Perpetua 49: At the Threshold 01

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Opening Narration

["Startup" by Jack de Quidt plays]

["Perpetua" by Jack de Quidt begins playing]

Austin: For hours, unto days, unto weeks, the crew of the Little Snail delved the Castle Eschatonica with their new allies, the Source Rot Investigators from the Elevana League. In the heart of the void, these adventurers escaped the wrath of dragons, met a fallen god, recovered lost, living gems… and found not only a route out, but a new method of travel entirely.

Jonathan named his new airship 'The Adventures Beckons,' and so, it does: But before it can be attended to in earnest—before he, Elena, Nicky, Veile, Flegbot, and their coterie of gems—can find and reach the White Lectern—they must first say goodbye to the little town of Spillaway Peaks, where Terapine ever-strive to prepare for the cycle's end.

But when will that end be? Is it still centuries away, or might the many ill portents across Perpetua prove what some whisper: The clock runs short.

The stars have faltered. An inverted eclipse. Cattle, obliterated. The return of dragons. Fire, cataclysmic. Invasion and War. Prayers go unanswered. A ruinous wind.

It is to this moment, this Perpetua-in-crisis, that the Little Snail and its roving staff returns to. Are the days of easy adventuring behind them? Is there no more blue in the sky now that they can traverse it?

These are the questions they dare not stop to answer. For it is time to prepare: To master this new vessel. To gather supplies for the journey ahead. To meet new allies. To take new oaths. And to learn (or to remember) that it is never guaranteed that you can go home again.

[song ends]

Introduction

Austin: Welcome to *Friends at the Table*, an actual play podcast focused on critical world building, smart characterization, and fun interaction between good friends. I'm your host, Austin Walker. And joining me today, Jack de Quidt.

Jack: Hi, my name's Jack. You can find me on Bluesky at @notquitereal, and you can buy any of the music featured on the show at notquitereal.bandcamp.com.

Austin: Darcy Swan.[1]

Darcy: Hey. You can find me over on Bluesky. I'm [username removed].

Austin: Ali Acampora.

Ali: Hi. Thank you for listening to *Friends at the Table*.

Austin: And Art Martinez-Tebbel.

Art: Hello. Let's go Knicks.

Austin: Let's go Knicks.

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

Jack: Let's go Knicks.

Ali: So true.

Austin: Yeah. This is our first time recording since the Knicks have won. The Knicks just won.

Art: Mm-hmm.

Austin: The city was extremely— Ali, did you end up going somewhere to see it?

Ali: No. I was in too much pain yesterday to go. [laughs]

Austin: No!

Art: Aww.

Ali: But it did sound like a bunch of people in my neighborhood just left their houses to go into their cars and honk the horns. [Jack laughs]

Austin: Oh, that's really fun.

Ali: Which, why not? [laughs quietly]

Austin: In the middle of the third quarter, I had to, like, run to the store and then go to a different part of Brooklyn, and in my neighborhood and in the neighborhood I was going to, people were just doing what seemed like ad hoc watch parties in the street [**Ali:** Mm-hmm.] with, like, USB projectors projecting the game onto the side of buildings and shit. [Art chuckles]

Jack: So cool.

Austin: It was pretty good.

Jack: God, that rules.

Austin: And some of them were, like, big watch parties, but a couple of them were just, like, 7 people or 15 people, [**Ali:** Mm-hmm.] which I thought was great. Really good.

Jack: Yeah, there's—

Art: Meanwhile, I'm 3000 miles away, and there were people setting off fireworks in my neighborhood and just… [Austin and Ali laugh quietly]

Austin: That's really funny.

Ali: Did you walk down there to be like, "I'm also from New York. Hi." [Austin laughs]

Art: No. I'm not going to, like, hunt— Well, one, trying to figure out where fireworks are coming from is pretty hard.

Austin: Hunt?

Jack: Hunt? [laughs quietly] What do you mean it's pretty hard? They go in the sky.

Art: They go in the sky!

Jack: Follow where they come from.

Art: It's very dark under there.

Jack: Well, mm…

Ali: Mm… [laughs quietly] Okay.

Jack: Mm. I remain unconvinced that it's difficult to find where fireworks. [Darcy and Austin laugh quietly]

Art: They weren't, like, constant. I'd be about to play, like, Marco Polo with an explosion.

Darcy: Yeah, I guess it depends on how many are being shot.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: “Fire a red one! Where are you?” and then you… [Austin and Ali laugh quietly]

Art: Just run around yelling, “I am also from New York!” [Austin laughs quietly]

Ali: Yeah.

Jack: I really recommend looking at the Defector piece by Barry Petchesky called “Scenes From The Street After A Knicks Title,” which is just some some extremely good street photography of the various watch parties and celebrations. Defector rules. It’s good stuff.

Art: Mm-hmm. Defector: the only good website.

Catching Up [0:05:27]

Austin: Mm-hmm. Today we are going back to our game of *Fabula Ultima* by Emanuele Galletto. We haven't done one of these intros in forever, because we are now on the other side of “The Castle Eschatonica”, our de facto, quote, unquote, “holiday special,” which I think is the longest one of these we've ever done. [Jack chuckles] And also maybe the— Is this the first time we've just kind of just played the game for a holiday special, instead of doing something goofy?

Jack: Ooh…

Ali: I think so.

Darcy: I think so, yeah.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah.

Jack: We did do something goofy, to be honest. I doubt anybody could look at what we just did and say that wasn't kind of goofy, but I see what…

Austin: No, but you know, I was using goofy as shorthand for “play a different game,” you know? And that leaves us here, back in the regular part of Perpetua. We've left the Dragon Path behind. I guess I'll just move us back to, like, the world map.

Ali: Whoa.

Austin: I guess, first and foremost, are there any questions about anything, before we get back to your holy quest? [Ali laughs quietly]

Jack: I have—

Darcy: Why are you saying it like that, bro? [Darcy, Jack, and Ali laugh]

Austin: You know, I just think it seems intense.

Jack: We're led by a priestess. You know, it’s…

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: I have three plot questions. Question one: Have we spoken, in character, about the cost to Jonathan of acquiring the Call to— The Beckoning to Adventure? *Adventure Beckons*.

Austin: I don't believe so.

Jack: Okay. That’s something we know as players, but Jonathan has not revealed the cost yet.

Austin: I believe that that’s correct. Yeah.

Jack: Cool. Second thing: Where is Waylon?

Austin: Waylon went with the other party.

Jack: Because he’s just like, “I'm going to live a cool life. Goodbye.”

Austin: Yeah. Yeah.

Jack: Yep. Okay.

Austin: Yeah. Waylon is going to the Gleaming Fortress of Lumai, because he thinks it sounds sick. [Jack laughs quietly]

Ali: Good for him, I mean…

Art: Yeah.

Ali: Yeah.

Jack: Question Three: I know Art acquired a gem inside Eschatonica by crawling out onto the thing.

Austin: Yep.

Jack: Does that gem still exist? Has that replaced our need for Nicky to recover his specific gem, or is the character impetus of “I accidentally sold a man, and I'd like to get that back” still extant?

Art: It’s that one.

Jack: It’s the latter. Okay. Cool.

Art: Yeah.

Jack: Those are my plot questions, I think.

Austin: All right.

Art: I don't think you can make up for accidentally selling a living thing by acquiring a second living thing and not selling it. [Austin laughs]

Ali: Mm.

Jack: [laughing] No, that’s true. I don't think…

Art: This might be a question for philosophers. I don't want to…

Darcy: [laughs] Step on any toes.

Austin: Interesting. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Art: If you are a human being trafficker listening to this…

Darcy: Please don't.

Art: Please don't, but—

Jack: Stop fucking listening. Turn yourself in.

Austin: Hey, first and foremost: stop it. Yeah. Yeah.

Art: Yeah. Get some help.

Austin: Yeah. Destroy whatever institution or organization you're a part of immediately.

Art: Although I guess I just said living thing. If you're a…pet store owner…?

Jack: I don't want you to be trafficking fish either. Well, I suppose pet store owner or something.

Austin: What? Or like, do you—? [Ali laughs quietly] Okay. I'm not going to go down this.

Darcy: Or like the people that fly the big fish from one river to the other and they, like, drop them from the plane so they can procreate and stuff?

Art: Uh huh, fish droppers.

Austin: I was mostly thinking about people who go fishing.

Darcy: Oh. I mean, that too, I guess.

Art: What, they don't even drop ‘em? [Ali, Darcy, and Jack laugh]

Austin: They drop them into their bellies eventually.

Darcy: Well, you said trafficking, so, you know, transporting the fish. I guess fishing is another form of transport.

Austin: Yeah, like—

Jack: I have one more plot question. I have one more plot question.

Austin: Okay.

Art: “Is fishing trafficking?”

Jack: We said goodbye to them. We said goodbye to the other party and kind of dropped them off. And I know that Veile and I had had a discussion about checking back in with Spillaway Peaks. Have we— When we left off at the end of the Eschatonica recording sessions, had we set a heading for the airship yet, or were we just sort of like, “Goodbye to our new friends.”

Austin: Yeah, we didn't go—

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: You didn't say shit about where you were going. Also, those episodes aren't out yet, so if in the last six weeks or whatever, you decided—

Jack: We need to smooth those, yeah.

Austin: “Wait, we should have stopped at Spillaway Peaks first,” you can just, you know. I'm not going to be like, “You said you were going southeast, [Jack chuckles] so now you can't stop the airship,” you know?

Jack: Right, right, right. Cool. Just didn't want to, like, reduplicate a scene.

Austin: Yeah, I get you.

Darcy: Can we review the gems that we have and, like, what we know about them?

Austin: Should we do this in character?

Darcy: That’s a good idea.

Austin: Where do you meet aboard the *Adventure Beckons*? Where do conversations happen? Because if we're going to spend time in this airship, I kind of want to make sure we all get it into our heads visually.

Darcy: Mm-hmm.

Austin: You know?

Darcy: Yeah. There's a nice, like, lounge dining area outside of the kitchen. Not like a restaurant dining area; like a crew cafeteria space.

Austin: That’s cool. What type of furniture is it? Like, what’s the vibe? Like, decor-wise. Are there booths? Is it a big round table?

Darcy: Hmm. I think it’s a mix. There probably is a booth in the corner, but there's also, I think it’s a lot of modular stuff, so there is a booth, but a lot of it is also other tables and chairs that you can push together or pull apart as needed or as wanted.

Austin: Right. All right, so then y'all are there. The ship doesn't have, like, a crew, right? So is it just floating right now above Spillaway Peaks? What’s the—? Let’s set the stage a little bit. Where we left you for—

Art: Oh, we're going to end up with so many FLEGbots working on this thing.

Austin: Ohoho, that’s really good. I guess the FLEGbot is the one who knows how to do it.

Darcy: I was thinking that, actually. [laughs]

Art: Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't mean to take it.

Darcy: No, no, no.

Austin: Yeah.

Darcy: Great minds think alike, Art.

Austin: But that's where we left it, was that the airship came back through the sort of underground slippage portal thing and emerged back above the Spillaway Peaks, like the actual mountains, so it's floating up there. It's been, you know, it's been some amount of time, you know? We ran that for quite some time. And I guess we only did one or two rests, probably? But I feel like to emphasize how big that delve was, it has to be a couple of days, or maybe even a week or two, right?

Jack: Yeah, I think so.

Austin: It doesn't feel like it was, like, yesterday, you know?

Jack: No, we didn't do that in eight hours.

Austin: No. We sure didn't. We sure didn't. [Austin, Darcy, and Jack laugh]

Darcy: We sure didn't.

Austin: Even we the sort of abstraction that happens inside of games. Yeah, so I think, you know, there was a lot of destruction of the mountains when the two dragons were fighting, you know? Or not the two dragons. What was it? It was the Dragon Ox and then…

Jack: A gigantic earthquake.

Austin: Mm, no. Wasn't there another creature?

Jack: Um, D.G. Flay was there.

Darcy: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Uh huh.

Jack: Was he heralding…?

Darcy: Mm-hmm.

Austin: It didn't just fall over and die. Something was killing it.

Jack: Yes. I don't recall.

Austin: Okay. Well.

Darcy: I'm flipping through my notes. Hold on.

Austin: Yeah.

Darcy: “A swarm of flies” is what I have written down.

Austin: There we go. There we go.

Jack: Okay.

Darcy: He was nasty bug man.

Jack: It’s being pursued by…

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: By a…

Austin: Go ahead?

Jack: Oh, it’s just, and then Veile tried to do the time spell. [laughs quietly]

Austin: The time spell. Of course.

Darcy: Oh, yeah. That’s how we ended up there. Ish.

