this? Or not learn to, but how does this happen? Because you fought dark things last session, and it didn't happen.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: Did you— like, give me the thought process or the feeling process that arrives at now you can do this.

Sylvia: So, in my mind, this is sort of like taking the healing— Okay. Come with me on a journey for a minute.

Austin: I'm walking with you on this journey.

Sylvia: So, like, imagine Heal feels like, you know, a nice warm ray of the sun on you.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: Like, using that spell, because it's from the same school of magic.

Austin: It's from Spiritist, which you took the Spiritist level [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] back in Cenn originally, after, like when you were healing people, right?

Sylvia: I did, yeah.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: What Lux feels like to use is like she's taking that, like, radiant warmth and putting it through, like, a really focused magnifying glass lens.

Austin: That's really fun.

Sylvia: And in this way, it comes out of, like, the tip of her sword basically when she does it, and it's just like...

Austin: This is really fun too, because presumably it's part of— You were kind of doing the look through the magnifying glass with the Reagent a moment ago, [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] and so it's kind of an extension even of that particular action, you know?

Sylvia: I think that's probably, in fiction, what clued her into being able to do this.

Austin: I love it.

Sylvia: This is like, if you're playing the game, you'd get a tool tip or whatever during this fight, that's just like, "Caoimhe learned Lux."

Austin: Yeah, I love it. That's really good.

Sylvia: After you do that, yeah.

Austin: Sick. All right. Now back to Malathornia for its second action here. Let's see. I think—

Sylvia: This is the opposite of Fleggus encounter for me, by the way, and I'm so happy.

Austin: I wouldn't say those words out loud. That's real asking for things to take a bad turn.

Sylvia: Well.

Austin: Just stay...yeah.

Sylvia: I'm knocking on wood.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah.

Sylvia: Cut that out. Nobody clip that.

Jack: Ha.

Austin: All right. I'm going to roll to get a target here. Again, this will be Nicky 1, Antistrophe 2, Caoimhe 3. Caoimhe.

Sylvia: Yep, that makes sense.

Austin: And is going to try to—

Art: That does make sense.

Sylvia: I did just jinx myself.

Austin: You did. You did. Is going to try to... Does it want to shoot you? I guess it's trying to get away, so it's going to go with the ranged attack again, which actually means it has a second target, so I'll roll a 1 or a 2. And that is a 2, so that'll be Antistrophe. So, Antistrophe and Caoimhe, what are your regular armors, your Defenses?

Sylvia: 13.

Keith: 15.

Austin: 13 and 15. That's a miss. That's a miss.

Sylvia: That's a miss.

Keith: Even number, too.

Austin: Oh, but it's a ranged attack.

Sylvia: Oh, it's ranged. Yeah.

Keith: Oh, it's ranged. Okay.

Sylvia: I was already thinking about it, Keith. Don't you worry.

Austin: Has retreated away or is trying to retreat away from you and is shooting these Thieving Webs to try to rob you of IP but does not manage to do that. Back to y'all.

Keith: I need that IP.

Austin: That's why it has a skill to get rid of it.

Art: Are any of these things Skills?

Austin: Any of what things?

Art: Like, this Back to the Shadows and...

Austin: I believe so, yeah.

Art: And the Marionette. You know how in the Gourmet— we call these playbooks or class?

Austin: They're classes in this game, I believe.

Art: All right. Well, they're like, "You should figure out what all your ingredient combos do really quickly."

Austin: Yeah.

Art: And I've been like, "That sounds like it's for suckers. I'm just going to let things happen as they do."

Austin: Yeah.

Art: I have a one in five chance of discovering that my next ingredient combo stops people from being able to use Skills.

Austin: That sounds great. [Sylvia laughs quietly] Yeah, that would prevent Back to the Shadows outright. And—

Sylvia: I'm going to feed this a nefarious snack.

Art: During their next turn. That's just one round. That's not even a whole round.

Austin: Hmm. Is it? Yeah, I guess it wouldn't be... I guess I would say that that's probably right. A turn is not— a turn is an action, not a round of actions. I'll double check

that that's how this game uses its terms.

Jack: I believe it is, because some of the other moves say, "Until your next turn."

Austin: Exactly.

Jack: Which I think is understood to mean, like, you go and then a bunch of other people go and then eventually you go again.

Art: Yeah, that's how many of mine do.

Austin: Sorry, my question is like, does a Champion get...? I have to look up what it describes a Champion class enemy having. Does it have...

Jack: Oh, Skills or...

Austin: No, does it have three turns per round or three actions per turn? I don't think it's three actions per turn, right? I think it is... let me see. Let me just take a peek really quick. Champion. Champion rank. Elites and Champions. Yeah, during Conflict Scenes, a Champion performs a number of turns per round equal to the number of soldiers they are replacing, so yes, that would only mean its next action, Art. But it would prevent that from happening still.

Art: All right, well. Well, I'm going to put some mushrooms in some coffee, and I'll see what it does. [Sylvia laughs]

Austin: I know people are into that, you know?

Art: And when we see what it does, we'll see what we're going to do with it.

Sylvia: Oh, yeah, yeah.

Austin: Mushroom coffee. It's having a moment.

Sylvia: Little infusion. Yeah. I think we're thinking about different things.

Austin: I think we are, actually. [Sylvia laughs]

Art: 7.

Keith: Talking about chaga? Who's talking about chaga?

Art: I already have 7.

Austin: So do you reroll it? Yeah.

Art: 10. Yeah, yeah. Has to...

Austin: And what is 10? 10 is a new type of...

Art: No, I have 10 too.

Austin: Yeah, that's the one with the dresspheres, right?

Art: Yeah.

Sylvia: Oh.

Art: 1.

Austin: Oh. That's useful.

Art: Oh, that's good. Do I have that one?

Austin: 1 is— go ahead. You explain it.

Art: Okay. So, that recovers a status effect.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: So, that would—

Austin: I have a question.

Sylvia: It could help me.

Austin: Do you choose that effect now, or is that you get to pick each time you make a

thing with this?

Art: Oh, I've been writing it as if I can choose each time.

Austin: Okay. I bet that that's right. It would be tough to be like, you can only— though it would mean you could hit the same one twice and choose a different thing.

Art: Sure.

Austin: Let me explain what I'm talking about. Number 1 says: Each of this delicacy's targets recovers from the—choose one—dazed/enraged/poisoned/slow/weak status effect. And so my question is: is it the fact that— does that mean that each time you make something with this, you can choose one of those, or is it that this thing does this one? Does dazed, does enraged.

Art: I believe it has to be the first one, because otherwise there would be effects I would never get.

Austin: I see. Well, but that's also—

Art: And I believe the intent is to—

Austin: This is a game that does often include the inability to be complete at a thing. In fact, "When completed, your cookbook sheet will feature a total of 15 effects, one for each possible pair of tastes," is what it says, which is more than 12.

Art: Which is more than 12.

Austin: Which suggests that these choose ones are choose one.

Art: Oh no.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Art: Well, we're going to have to check the tape on every one I've already used.

Austin: Well, you have them written down, don't you?

Art: I don't know what I picked.

Austin: Yeah, well, just pick one now.

Art: Okay.

Austin: Or, you know, each time we use it going forward. I'm not going to go back in time and say you dazed once already. Just make sure you pick one now, and we'll go forward with it.

Art: Sure.

Austin: And that doesn't mean the numbers you've already—

Art: Oh, yeah, that's right. It is only one. Okay. So we'll do the one that's useful now, which is weak, right?

Austin: That is the one that's very useful right now, yes.

Art: Yeah. So, please have some.

Austin: Mushroom coffee.

Art: Mushroom coffee. But only one person has been hit with weak, right?

Austin: Just Caoimhe. Yeah.

Sylvia: Just me, yeah.

Art: All right. That's a shame. I just took the thing that lets me spread it around, but we can do this again. If this happens again, we can have— oh, no, I'm out of bitter. I can salt and pepper something into bitter. [Sylvia and Austin laugh quietly] I can use so much salt and pepper that the jellyfish becomes bitter, and then you can have that with some seaweed, and we can do it all over again.

Austin: Oh.

Keith: Mmm.

Jack: Oh, it's a fun class.