Austin: Yes. I'm just double checking the transcript really quick. Uh, buh buh buh buh buh… Fell into the Dragon Path. Me being like, “Hey, I want to get this all right.” The Dragon Ox, the first ox, falls. Is that the first time I say that phrase? I guess it is. Okay. So, yeah. The Dragon Ox. The Draconic Ox is what I also say. Okay, here we go. Yeah, okay. Huge swarms of flies and the last gasps of the Draconic Ox. So, yes. That is what happened there, was you saw the big ox fighting these huge swarms of the flies. It falls

through the earth. It crashes everything apart. You fall through into the portal. You're now above all that destruction. You know, passages are completely blocked up. There's, you know, trade in and out, I'd say, of Spillaway Peaks is probably halted. You can see it in the distance. It seems okay. It doesn't seem like the fight spiraled out down to there or anything like that. And let's call it sunset, just for mood lighting, as y'all gather around to talk about the gems. Jack, is this a thing that Veile is bringing up? Elena is bringing up? [laughs quietly] I had my mouse over Veile's character sheet, so that's what I read.

In-Character Talk [0:14:40]

> Jack (as **Elena**): [sighs] Nicky, is it time? Do we need to go back and get that sorted for you? Have you got enough money now?
>
> Art (as **Nicky**): I don't think so.
>
> Jack (as **Elena**): Ooh…ooh. Okay. I was sort of hoping you might have… Let me see.
>
> Ali (as **Veile**): Wait. Wait.

Ali: Pulling out a big bundle of thousands, uh, asta.

Austin: You got it.

Ali: [laughs] The sheet said something different, because the game says something different. But, [clears throat] you might have remembered that Veile picked up a bunch of money, and then Darcy was like, "Oh, so we all have this money, right?" and I was like, "No, no, no, no! [Jack, Darcy, and Ali laugh] It's my money until the end." But now I can say that I am dividing…

Austin: [quietly] Wow.

Ali: I don't know how much I started with, so I'm just dividing this evenly by four. All of us will have 500 asta.

Austin: Wow!

Jack: 500 more?

Ali: Well, I'll have 500, and you guys will have much ever you have.

Austin: Oh, you're cutting 5? Sorry, how much are you cutting?

Ali: I have 1010.

Austin: And you're cutting that four ways.

Ali: Yes.

Austin: But you're taking 500 for yourself first?

Ali: That's my fourth.

Austin: Nope. 500 is half of 1000.

Ali: [laughs] No! Okay. Well, then, each of us gets 250. [laughs]

Darcy: No, you see, Chuck, when you fill up the gas tank before it's empty… [Ali, Austin, and Darcy laugh]

Austin: No! No! Not the Shaq comparison! [Darcy and Ali laugh]

Ali: I feel like I have less money than I started with now, and I'm definitely not buying, like, a coat. And I kind of thought I was giving everybody a lot of money, but… [laughs]

Austin: Okay. You have all this stuff you could sell, certainly.

Ali: I guess. Yeah.

Austin: I think everybody left with, like, some loot to sell, right?

Darcy: Oh. I don't know if I did.

Ali: Maybe?

Austin: Maybe not.

Darcy: I mean, I left with a ship, you know?

Jack: I have an extremely cool crown that I can try and sell.

Austin: You do have that.

Jack: Which I think I'm still wearing, sort of balanced on top of my head as like a little tiara. But hang on, wait a second.

> (as **Elena**): [proudly] Veile, you kept that money from Caoimhe and Brontë.
>
> Ali (as **Veile**): No.
>
> Jack (as **Elena**): You absolutely did.
>
> Ali (as **Veile**): No.
>
> Jack (as **Elena**): You were planning on sharing it with us. [Ali laughs quietly] We all said, “Let’s share it,” then, and you said, “No, no, no, it’s mine.” But now I see you were just holding it back so you could share it with us.
>
> Ali (as **Veile**): Well, that man from the city was very well off.
>
> Jack (as **Elena**): He was. He had servants. He had *two* servants.
>
> Ali (as **Veile**): And I found this, and I saved it for all of us.
>
> Jack (as **Elena**): Thank you.
>
> Ali (as **Veile**): It was in that artist’s room, and nobody saw me take it, and I just thought it would benefit the group of us. You know, with like, aligned goals.
>
> Jack (as **Elena**): Mm.

Jack: Elena—

Art (as **Nicky**): Yeah, I don't think there's anything to be ashamed of taking money from an aristocrat.

Jack (as **Elena**): No, no, I agree.

Ali (as **Veile**): I didn't take it *from him*. I just concealed—

Art (as **Nicky**): I'm saying you're right.

Jack (as **Elena**): And you were doing a little bit of low down work.

Ali (as **Veile**): Excuse me? [Darcy laughs]

Jack (as **Elena**): You were kind of conning them.

Ali (as **Veile**): No. [Ali laughs] No! No.

Art (as **Nicky**): Or “low down work,” as we say in the criminal community. [Ali laughs]

Jack: Elena doesn't know shit about the criminal community. [Ali laughs]

Art (as **Nicky**): I'm saying you did a great job. These things can mean whatever we say they do.

Jack (as **Elena**): So how much do you have now, Nicky?

Art (as **Nicky**): 750.

Jack (as **Elena**): And how much do you need?

Art (as **Nicky**): I don't remember.

Austin: It was a grand, if I remember right.

Art: All right.

Austin: As a reminder, you did do some quests, theoretically.

Jack: Oh, yeah.

Ali: Oh lord. [laughs]

Jack: I just, we…

Austin: You investigated the livestock deaths.

Art: That's true.

Ali: That was the most expensive one.

Austin: That was 400 that you would have earned from that. And then you have to finish the Terrapine interest story.

Jack: Yeah.

Ali: Oh, we're not doing that.

Jack: So, okay.

Austin: What?

Jack: Elena looking out of the window [laughs quietly] down at the wreck outside Spillaway Peaks.

> (as **Elena**): We gotta go down there. And, I mean, first we've gotta collect the money that we're owed, and then we've gotta sort of make our apologies and help, I suppose. And we didn't get to say goodbye to your folks, Jonathan.
>
> Darcy (as **Jonathan**): [reluctantly] No. No, we certainly didn't, did we.
>
> Jack (as **Elena**): So we can go down. Here's what we'll do. We'll go down. We'll say, "We're happy to help you clean up." We'll finish that interest story. We'll collect the money that you owe—

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

Jack (as **Elena**): No? [Austin and Ali laugh]

Ali (as **Veile**): Elena, I think it's time for us to move on.

Jack (as **Elena**): We have to get his gem.

Art (as **Nicky**): Well, we can't move on move on.

Austin: Yeah. [Ali laughs]

Ali (as **Veile**): Well, yes. We get the gem. We donate— We let the farm keep the $400, [Elena sighs] and then we leave.

Jack (as **Elena**): We say goodbye to Jonathan's folks.

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

Jack (as **Elena**): Okay. [reluctantly] Fine, I suppose. [Ali and Jack laugh quietly]

Jack: Brackets above Elena's head: she does not suppose.

(as **Elena**): And the photograph? [Ali laughs]

Ali (as **Veile**): They're going to see that—

Art (as **Nicky**): I don't think the newspaper is going to pay up at all. We lost their reporter.

Austin: Well, you were their reporter.

Ali (as **Veile**): And they're going through hardships.

Jack (as **Elena**): That's why we can't walk away from what we did.

Austin: Hey, does anybody remember why you were doing any of that stuff, besides the money for the crystal or the gem?

Jack: Yes, because of the fucking, the guy.

Ali: Oh, sure. [laughs] Actually, that's…

Jack: The guy who runs the newspaper.

Ali: I had forgotten about that.

Austin: Yeah, it's been a minute. It's been months and months, to be fair. [Ali laughs]

Ali: That's true.

Jack: And we also found sort of another way into that information.

Austin: You don't know what information that—

Jack: No, I suppose, I suppose.

Ali: Yeah, no.

Austin: You have no idea.

Ali: He's like the only tie to the organization that even set us on this path. [laughing] I think that, like, that's kind of a big deal, unfortunately. [sighs] All right. Take back everything Veile said, because I'm a fool. [laughs] Many such cases.

Austin: I mean, I think that the bit of, like, "We don't want to take money from these people," or like, "It's time to move on," I get where you get to there, you know?

Ali: Yes. Yes. I believe that that is still her emotion. The sort of, like, the Elena version of like, "Let's get back involved, and let's finish the story, and let's scam them." Not scam them, but like, [**Austin:** Right.] "Let's figure out more ways to earn from them."

Jack: Low down work.

Ali: Feels like, no, let's just do what we have to do. Let's click these things off of our to do list, and then let's get out of here, because the White Lectern is finally in our grasp.

> Jack (as **Elena**): Okay. Well, I'm ready to head down whenever anyone is.
>
> Darcy (as **Jonathan**): [sighs] Okay. Can we also review what's going on with all these gems? I'm kind of not really caught up on everything.
>
> Jack (as **Elena**): Well, I mean…
>
> Art (as **Nicky**): Each of us has a gem now, right?
>
> Jack (as **Elena**): Well, yes.

Austin: Is that true?

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Darcy: Is that true?

Austin: I don't think that's true.

Ali: Oh, you still don't have one.

Austin: That's correct.

Darcy: Yes. Yeah.

Ali: I see.

Darcy: At least as far as I know.

> Jack (as **Elena**): And Veile and my gems, we've met them, and we've spoken to them, Veile more recently than I, I think.

Ali (as **Veile**): Yeah, and it seemed like, well, these gems seem to be important in some way, if they were tied to that strange place we were in, and if that— she was more than rude. I don't know that I'd call her evil yet, but that strange bird woman who was seeking one or at least seeking to destroy it.

Jack (as **Elena**): And the success, of course. You know, if the destruction of that gem can wipe out, you know, what was left of Redolencia, I have to imagine that what we're carrying, you know, holds great power and seems to be, you know, an all right person. I've only met Violet once, I think, and she was a little rude, but you know, I won't hold that against her.

Darcy (as **Jonathan**): Wait, how was she rude?

Jack (as **Elena**): Oh, she… [sighs] Violet and I had a strange situation on looking at the gem. We spoke. She seemed to think little of me, and then we found ourselves in a memory of some kind, which we found our way out of. But an interaction with those gems is, you know, magical and somewhat unsettling, but I don't think bad.

Darcy (as **Jonathan**): I see. And we don't—

Ali (as **Veile**): I believe they're—

Darcy: Oh, go ahead.

Ali (as **Veile**): Well, I believe they're some sort of remnants of the world they were from.

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

Ali (as **Veile**): And I mean, at least in Cerulea's case, which is the woman in my gem, I don't know that— her world may have already gone through its cycle.

Jack (as **Elena**): Yes. I think the same about mine. I could see bits of Imago?

Jack: That’s right? That’s where Violet’s from, right, Austin?

Austin: Yep. You got it.

Jack: Yeah.

(as **Elena**): I could see bits of Imago in the castle, and the castle is made up of ruined worlds, so, you know.

Darcy (as **Jonathan**): And Nicky, do you know… I guess you didn't get a chance to really converse much with your gem.

Art (as **Nicky**): No, we haven't talked. Maybe that’s what we should do now.

Jack (as **Elena**): You're going to get two gems, Nicky. That’s a big responsibility.

Art (as **Nicky**): Well, I don't know that we can keep these.

Jack (as **Elena**): I think they're bound to us. [Austin snorts.]

Darcy (as **Jonathan**): I mean, what were you going to do with yours, Nicky? Were you going to, like, double or nothing? Or what were you going to do, if you weren't going to keep it?

Art (as **Nicky**): Well, how do you keep something like this?

Darcy (as **Jonathan**): Uh, you make a nice stand for it, or depending on the size, maybe you build it into a nice charm or necklace.

Jack (as **Elena**): No, no. Here’s what I suspect. I suspect that at some point, somewhere in the world, there's a door that we can slot them into, and then that will open the door.

Art (as **Nicky**): What? Didn't we just do that?

Jack (as **Elena**): Yes, but that was in Eschatonica. It can come out further into the world.

Ali (as **Veile**): They seem to… Well, in Cerulea's case at least. She seemed to be afraid of that space.

Jack (as **Elena**): It was a ruin of the place that she was. I could see why it would be stressful for her.

Darcy (as **Jonathan**): Well, we can worry about that later. Nicky, you should— How do you talk to your gem? Like, how does it work?

Art (as **Nicky**): I think that's a question for Veile and Elena. How do you get them to talk?

Jack (as **Elena**): The normal way. Hold it up.

Ali (as **Veile**): Yeah, you just kind of hold onto it and focus pretty strongly, I guess?

Jack (as **Elena**): It works if you introduce yourself.

Art (as **Nicky**): Okay.

Orange Gem [0:26:33]

Art: Pulls out the gem.

Austin: Which, this is the orange gem?

Art: Yeah, I believe so, yes.

Austin: Yeah.

Art (as **Nicky**): Uh, hello? Hello in there? This is Uncle Nicky. Who might I have the pleasure of talking to?

Austin: Give me a Willpower + Insight roll; difficulty just 7, you know? It's an open one, an open check here. Okay, well, that's a 6. That's a 6. Do you want to Fabula that, or do you want to just let it ride?

Art: Uh, it sort of feels like I should Fabula that. Although only— Oh, no, they're both worth rerolling.

Austin: Yeah, you rolled a 4 and a 2, which is not fantastic.

Art: Uh huh. And I'll call upon Scoundrel. You know who's usually pretty charismatic is scoundrels.

Austin: Mm.

Art: *Media Club Plus* season three, wherever you get your podcasts. [Jack chuckles]

Austin: That's true. That's true.

Darcy: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Austin: Hey, there's your 7.

Art: I did it. We're never gonna die. [Jack and Darcy laugh]

Austin: Your 4 went up to a 6. Your 2 went down to a 1, but that's still 7. That's an improvement. Yeah, I think that you feel the sound of or you feel a little vibration coming through the gem, and there is briefly a sound of, like, windchimes in your ear or in your, like, internal ear. No one else is hearing this; just you. And I don't, did you spend time in any of these places? I don't know that you spent any time in Springsong inside of the Eschatonica, the sort of sunny desert place?

Art: No, I think I was only in wet and gross places, if I remember correctly. [Jack laughs]

Austin: I think so. Well then this wonderful, dry, sunny, sandy world kind of, you know, spreads into your mind a little bit, and there is suddenly, kind of in your mind's eye, an incredibly handsome, beautiful-looking, royal, regal-looking man, a young man with tan

skin and kind of burnt orange—so kind of a darker orange—hair up in, like, a high ponytail with a long ponytail, and he has on a pair of glasses, kind of round, super fashionable glasses. And he says,

(as **orange gem**): Who do I have the acquaintance of meeting?

Art (as **Nicky**): As I said, you got Uncle Nicky, chef of the Little Snail and—

Austin (as **orange gem**): The Little Snail.

Art (as **Nicky**): Yeah. We got a food truck.

Austin (as **orange gem**): Hmm. That's interesting. What is a, uh, truck?

Art (as **Nicky**): Okay. Um, do you know what a wagon is?

Austin (as **orange gem**): Of course.

Art (as **Nicky**): Okay. What if a wagon could sort of go on its own?

Austin (as **orange gem**): As if moved by, uh, a sort of…an engine, like our automatons are.

Art (as **Nicky**): An engine is exactly right. You've got this one bang on.

Austin (as **orange gem**): [intrigued] What if you put an engine into a wagon.

Art (as **Nicky**): What if you put an engine into a wagon?

Austin (as **orange gem**): You could build all sorts of machines like that!

Art (as **Nicky**): You could build all sorts of machines. You are nailing this.

Austin: Something, the glasses slip just a little bit down his nose, and this really put-together look he had just a moment ago begins to slip.

(as **orange gem**): [excited] You could put two such vehicles right next to each other and build a sort of moving caravan of them! Or you could— could you put one strong enough to lift something off the ground?

Art (as **Nicky**): Yeah, definitely.

Austin (as **orange gem**): There are so many things you could do!

Art (as **Nicky**): Yeah! I think you might be a little too focused on the just going—

Austin (as **orange gem**): You could put one in a boat!

Art (as **Nicky**): Yeah, uh huh.

Austin (as **orange gem**): You would no longer be leashed to the vagueries of the wind!

Art (as **Nicky**): That’s true, yeah.

Austin (as **orange gem**): You could make them little and give just a person their own little wagon. It wouldn't have to be a motor transport for a lot of people or goods.

Art (as **Nicky**): Uh huh.

Austin (as **orange gem**): You could put one on a sled, and then after you go down the hill, you could turn it around and go back up the hill.

Art (as **Nicky**): Yeah, I don't think we do that, but you could.

Austin (as **orange gem**): Seems like there's an opportunity. I like you, Uncle Nicky.

Art (as **Nicky**): It’s great to meet you. Hey, how’d you get in this gem?

> Austin (as **orange gem**): I don't understand what you mean by that. I am, of course, Re’algar, Prince of Sun and Sand, and—

Art: That’s R-E-A-L?

Austin: R-E apostrophe A-L-G-A-R. Re’algar.

Art: Oh, it’s one word. Got it.

Austin: It’s one word, yeah.

Art: Sorry, it’s a little hard to…

Austin: [laughs] Yeah.

> Art (as **Nicky**): A pleasure to meet you, and, hmm, I don't know how to ask you anymore questions right now.

Austin: Darcy says, “Look out for his seductive and morally ambiguous daughter, Uncle Nicky.” Yeah. You know, sometimes— This guy is not very Ra’s al Ghul, but, you know. Sometimes you get a little pronunciation similarities.

Darcy: Words are fun to say. Letters are fun to put together.

Austin: Re’algar is really fun to say, so.

Art: Uh huh.

Jack: Ra’s al Ghul, instead of training Batman, he’s just like, “Yes, an omnibus! Indeed!” [Darcy and Austin laugh]

Austin: Yes. And I think—

Art: I'm really looking for a Damian Wayne joke here, and it’s not coming to me, but.

Austin: Yeah. We've not ever had a Damian Wayne type character on this show, I think. Maybe a Sangfielle character had a little— Anyway. We can't go down this road. Yeah, so this is Re'algar, Prince of Sun and Sand. He is, and you know, I think this is— The actual note I have here is, "Looks like a beautiful bishounen prince with tan skin and long burnt orange hair; is actually a big nerd."

Art: Mm-hmm.

Austin: He's an expert in poetry, storytelling, and music, and can be used as a Trait when you spend a Fabula Point, in the same way the other gems can be, and then when you do this ten times, dot dot dot dot dot… So, yeah. I'll copy and paste that in so you can add it to your sheet.

Art: All right. I mean, it sort of seems like we should just speedrun ten times and see if the answer is gets him out of there.

Jack: Is what? Well, see, this is what I've also been wondering. Less in the sense of speedrunning but more in the fear of what the other option is.

Art: It's sort of academic for me. I don't have any Fabula Points anymore.

Jack: Right.

Austin: But yeah, seemed to not understand the gem thing so much right away, which is not that dissimilar to what the initial responses were from the other gem folks, as you may recall.

Art: Yeah. But maybe as a scientist, Re'algar would have…

Austin: Mm.

Art: Or, you know, a nerd might be more…

Austin: A nerd. Not a scientist, importantly. I'll note, I did not say that you can call on Re'algar in, you know, questions of engineering.

Art: Sure.

Austin: He’s a nerd. He likes stories. He likes songs. He likes big ideas, but he isn't like a… He couldn't build any of the stuff he just talked about, you know? It’s like you told him spaceships exist.

Art: Sure. I mean, some of the stuff he talked about isn't very practical.

Austin: No. No. What’s this experience look like for everybody else watching Nicky do this? I think you're just kind of concentrating, right? In the past, we've not talked about—or have we talked about it actually being vocal when you talked to your gems?

Ali: It is vocal.

Austin: It is vocal. You can overhear it.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah, okay. Not just telepathic.

Jack: Just Veile and Elena, like, tried to hide it on several occasions.

Austin: That’s right. I recall this now.

Darcy: Mm.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: That’s very important. Yeah. [Ali laughs quietly] Again, it’s been like three months since we recorded any of that, so.

Ali: And yeah, I didn't want to interrupt Art there, but I was imagining Veile, like, leaning over to Elena and being like,

> (as **Veile**): [hushed] He’s doing it! [Austin chuckles]
>
> Jack (as **Elena**): [hushed] He’s talking! Who do you think it’s going to be?

Ali (as **Veile**): Does the gem seem nice?

Jack (as **Elena**): I don't know. I mean, I can't hear. I think he’s explaining, like, vehicles to him.

Ali (as **Veile**): [chuckles] Nicky doesn't look upset.

Jack (as **Elena**): No, no. [Austin laughs quietly]

Ali (as **Veile**): Oh, Jonathan, I'm so sorry you don't have a gem. [Austin laughs] It’s really a nice experience.

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

Jack (as **Elena**): Maybe you can get one in town.

Ali (as **Veile**): Do you want to talk to mine?

Darcy (as **Jonathan**): Does it work like that? Can I—?

Jack (as **Elena**): Give it a go!

Darcy (as **Jonathan**): Can you just talk to anybody’s gem? [Ali laughs] I thought it was like a thing, you know, you get a gem and you're kind of matched for life, but you know, if you can just try out new gems.

Ali (as **Veile**): I don't see why not. I mean, I certainly think Cerulea wouldn't mind the change of pace.

Jack (as **Elena**): Maybe you should talk to mine. I know Cerulea got stressed out, [Ali and Darcy laugh] you know, in Eschatonica.

Ali: [laughing] Both of them just holding out gems to Jonathan.

Austin: I think we actually did say it doesn't work, didn't we?

Ali: Did we?

Austin: I thought we did. I thought we really did have a sort of “it’s bound to you” situation.

Darcy: I thought so too.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: But Jonathan was there when I talked to Cerulea the first time, and it was kind of like a three-way call. Not like a—

Jack: Oh!

Ali: Jonathan didn't talk to Cerulea, but Jonathan was—

Jack: I was listening to this recently. I think they hear it like it’s like a signal…

Austin: They can hear out.

Jack: It’s like if you try and talk to a gem that isn't yours, you hear this sort of, like, garbled underwater signal, almost.

Ali: Oh, it’s like the Charlie Brown…

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: It’s a Charlie Brown situation. Yeah, yeah, yeah. [Darcy and Ali laugh] They have limited, yeah, sensations and perspective on the world around you when you hold them out and, like, do stuff. And that can increase. When you spend the Fabula Point, part of what you're doing is, like, giving them the full—

Jack: Tuning.

Austin: Tuning them to reality, to your reality so that they can kind of help you with a question or whatever. And maybe that’ll grow with time. You know, they're not very practiced at this. Some of them don't even want to admit that they're in a little gem, you know?

Ali: [sadly] Yeah.

Austin: But yeah, we have not, I don't think we've seen anyone switching gems in the sort of conversational bond way. It does seem like, so far, every time someone's had to make the roll to then talk to their gem or opened up that sort of channel, it has seemed like, thus far, that has been a thing that's, like, tied to you, so.

Ali: Does that mean that we have to let Jonathan… [laughs] Jonathan needs to talk to the gem at the store first, before Nicky gets to, before Nicky imprints on the yellow gem? [Jack and Darcy laugh]

Jack: Like a baby goose.

Ali: [laughs] Yeah.

Austin: Like a baby goose. Yeah.

Art: All right, but Austin told us the name of the yellow gem, and it would have been pretty funny.

Ali: Yeah. And Jonathan could have gotten that nerd.

Jack: Got the wrong gems.

Austin: Maybe you could switch gems. I don't, you know. Maybe there's sort of ritual. [Jack sighs]

Ali: Oh man.

Jack (as **Elena**): Nicky, can Jonathan buy your gem?

Austin: Or maybe it's just, "You would love my good friend Jonathan," you know? [Austin and Jack laugh quietly]

Jack: Yes. Okay.

Art: Well, we still need to turn in all our quests and get the money, because I'm still short.

Jack: Yeah.

Art: And I still don't think Jonathan’s said the thing about not going home.

Jack: Nope. Nope.

Darcy: Mm-mm.

Austin: Sure hasn't.

Darcy: Nope.

Jack: Okay.

> Ali (as **Veile**): Well, when we touch down, I'd like to speak to that man at the newspaper.
>
> Jack (as **Elena**): Me too.

Ali: The White Star? Is that it? The White Star?

Jack: The Silver Star? The…

Ali: Silver Star?

Austin: It’s neither of those.

Jack: Shining Star.

Austin: The Shining Star, yes.

Darcy: Shining Star, yeah.

Jack: Like the Belle and Sebastian song.

Ali: Shining. Okay.

Austin: Theo. Thelonious.

Ali: And he’s part of the Luminaries.

Austin: He is part of the Luminaries.

Ali: And I'd also—

Austin: You believe. I mean, that seems like— yes. Yes, he is part of the Luminaries.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: I guess I don't want to undercut something that seems like you know it pretty well, so yeah.

Ali: Sure. Well, I mean, unless the evil military guy is lying about being in the Luminaries and saying that he’s in the Luminaries, but he was putting down some hints when we spoke to him last.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah.

Chelik [0:39:10]

Ali: So. And I'd also like to speak to the dragon woman whose name I don't remember.

Jack: Oh, who we summoned! Yeah.

Austin: Oh, that is the actual last thing, is yeah, Chelik is arriving is the other thing. So.

Darcy: Ohh.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Was arriving. That was actually where we left this side off, now that I think about it. So, yeah. Chelik was, like, flying to the airship at the time. That was the last

image we saw. So maybe at this point, Chelik could land on the deck of the *Adventure Beckons*.

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

Austin: The whole ship kind of sways. You're down, you're— or maybe at this point, we can cut that last scene, and now, yeah, if you want to be on top of the deck. Though actually, I'm curious about this. How do people feel about being on an airship?

Jack: Very exciting. [Darcy chuckles]

Austin: It's really high up.

Jack: I'm not scared.

Austin: Okay.

Ali: [chuckles] You sure about that? [Darcy, Ali, and Jack laugh]

Austin: Damn.

Darcy: Get her ass.

Art: Casually excited.

Ali: Yeah. I think I'm very nervous excitement. I think it's a little bit of an adjustment.