Sylvia: The mental image of Caoimhe and Antistrophe in, [Austin laughs] like, battle mode, while Nicky is, like, fucking around with a coffee maker and shit.

Keith: Stirring a little pot.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah.

Sylvia: Yeah. Like, I've just done a Kamehameha wave, and this guy's making coffee.

Jack: I'm so glad. I'm so glad you get to experience this. He does this all the time.
[Austin and Sylvia laugh quietly]

Sylvia: It's very charming.

Jack: He gave me, like, crunchy oyster midway through a fight one time. It was great.

Sylvia: RIP—

Austin: Ah.

Keith: No.

Austin: I love it when my oysters are crunchy. [laughs]

Keith: No, you've done it bad. [Jack laughs]

Art: All right, this one does weak, and I'll pick the other ones.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: [quietly] Are you not supposed to eat the shell?

Austin: You go ahead and pick the other ones off— not off mic, but you know, you don't have to tell me until it's time, you know? All right. So, yeah, recover from weak. That's

really good. That's really good. That means you can't be Wicked Weaverred into— sorry, Malathornia's Marionetted into hurting other friends. All right, now back to Malathornia.

Sylvia: So I don't have weak anymore, just to...?

Austin: You don't have weak anymore. Yeah.

Sylvia: Okay, cool.

Austin: Malathornia is, again, going to try to retreat back into the shadows, rolling a d2, and only getting a 1 again. This is not going great for Malathornia.

Sylvia: Good.

Keith: Good.

Austin: Needs two more to get back to the shadows. Back to y'all.

Sylvia: It's Antistrophe. You're the only one who's got a move left.

Keith: Okay. Does anybody have close to 50 HP gone, just to check?

Sylvia: I think I'm at full HP right now.

Austin: No, because you got hit, didn't you? When did you get healed?

Art: I have...

Sylvia: No.

Austin: You did not get hit.

Sylvia: I didn't get hit, no.

Austin: Okay. Antistrophe got hit. That's what it was.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Art: 28 off.

Keith: Say again?

Art: I've been hurt for 28.

Keith: Okay. So I won't heal anybody yet. And remind me again how I can add points to Malathornia?

Sylvia: Objective.

Austin: The Objective action or something else, like we did Study before, which would do less, but you would learn more.

Keith: Okay. I would do that instead of attacking.

Austin: That's right. Either of those would be instead of attacking.

Keith: Okay. And once it's full...

Austin: It can continue to try to remove them.

Keith: Okay. So this is just, yeah, that is a buffer.

Austin: It's a tug of war clock. Yeah. Mm-hmm.

Keith: Okay. So, it makes a lot of sense for Caoimhe to be the one attacking Malathornia.

Sylvia: I mean, yeah.

Keith: Because of the huge amount of damage that you do with your light attack.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: So I'm going to roll that Objective roll.

Austin: All right. What's it look like? How are you trying to keep Malathornia from retreating to the shadows, or rather, bring it back into the light? Or deeper into the light.

Keith: Um...

Austin: Or mark it somehow so that you can continue to watch it as it tries to slink away?

Keith: Yeah. I would like to... Can I do this physically? Can I physically, like, be pulling Malathornia away from the shadows, trying to hold it in the light for Caoimhe to be attacking?

Sylvia: Like, throw something on it to, like, mark it?

Keith: I don't really have anything to throw to mark.

Sylvia: I mean, like—

Keith: I mean, I could make something up.

Sylvia: Pick up some larva.

Keith: My best die is Might, so I'm describing something...

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah, you could absolutely be trying to hold it in place. That makes sense. Though that would then become, we'll just say this. That is a contested roll, which makes sense, because you'd be trying to hold it in place.

Keith: Yeah. I'm happy to do a contested roll, I think.

Austin: Yeah, let's do it. Yeah, contested Might + Might.

Keith: All right. Effort.

Austin: You win! And you win by 6, so that means you get 2. You rolled a 14. Malathornia rolled an 8.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: You get to advance this clock by 2. Look at that.

Keith: Perfect. Great.

Sylvia: Hell yeah.

Round Three [0:50:00]

Austin: And now that you've closed in on it, I think it has turned its attention to you. You're trying to hold it back with your hands, presumably?

Keith: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Austin: Yeah, it's going to use its— That was your final action this turn, right?

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Does that mean it's done, then? Wait, one second. Let's make sure I'm not going to— It tried Back to the Shadows. It did Thieving Webs.

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Austin: And then it tried Back to the Shadows again. So that's the end of the round, so now we are into round three. So it's going to start first, and it's going to try to hit you with its Enervating Claws. What is your Magical Defense?

Keith: I think it's 12. 12.

Austin: Critical fumble!

Keith: Critical fumble!

Austin: Critical fumble!

Sylvia: Let's go! Faux Pas time!

Austin: You get to decide what the fumble is.

Keith: Kill it.

Austin: That's not one of the options.

Keith: Can I decide to kill it?

Sylvia: That's unfortunately not one of them.

Austin: That's not one of the options.

Keith: Yeah, I just forget what they are.

Austin: Yeah, I get you.

Keith: Is it Opportunities or...?

Sylvia: It's under Opportunities.

Janine: It's a mortal faux pas. You do something that... [Austin and Jack chuckle]

Austin: Advantage, Affliction, Bonding, Faux Pas, Favor, Information, Lost Item, Progress, Plot Twist, Scan, Unmask, and you can also always come up with your own, and we can talk it through. The Game Master has final say on whether an Opportunity is appropriate.

Sylvia: Opportunity: neck snap. [Austin chuckles]

Keith: Well, I always like to have a little bit more flavor, but I also like to win the game.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: So I'm deciding, I think, between Advantage for Caoimhe's razzle dazzle? What is it called?

Austin: Yeah, it's called razzle dazzle. We're calling it razzle dazzle now, yeah.

Sylvia: It's called razzle dazzle.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Art: You can change the tool tip if you want.

Keith: Or Unmask, you learn the goals and motivations of a creature of your choosing. I don't think this thing has that many motive—

Art: I think I could tell you this thing's motivations with pretty clear certainty.

Keith: Well, I would like to know why it's here, what's going on, who is this. Like, you know, there's something. I would like to know something, whatever the thing is, but it might be best to just win the fight. This thing has a lot of HP.

Art: Yeah, but much less than it used to. Thanks again for that.

Keith: It's true. I'm going to take Advantage.

Austin: Okay. So the next ally that attacks against it has +4 on the roll.

Art: Also, we're getting advantages like crazy. That's never going to stop. We're going to be doing this forever.

Dre: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Keith: Yeah, this is the new way.

Austin: Oh, okay.

Sylvia: Yeah. [Jack chuckles]

Art: So we can always use the Unmask later.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: [nervously] Thank you for saying that before I roll the dice. [Keith chuckles]

Austin: Yeah, how does this work? Is this because you're holding it in place so strong?

Keith: I think, so, I was already holding it in place, [**Austin:** Yeah.] and it tries to turn to attack me, right?

Austin: Yeah, yeah.

Keith: And it critically fumbles, so I think that it just puts itself in a way worse grappling position.

Austin: Ah, sure.

Keith: And so it is now both more vulnerable and more controlled physically.

Austin: Yeah. Caoimhe says, "Goku and Raditz moment." Please don't Special Beam Cannon.

Sylvia: Yeah, like in the—

Dre: Mm.

Keith: Actually, don't! [Austin laughs]

Sylvia: [feigned disappointment] Okay. Fine. Fiddle dee dee. Are we good with me going next?

Keith: Yes, please.

Austin: Get that +4.

Sylvia: Hell yeah.

Austin: Jesus christ.

Sylvia: That's 25. 29 damage.

Keith: Oh my god.

Dre: Oh, you're going to murder this fool.

Sylvia: That is the best I could have rolled. I rolled a 10 and an 8.

Austin: Incredible.

Art: So that's...58?

Austin: 58 damage.

Sylvia: 58 damage, yeah.

Austin: It sure is.

Art: And what did we do last time?

Keith: 56 or something?

Austin: 54. Yeah.

Art: 54.

Sylvia: 54. Yeah.

Austin: It is in Crisis.