Austin: It's, you—

Ali: But then fuck it. After being in, fucking, a dragon [**Austin:** Yeah.] portal for a week, I think it's just kind of like, I'm happy to have a bed and a fucking stove, you know what I mean?

Austin: Yeah. I feel you. [Ali laughs] I get it. Just did some travel. I feel the same way. Yeah. So, yeah, you're on deck then. Veile, as you were saying. As Chelik, who as a reminder is this sort of draconic woman, tall, who, you know, we didn't go deep into the

way that the Dragon Watchers, like, work, but very clearly like, through devotion to the dragons, became more draconic, became more dragon-like. You know, was not born a dragon person, you know?

Ali: Ohh.

Austin: But kind of grew these traits through devotion, if that makes sense. And so, yeah, she comes landing with the letter, the dragon origami thing, you know, floating next to her maybe as she lands. And she says,

> (as **Chelik**): As promised, I have come. What do you need from me?
>
> Ali (as **Veile**): Oh. Oh! Goodness. I'm surprised to see you here. I thought you might have made it to town already.

Austin: She shakes her head.

> (as **Chelik**): I have just arrived.
>
> Ali (as **Veile**): Oh. Well, uh… Sorry, it feels like a lifetime ago at this point. There were, uh… There were some cows being affected by some sort of strange rotting virus, and I believe that it was tied to the dragons in some way. There's some sort of strange entity—and perhaps some sort of group aligned with Caliginia—that are trying to hurt the dragons in some way?

Austin: She nods slowly and says,

> (as **Chelik**): This aligns with some of what I've discovered in our time apart. This is quite a vessel. When did you build it?

Darcy: Is that to Veile, or…?

Austin: At this point, I think Veile's the only one here, so I'm kind of like…

Ali: Oh, okay, sorry. [laughs]

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: I didn't know this was like a whole party thing.

(as **Veile**): Oh, no. Oh, no, no, no, no. I'm not capable of doing such a thing. This is Jonathan's vessel. You remember the Terrapine man I had been traveling with?

Austin: She nods.

(as **Chelik**): Hmm.

Ali (as **Veile**): How are you enjoying yourself, being, you know, awake?

Austin (as **Chelik**): We should catch up. Can you gather your companions?

Ali (as **Veile**): Yes. Yes, of course, yes. We were just about to head to the town. Perhaps I could bring you to the farm.

Austin (as **Chelik**): I suspect it would be best for the people of this town not to see me.

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

Austin (as **Chelik**): The Dragon Watchers are not well regarded in much of the world.

Ali (as **Veile**): Oh. Well, they care quite a bit about their livestock, and I thought that you might provide some guidance. They're very nice people.

Austin (as **Chelik**): I would love to hear from you first about your time and about the livestock and any other information.

Ali (as **Veile**): Yes. Yes, I understand. [calling] Hey. Hey, everyone. [Ali laughs quietly] Are you guys ready yet?

Jack (as **Elena**): Oh. It's Chelik. Wow, you came!

Austin (as **Chelik**): I gave an oath.

Jack (as **Elena**): Yeah. Yeah. The situation was a little different when we made the call, I suppose, but I'm grateful to see you.

Austin: No response to that.

Art: I think someone might need to— Nicky still has a Bond of Hatred with…

Ali: [laughs] Well. Play your sheet.

Jack (as **Elena**): Do you want to come down into the town with us, Chelik? [Ali laughs]

Art (as **Nicky**): [displeased] Look who it is.

Austin (as **Chelik**): [coolly] I would prefer to be briefed on whatever activities you have gotten up to.

Austin: You know, she does not have a Bond of Hate with Nicky but does not like the aura emanating from him in this moment.

Darcy: Mm.

Art: It's just the meanest look anyone's ever seen. [Ali laughs quietly]

Austin: Yeah.

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

Darcy (as **Jonathan**): How about this. [pointedly] Nicky, why don't you go and prepare some supplies for landing, and Chelik, we can fill you in on everything that's been going on.

Art (as **Nicky**): [vaguely threatening] Yeah, I'll go prepare some supplies all right. [Ali laughs quietly]

Austin (as **Chelik**): That would be best.

Art: Nicky does not have another plan, but he wants it to sound like he does.

Austin: [laughs] Yeah. Yeah. I think heads inside to wherever. I guess we already talked about the big meeting area being the sort of dining area.

Art: Yeah, just sort of stands in there and throws a chair [Darcy laughs] and pounds on the table.

Austin: Damn.

Darcy: Don't throw a chair! This is all new!

Austin: Goddamn. I meant where Chelik was going to go chat. I guess y'all can just chat out here. That's also fine.

Art: Oh.

Darcy: We can also chat in, like, the cockpit.

Art: There's chairs all over the place.

Darcy: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: Okay. Okay.

Jack (as **Elena**): We fell into the—

Ali: We're still in the sky.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah.

Ali: Okay. Okay. I thought we had landed and then…

Austin: Oh, no. No, no. Definitely not.

Jack: Chelik flies.

Austin: Chelik flies, with wings, with dragon wings, you know?

Ali: Uh huh. I see. I do see.

Austin: It's fun. Yeah.

> Jack (as **Elena**): We fell into the Dragon Path and found ourselves in a strange castle within the Dragon Path. All sorts of trials. And we met others there too, other adventurers like us, who had similarly lost their way in the Path. But the long and the short of it, as I understand it, is that within the Dragon Path, you know, two great forces of the gods were warring with each other in search for a sort of gem, and before one of them could triumph over the other by finding the gem, a third party, a draconic woman, found the gem and crushed it, causing great destruction.
>
> Austin (as **Chelik**): A draconic woman? Another Dragon Watcher.
>
> Jack (as **Elena**): Well, I'm not sure.
>
> Ali (as **Veile**): Oh, yes.

Austin: She doesn't— they didn't— The draconic woman you saw looked, I think, quite different than Chelik does. Chelik has some very traditional, like, dragon features, in the

like, you know, looks like a big lizard lady with, you know. As if you picked the dragonoid, the draconic human class in a video game, you know?

Jack: Yeah, yeah.

Darcy: Mm-hmm.

Austin: You got the Elden Ring dragon mode upgrade or whatever. Whereas the character that you saw who crushed the gem looked like a draconic elf specifically, like an elf with some…

Ali: Oh, the first elf. That's right.

Austin: The first elf. Yes, exactly right, yeah.

Darcy: Mm.

Jack: Yeah, I think we feed this back to Chelik.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah.

Ali: Right.

> (as **Veile**): Well, not quite a Watcher,

Ali: I think is what Veile says.

Austin: Mm.

> Ali (as **Veile**): More of a dragon herself, I suppose. And that's how we fell. There was that creature being attacked, and I imagine that you hopefully know something about that as well.

Austin: She nods slowly, but I think, you know, she cannot hold back a look of surprise at the idea that there would be, like, a humanoid dragon in that way. Like, it's just not a… You know, I don't want to go too deep into the, like, interior politics and theology of

the Dragon Watchers, but like, that's not— It seemed like she felt something— It was not how she believed things. She maybe even seems skeptical of the thing that you saw being a dragon, [**Ali:** Mm-hmm.] but doesn't say anything about it, you know? Instead, what she says is,

> (as **Chelik**): Yes. The dragon which fell here, it is not the only one. There have been holy creatures getting sick, turning on each other, emerging from centuries of absence in a fury. We waited and watched for so long for them to return, and now they have, and it has been… It is unclear if there is even a single cause.
>
> Ali (as **Veile**): Well, as far as we know, it seems that there's some desire to wound the dragons in some way.
>
> Jack (as **Elena**): Poison them or mess with them. Like an active participant, I think, is causing this.
>
> Ali (as **Veile**): And, well, do you know of the mole creature?
>
> Austin (as **Chelik**): Yes. In the eastern continent.
>
> Ali (as **Veile**): Yes. We met the adventurers who…

Ali: Fought it? question mark?

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: I don't know what my understanding of that is. [laughs]

Austin: I think that that was made clear. Maybe not exactly, but I think so.

Ali: I think the reason I paused was because in my memory I was like, "Were they fighting against it or kind of for it, or…?" I don't really remember. Yeah.

Austin: They were fighting against it. It was trying to destroy the city of Cenn.

Ali: Oh! Yes yes yes yes yes yes yes yes, yeah, yeah.

Austin: And they held it at bay long enough for Castine to build the dome.

> Ali (as **Veile**): Well, yes, we met the adventurers who defended Cenn at that time, and they're researching some sort of wound in…well, I can't really describe it. In the world, I suppose? In the pathway, in Perpetua itself? I don't know.

Austin: I think, you know, she nods.

> (as **Chelik**): To attack the dragons would be to attack Perpetua itself. The death of the one here, an entire page has been ripped from the book of life.
>
> Ali (as **Veile**): The one being swarmed was killed in the end?

Austin: She nods.

> Jack (as **Elena**): [sighs]

Ali: Do we know what that was?

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: It was an ox.

Austin: It was the ox. Remember that you had separated the one remaining ox from…?

Ali: Oh! Oh oh oh oh oh oh. I thought you meant the big thing that crashed through the thingy.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: And that was the ox.

Austin: The big thing that crashed through was the Draconic Ox, was the first ox.

Ali: Ohhh.

Austin: That’s what was wrong with the ox that you were treating, was—

Ali: Right.

Austin: I mean, it was like kind of a two-pronged attack, right?

Jack: It was like it was going both ways.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah, yes. By poisoning all of the oxes of the world with poison…

Ali: It weakened the dragon, and then you can attack the dragon, and then you can…

Austin: And then you can attack the dragon. Yeah, exactly.

Ali: And then the…

Austin: And then you kill the dragon, and then it kills all—

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: But the one that you severed from the Draconic Ox is still alive. You did save that one, and it's its own thing now. [Jack chuckles]

Ali: Mm-hmm. Right. Yeah.

Jack: Oh god. Yeah.

Austin: Yeah. You've done some sort of metaphysical trickery, so. [Ali laughs]

> Ali (as **Veile**): Well, part of the reason I wanted you here—I mean, despite all of the dragon intrigue, of course. That seems exactly relevant. There's an ox that remains.

Austin: Her eyebrows shoot up.

> (as **Chelik**): How? Surely a different beast.
>
> Ali (as **Veile**): No. I was able to perform on it in some way.

Austin (as **Chelik**): [sighs] I don't understand. [Ali laughs quietly]

Ali (as **Veile**): I don't know that I do either.

Darcy (as **Jonathan**): Veile is able to do a lot of things that shouldn't seem possible. In a good way, I mean.

Austin (as **Chelik**): Fine. I would like to see this ox. [disdainfully] I will risk confrontation with the people of Spillaway Peaks.

Ali (as **Veile**): I'm sure most of them have their own concerns at this point that aren't trying to attack one of your stature.

Jack (as **Elena**): Before you go, does the name D.G. Flay mean anything to you?

Austin (as **Chelik**): [thoughtfully] D.G. Flay.

Jack (as **Elena**): Some malevolent entity directly involved with the dragon.

Austin: Give me an Insight + Willpower.

Jack: Yeah, sure.

Austin: Difficulty here is 13.

Jack: Insight + Willpower. Classic Interrogate.

Darcy: Hmm.

Austin: That’s a 9.

Jack: Hmm, let’s see. What is this?

Austin: 6 and 3.

Jack: Yeah, I'm going to try and reroll that 3. And I think the—

Austin: You need a 13, so you would need a 7 on the 3.

Jack: Yeah. I think the—

Austin: What are you doing? What Trait are you pulling on?

Jack: I'm pulling on Megadungeon Hostess, in the sense of being in conversation with someone and trying to read their reaction.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: You know, whether or not they know something or not, I might be able to get something from the way they're responding.

Austin: Yeah. Totally right.

Jack: Oh my god!

Austin: Oh, that’s a 12. Do you have another Fabula Point?

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: You could spend it on a Bond to get a plus, a flat plus to go from a 12 to a 13.

Jack: Yep, okay. I'm going to spend it on… I'll get the +2 with Veile here, because Veile has kind of been taking the lead in trying to get Chelik involved with the cow.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: And I want to sort of be a second participant in that conversation, in the success of that conversation.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah. It’s pretty clear that Chelik is— Chelik did some, like, math in her head or some sort of, like, she kept her eyes locked on you as you asked the question, but you could, like, too much. Do you know what I mean?

Jack: Yeah, too locked in.

Austin: She should have looked up into her head to see, like, “Do I know that name from somewhere?” Do you know what I mean? But she kept her eyes locked on you while she was doing the work of trying to, like, figure out if she knew what you were talking about, in a way that makes you feel like she actually does know something here, you know? 13’s a pretty high one [**Jack:** Yep.] to get, and I think, yeah, it’s clear she— That name might not mean something to her directly. She didn't go, “Oh yeah, D. G. Flay,” but there is, like, yeah, she has some theory, after you say that, even though she said she doesn't know that person.

Jack: She explicitly says she doesn't.

Austin: I think she says,

> (as **Chelik**): I don't know anyone by that name.