Art: That's 112 and then two from before.

Keith: Wow.

Sylvia: This is really building my confidence after not doing, like, any damage in that last fight.

Austin: Yeah. That is 54. It is deep into Crisis. Sorry, 58. It is deep into Crisis.

Sylvia: I can still do that three more times too.

Austin: Mm-hmm. Oh boy.

Art: Well, if you have to do it three more times, something will have gone wrong.

Austin: It is again—

Sylvia: No, I'm just saying.

Austin: Ooh, it has to make a decision here, doesn't it? I'm looking at its traits.

Sylvia: I've got lots of razzles to dazzle.

Austin: I'm looking at its traits to make a decision. It's going to try to get back to the shadows. It's going to roll a 1d2. This will not get it back to the shadows, even if it was a 2. Oh, but now, that's a 1.

Sylvia: Wow!

Austin: It's not doing good. It's not doing good.

Keith: Oof.

Austin: It is at a one, two, three...

Keith: It can roll a 2 and still not be back in the shadows.

Austin: And still not get, yep. 100%. Yep. It is trying to get away actively, or back to the shadows at this point.

Art: Yeah, I think it should be trying to surrender. I think that's...

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Art: You want to go, or you want me to go, Keith?

Keith: You should go.

Art: All right. I'm going to go back to fork.

Sylvia: Hell yeah, man.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: Yeah, it's visible. You could try to fork it. You've never forked it before, but you do this time. That's an 11. That hits it. Its Defense is only an 8. However, it does resist physical damage, so you've only done 11 physical damage to it, not 22.

Art: Oh! All right. Well, if it comes back around to me, I'll switch weapons.

Austin: What's the special text here? When you use— oh, you're not using the Knife and Fork skill. I see. I see.

Art: No, I don't have anything that I could be force-feeding it right now, really.

Austin: Mm, I see. I see. It is going to commit to the path and continue to try to escape right now.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: Rolling another 1d2. And there's a 2. That's the first 2 it's gotten. Is that the—?

Sylvia: It's still not invisible.

Austin: No, it is still not invisible, no.

Sylvia: Because it needs to be less than four, right?

Austin: It needs to be less than four. That's right. Half or more.

Art: Oh, there is something I could have forcefed it, but not until I knew this.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: It's fine. Everything's fine.

Keith: It's funny to have forcefeeding as part of your toolkit.

Janine: Yeah.

Art: [sighs] It's not called forcefeeding.

Janine: West Coast people, your guy's weird. [Keith and Sylvia laugh]

Austin: So true.

Keith: We're trying to kill this spider, and you're stuffing linguini down its maw.

Janine: Ugh, strange.

Austin: Okay.

Art: Excuse me. I would be feeding it, um...

Sylvia: Mushroom coffee.

Austin: Mushroom coffee.

Art: No, this would have to be salty/sour, so it would be...

Sylvia: Mm.

Keith: [feigning understanding] Oh, yeah, it would have to be salty/sour. I feel like an idiot.

Art: Jellyfish rhubarb. [Jack laughs quietly]

Keith: Jellyfish rhubarb what?

Austin: That was the beginning of another round.

Art: Well, that would just be on the fork. It would just be...

Keith: Oh, okay.

Janine: [displeased sound]

Austin: That was the beginning of round four, right? Because, from scrolling up, yeah.

Sylvia: It was?

Austin: So it's back to y'all. But we're in round four.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: It is.

Art: Oh, but now it's almost there.

Sylvia: You want me to do it again?

Art: Yeah, and if it then goes away, we'll figure it out.

Keith: 15.

Austin: 15 hits, and you do 56 damage.

Sylvia: 28. 56.

Austin: To the number, you have killed it.

Keith: Whoa.

Sylvia: Right through the head.

Austin: *Ptooo*. The hive goes quiet.

Sylvia: I'm flexing.

Art: You changed it to Razzle Dazzle. [laughs quietly]

Sylvia: I did change the name to Razzle Dazzle. Thank you for noticing. [laughter]

Austin: You've Razzle Dazzled it. It falls.

Art: I'm sorry it took me two times.

Sylvia: It's all good.

Austin: It comes crashing down from one of the higher levels, all the way down to the—I guess it was actually not that high up, because you were holding it in place. It never got back up there, because you were holding it in place, Antistrophe.

Keith: Mm. Yeah, we never put a single point into these level things.

Austin: No. You still have to climb this place, but I think, at this point, without it provoking you. You know, the other way you could have gotten through this level was to simply climb and get eight steps of Objective.

Sylvia: Eh.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Which I think you did more than that, all said.

Sylvia: I think this would have been faster, though.

Austin: Yeah, I think so. But instead, you killed this living being, and you get 1 XP, [Sylvia: Okay.] because you did so in under five rounds. You did it in the fourth round.

[“[Pruning the Garden \(Redolencia Combat Ends\)](#)” by Jack de Quidt plays]

Post-Conflict [0:57:24]

Art: I'm not going to feel bad about killing the puppeting-the-dead evil spider.

Sylvia: The demon spider trying to—

Keith: Sorry, what was its name? Was it Malathornia the nice friendly guy who gives you stuff? [Jack chuckles]

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah. I'm just saying. You know, I'm just saying. And now you can explore this place to your whims. The second layer is of course the Living Chambers. It's really more like the unliving chambers at this point, though with Malathornia dead, nothing is puppeting the hornets there. The third level is the Pollen

Workings, and the fourth level is the Honey Storage.

Jack: [gasps] Ingredient!

Sylvia: Oh, that's fun.

Austin: There is an ingredient there.

Keith: Oh, we do get a snack. We do get a little buffet.

Austin: You do get a little buffet.

Art: All right. Is it—?

Austin: Art, you go ahead and you write this one down for yourself. Let me find it here.

One second. Let me look for the word “honey” that I've written down. Here it is.

Otherworldly Honey. It's an echo ingredient, which means that it can be used as a fourth ingredient in a meal.

Art: Oh. I've never even made a three ingredient.

Austin: You've never even made a third ingredient meal, no. But you can, and you had another otherworld—

Art: The ingredient economy got kind of messed up when I kept getting us into fights instead of gathering ingredients.

Austin: This is true. [Jack chuckles] And then you also do find a two-handed spear here

[**Sylvia:** Ooh.] called the Hornet's Stinger. It is a two-handed spear, melee, Might + DEX + 1 to hit. I'll put this in the chat in a second. Then HR + 12 poison damage. Attacks with this weapon have multi. You can hit two people with this spear in a single attack.

Art: Ooh.

Keith: Cool. I think Caoimhe should take this, because Caoimhe did 200 out of the 240 damage that this thing could take.

Art: Yeah, sounds...

Sylvia: I mean, I'll hold onto it. I don't know if I'm going to use it, but I'll hold onto it.

Austin: Sorry, I deleted it, because I had to re...

Keith: Well, you can sell it, and then we can split some...

Sylvia: Yeah. No worries.

Keith: I heard about splitting recently, and so maybe we can split some...

Austin: Oh. [Jack chuckles]

Sylvia: It's just really funny, because I do technically still have my old sword too, so I've just got, like, a big sword and a big spear while using my little rapier.

Austin: It's very funny.

Keith: I also have multiple weapons that I'm holding and using the shields instead.

Sylvia: Yeah. I have a thing I want to do now that the spider's dead that might be gross and we can veto, but I kind of want to cut it open and take some of its webbing.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah, absolutely you can do this.

Sylvia: Cool. It seems like it could be useful.

Austin: Yeah, it's some sort of...I was going to say "unbreakable webbing," but I think we've maybe seen you break it. But, you know, extremely strong demon webbing. Write Demon Webbing down. Go ahead and write Demon Webbing down.

Sylvia: Okay, I'll write Demon Webbing down.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. That sounds right. And then, I think also...one second, I have to check my things here. Yeah. The grossest and most *Monster Hunter* thing I can do here is tell you that you could take the shell, like the shelled face of the demon

spider as a shield.

Sylvia: Oh. Hey, Antistrophe.

Art: Well, that sounds intense.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: You want that?

Keith: Yeah, I think I might.