Jack: [chuckles] Eyes locked onto mine.

Austin: Yeah.

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

Austin: Yeah. So do you take the vessel down? You take the…? I guess how do you disembark from the *Adventure Beckons*?

Ali: Also, Elena, was that like a purposeful…? Because you didn't follow up to say that’s the guy.

Jack: Oh, that’s true. I suppose I had sort of, on some level, covered that when I said there are active people working against it.

Ali: Oh, sure, sure, sure.

Jack: But if we want to get that coverage, as it were.

Austin: Yeah. I mean, I guess a question for me is, just to make that super simple, is like: do you summarize the events as they happened to you accurately?

Jack: I think so.

Austin: Then we don't need to go beat by beat, you know what I mean?

Jack: No, no. No.

Austin: But if there's something you don't want to tell her, then we should identify that.

Ali: Okay, yeah.

Austin: Does that make sense?

Ali: Yeah. I think that's kind of why I brought it up, because it's like, "Do you remember this name?" weird reaction, and then no, like, well that was the guy who was attacking the cows or whatever.

Austin: Right, right, right. Yeah.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: Right, yeah. I was presuming you kind of told her about the—

Jack: Yeah, we met him. There was the fly attack. You know.

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Austin: There was the bad feed situation, the poisoned feed.

Jack: Yeah, he was there as we fell in.

Austin: But I guess you did not say that, so I should not have assumed that, yeah.

Jack: But no, I think it is in Elena's character to say this, despite being warned not to, over and over again.

Austin: Yeah. [Ali laughs quietly]

Jack: And I also think that Elena would be like, “Well, we summoned Chelik to ask for help.”

Austin: Right.

Jack: She is a wise and powerful being and we should, you know, we should take advantage of that.

Austin: Yeah. So, yeah. Going back to the other question, how do you land the *Adventure Beckons*? And how big is it?

Darcy: Boy, how big is it? [thoughtful noise]

Austin: I mean, it has rooms and compartments, and it has enough room to carry around the Little Snail, right?

Darcy: Yeah. I do think that the garage, like, bay—whatever we want to call it for the Little Snail—takes up a significant chunk of the bottom floor of the ship. I don't think it’s big enough to carry four Little Snails or anything crazy like that.

Austin: Sure, sure, sure. Yeah.

Darcy: But it’s big.

Austin: It’s enough to have, like, the Little Snail and then bedrooms and this dining area and a kitchen and then the open deck.

Darcy: Yeah, it’s probably the size of, like, a decently sized house.

Austin: I mean, it sounds bigger than a house to me.

Darcy: Yeah.

Austin: I mean, if it can fit the Little Snail and then multiple other floors on top of it, right?

Darcy: This is true. This is me being poisoned by growing up in the suburbs and having my idea of house sizes be fucked up. [laughs]

Austin: Oh. Sure. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, I mean, I grew up in the ‘burbs. We could not fit the Little Snail in our house, so.

Darcy: Yeah, true, fair.

Austin: We could fit it longways, but not— even with the attic, I don't think we could fit it tallways. The Little Snail is big. It’s a big double decker, right?

Darcy: That’s true. It is a moving house itself, so, yeah.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah, exactly. This is what I mean. Yeah, exactly. So. I think you need to do the thing you need to do in JRPGs of this era, which is like, find a place to land it, you know?

Darcy: Oh, for sure, yeah.

Jack: Yeah! Yeah!

Austin: You can't just drop it in the—

Darcy: It’s gotta be the right patch of texture.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah, you can't just drop it easily in the mountains. You have to, like, find the flat area that makes it work.

Darcy: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Otherwise you have to land it and walk through an area to get places, so like. And is there a piloting check you can make to try to find a place to set it down? [Darcy sighs] Or is there another way to—

Darcy: Is that a Travel roll?

Austin: I don't think it’s a Travel roll, because it’s not—

Darcy: Okay.

Austin: A Travel roll is explicitly about going from point A to point B, right?

Darcy: Sure.

Austin: Which we can also do, right? To get from where you are to one of the places that's very clearly a place that's flat enough for you to land, like north of Clayridge, the Clayridge Mountains, or, you know, to the west where Capstone is or something, like that would clearly be, or even just like to the eastern shore on the other side of the mountains. I think all of that would be acceptable, but that would be a Travel roll. But if you're just trying to, like, find a place inside of these mountains that would be like, hey, that's flat enough and big enough for us to land safely, I think that's some sort of piloting check, [**Darcy:** Mm-hmm.] which I think would probably be Insight + DEX?

Darcy: Sure.

Austin: That seems right to me. Difficulty… I think you're in the mountains. I think it's difficulty 13. I think it's hard to set down a bit airship in the mountains without, you know, there's not like a landing pad for you there, you know?

Ali: Isn't Spillaway Peaks kind of a port town because the ocean is right there?

Austin: It's an ocean port town. Jonathan can't go there.

Darcy: Yeah.

Austin: Jonathan cannot park the ship there.

Ali: Oh, sure.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: You can't just idle it above the water. [laughs]

Austin: Yeah. Jonathan could drop— again, you just would have to walk back up through the mountains. This would let you just land in the mountains and then walk back to the farm, which is at the edge of town, right?

Ali: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Rest [1:01:00]

Darcy: Okay. And we haven't rested since session or anything, right?

Austin: You could choose to do that now if you want to do that on the ship instead of doing it later. I'm not going to stop you from doing that before you make this roll.

Darcy: Yeah. I guess I don't have anything that would affect this roll. I do have a status still leftover, though.

Austin: Yeah. I think it's fair to say, you know, I described it as being sunset. Maybe what Chelik suggests here is like,

> (as **Chelik**): Perhaps we could rest for the rest of the night and then go in the morning.
>
> Jack (as **Elena**): Yeah.

Darcy: I think that's also fun, because then that also paints the scene of Jonathan, like, not being able to sleep all night. [laughs quietly]

Austin: Yeah.

Darcy: Thinking about, like, how am I going to tell people tomorrow.

Austin: Yeah, that's really good. And also paints Nicky needing to be on board the ship with someone he hates.

Jack: Oh, with Chelik!

Austin: Yeah. All right. Let's do a rest. It's been a minute since we've done this. Resting. Here we go. I think it's fair to say that this is a… I think it's fair to say in this moment that this is a safe place, but I don't think that the ship is always going to be a safe place. I think above Spillaway Peaks, above the Clayridge Mountains, is safe. But I do think that, long term, there are places you could fly around in this world where you could rest but it's not a safe place where there's no risk of being attacked. There would have to be some sort of, like, I guess you would have to use a magic tent by spending 4 Inventory Points is actually what you would need to do, right? And we can, like, abstract that into being something different than a magic tent. Maybe that's, like, something to keep it safe from pirates or Valte raiders or any of the other, you know what I mean? But I don't think that this is fundamentally always safe. I think there are places in the world where you need to make sure that you're not going to get jumped in the middle of the night, even in the airship, you know?

Jack: I'm hitting the Rest and Recover button.

Austin: You recover all your Hit Points and Mind Points. You recover from all Status Effects. You can now create a new Bond towards someone or something, add an emotion to an existing Bond, or erase an emotion from an existing Bond and replace it with a different one. And then, of course, you can use your camping action, your… What's the actual name of it? Camp Activity. Who has a Camp Activity? And again, heal up. No more; you can clear your negative statuses, finally.

Darcy: Mm-hmm.

Ali: Oh, and we recover our 3 IP? 2 IP? 1 IP?

Austin: You don't recover IP from resting, no.

Darcy: No, you gotta spend money for that.

Austin: Gotta spend money for it.

Ali: Alas.

Austin: Yeah, you'll be in town soon.

Jack: My daydream actually comes after Elena has woken up from a dream that she was having, lying on her bunk. The dream that she was having was that she was back in Castle Eschatonica, and while Eschatonica was threatening and frightening and Elena generally had a kind of unsettled time there, the feeling that she has when she wakes up is instead the feeling of like when you dream about having to do homework and you wake up and you realize, “Oh my god, I'm 33, I don't have to do homework anymore” or something. Instead it’s this kind of relief of like, I'm not in that place, I don't have to do that thing anymore. And so her daydream is like, oh my god, I'm out. I'm in the real world again. I don't have to worry about all those new people. We've got an airship. You know, we're on our way to White Lectern. The world is our oyster.

Austin: Cool. What’s Daydream do, again? To remind people.

Jack: I get to, once before the next rest, when you lose Hit Points for whatever reason, you may choose to halve that HP loss.

Austin: Love it. Who’s next?

Art: I have the thing that lets me take two.

Austin: Yep.

Art: [uncertainly] And surely rolling Gathering is going to be fine, right?

Austin: You're the one who has to roll it, friend. [Darcy laughs]

Art: Well, I'm sort of asking the group about their tolerance. [Jack laughs quietly]

Ali: I do not want to hold you back. I know that you're very attached to gathering.

Darcy: Mm-hmm.

Art: I am low on ingredients.

Darcy: Now, what ingredients are you going to get with us anchored in the sky? Birds.

Art: We just stole this boat. There must be all sorts of stuff in here.

Jack: Birds. Yep.

Darcy: Oh, okay.

Austin: Sky plants.

Art: Or birds.

Austin: Floating plants, air plants.

Jack: That farm that Ali ran in the…

Ali: Well, last time we said birds, and then we got into the whole thing where like, “oh, the only birds that are going to come fight us are the enemies on this thing.” [laughs]

Austin: No, no, no. No. Ali. Ingredients.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Food. Food. Food.

Ali: [quietly] Yeah…

Austin: Not… Because last time, it was he was getting—

Ali: I'm just saying. I'm just saying.

Austin: Okay.

Ali: I'm just saying. We've been in this with birds again. I'm just saying. [laughs]

Austin: But he wasn't going to gather birds last time. He was going to gather stuff from their pantry or whatever, wasn't he?

Art: Yeah. That was just a bird group.

Ali: [laughs] It was just an airship full of birds. I understand. I'm just saying.

Austin: Bird people.

Ali: Yeah. [laughs]

Austin: I just want to be clear the Nicky isn't going to gather parts of bird people to eat.

Ali: Yes. Yes. This is true.

Austin: That's all I want to be clear of.

Art: That would be gross.

Darcy: Not yet.

Ali: Okay.

Austin: Oh boy. Different upgrade. All right, you can do gathering. You want to roll anything but a 1 on a 1d6.

Art: Anything but a 1, which of course I have rolled twice in a row. Three times in a row?

Austin: I have never— I feel so bad about this. You haven't rolled it yet, but I don't feel good about it. Roll the dice.

Art: I don't feel good either.

Austin: Hey, there's a 5.

Jack: Oh, thank god. [Ali laughs quietly]

Austin: Looks tasty: the target receives three ingredients with random tastes. So give me a 3d6 or whatever.

Ali: Oh.

Art: All right, I'll roll 3d6…

Austin: Yeah.

Art: Oh, crap.

Austin: 6, 5, 6.

Art: I know 6 is choice.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: And 5 almost certainly is umami. I think they're alphabetical order. Of course these are in the same book, so…

Austin: The Gourmet class, right? Yeah.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: 5 is umami. 6 is your choice.

Art: 5 is umami, okay. Great.

Austin: So you get whatever you want here. Two of whatever you want and then one umami.

Art: I'll deal with that, and my other two activities are Sleep Soundly and Massage, and I don't remember what Massage does. It halves an MP cost. Does anyone need that, or should I Sleep Soundly instead?

Austin: Wait, what has an MP cost?

Art: Massage.

Ali: Oh, the massage.

Art: It halves.

Austin: It halves.

Art: It cuts in half your next MP cost. Or not next; once before the next rest. Does not work on a Ritual.

Austin: Okay. So someone can choose to cash this in when they want to, if that's what you want to…

Art: Yeah.

Austin: You're asking if anybody wants that.

Art: Right.

Jack: I mean, it's always nice. I got it last time. I'm up for you taking a long rest, a Sleep Soundly, if that's what you would prefer. I don't urgently need it.

Art: All right. I'll Sleep Soundly then.

Jack: Good for you.

Art: Thanks. [Darcy chuckles]

Austin: Which does what, Art?

Art: Sleep Soundly says that, before the next rest, I may perform an additional action on my turn. Or once before the next rest, I may perform an additional action that has to be used for Equipment, Hinder, or Inventory.

Austin: Love it.

Art: [quietly] And I'll do ingredients.

Austin: And that leaves Veile and Jonathan.

Darcy: I want to start a project.

Austin: Okay.

Darcy: I got that book or some sort of book guide from Gnova [**Austin:** You did.] that would allow me to learn dragon script via a project.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Oh, interesting.

Austin: You did get that.

Jack: Can Chelik read dragon script? Presumably, right?

Austin: Oh yeah. 100%.

Jack: And she's on board the ship right now.

Austin: She is.

Darcy: Mm-hmm. I'm going to show off my Duolingo streak when we have breakfast tomorrow morning. [laughs]

Austin: [laughs quietly] Christ. Yeah, okay. So, talk to me about starting a Project.

Darcy: Okay. Um…gosh, it's so bad. I remember how to do this, but it's been so long I don't remember how to do this. So, we basically come to a cost to the project based on the criteria. Let me pull those up. I remember it's like area of effect, [**Austin:** Yeah.] intensity of effect. I forget the specific. Let me pull this up. I got it right here. Okay. It is based on potency, area, and uses.

Austin: This is a very funny way of thinking about learning a language. [Ali laughs quietly]

Darcy: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Austin: It's permanent, for sure. And it's individual.

Darcy: Hopefully it's permanent.

Austin: It's just you. You're not making it so that everybody can learn it.

Darcy: Mm-hmm.

Austin: What is the—? Is the potency of learning a language minor, medium, major, or extreme?

Darcy: Oh man. Um… [Austin chuckles]

Jack: It sucks, because in our world, learning a language fluently is fucking extreme.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: If I could fluently speak a language, that would be…

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: It would completely reshape the way I interacted with the world.

Austin: We should be clear that the Projects, just for the listener, [**Darcy:** Mm-hmm.] the Projects system is for inventions, technically. [Jack chuckles]

Darcy: Yeah.

Austin: It's not for "I want to learn a thing."

Darcy: Jetpacks and…

Austin: Yeah, exactly. But I do think that there's something kind of funny about, like, giving it an asta cost, which is what this is about, does suggest that the book alone isn't going to do it. You're going to have to, like, look at— You're going to have to get other supplies to practice your draconic speech or whatever. You're going to have to get— or draconic script. You're going to have to get writing supplies. You're going to have to get other draconic, you know, texts to help you, like, translate [**Darcy:** Mm-hmm.] and see if you're doing a good job. I'm willing to say that this is, in this world, medium.

Darcy: It does literally say relay sound or speech.

Austin: It does. It says it right there, so. [Darcy chuckles] Individual, permanent, medium. So the cost is 1000 asta by default.

Darcy: Okay.

Austin: I know you have a bunch of shit that changes that.

Darcy: Yeah. So, basically, it is— So that's a 10 step clock, because it's basically one step per 100 asta.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Darcy: I fill… I can't remember if it's five or six of those automatically because of my class stuff. Uh…five.

Austin: Okay.

Darcy: When you work on a Project— Well, okay, hold on. "When you work on a Project, up to skill level times 100 asta of material costs are automatically paid." I have five skills, so that's 500 asta immediately.

Austin: 500. Nice.

Darcy: Additionally, you generate an additional five progress everyday.

Austin: That's wild.

Darcy: Mm-hmm.

Austin: What was the— sorry, what was the…?

Darcy: Go ahead.

Austin: How big was this clock, again?

Darcy: I believe… Hold on, let me check. I believe it is one for every, like, 100 that it's worth.

Austin: That sounds right. Yeah, 100 per every, yes.

Darcy: Equal to one for every 100 zenit—or asta—of material cost, yep.

Austin: Yeah. Okay. Cool. All right, so that means you're halfway there. You're five out of 10 there, [**Darcy:** Yep.] and you're 500 out of 1000 spent.

Darcy: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Cool.

Darcy: I also have… Also, it'd be six, because I do one plus the five extra.

Austin: Oh, you do one. Yeah, okay, so you're six and 600. Okay.

Darcy: And then I also have the Camp Action of Midnight Oil, which is generating two extra points of progress on a Project.

Austin: Oh, damn. Sorry, wait. Sorry, sorry, sorry, sorry.

Darcy: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Austin: So, you're starting this Project theoretically right before you go to bed.

Darcy: Yes.

Austin: So that you can then use the Camp Action. I see. Yes. Okay.

Darcy: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Great. So then that Camp Action increases it to eight out of 10.

Darcy: Okay.

Austin: So one more run of this, you'll have filled that out, and you'll still need 400 more asta to put into it, presumably.

Darcy: Yes.

Austin: Do you have that asta?

Darcy: I do, so I can just go ahead and, like, pre-mark it off.

Austin: Yeah. I do think that it means that we need, like, you need to send people into town with money to get you supplies for this.

Darcy: Mm.

Austin: So like, I'm not going to say you don't— You go ahead and you mark it all off right now, but I want to know what that is like tomorrow or whatever.

Darcy: Sure.

Austin: I want you to have a scene where you tell someone, “Hey, bring me back the supplies I need to learn a language,” you know?

Darcy: Yeah.

Austin: And you can tell them what that is.

Darcy: Yeah, this isn't mechanical friction; this is narrative friction.

Austin: Yes, exactly.

Darcy: Yeah.

Austin: I'd love to see that actually, you know?

Darcy: Sure.

Austin: Especially since you can't go and you haven't told them that yet, right?

Darcy: Mm-mm.

Austin: So. Because if you could go, you would just go into town and get yourself some writing supplies and get yourself, you know, some sort of copy of some ancient text or some dragon text that’s more widely available even though it’s not, you know. You know what I mean.

Darcy: Yeah. Yeah.

Austin: There's not another book that's like "here's how you learn Draconic," but I bet somewhere in Spillaway Peaks there is something you could buy that would be like, has some ancient Draconic script in it that you could at least look at, you know? Anyway. Cool. And so then, Veile.

Ali: Yeah. I think this can be a pretty straightforward one for me. I actually have Pep Talk.

Austin: Mm.

Ali: "Once before the next rest, if the target is about to recover MP, they may double the amount of MP recovered," which could be huge.

Jack: Yeah. [Ali laughs quietly]

Ali: I have a lot of MP, but I would like to also spend a lot of MP. And I think that the way that— Because I think that this is Veile, like, talking to herself into the mirror.

Austin: Aww.

Ali: You know, I think that the game maybe wants this to be character-to-character, but I think that this is a moment where Veile has to be like, "It is time for you to lock in." [laughs] Like, you are like… You have to go, and you have to talk to this person, and you have to impress him, and you're not going to, you know, walk away from this conversation and let Jonathan take care of it and be afraid of what Nicky's going to say to you. You, like, have to get in on this organization. We're going to go to the White Lectern. We are capable of this. [Austin chuckles sympathetically] I don't know what's going on with Caliginia. Keep depending on her. You know, we're going to figure this out. We're all in this together. [laughs] Like, it's going to be okay. But that's her night, I think, or the morning before they go to Spillaway Peaks is like, this is not time to doubt yourself or anything else.

Austin: That's great. I love it. All right. Everyone's through resting. The sun hits the ship.

Ali: I guess none of us did our Bond stuff?

Austin: Oh, yeah. What are your Bond changes? Sorry, thank you. Good catch.

Darcy: Oh, yeah. Oh, I also wanted to change my Theme as part of leveling up.

Austin: Oh, because you leveled, and you can do that when you level.

Darcy: Mm-hmm.

Austin: What's your new Theme?

Darcy: Um… And Theme isn't a thing where it's like Bonds where there are specific types, right? Or are there, like, specific beats?

Austin: There are specific types.

Darcy: Okay.

Austin: There are only the kind of three categories, and there's two types per— Sorry, sorry, sorry, sorry, sorry. Bonds are that. Themes are not.

Darcy: Okay. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: Themes are wide open for you to play with, I believe.

Darcy: Okay.

Austin: If I remember right. Let me double check. There are suggested ones.

Ali: I think there's, like, a list in the book? Yeah.

Austin: Yeah, but you're not— I don't think anyone has a Theme from the book, do they? Oh, they do.

Ali: I think— yeah.

Darcy: I think I might.

Austin: Some people don't, is what it is, but many people do.

Darcy: Yeah.

Austin: Because I know, like, Brontë has Scintillation, and that's not a Theme from the book. [Darcy and Ali laugh] But I think maybe this whole side has Themes from the book, so.

Jack: I got mine, like, automatically set to Anger as a result of one of the times I died.

Austin: Oh, that's right. That's true.

Darcy: Mm.

Ali: [laughs quietly] Oh god. Mine is still Duty, because I've yet to have to Surrender.

Austin: Mm.

Jack: [laughing quietly] Wow. Cool. [Ali laughs]

Austin: Must be nice.

Darcy: Then maybe Jonathan's new Theme is Duty, then.

Austin: Interesting.

Ali: Wow.

Austin: Do you want to know the ones in the book, just to hear some words really quick?

Darcy: Yeah, please.

Austin: Ambition, Anger, Belonging, Doubt, Duty, Guilt, Hope, Justice, Mercy, and Vengeance. As a reminder, this is one of the Traits that you can call on when you use a Fabula Point. I don't think we've really run into too much trouble to justifying Fabula

Points, but it’s happened a couple of times, so it’s useful to have one that you think aligns with the types of actions that you are making with your character.

Darcy: Mm. I think I'll actually pick Hope as a Theme.

Austin: That seems right.

Ali: Oh.

Austin: “You seek a better world for yourself and/or others,” is what the book says about that Theme.

Darcy: Yeah.

Austin: Cool. What had your Bond been? Or not your Bond; your Theme?

Darcy: It was Doubt.

Austin: Was it Doubt? So you've overcome that doubt. The time spent in Eschatonica somehow overcame that doubt?

Darcy: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Interesting.

Darcy: I think making the choice of, like, I am choosing the ship. I am choosing to never come home” was just a, like…

Austin: Yeah.

Darcy: I have chosen. Like, I could still think about this, but what’s the point?

Austin: Right.

Darcy: There's no other choices to be made, so just move forward.

Austin: Yeah. Cool. Any other Bonds or Themes or anything changing while we're in this bit?

Art: Yes. I would like to change my Bond with Veile from Mistrust to Loyalty.

Austin: Yeah!

Ali: Whoa.

Art: I just don't think Mistrust is appropriate anymore.

Jack: Similarly, I would like to change my Bond with Veile from Mistrust to Affection.

Ali: Whoa!

Austin: It’s all coming up Veile.

Jack: I like Veile. I like spending time with Veile. I am now fully bought in on the quest. I mean, it’s awful, but it’s our duty, you know?

Darcy: Hmm.

Ali: Mm. I am keeping my Inferiority Bond with Nicky, but I am adding to it a Bond of Loyalty.

Austin: Cool.

Darcy: Mm.

Ali: So now I have a +2 with Nicky.

Darcy: I'm going to add a Bond of Loyalty to Nicky as well.

Austin: Wow. Everyone’s feeling real loyal.

Darcy: Mm-hmm. [Ali chuckles]

Jack: Eschatonica will do that to you.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah, you kind of went through it a lot, you know?

Darcy: Yeah.

Jack: And also, I also wonder whether there's, like, a… [laughs quietly] Meeting another bunch of weirdos, I wonder if there is this upswell of among our group of like, “I'm glad I'm back with *my* weirdos.” [Ali laughs]

Darcy: Mm-hmm. The honorable weirdos. [Jack laughs]

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: It’s that meme of the entire cast of Perpetua with a thought bubble all above their heads and they're all thinking, “Thank god I'm in a normal party and I'm not with those weirdos.” [Austin and Jack laugh]

Jack: Yes. Ah, yeah.

Austin: [laughs] Yeah.

Landing [1:19:54]

Austin: All right. The morning comes. You gotta put this ship down somewhere, Jonathan.

Darcy: Yeah. Let’s do it.

Austin: And I will say maybe the obvious place to put it down would be at Spillaway Peaks, but you're not aiming that way for some reason.

Darcy: Mm. Out of character, just to make sure, [**Austin:** Yeah.] because it has been months, this was framed as, in character, Jonathan, like, knew that he was making a choice.

Austin: Oh, yeah.

Darcy: Okay.

Austin: You made a *choice*. 100%.

Darcy: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: Yeah, and I guess, because it's been months, you made a choice. You did not— You made a choice. You were active and conscious, and you remember making the choice, and no one, like, magically remembers that you used to have this ship. This is new too.

Darcy: Mm-hmm.

Austin: So. Whereas everyone—

Darcy: Yeah, this isn't like Mae, where like, reality and what we remember got rewrote.

Austin: Yes. And I do want to, again, like, underline that that is strange and weird.

Darcy: Mm.

Austin: That like, we the players and you the listeners, should— Like, that's a— This is the first thing that has that sort of ability in this story. Nothing else has been able to write fact into reality before, you know? And so, as players—even though not as characters, at this point—it might be worth raising your eyebrows and being like, "What the fuck is going on with that?" you know?

Jack: The fact that Maebela is Maebela the adventurer, whereas Jonathan is someone who has… [chuckles]

Austin: Just simply that Maebela is Maebela the adventurer and has always been now.

Jack: Yeah.

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Austin: The contrast to Jonathan isn't the part that's important, I think.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: The part that's important is something about the Dragon Path and the Beckonings were able to rewrite history in that way, [**Jack:** Yep.] which seems very different than the Perpetuan Cycle, you know? So.

Jack: Yep.

Austin: That's all.

Darcy: Right. Rolling. Yes, that's where we got to from here. [laughs quietly]

Austin: Rolling? Well, actually, even before we roll, I do want to, like, maybe nobody else picks up on this, but like, Jonathan is not going to go park down at Spillaway Peaks.