Austin: I'll put the stats in here. I guess we'll call it the Shield of Malathornia, Wicked Weaver. It's just going to be Shield of Malathornia. It is a martial shield, so you do need to have the ability to wield those.

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Austin: It's +2, +2 on Defense.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: +2 Defense. +2 M Defense. And it has a special thing that says— I'm actually going to change what the one in the book is to fit this better. It's after a creature deals damage to you, if you are in Crisis, you may have that other creature suffer weakened.

Sylvia: Oh, that's cool.

Austin: As written, in the book, it's suffer shaken, but it was weakness based, so it makes more sense that it can make people suffer weakened.

Keith: Great.

Art: And I'm sorry, what's the XP situation?

Austin: You got 1. And now there are two doors for y'all to decide where to go to. One would circle back the other way, and one would go up to where you would presume you

would find the end of this little thing, because it doesn't seem like it connects back around.

Art: I mean, this has gotta be where we were going, right?

Sylvia: Yeah, but now I'm kind of like, I don't know.

Keith: We made Caoimhe a promise to go there, even though it seems like definitely the wrong way.

Art: Well, there's nowhere else to go.

Keith: No, no, there's two. There's a door here.

Art: Oh.

Sylvia: Sorry, I got to kill a demon spider from another dimension, so Caoimhe's like on cloud nine right now. She does not care about going back to that room.

Art: Well, we can also just— this must go somewhere. I mean, this isn't just going to be a right angle, is it? And if it is, we can just walk right back, right?

Sylvia: I mean, it might be.

Art: You can't see the moves I do with my mouse there, I realize.

Austin: Oh.

Sylvia: Oh, yeah.

Art: But, you know, if this just goes from, like, here back to here, then there's nothing here.

Austin: Art is gesturing at— there's a sort of elbow area. There's a second entrance into this big hive.

Keith: Mm.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: Which I should note, if you'd gone through that way would have put you higher up in the hive. That's, like, the benefit of going in that direction would have been you would have been only one clock away from getting to the top of the hive and just avoiding that fight, basically.

Sylvia: Oh, I see.

Keith: Right.

Austin: But instead, you killed Malathornia and took its head as a shield.

Sylvia: And insides.

Austin: And insides for the future, for future uses. Yeah. So, that's the choice you are making, is either go forward through the roof kind of doorway, where there is some sort of strange light coming, or go back down the kind of elbow path.

Art: But if this is not a T intersection, we would be able to see it from, like, you know, not very far, right?

Austin: Yeah, you'd go in and immediately be able to see if it has a door or not, for sure, or was another intersection.

Art: I mean, I think we should, just for the sake of completion.

Sylvia: Okay.

Keith: Art is filling out maps.

Austin: All right, so then give me a d6 Dungeon Check, and we'll open this door, and then we'll swing back over to the other side.

Keith: Art should have to roll that.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Austin: That is a 3, and I believe on 3 and 4, nothing happens. Isn't that right? 1 is major discovery. Oh, no. 2 to 3 is minor discovery, I think, is how we've been doing it.

Sylvia: Oh, great.

Keith: Oh, great.

Austin: Let me make sure that's right. Let me double check our optional travel rules, which have been fantastic, by the way. Yeah. On a 2 or 3, the group finds a minor discovery. So, nice job. You come into this room, and it is— Let me make sure I remember where this is. This is in the same type of place as you were just in. This is also part of Redolencia, the sort of plants and bugs and weird poison world, and this seems to be someone's alchemical hut, like an alchemist's hut. And you come in, and it's in better shape than the hive was in, but it doesn't seem like the alchemist is here at this moment. But you know what is here is a bunch of alchemical supplies. Everyone take full IP. Maximize your IP.

Sylvia: Ooh.

Austin: You can spend before you take, yes.

Sylvia: Cool. I'm going to spend an elixir before I take that.

Austin: There you go.

Art: Oh, I'm going to spend before I take too.

Keith: Yeah, same.

Austin: Go for it.

Art: I need a potion.

Austin: And then we'll go back over to the other side, and we'll come back to y'all in a bit.

High Masque [1:04:48]

Austin: How is it going over at the High Masque? Everyone having a good time?

Jack: Yeah.

Dre: Door's kind of rude, but other than that, pretty good time.

Jack: Yeah. I think I'd like to go check out the Tier of Feasting.

Austin: All right.

Jack: Elena's kind of in a bind, because my mask is responding or the door is responding well to my mask, so I don't know that I'm in the business of swapping, but I am ostensibly a cook?

Austin: You're actually a cook.

Jack: I'm actually a cook.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: I'm being kind to myself. What I was going to say is I am a musician but, in flying up to see the Tier of Music, noticing Brontë dancing up there, I sort of turn, and I'm like, "I'll go check out the Tier of Feasting instead right now."

Austin: Oh, okay. Sure.

Janine: Ouch.

Jack: So I'm going to head down there.

Austin: I don't think that was like a "Brontë's bad at dancing." I think that was like a "Brontë has this covered."

Janine: I wasn't reading it as "Brontë's bad at dancing" either, but. [laughs quietly]

Ali: I thought it was like a "I don't want to go hang out with that guy."

Janine: Yeah. [laughs] Yes.

Jack: It was more of that, if I'm being honest. [Ali laughs]

Austin: Oh. Okay. Yeah. Then, ouch.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Ali: Reminder of Bonds, here? Reminder of Bonds, here? Just, you know.

Janine: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Jack: Yeah, my Bond is mistrust with Brontë and “Who the hell are those two weirdos with bumblebee wings?” [Ali and Janine laugh]

Austin: Fair enough.

Jack: But I'm going to go check out the Tier of Feasting. I'm not looking to swap my mask, but I could be talked into it. You know.

Tier of Feasting [1:06:09]

Austin: Mm-hmm. Yeah. The Tier of Feasting. I think folks are landing to eat food. You know, it's fun to fly around. It's fun.

Jack: As soon as you mentioned the flying, I thought about this exact thing, Austin.

Austin: Yeah?

Jack: I was like, “I don't want to drop crumbs on someone below me.”

Austin: Yeah, I don't want to drop crumbs.

Jack: I don't want to slosh some of my apocalypse martini on somebody.

Austin: No. Also, flying is effort. It's effortful.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: You know, it's like you only ate meals while walking around. Even lowkey flying is effortful.

Jack: I try and do as little as possible walk and eat at the same time.

Austin: Yeah, exactly. You'll do it if you have to do it, you know?

Jack: Yeah, gotta make a train or something.

Austin: Yeah. But yeah, people have landed here. Though maybe what has happened is there are some, like... [laughs quietly] Maybe there are some enchanted tables that are hovering, and the chairs are hovering, and you can sit at the chairs, you know? Too goofy?

Jack: Wow.

Austin: No. That's fun. Let's do that.

Jack: No, no. It makes me think of the party planner for this. The party planner for this has got to be a real professional.

Austin: It's interesting you say that. You can see the party planner for this. You can see someone who is, like, in charge of this hall, in fact. You can tell because of the posture they take, and, like, they are ordering people around in a way that suggests a sort of they're the boss of this place. Give me a d3 to begin with.

Jack: Okay.

Austin: Let me make sure I get this right.

Jack: That's a 2.

Austin: All right. And then give me a d30.

Jack: That is an 18.

Austin: An 18. Okay. Well, this, of course, is someone wearing the mask of a spurge

laurel. [Jack chuckles]

Sylvia: A what?

Austin: You know, a spurge laurel. Daphne laureola. A spurge laurel. I'll go ahead and put the...

Jack: It's like a classic— oh, no. it's a smaller laurel.

Sylvia: Oh.

Jack: I was thinking of those laurels that are in those massive bushes, but this looks like it's lower. Yeah.

Austin: Yeah, it's a lower down foot shrub, you know? Oh, it looks like it can get— it can get pretty big. It can look pretty big. This is a pretty big one. And so, yeah.

Jack: I love the color on this.

Austin: Yeah, green. Definitely a green mask. Actually, maybe not a green mask. Maybe this one's, like, very bark-focused but then has, like, bark as a half mask background or the field is the bark, and then there's bits of this laurel kind of coming off of it or almost just big bushy eyebrows, actually. And you see her, and she's like, you know,

(as **planner**): More pig! More roast pig, table seven!

Jack: [chuckles] Jesus. Is the pig normal pig?

Austin: It's flying pig, innit?

Jack: Ohoho, it's flying pig, innit?

Sylvia: Wow.

Austin: Winged pig.

Jack: Wow. When pigs fly, that means very normal stuff.

Austin: That's right! [laughs] Yeah, when pigs walk, buddy. [Sylvia laughs]

Jack: Yeah, now that's when it's pretty rare.

Sylvia: Oh no. The pigs don't have feet? The pigs don't got legs?

Austin: No, they're bird pigs. I know birds have legs, [**Sylvia:** Ohh.] but not these ones!
Not these ones!

Jack: Austin, do you— [chuckles] Okay.

Austin: Nope.

Sylvia: No, they're wyrm pigs.

Jack: Wow. Wow. The Judicious Boar.

Austin: That's right, has arrived. Hence!

Jack: [chuckles] Hence! Hence comes.

Sylvia: Judicious bore sounds like something they'd call Frasier in *Frasier*.

Austin: Get his ass.

Jack: Oh, but bore.

Sylvia: But like, B-O-R-E. You know what I mean?

Austin: B-O-R-E. [laughs]

Sylvia: Just, I don't know. Yeah.

Austin: Ahh, the best Norm Macdonald bit. Anyway. What are you doing?

Jack: Okay. Hmm. We were described as, like, the Deadwind family? Or the—?

Austin: Yeah. You're House Deadwind.

Jack: House Deadwind. And there are, what, four winds? The sun wind? I'm trying to put together the ones we've heard so far.

Austin: Okay. Yeah, you should put those together. That's the puzzle.

Jack: Okay. We have— Ohohoho! Okay. Right. I see. Okay. We need family houses, because the reason that it responded well— The door would have responded well to any of us, because we have Deadwind masks, and I was the only person with the mask at the door. Veile spoke to someone who fought in a war. He described his opponents. Fuck. Veile, Ali, do you remember the name of the...? [laughs quietly]

Ali: Sure don't. I can describe to you the, like, emotional depth of that person's life, but I sure didn't... [laughs]

Janine: I thought it was...

Dre: Something with the sea or the ocean.

Jack: Yes.

Keith: Oh, that was the enemy, right?

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: The enemy was the wave.

Jack: But that's gotta be a new family as well.

Dre: Mm.

Jack: And this person is wearing... But I don't know that the masks...

Janine: Were they wind or something? Were they...? I mean it's already like wind, but like, wind wind?

Jack: They could have been, yeah. Unless there's something I'm missing, I don't know how the masks correspond to the family, given that our masks were all so varied, you know?

Janine: Well, our masks—

Dre: Maybe it didn't have anything to do with the mask's design and who wore it instead?

Jack: Yeah.

Janine: Our masks weren't *that* varied. Our masks were cart, two kinds of rock, and a fruit. [Jack chuckles] Which I feel like, you know, three out of the four of those paints a certain picture, you know? Certainly feels regional to me. Also, I think we maybe have a— I might have a sun one, or sun was mentioned.

Jack: Oh, yeah. And you haven't been down to the door yet.

Janine: No, I'm fully— I'm just going to say this. Brontë's not going to go check out that door unless someone makes him. He doesn't care. [Sylvia laughs]

Jack: Okay. Fair enough.

Janine: He's not going to the kitchen when he's at the party. He's going to be in the party.

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Janine: And for all he cares, that's the kitchen, so.

Jack: I think— God. I've been playing Elena in this megadungeon as anxious, given her experiences with Violet and megadungeons prior to, you know. Elena is someone who likes to feel comfortable in a megadungeon. She wants to play a big game of understanding how the dungeon works. But after going to hell with Violet and now being put in this new place with new people, she is, you know. She is less certain. But I think I'm going to try and do some nice schmoozing and try and get a better understanding of

who we might want to go for finally. And so I think I'm going to approach this figure. I'm going to approach spurge laurel and, in the guise of a Deadwind guest, say... [sighs] God, what's an opening that says, "I know exactly why I'm here"? I'm trying to play, like, *A Fake Artist Goes to New York*, but with the masks. [laughs quietly]

(as **Elena**): [haughty voice] A beautiful event you've thrown here.

Austin (as **planner**): You got the pig?

Jack (as **Elena**): Do I look like I'm wearing the mask of a servant?

Jack: Taking a real risk with this.

Austin (as **planner**): I suppose not.

Jack (as **Elena**): I see you're very busy.

Austin (as **planner**): [testily] I am. Are you here to help us, or are you here to waste my time? [Sylvia laughs quietly]

Jack (as **Elena**): House Deadwind does not offer help.

Sylvia: [quietly] The second one.

Austin (as **planner**): No one has ever doubted that!

Ali: [quietly] Damn.

Jack (as **Elena**): Well, I'll be on my way, then.

Ali: Got 'em. [laughter] Owned.

Austin: Not a word back, as you leave her alone.

Jack: Elena walking away, "Stupid, stupid Elena! Stupid Elena!" [laughter]

Ali: Aww.

Dre: Aww.

Keith: Yeah, you've already got the mask that people hate, huh?

Jack: Yeah. I had it from the start. Everyone else is— and yeah, I suppose I'm typecast here. I was really hoping that she'd say something like, "Ah, House Deadwind. You thought you could vanquish us at the *whatever*," you know? She just wants the fucking pig!

Austin: You could try to provoke her to saying something particular with the dice that you have available to you.

Jack: [sighs] I suppose I could.

Keith: No, that sounds nasty. Don't do it.

Austin: Mm. [Ali and Keith laugh]

Ali: It sounds nasty? [Jack chuckles]

Keith: Yeah, it's a nasty thing to do. [Ali laughs]

Jack: I mean, do we know if these people are real? You know? Is this all a simulacra within the dungeon? [laughs quietly]

Dre: Mm.

Jack: Are these real people?

Janine: That's a wild thing to ask about the game based on video games.

Austin: Also as the person from the dungeon. [Ali, Janine, and Jack laugh]

Janine: Yeah, what's, like, if this was Elena's dungeon, what would she be doing, you know?

Jack: I mean, if this was Elena— The true answer is she'd be sitting with her feet in a

warm pool and, you know, like, reading a book or eating oyster or something, right? Like, the dungeon's her home. It's tough, because all of my moves are, like, Persuade and stuff.

Janine: Yeah. That's what you were trying to do.

Jack: Study is pretty good.

Keith: Isn't that exactly what you want?

Jack: Well, I want to get information out of here.

Janine: [laughs] Yeah?

Jack: The problem is that I have cast myself [Janine laughs] as the unpleasant member of House Deadwind in this situation, you know?

Keith: Couldn't you be surprisingly someone else, because everyone here— because you're not actually from House Deadwind.

Jack: Yeah, I suppose. The problem is that I talked really big game about how House Deadwind was going to kick their asses up and down the street, essentially.

Keith: I think you just come clean. I feel like, as the quince, maybe the duel is— because maybe you'll win a mask from the duel and not have to trade it.

Jack: No, I'm happy with my mask. The door likes my mask.

Keith: That's what I'm saying. Because you don't want to trade, you want to get a mask.

Jack: Oh.

Ali: You want to get a mask?

Janine: What?

Keith: And maybe dueling you can win a mask instead of having to trade.

Jack: Get the fourth mask, Keith is saying. You know, like—

Janine: But are there people who are getting unmasked?

Ali: Yeah, that doesn't sound...

Keith: I don't know.

Jack: It's like a mask match, luchador.

Keith: No one's been there. No one's been to the duel, so I can't—

Sylvia: Yeah, lucha libre.

Keith: But there's a list of four things. There's chatter, bleat, batter, and...

Janine: Yeah.

Dre: Stab?

Sylvia: Yep.

Dre: Yeah.

Keith: A fourth one. And if I had to guess, of the four of those, batter...

Jack: Is probably, yeah.

Keith: Is one where you could maybe win a mask without having to give a mask?

Ali: I think that's just four things you do at a party.

Janine: Yeah. I would assume, if anything...

Keith: Batter?

Janine: It's a weirdo party. It's a weirdo rich person party.