Jack: No.

Austin: Jonathan is parking up in the mountains.

Jack: We can press that issue, actually.

Austin: Yeah.

> Jack (as **Elena**): Do you want to come down in Spillaway Peaks, Jonathan? It'd be a lot easier, and we can go straight to the newspaper. We can go to the shop as well. I'm sure there's that big square.
>
> Darcy (as **Jonathan**): [sighs] I was hoping that this just wouldn't come up somehow.
>
> Jack (as **Elena**): I know it was stressful for you last time you were there, but, you know, absence makes the heart grow fonder, and I'm sure we'll be able to tell them all about what we did, if that's what you want to do, and, you know, we'll be going in. Forewarned is forearmed.
>
> Darcy (as **Jonathan**): I don't fully remember it, but somewhere in there, somebody, something, they gave me a choice, and I chose.

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

Darcy (as **Jonathan**): I chose this ship, this vessel. I chose…what we needed. If we are going to try and stop the cycle, this is what we needed. And in return, I had to make just a small sacrifice. I don't know how it works—I don't want to find out how it works—but I can't go back there with y'all.

Jack (as **Elena**): Hmm. Right. Okay. That must be very hard.

Darcy (as **Jonathan**): You know, it's a lot harder to love something and know it don't love you back and to think that there's a chance it'll change.

Jack (as **Elena**): Well, I mean…well.

Darcy (as **Jonathan**): I'm okay, Elena. I appreciate it.

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

Art (as **Nicky**): Do you think it's like a force field, or like, if you went there, the ship would stop existing?

Darcy (as **Jonathan**): I don't want to find out, especially if it's the latter.

Art (as **Nicky**): We're very different people. That's all I want to know.

Darcy (as **Jonathan**): And thank every one of the Ennead for that, Nicky. That's why I get to drive. [Austin chuckles]

Art (as **Nicky**): Oh.

Darcy (as **Jonathan**): That's why you get to cook! Need that boldness.

Art (as **Nicky**): What if I was driving and you were cooking, and we tried it that way?

Darcy (as **Jonathan**): I'm going to stick to—

> Art (as **Nicky**): What if you were in the trunk of a car?
>
> Darcy (as **Jonathan**): I, uh, this is actually, you know, now that I think about it, I've never landed this thing before, Nicky, so I should probably concentrate.
>
> Art (as **Nicky**): All right. I know when I'm being handled, friend.

Austin: [chuckles] All right.

Darcy: Insight + DEX; is that what we said?

Austin: Insight + DEX. Difficulty 13.

Jack: Ah, it would be so funny if— [Darcy sputters] I was just about to say. Yeah. [Darcy laughs]

Austin: That's a 3.

Jack: That conversation and then you just fly it straight into a mountain.

Austin: That's a 3! That's a 3! That's a 3!

Darcy: I told you to leave me alone, Nicky! [Darcy and Jack laugh quietly]

Jack: How many Fabula Points do you have, Darcy?

Darcy: I have the 1, because I started with 0.

Austin: Well, you better spend it.

Darcy: Yep.

Austin: What Trait are you pulling on? [Ali and Austin laugh]

Ali: It's bad when the GM is like, "Yeah, you better spend that shit."

Austin: I mean… [Jack laughs]

Ali: [laughing] And not like, “Well, let’s see what happened.”

Darcy: I will use my Identity of a gearhead.

Austin: Oh, okay.

Ali: Mm.

Darcy: You know, I'm probably, like, moving around.

Austin: Yeah.

Darcy: The buzzers are starting to flash. I can tell something’s going wrong.

Ali: Yeah, if it was— Because it’s you, you can sort of feel the…

Darcy: Mm-hmm.

Ali: The not-rightness with the steering or whatever when you… You're like, “Oh, if I do this more…

Darcy: Ah, 16.

Austin: Ay! 16!

Darcy: Ah! You know, whoever last used this left the controls on inverted. That’s what happened. [Austin, Jack, and Ali laugh]

Austin: Gotta flip that button. Yeah. Of course. I love it. I love it. All right, yeah. As Jack notes, it’s the fourth Fabula Point you've spent, so that’s going to be an XP at the end of the session for everybody.

Darcy: Nice.

Ali: Oh!

Austin: Yeah, you find a little clearing up in the Clayridge Mountains north of Spillaway Peaks, and you're able to put the airship down nice and gentle. We talked about this a

little off mic, Darcy, but a thing I really want to reserve or retain from the idea of the JRPG airship is that, like, it goes up in the air. It lands, but it’s not a boat.

Darcy: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Maybe it could float in the water, but it can't— it’s not an ocean ship. It’s not built for that. And so, like, maybe it can land on a shoreline? It can definitely land on a shoreline without any sort of, you know, thing. But you couldn't just park it in the water and drive it around.

Darcy: Yeah.

Austin: You're doing this thing that you're doing here, basically, right? So. So, yeah. Land it nice and safe. I think the bottom must have some sort of, given what I was just saying, it must have some sort of— Does it have landing gear? Does it have landing rails? Does it just always have, like, sort of…nacelles?

Darcy: I think it’s got retractable big, like, clawfoot tub feet.

Austin: Oh, that’s fun. Cool. Cool. Then, yeah, you land. Is there, like, a ramp? How do you get out of the ship?

Darcy: Yeah, I think a ramp. Like a garage door sort of slides open, and a ramp goes down, and…

Jack: Real *Howl’s Moving Castle*.

Darcy: Mm-hmm.

Austin: I guess, actually, here’s an actual real question, again, as I continue to try to imagine what this ship looks like. The Little Snail I think of as like a garage project or like a, you know what I mean?

Darcy: Mm-hmm.

Austin: I can picture Jonathan putting it together. It has— I'm not saying that it's, you know, ugly, but I think of it as being a sort of hodge-podged together collage of stuff [**Darcy:** Mm-hmm.] that works and that's well-treated and et cetera. Does this have the same aesthetic as that, or does it have—?

Darcy: The ship?

Austin: Yeah, or does it have like the kind of—

Darcy: No.

Austin: So it— okay. Cool. It has a more traditional kind of wooden airship [**Darcy:** Mm-hmm.] with big propellers or whatever visual design.

Darcy: Yeah. If the Little Snail is like completely function over form, then the airship is like maximizing form and function.

Austin: Gotcha. Cool. All right, then everyone can come out of the ship and begin to walk down to the area of the mountains and Spillaway Peaks where the ox, where the farm was and the cows got sick. I think you can feel it a little bit, Jonathan, the way that this seems like it's working, which is just: you don't want to walk south towards Spillaway Peaks. You just don't want to do it. It's a little like feeling like someone's telling you to touch the stove. There is like a feeling that's like every step you take is really hard, and there will be a point at which you cannot bring yourself to do it. And you can sense that if you ever made it into Spillaway Peaks, you would fight or flight you way out.

Darcy: Mm.

Austin: With no way of being productive inside of there. No conversations, no nothing. And maybe the ship would disappear. You can't, you don't know.

Darcy: Yeah.

Ali: Does Jonathan just wait at the ship, then?

Jack: He can come down to Beul's. Beula?

Austin: Beula.

Jack: Come down to Beula's farm?

Darcy: Ooh, I don't— Can I?

Austin: Beula's farm is right on the— This is the question. Where's the— What is Spillaway Peaks?

Ali: Yeah, I did not think that that was…

Austin: It's not on the Spillaway Peaks map, but it's…

Darcy: I don't think that's in— I don't think Jonathan can go there.

Austin: Yeah. Okay. Too close.

Darcy: That feels spiritually like cheating the rules, [chuckles] if Jonathan could go there.

Austin: Yeah. I'm happy to defer to you there, Darcy. I really do think that that's— the question really is, like, is that Spillaway Peaks to Jonathan, and the answer seems to be yes.

Darcy: Yeah.

Austin: So, yeah, you can't go. You're able to take a couple steps in that direction, and then you can just feel it. You can't do it.

Darcy: You know what it is, Austin.

Austin: What's that?

Darcy: That's probably a person that Jonathan would like to see.

Austin: Yeah, totally. 100%.

Darcy: Mm-hmm.

Austin: We talked about it. Like, they were childhood friends or whatever.

Darcy: That’s a positive connection to home.

Austin: Yeah. Totally.

Jack: In that case—

Darcy: So if anywhere, that’s definitely where the divide starts.

Austin: [laughs] Yeah, that makes perfect sense.

Jack: I think I would like to, you know.

> (as **Elena**): Jonathan, do you want us to tell them?
>
> Darcy (as **Jonathan**): [sighs] I don't know. What would you even say?
>
> Jack (as **Elena**): [sighs] I don't— We could talk it over with, you know, Nicky and Veile and I. It just seems so awful that they never hear from you again.
>
> Darcy (as **Jonathan**): I mean, I don't know if I can ever write a letter.
>
> Jack (as **Elena**): [sighs] Okay. Then nothing? [Jonathan sighs] What if we run into them at the store?
>
> Darcy (as **Jonathan**): [sighs] Tell them the truth. Tell them we're going to stop the cycle.
>
> Jack (as **Elena**): Okay. Okay.
>
> Darcy (as **Jonathan**): Okay.
>
> Jack (as **Elena**): And there's some ingredients that you need us to pick up? [Darcy and Austin laugh]

Darcy: Oh, yeah, my fucking translation shopping list, yeah.

Ali: [laughs] Can you get me some flashcards?

Austin: Exactly, yes.

Darcy: They got the really good erasers. I hate working on my vocab sheets when I don't have the good eraser. [Jack and Austin laugh]

Austin: Ah, great. All right. Chelik and you all head south towards Beula's.

Darcy: Austin, I do have a question. If, like, while everyone else is walking away and Jonathan is there, while everyone is gone, if Jonathan tried to write a letter and fold it up into a paper airplane and throw it [**Austin:** Yeah.] in the direction of his friend's farm, what happens to that letter?

Austin: It can go.

Darcy: Okay.

Austin: Totally. The deal was not you can't ever write a letter home.

Darcy: Okay.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: And again, what happens if someone knocks Jonathan unconscious, drags…

Ali: God. [laughs]

Austin: I said this already. I already gave this answer.

Art: What's that?

Austin: Jonathan would wake up and be in immediate flight mode without any ability to do anything there.

Darcy: Stop it, yeah.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Jonathan can never, like, be Jonathan inside of Spillaway Peaks again. Jonathan's, like, innate sense will be to flee. The paper— I mean, I think the image of Jonathan writing a letter and trying to, like, airplane it there. You know, it just goes, and then it lands, because you can't send one all the way. You know what I mean?

Darcy: Hmm.

Austin: It's far. You can't just like—

Darcy: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: I mean, maybe it gets caught up in the wind and flies off into the mountains. What do you write? What's the gist of what you write?

Darcy: [thoughtful exhale] That's a great question.

Austin: You do it once with, like, a blank piece of paper, just to see can you do anything, you know?

Darcy: Mm-hmm.

Austin: And then you get another piece of paper out to write. Because the regular piece of paper, you know, totally works.

Darcy: Yeah. Um, I think the letter starts off angry, like it starts off about feeling, like, stuck and constricted and feeling frustrated with the questions that people wouldn't let be asked or answered, feeling like how that is holding things back from getting better. But as that goes, it starts to turn into more, like, softer memories, like places that Jonathan is thinking about that he won't get to go to again.

Austin: Yeah.

Darcy: You know, asking this person to, like, check on his mom. I think in the margins, maybe in the P.S., Jonathan writes a quick, like, “This is a recipe for a soup I made once that my mom kept bugging me for, and I never remembered to give it to her, so can you please give this to her?”

Austin: Oof. Oof. Yeah. Cool.

Beula’s Farm [1:34:40]

Austin: Everybody else, you make it to the farm with Chelik in tow. I think you see Beula, like, out brushing the one cow that is still alive.

Ali: Is this the only cow ever?

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: I should've had two of those so there could have been more cows. [laughs] That’s fine.

> (as **Veile**): Uh, Beula, ma’am? We finally returned.
>
> Austin (as **Beula**): Who is that? And where's Jonathan?
>
> Ali (as **Veile**): Oh, um, well, Jonathan couldn't, uh, join us right now. But this is the woman that I spoke of, the kind of tall intense one who would've known about the cows?

Austin: I think Chelik kind of looks down from her height at Beula, who gulps and is like,

> (as **Beula**): [nervously] I see. Well…um… It’s just ol' Belly Girl now.

Austin: I think it was Belly Girl who lived and not Old Roger. I guess I don't remember, but I'm pretty sure it was Belly Girl.

Jack: I think it was ol' Belly Girl.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah.

Ali: Yeah, I think so.

Austin: Yeah.

> Ali (as **Veile**): Have you been doing all right with the, you know, the destruction in the mountain and all that?

Austin: I think she just makes eye contact with you. [Jack laughs]

> Ali (as **Veile**): Oh. [Ali laughs] Yeah.

Austin: Like the word you've said, you know? Yeah.