Dre: Yeah.

Janine: At the end of the world.

Sylvia: Yeah, they're frying a bunch of stuff.

Keith: I guess I don't understand what the— because you can get a mask in anything, because that's the point of where you are. And if you can start off with a good mask, you don't want to trade it away, and so, you know, it's just a guess that maybe there's a way to get a mask without having to give your own mask up.

Janine: I mean, it could be a social thing of, like, because the whole thing is about trading masks, it could be that, like, even if you start off with a quote, unquote, "good mask" from a respected family or whatever, if you don't trade a mask at some point, like if you end the party with your own mask on, everyone's like, "Wow, you're a fucking snob. You suck."

Ali: Mm.

Janine: You know, it could be anything.

Dre: Mm.

Janine: I don't necessarily see the dueling thing. I think if the dueling thing was like, you're taking a mask and then you have two masks, we'd be seeing more maskless people crying.

Austin: Yeah, no one is crying.

Jack: Yeah, that's true.

Austin: No one has been crying about masks. As far as you've seen.

Janine: I'm sure someone's been crying, but yeah, the mask part.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah. No one maskless is crying. Well, yeah, yeah.

Ali: And no one's maskless, basically.

Austin: I doubt it. I think, you know...

Ali: Okay.

Austin: Someone might— people are briefly maskless as they exchange masks, though they tend to try to hide their faces from anybody except the person they are, you know, revealing their mask to.

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Austin: And, you know, other than that, I think it's generally mask off, you know? So, yeah.

Keith: Mask on?

Austin: Sorry, it's mask on. Yeah, my bad. [Ali laughs] Yes. Yes. Mask on. Fuck it, mask on. [Jack chuckles]

Dre: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Jack: I've figured out what I want to do.

Austin: Okay.

Jack: I would like to try and find the pig or a plate of the pig and bring it over to help.

Austin: Ohh.

Jack: Let me know if you want me to roll [cross] for pig hunting or if pig hunting is pretty easy.

Austin: [cross] Yeah, yeah. Give me— Pig hunting? No, you're not...

Janine: What?

Jack: Pig finding at the party.

Austin: Pig finding. Yeah, give me a Study Check.

Jack: Okay.

Austin: Or something like that. I think Insight + Insight is...

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah. 14, you found yourself the cart with the pig on it. The person who was supposed to be bringing it has gotten caught up flirting with somebody else, and so they've left the pig unattended, the pig cart unattended, allowing you to slip in and take it.

Jack: Pig cart, take. Journey to the spurge laurel, and sort of chucklingly, although Elena has realized that she misplayed this a little, says something to the effect of,

(as **Elena**): [chuckles] How did you like my Deadwind impression? I found the pig and brought it for you. [Dre laughs, Ali sputters] Swapped the mask with a member of House Deadwind earlier in the evening.

Austin: And I think spurge laurel says,

(as **planner**): [flatly] I would have found it funnier if you'd had the pig the first time, but pretty good joke.

Jack (as **Elena**): I just figured that, as a true member of House Deadwind—

Jack: I suppose you can see Elena's eye through the half mask, and she's winking.

(as **Elena**): You know, as a true member of House Deadwind, showing up empty-handed seemed like the thing to do.

Austin (as **planner**): Yeah, yeah, yeah. Now help me with the pig. [Janine and Ali laugh]

Austin: How are they preparing this pig? What's in this year? I think it's just, it's very thinly cut slices of ham.

Jack: Yes, (inaudible 1:19:55) ham.

Janine: Like hasselbacking the ham?

Austin: Yeah, they're hasselbacking the ham.

Sylvia: Mmm.

Jack (as **Elena**): A fine technique. Mind if I help?

Austin (as **planner**): I asked you to help me with it. [Janine laughs]

Jack: Elena's ears are burning. [laughs quietly] Okay. I'm going to pick up a knife. I'm going to start working on my own section of the pig. Cutting these fine slices, sort of looking over my shoulder to make sure.

Austin: Yeah. I mean, we'll roll to do some cooking. Chef, what's our normal cooking roll? Because I know you've had to do it a couple of times. It's not normally what you do. Do you remember what we've done before?

Art: Oh...

Austin: Like, DEX + Insight?

Art: No, I don't. Yeah, I think it was DEX + Insight.

Jack: Yeah.

Art: Because that's what I was about to guess it was.

Austin: Yeah. DEX + Insight, Elena.

Jack: Yeah. In our sheet, this is called Anticipate, and I think that is a good being a sous chef. Ah, right.

Austin: That's a 4.

Jack: No. We will not be doing this.

Austin: That's a 4 right there that you got.

Dre: Mm.

Jack: Wow. I rolled a 1 and a 3, so I'm going to be rerolling both of these.

Austin: Yeah. What Trait are you calling on?

Jack: I'm calling on megadungeon hostess.

Austin: Yeah, sure. You've been asked to hasselback a pig before.

Jack: Yeah, absolutely.

Austin: You probably have not, but you've certainly had to do a potato.

Jack: Or my knife skills.

Austin: Yeah, uh huh.

Jack: Yeah. Let's spend this, and I am going to just reroll the whole thing, because that was a shit roll.

Austin: Mm-hmm. [Jack laughs] Well, that's a 4 you got there. 2 and a 2. Again, in Redolencia, that would be a fumble, but here, it's not, which is good. Uh, I think... I don't think it's going well.

Jack: No.

Austin: What are you struggling with here?

Jack: I am struggling with the type of knife that they're using.

Austin: [chuckles] I see.

Jack: It's a completely different sort of style of...

Janine: I was going to say. They've gotta have weird knives, right? [laughs quietly]

Jack: They gotta have weird knives. You know—I doubt it made it onto the

recording—earlier, we were talking about, like, weird different kinds of cymbals that have holes in or cymbals that have rivets mounted into them or, like, very strange shapes, and there's something about this set of cookware that is completely alien to Elena. I think the knife is sharpened in a very odd way, and so it keeps, like, sticking and jamming, because she doesn't have the skill to use it. The handle is very very thin.

Janine: You know how, like, there's the... Sorry, I got distracted by a weird knife, because I googled “weird knives.” [Sylvia and Janine laugh] You know how there's, like, a saw? You know, saws that cut when you push, versus saws that cut when you pull?

Jack: Yes.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Janine: Like the Japanese pull saw type thing? I wonder if it's like, if there's an element of it like that, where it's just like, it works the opposite way. Or, you know, like when you have a vegetable cutter that's, like, for a different hand than you usually use. Sorry, vegetable peeler.

Jack: Yes. Yes, that's absolutely what it's like.

Janine: So you're, like, trying to peel, but then, like, nothing fucking happens. You're like, “What the fuck am I doing wrong?”

Jack: This is also very good for Elena's embarrassment tour, because she is, as we said, ostensibly a cook.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: But she's making an absolute dog's dinner of this.

Austin: Are you willing to spend a second Fabula Point?

Jack: [resigned] Yes. It helps us all. [Keith laughs]

Austin: Which brings you down to one, right?

Jack: Yes. [laughs] Yes.

Ali: How many is that for today?

Austin: I've lost count. I would love to know, if someone can do a count.

Sylvia: Um...

Ali: Who used one? I used one.

Janine: I used one.

Keith: Art used one. Sylvi used one.

Sylvia: I did not use one.

Keith: Oh, you didn't? Oh.

Ali: But we're up to four with that, right?

Sylvia: I don't think I did.

Janine: With Elena double spending, yes.

Sylvia: I believe we're up to four.

Ali: Art, me, Janine, Elena.

Jack: Elena, twice. Yeah, that would be five.

Ali: Okay, okay.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: So two more you need, to get an XP.

Jack: Okay. I am pulling on my Theme of anger.

Austin: Ah!

Sylvia: Hell yeah.

Jack: Let's give this another go. Okay. Look, it's...

Austin: It's an 8. An 8's a success, it's just the lowest possible success. You're certainly not getting any masks.

Jack: It's just the lowest possible success.

Austin: You're certainly not getting any mask exchanges out of this, but you don't get shooed away.

Keith: You're trying so hard.

Austin: And I think she looks down at you and goes—or at the pig—and goes,

(as **planner**): Yeah, they don't really care about this anyway. Good enough.
[sighs] [Janine laughs]

Austin: And begins to plate the pigs you've cut—or the ham you've cut—and then sends it up to get, you know, put on different tables. And then looks around and is like,

(as **planner**): [more relaxed] I think we earned ourselves five minutes.

Jack (as **Elena**): [sighs] Tell me about it. You did that so much better than me.

Austin (as **planner**): Yeah, well, you didn't even show up on time. You were too busy getting that shit mask of yours. [Sylvia laughs] Why'd you trade down? No one likes Deadwind. I mean, I guess Fog and Silence do, but no one likes Fog and Silence.

Jack (as **Elena**): I thought it would be a bit of fun. Tell me you've never thought about what it would be like to be House Deadwind.

Austin (as **planner**): I have never thought about what it would be to be House Deadwind. They're hexers, occultists.

Jack (as **Elena**): Sure. The occult holds no joy for you?

Austin (as **planner**): The occult holds no joy for me.

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

Austin (as **planner**): The occult is what killed the world. Why would it hold joy for me?

Jack (as **Elena**): [struggling] Well, there's always joy in— there's always— uh... [Sylvia laughs quietly] There's always some joy in transgression, is there not, as the sages say?

Austin (as **planner**): As the sages say. Oy. You're a regular House Sun, aren't you?

Jack (as **Elena**): That's me. Came in here with a beautiful House Sun mask of plums.

Austin: [laughs quietly] Oh yeah?

Jack: Yeah.

Austin (as **planner**): That's not right.

Janine: [laughing] I was going to say, why would you volunteer that?

Austin: She reaches for her knife.

Sylvia: Oh my god...

Austin: You have said something that makes her feel like she is under threat. You pick this up immediately. You need to deescalate this, or else there will be immediate consequences. [Ali laughs]

Jack: Okay. So, I was absolutely trying to bait some sort of connection, mask-house connection, but—

Austin: And you did.

Jack: And I absolutely did. Okay.

Austin: I cannot wait to tell you what it is.

Jack: The deescalation that I... [Austin and Jack laugh]

Austin: Oh, it's so funny, what you just did. All right. It's fine.

Jack: Right. I think I'm going to play this as simply— I don't think I need to get complicated here, and I think, in her shock, Elena is not going to go for complicated. I think that she is going to take a step back and say,

(as **Elena**): My friend, my friend! House Sun joke! [Austin chuckles] There's no need to go that far.

Jack: And I'm going to roll Persuade.

Austin: Yeah. Which is?

Jack: Insight and Willpower.

Austin: Okay. Hey, that's a 10.

Jack: Okay. I'll take it.

Austin: I think she says—

Jack: Whoa! I rolled a 1 and a 9!

Austin: You did. With that, she is going to, like, let you deescalate but is done talking to you. You could try to get up to a 13, which would, I think, get you back into good graces, but you are freaking her the fuck out!

Jack: Oh my god. Is it worth spending Fabula Points again? I can't invoke a Bond. Nobody else is kind of here with me.

Austin: You can invoke a Bond without someone being there. You just have to explain, like, mentally or emotionally or psychologically, like, spiritually, how you're evoking.

Janine: This place is full of people. I'm so worried about you sunk-cost-fallacying yourself into a hole with this pig lady.

Keith: I'll say this, though. Any unspent single Fabula Point is like a wasted Fabula Point, since we get one back for free at 0.

Jack: Oh, we get one back.

Janine: That's true. That's true.

Jack: We do. We do. Okay, let me see.

Austin: I only say this because you got a 9 with your other die. You got a 1 and a 9.

Jack: Yeah, I'm going to reroll that 1. I'm absolutely.

Austin: So you just need a 3 with that other 1.

Jack: Oh my god. Art's internet died.

Austin: Oh no.

Sylvia: Oh.

Jack: He's still in the call, which is very peculiar.

Austin: That is. Let's get through this roll, since Art's not in this scene.

Jack: Yep. Sounds good.

Austin: And then we can figure out if we need to take a break.

Jack: Right. I'm going to spend a Fabula Point, and the Fabula Point that I'm going to spend is called, "No! No! Elena!" This is a d10?

Austin: You're looking for a 4 here.

Jack: Yep.

Austin: Hey, that's a 7!

Jack: Oh, beautiful. That's a 7.

Austin: That's a 17. No, it's a 16. That's still the highest of the basic successes. And I think she says,

(as **planner**): You are too clever for me and too clever for that mask. We should switch them. I will make a better quiet, out of the way House Deadwind than you. And you can go back to being just a normal attendee.

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

Austin (as **planner**): Jesus Christ. Don't ever do that again.

Jack (as **Elena**): I'm sorry. I was just having a bit of fun. [Ali laughs quietly]

Austin (as **planner**): You know that House Silence is...

Janine: They have Jesus?

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: I said "Jesus Christ," didn't I?

Ali: Uh huh. [laughs]

Austin: They might.

Janine: Yeah, you said, "Jesus Christ," like, fully! [Ali laughs]

Austin: That's how it felt, you know? That's the...you know. What do they have instead? They got, uh... [Janine chuckles] See, this is the thing, is like, you can't say, like, "By the Fifth Wind!" and have it sound like, "Jeeesus Christ."

Janine: Breezus Christ.

Keith: I agree. I've been saying this for years. "Jesus Christ" just means whatever their version of that is.

Austin: Of Jesus Christ. Yeah.

Dre: Sure.

Keith: We don't have to make a— we don't have to say "farking" or whatever.

Sylvia: I like Breezus Christ.

Austin: Breezus Christ! [Austin and Ali laugh]

Janine: Breezus Christ, yeah.

Keith: Great.

Sylvia: Yeah, that's a good one, Janine.

Austin: Anyway. She continues and says, like,

(as **planner**): If you ever say something like that again to somebody, given Silence's association with, you know, assassinations, you're going to really— You're lucky that you already showed me you knew how to make the pig look good. Otherwise I wouldn't have trusted you at all. All right?

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

Austin (as **planner**): You House Sun poets have *got* to chill.

Jack: I change masks with her.

Austin: Yep. You now have the spurge laurel mask, and the head chef has the quince.

Jack: What does the head chef look like?

Austin: I think a kind of small and severe woman with dark features. Hair up and netted. And I think, you know, is here to do the work. Takes this seriously. Has a hunter's eyes, has the eyes of someone who's piercing constantly around and keeping account of everything. And importantly, I think has the sort of, has a similar attitude to that warrior before. Not exactly like "this place is good," or rather, not exactly "this place sucks," but is not super impressed with this all, you know?

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: But has found the place that she can fit and do some work.

Jack: Okay. Before we leave—I'm going to leave her, but before I head back up towards the door—is there a chance I could just roll an Investigate roll or something to try and find an ingredient for Nicky?

Austin: Sure.

Jack: I miss him.

Austin: Aww.

Jack: I know he's doing good work out there.

Austin: You don't have to roll to—

Jack: The idea of, like—

Austin: There's ingredients everywhere. Let's just roll to see what you get. Oh, it's a 6. Roll a d6.

Jack: Cool. That's a 1.

Austin: You got a bitter ingredient. Write up a bitter ingredient, and we can give it to Nicky.

Jack: Yeah. [laughs quietly] We can give that to Nicky, if we make it back to each other.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Okay. So, to recap, she mentioned Fog, House Fog.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Jack: House Silence. House Deadwind. House Sun, who are poets and jokers. House Silence, who are assassins and who wear plums for some reason.

Austin: Well. That's not necessarily. It's not like they wear plums.

Jack: Something about plums.

Austin: You said that you came here with the plum mask on.

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Yes.

Austin: She knows that the plum mask is a House Silence mask.

Jack: Right.

Austin: So it's not like they wear plums.

Jack: Right, right, right.

Austin: It's that the plum mask is a House Silence mask.

Dre: Mm.

Jack: Yes.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Like October is in Autumn, she was like, "Ah, plums is House Silence."

Austin: Or like Halloween is in Autumn. Like how Halloween is in October, you know?

Jack: Okay. I don't know what house she was.

Austin: I don't believe you do. You've not—

Jack: But I have her mask.