> (as **Beula**): It has been pandemonium. We are doing our best.
>
> Ali (as **Veile**): Mm-hmm.
>
> Austin (as **Beula**): So, what? You want to take a look at Belly Girl and see if she's still all right? She's the only one, seems to be. Not just me neither. Heard word all through the region.
>
> Ali (as **Veile**): Uh, well, yes. Well, I'm very sorry that she was the only one, but I'm glad it seems she's in good health.
>
> Austin (as **Beula**): It's a blessing. Whatever you did, I will say I'm thankful.

Austin: I found out it is not Belly Girl. It is Old Roger. Old Roger is the one who is the world's truest cow.

Ali: Damn.

Darcy: Oh!

Art: Oh.

Austin: RIP to Belly Girl.

Ali: Damn.

Austin: I had to double up. I had to double check.

Art: Boo!

Jack: Boo!

Austin: Sorry to Belly Girl. Yeah.

Jack: Change it! [quiet laughter]

Darcy: Go back to the Dragon Path! Change it! [chuckles]

Art: Let's take a trip to cow hell.

Ali: Oh.

Jack: Whoa. [Austin and Jack chuckle] Going to cow hell to rescue…

Art: Like Orpheus and Eurydice but with cows.

Jack: Oh, I see.

Austin: I see. I see.

Ali: [yawning] Can the Dragon be recreated from this cow?

Austin: Is that a thing you ask?

Ali: Can we make this cow a dragon? [Darcy laughs]

Jack: You gotta ask that to Chelik.

Darcy: You have to yawn while you ask it too, just like that. [laughs]

Ali: [laughs] We sure do, yep.

(as **Veile**): Chelik, I'm not sure what you might be able to provide. Yes, this is the cow that remains.

Austin: I think she kneels down and looks at Beula right in her eyes and goes,

(as **Chelik**): May I touch the cow?

Austin: And Beula nods slowly and says,

(as **Beula**): [stammers] Be careful. It’s the only one we got.

(as **Chelik**): Mm.

Austin: Says Chelik. And just kind of reaches out and, you know, there's like a little bit of magical energy emanating, and she says some words in the dragon tongue, and then kind of stands back up and says,

(as **Chelik**): Interesting.

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

Austin (as **Chelik**): She has been cut away from everything.

Jack (as **Elena**): What do you mean by “everything”?

Austin: I guess he has been cut away. Old Roger, I think, probably a guy, probably a bull, an old bull.

(as **Chelik**): He is unique, unattached.

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

Ali (as **Veile**): The Ritual I did was to, I suppose, sort of separate him from the existence of the poison, and if it was the Dragon Ox itself that was experiencing the poison, then I suppose… Oh, I don't know. I haven't studied it.

Austin (as **Chelik**): No, you're correct. Your insight, your intuition is accurate.

Ali (as **Veile**): Is it possible… Oh, I suppose it's bigger than either of us, but for this being to serve as some sort of sprout to, you know, return…?

Austin (as **Chelik**): I wouldn't say such a task is beyond us in all times, but it exceeds my knowledge currently.

Art (as **Nicky**): How to make cows like potatoes.

Austin (as **Chelik**): Excuse me?

Jack (as **Elena**): I'm sorry? [Ali laughs quietly]

Art (as **Nicky**): That's how potatoes grow.

Austin (as **Chelik**): What?

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

Art (as **Nicky**): Didn't you ask if we can make more cows out of this cow?

Ali (as **Veile**): Well, yes, but like, through a process of, um…well, I don't…magic or dragoning or…? I don't… [Ali laughs] Have you, in your studies, run into anything like this before?

Austin: Chelik shakes her head and says,

(as **Chelik**): The arrival of a new dragon is unlike anything else. It happens between Perpetuan Cycles, we believe, and it is the truest act of creation, as it—until now—added something real and permanent to the world. Never has anything been lifted to such a realm, to such a status. The dragons were created, each of them, whole cloth, and then from them, their shadows appear in our lives. It would be like trying to create the form from the shadow, like trying to create the hero from the statue of them.

Ali (as **Veile**): Well, yes, but the Ennead represents, you know, things that are alive, things in our world.

Austin (as **Chelik**): Well, the Ennead is temporary and foolish.

Austin: Shakes her head. [Ali laughs]

Ali (as **Veile**): Well, yes, but we've learned of a process— Well, we don't know the process, but we've learned that they're risen to that position.

Austin (as **Chelik**): I don't know the specifics of the so-called gods. I know that they, compared to the dragons, are little more than pretenders at divinity.

Ali (as **Veile**): [subdued] Mm…sure. [Ali and Art laugh]

Art: Look, I know I'm biased, but—

Jack: Fucking got by ideology.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: Chelik is so annoying. [Austin, Ali, and Jack laugh]

Ali (as **Veile**): If you say so.

Austin (as **Chelik**): I'm sorry. I know that you've devoted much time, and I don't mean to diminish what you've done here. This is remarkable, and perhaps it could be the seed to a new sort of life. I can confirm that it lives apart from the stream of all other living things.

Jack: That’s so cool.

Austin (as **Chelik**): You ask if you could perhaps make it into something else. You already have.

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

Jack (as **Elena**): But there's just one. Presumably it’s mortal. It will live…

Jack: Looks at Beula.

(as **Elena**): How long do cows live?

Austin (as **Beula**): 12 years, 13 years, up here.

Jack (as **Elena**): Well, and then no more cows.

Austin (as **Chelik**): I would not presume to its mortality,

Austin: Says Chelik.

Jack (as **Elena**): It was mortal before. Well, I have to imagine.

Jack: Looks at Beula again. [Art laughs]

Austin (as **Beula**): It hadn't died yet.

Art: Is your cow mortal? [Darcy laughs]

Jack: [laughing] Beula runs a ranch of immortal cows.

Art: You ever had a cow that lived forever?

Jack (as **Elena**): Chelik, do you have a base or a community or something where you study? Forgive me, I don't know where the Dragon Watchers come from.

Austin: Okay, you— Okay. You found Chelik in her base that had been destroyed.

Jack: Well, we found her in a base, but she had been a statue, and I didn't know if, since un-statuing, she had gone to her community somewhere.

Austin: Right. I see. I see.

Ali: Right. Especially since when she left, she was like, “I need to go find people to…”

Austin: I see what you're saying. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yes.

Darcy: Mm.

Austin: I think she says,

> (as **Chelik**): After the attacks of the Valte in my lifetime, we have been effectively scattered. I have managed to find a number of my own peers, my cohort who survived, but our towers have been attacked across Perpetua, our books destroyed, our relics stolen. You are not wrong when you say it is as if dragons are coming under attack. Who would seek to destroy the very building blocks of life? Who would make an enemy out of blood?

Jack: Was it only Veile who saw the vision of the Night’s Own collected, like the whole gang?

Austin: I believe so, yeah.

Jack: Yeah. Which included, what, Caliginia, Genuine Sincere…

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: Yeah.

Jack: Flay, and then someone else.

Ali: Opal?

Austin: Opal. Yes, Opal. Opal. The other Valte…

Ali: Who was the other, yeah.

Austin: Yeah, the mean Valte lady from—

Jack: Oh, yeah. Yep.

Austin: The dove from Calstega Bay.

Ali: Yeah.

Jack: The opposite to…

Austin: To Onyx, yeah.

Ali: Who was the one who helped us.

Jack: What's the other faction called? I had it— the Luminaries.

Austin: Luminaries! The Luminaries. Yeah, Luminaries and Night's Own.

Jack: Wow, it's pretty lucky they were so close to each other.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Sorry, carry on, Ali. [Ali laughs]

> Ali (as **Veile**): Well, that's just the thing, Chelik. It seems as though… It's all very complicated, but the man with the flies seems to be working with the man who is trying to fight against the Luminaries to keep us from stopping the cycle because he's really attached to the cycle? And it seems that both of them are working with Caliginia, but Caliginia seems to support my… [Ali and Jack laugh]

Jack: Uh huh?

> Ali (as **Veile**): My efforts in seeking the cycle to stop, or at least she's bound by her authority to, you know, behave as she should during the rituals, so it's all quite confusing.
>
> Austin (as **Chelik**): You seem burdened by a great fate.

Ali (as **Veile**): Well, yes. [Ali and Art laugh]

Austin: She shakes her head, you know? [Ali laughs quietly]

(as **Chelik**): All I can say—and I know we differ in our beliefs and in our devotions, but in this, I think there is a similarity between the dragons who we watched for for so long and your [disdainful sigh] Ennead. Their strength is in their singularity. Do not…do not abandon yourself. Do not defer to another your decision. Whatever it may be, guide yourself to the solution.

Ali (as **Veile**): I think I understand. Might I ask: do those among the Dragon Watchers have a belief about the cycle?

Austin (as **Chelik**): It is eternal. The only true lasting thing are the dragons. At least this is what we believe.

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

Austin (as **Chelik**): And so it is all that we can do but wait and watch and attend to those who yet live, the dragons who will survive us, and hope that they arrive to some desire of their own.

Ali (as **Veile**): Are there efforts now to defend them, knowing what you know?

Austin (as **Chelik**): From my scattered sect? Not yet, but there's been talk among those I've found that something must be done, though there's hardly agreement on what is being done to them. Learning what you have just told me, all of you, is useful. It does suggest an enemy, this Flay.

Jack: Is there a look on her face? Can I catch anything there?

Austin: Not here, now. No, this is protected, you know? This is…

Jack: Yeah, yeah, yeah. She’s on something now.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah. She knows she can't slip at this point, you know? I mean, just the word she said, right? Like, she cut through everything else you just told her and is focused in on Flay.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: She didn't say Caliginia. She didn't say the Night's Own. None of that shit, so.

Jack: Is there a sense, you know, she clearly thinks that this sort of remarkable cow is very very special. Do we get a sense that she treats it with the same reverence and divinity that she treats the dragons? Is she treating it kind of like a dragon, or is it something—?

Austin: No, she's not, like, kneeling to it. You know what I mean?

Jack: Oh, oh, sure. I see.

Austin: If it was a dragon, she would be in, like, priestess mode.

Jack: Like, prostrate.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, 100%.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: I think she thinks it's… I think she has, like, a philosophical, you know…

Jack: It's very very special.

Austin: It's clearly very special. It is, like the dragons, unique, and she does not know that it's going to die. Maybe in freeing it from the dragon, it is a dragon. Like, she doesn't know. And it's not like she's ever studied a dragon before, up close, you know? It's not like she has… People don't get to interact with dragons in this world.

Jack: Has she seen a dragon?

Austin: No. Probably not.

Jack: Never. Wow.

Austin: No one has. They've been gone. It’s not what they do, you know what I mean?

Jack: Right, right.

Austin: That’s why the Dragon Watchers exist, is like, “Oh, I caught a glimpse.” You know, like…

Jack: This very holy thing.

Austin: There's a sign that one of them was active, you know, in the mountains once, you know? We should build a temple there. [laughs quietly]

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Jack: God, that sucks to be them right now. [Ali laughs]

Austin: Yeah. Yeah, they got bombed to oblivion by the Valte a century ago or whatever, [**Darcy:** Mm.] and then this other person showed up and fucked their stuff up at the Dragon Tower, whatever was remaining, the first elf at the beginning of the campaign, and presumably was doing that in other towers too.

Jack: And now the dragons finally come back, this thing they've been wanting for so long, and they're fucking sick. They're getting—

Austin: They're sick, or they're hurting people.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: Seemingly they're not of their right mind, like the mole in Cenn. And they're being killed by big bugs and poison.

> Jack (as **Elena**): Beula, do you think you will be able to keep this animal safe here?

Austin (as **Beula**): Old Roger? Yeah.

Jack (as **Elena**): Do you?

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

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

Austin (as **Beula**): I'm being real careful with the food now. Trusted venders only. No cheap stuff.

Art: [snorts] Thank goodness.

Jack (as **Elena**): Chelik, you once gave us a paper bird to contact you again so we meet here. Can you do that again?

Austin: She folds the one that she had before back and hands it to you and says,

(as **Chelik**): Yes, though I don't know how quickly I'll be able to come. With the information you've given me, I'm hopeful that I can bring more of my cohort together and perhaps build something new, make sure something gets done.

Jack (as **Elena**): Oh! Oh! If you ever meet Caoimhe Wake, Brontë Adelvys, uh, and there's another one. Antistrophe something?

Austin (as **Chelik**): Antistrophe Something. Okay. [Darcy chuckles]

Jack (as **Elena**): They're good people, if a little odd. They can be trusted.

Austin: She nods slowly.

(as **Chelik**): Good luck, and be in touch.

Jack (as **Elena**): We will.

Austin: I think she turns to Beula and nods and says,

> (as **Chelik**): You are warden to a being like no other. Safeguard him with your life.

Austin: And Beula goes,

> (as **Beula**): I got it. I know. Okay. [quiet laughter]

Darcy: Chill, bro.

Austin: Yeah. [laughs quietly] And Chelik begins to walk away, and then, at a certain distance, lifts up into the air and flies away.

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

[“Perpetua” by Jack de Quidt plays]