Austin: You do have her mask.

Door [1:32:48]

Ali: Is it— Can we check now?

Austin: You want to, like, bring it back and see what the deal is?

Jack: Yeah.

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Ali: Yeah, Maebela has her original...

Austin: Maebela does have her original.

Ali: I guess we don't know what she's up to, but yeah.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Well, do you go get Maebela, Jonathan?

Dre: Yeah. Or at least go see what she's doing.

Austin: She is watching these duels.

(as **Maebela**): [hushed excitement] You gotta sign up for one of these duels! Or I gotta, but I— [Jack chuckles] Oh, I guess you can't, 'cause you're just a servant here.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Yeah. I mean, we could—

Austin (as **Maebela**): Dang.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): You wanna switch masks?

Austin (as **Maebela**): Oh, I'm not allowed to switch masks with a servant. [Sylvia, Keith, and Dre laugh]

Ali: She's so...

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Yeah. Yeah, no, I guess that's true. I don't know; how do you think you'd hold up against them? You've been sitting here watching them.

Austin (as **Maebela**): That one right there? They beat seven people in a row. They got that wicked sword.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Wait, what makes it wicked?

Austin (as **Maebela**): Look how it curves.

Austin: It does. It has like a cool wicked curve in it.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Oh. Damn, that is cool.

Austin (as **Maebela**): They fly around when they fight, do all sorts of dives and loop-de-loops.

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

Austin (as **Maebela**): It's right pretty.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Yeah. Mae, I think I need you to come back with me. We found a talking door?

Austin (as **Maebela**): Y'all found a talking door?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): Yeah, and it's like, it's all about—

Austin (as **Maebela**): Show me.

Dre (as **Jonathan**): There's like a mask— well, okay, come over here. It's just a few steps down.

Austin: And, like, dives down. Like, fast dives. She *loves* flying around with these wings.

Sylvia: Hell yeah.

Austin: Yeah, like dive bombs down to y'all. All right.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Austin: So, what do we now have at the door? We have... Can you go over these one time for me?

Jack: Elena is wearing a spurge laurel mask that she got from the head chef.

Austin: That's right. Veile?

Ali: I have, like, a yellow lily mask? I forget the exact flower.

Jack: Oh, artichoke.

Austin: It is the artichoke flower, Jerusalem artichoke, the sunroot flower, the wild sunflower. However you want to call it. All right. And then now you have Maebela, who has the saltpeter mask on, right?

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Okay. As the three of you approach...

[unreleased door music begins]

Austin (as **door**):

Three masks? Oh my. The odds are high
you know what you are doing.

But four is harder, and they grow smarter,

and soon you'll set them stewing.

[music ends]

Austin: And as you hear that, you do notice that the group of you is gaining some negative attention. Simply by being together in this way.

Dre: Mm.

Jack: Right.

Austin: There's a sort of, like, "Whoa, what are those three plotting?"

Jack: Huh. It's "what are those three plotting?" and it's not "those three shouldn't be together or wouldn't usually be together"?

Austin: It's a corollary from that.

Jack: Yeah. Okay.

Austin: But it's particularly, at this event, the fact that you three are all together suggests some sort of strange power play.

Jack: Yes.

Austin: People are whispering amongst themselves about you.

Jack: Like an unfortunate coalition.

Austin: That's right. Exactly that. And I would say give me a Study Check.

Ali: Uh, group?

Dre: Who's that to?

Austin: The group. Yeah, you do a Group Study Check together, as the whispers start around the group of you.

Ali: Elena probably sounds like she's the one leading that?

Jack: Yeah, I'll lead.

Ali: And then Study is, what is Study? Oh, Study's Insight + Insight.

Dre: Insight + Insight? Bleh!

Austin: Ooh, that's only a 6, so that help doesn't work.

Dre: I can't— Can I Fabula to reroll that?

Austin: No, because it's a—

Keith: Mm...

Dre: I don't think so.

Austin: I don't think it's a Skill Check. It's a helping check. Caoimhe, that is exactly right.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Great.

Sylvia: I said, in my mind, this door has a Tim Curry voice. [Ali laughs quietly]

Keith: Yeah.

Ali: I got a 14.

Austin: 14, all right. So that's a +1.

Jack: And Brontë's not here, so.

Austin: Yeah. Elena.

Ali: And Elena, you also get a +2 because of our Bond.

Austin: Ooh! So +3 total?

Jack: Whoa, +3.

Austin: I love it. You're looking for a 13, and that is an 18. It's open-ended, a Study.

Dre: You see everything.

Austin: So you crush it. All right. It takes you a moment to understand what's really happening. Eh, there's a lot of talking around from everybody, but you start to piece together particulars of which...you can start to piece together groups of people who are talking, and it takes some doing. You got an 18, so I'm giving you this, right? It seems like there are particular sets of people who are *more* worried about you, and in fact, they start to cross from zone to zone or from, you know, across a room to meet each other. You're kind of filtering out a larger set of groups or one larger group. Does that make sense?

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Because it seems as if three fourths of the world is conspiring against them in this moment, instead of it being like... You know, sometimes you'll have two people from one group talk to a third person, but now that it seems like— they're looking over, and they're like, “Oh, those three people are all, maybe the three of them are going to plot against us.” And so you start to get the sense that there is a larger kingdom that has three houses in it, and those three houses in it are all opposed to three other kingdoms, and that each of these four kingdoms has three houses in each.

Jack: Huh.

Austin: And you, at this point, have masks from those other three kingdoms.

Dre: Mm.

Jack: So, out of—

Austin: And one of the people who is— with an 18, I mean, this is actually kind of

perfect. One of the people who is eyeing you is Scythe, [Ali gasps] the sailor that was described to you by the person who is now wearing the limestone mask but who previously had been wearing Jerusalem artichoke.

Jack: Yeah. So it's like we have a representative of one of the houses from each kingdom in our little coterie.

Austin: That's right. I mean, I'll just say it outright: from each Wind, right?

Jack: Right. Yeah.

Austin: This is, at this point, flavor enough. You have someone from the north. You have a mask from the North Wind Clan, a mask from the South Wind Dynasty, and a mask from the Empire of the West Wind.

Jack (as **Elena**): [sighs] Okay. Well, I think it's got to be him, scythe, the only one left. If we can swap masks with him, I think we have the works to get through.

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

Austin (as **Maebela**): I'll do it,

Austin: Says Maebela.

Jack (as **Elena**): I've been putting my f—

Austin (as **Maebela**): I'll duel him.

Jack (as **Elena**): [concerned] No.

Ali (as **Veile**): [concerned] Oh, no. Duel him?

Jack (as **Elena**): Maebela, you can't. No, you can't.

Austin (as **Maebela**): For his mask.

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

Jack (as **Elena**): No, no dueling, Maebela.

Ali (as **Veile**): No, that man is dangerous. You don't understand. I spoke to some scarred warrior who spoke of that man with the scythe killing all of his comrades.

Austin (as **Maebela**): Oh, he wouldn't kill me, and the duels aren't to the death anyway.

Ali (as **Veile**): Well, we're in a place of war, and I...forgive me for saying, but you're not... [Ali laughs] You don't seem well practiced in the skill of combat.

Austin (as **Maebela**): But I got a lot of heart.

Ali (as **Veile**): Well, yes. [Keith laughs]

Sylvia: I love her.

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

Austin (as **Maebela**): Mm-hmm?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): When's the last time you went shootin'?

Austin (as **Maebela**): Well, I mean, I've been shootin' cans.

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

Dre (as **Jonathan**): When's the last time?

Austin (as **Maebela**): Been a couple years.

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

Austin (as **Maebela**): Ain't no shootin' here anyway. It's fisticuffs. It's swordplay. They got them spears.

Ali (as **Veile**): Well, yes, but it's a point of pride and of something sinister.

Austin (as **Maebela**): Fine, then. Are you gonna go duel him?

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

Austin (as **Maebela**): You gonna...? He's not just going to give you the mask, is he?

Dre (as **Jonathan**): No. Well, I guess we got two choices, Mae. Either we swap and I go fight him, or you go fight him.

Ali (as **Veile**): Has anyone seen Brontë?

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