

Chromythica Episode 7: It's Complicated

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Esther: Content notices for this episode include: strong language; potential references to off-screen cruelty to an Awakened Animal as part of character backstory; light to moderate combat violence, including violence toward an Awakened Animal as part of combat.

Esther: Hello, and welcome to Chromythica. I am your GM Esther Wallace, and I am so excited that all of you, my wonderful players are here today and that you, our wonderful audience are here listening in.

Esther: I use she and they pronouns, and I am so excited to have my wonderful group of players introduce themselves to you real quick.

David: Hi, I'm David and I use he/him pronouns. I play Oom, a gnome Sorcerer, who is polygendered and uses any combination of she, him, or they pronouns. I also play Oom's pseudodragon familiar, Nommie, who uses he/him pronouns.

David: So Oom's from Hermea, an island ruled by the Gold dragon Mengkare. Not much else is known about Oom at this point, except that she's crossed paths with Ember before he could talk. So as we continue to play, I hope you'll enjoy exploring more of that backstory with us and personally, I'm most excited about seeing whether Professor Z will let Oom and Ember burn his messy home down.

Alex: Hi, I'm Alex. I'm playing Professor Z, who is a professor at one of the academic institutions in Brastlewark. He's a gnome. He is sort of always trying to gain academic fame and, and academic fortune. But he's not totally successful at that. What Professor Z has been successful at is building a companion, Buster.

Alex: Buster is a clinging and clanking pile of cast iron and steam pipes and stuff like that. Pots and pans, anything else you can weld together. And he, uh, occasionally explodes, hopefully on purpose, but sometimes not on purpose. And so Professor Z continues to work on and invent trinkets for Buster and try to do things.

Alex: And Professor Z is really interested in understanding what's going on in Brastlewark, especially the sort of academic pursuits that he doesn't know about and that weren't shared with the town, but he can be a little bit naive about whether or not those are, um, nefarious or not, because in his mind, all pursuit of knowledge is, is noble and worth the curiosity, including, you know, blowing up your contraption occasionally.

Justin: I'm Justin. I use he/him pronouns. I am currently playing our canine Barbarian, Ember. Ember is an awakened copper-and-white two-tone Husky, with numerous scars and a peculiar star-shaped mark of white fur around one gold eye. He wears a ring on a simple leather strap around his neck, and I'm excited to explore a world of complex morality from the point of view of a dog with very simple ideas about what is good and what is bad.

Fai: I'm Fairuz Rougeaux. My pronouns are she and they, and I play our Rogue, Temerity Vane. Temerity is a Tiefling who was born into an Elven family. He's just this guy, you know? He likes to go around and see the world and find mysteries, big or small. And there seem to be quite a lot of mysteries here in Brastlewark.

Fai: What I'm excited about is digging deeper into this dragon sex cult theory that I'm fleshing out right now. I feel like it's going somewhere. I feel like I'm connecting to the galaxy brain of the universe and something is coming to me. So let's see where that all goes.

Esther: I'm so here for us having dragon sex cult merch someday. It's going to happen. I will it into being.

Fai: The dream! The dream.

Justin: Pins! Those will be the first set of pins. The, the dragon sex cult pins.

Esther: Yes.

Fai: I mean, we should just make them for ourselves!

Esther: Yes! Yes. I'm so here for it.

Fai: You gonna have to look into that.

Esther: So we have a tradition of asking a warm-up question before every game to help ourselves get into character and into the world of the story. And today's warm-up question for you to think about in character and answer in character, or from the perspective of your character is: how do you tend to mediate or resolve conflict? Are your methods similar to, or different from common methods of conflict resolution in your culture or cultures?

Fai: "When I was but a child, my mother said to me 'Tereva, words are one's most versatile tool in this life. They can build a bridge, or they can burn it down. They can be a shield, or they can be a weapon. Care always for your words.' My other mother, she said 'Words first, but keep an extra blade in your boot.'"

Justin: "I fight them until they stop moving."

Alex: Professor Z, solves conflicts with a very solution-oriented, what can we build? What can we discover? What can we figure out to solve the problem? No conflict can not be solved with additional knowledge, or figuring something out, or building something greater, and has very little experience with conflict that might involve blades.

David: "Hermean culture is based on a Restorative Justice and Community approach for addressing conflict. At a young age, children in Hermea are taught that there are four main pillars to resolving a conflict.

David: So the first is a Sharing Of Viewpoints, one where each individual tries to be as honest as possible in terms of their own experience. And just through a sharing of their own point of view, the goal is to reach that loose approximation of the truth.

David: Next, we have this Discussion Of Viewpoints, and that's the goal of really trying to learn from each other. The hope being that from discussing, we can better connect with each other's experiences.

David: The third pillar is Repairing. And for this, the community really tries to correct any actual or perceived harms that result from those fractured viewpoints. Our leader Mengkare's favorite lesson for this pillar is that value of caring for one another. He would often say that if you truly want to do good in the world, then being mindful of the perceptions and the impacts we cause are sometimes more important than insisting we're right because of any intentions that we had.

David: And that brings us to our last pillar, which is Transformation And Growth. This really recognizes that resolving a conflict is an ongoing process that doesn't always simply end. So, often in Hermea, we have this periodic sharing of viewpoints where each individual shares until everyone in the conflict feels that the situation is fully resolved.

David: Personally, I think it's a little hard to think about all these things too heavily. I think I can only do my best to follow my own sense of what's right, and hopefully learn from others along the way. You know, I really think that that's really all anyone can ask for."

Esther: Beautiful.

Esther: And on that note, let's remember where we were in the story last time.

Esther: When last we were in our story, you all approached the mysterious observatory King Drum Thornfiddle has built in the foothills of the Asphodell Mountains in Cheliax. The observatory is a large, squarish building made of dark stone with a large metal dome rising out of the middle of the building.

Esther: There are many windows cut into this stone, each window with deep red sills, and four entrances to the building. One at the front, one on either side, and one at the back. You all noticed three houses on the Eastern side of the observatory a little way apart from the main imposing structure. Two of the houses were very colorful -- one striped, one with polka dots, and one was gray. Except to Ember all three were gray, but it's neither here nor there.

Esther: Temerity and Ember, you drew close to the observatory. Ember, you sat by the front door, patiently waiting for someone to open it. And Temerity, you looked through one of the front windows and noticed that the inside of the

observatory is formed of stone of a much lighter color than the exterior. Metal and gems are inlaid into the walls to form what appear to be complex star maps. On certain spots in the floors, there are runes carved out of the stone, and also the symbol of a five-pointed star. The runes and these stars all glow red. And Temerity, you surmised from this, and from your knowledge of Cheliax-- having spent a lot of your formative years here-- that this observatory may have some connection to the Church of Asmodeus.

Esther: Oom, you waited towards the back of the party with Miv, wanting to give Ember a little space after he seemed upset by your use of electricity magic in the combat with the clockwork constructs guarding the observatory road earlier in the day.

Esther: And Professor Z, you hung back a little bit too, trying not to make too much noise. You all decided to enter the observatory, and that Nommie and Buster would remain outside near the front door. Through Temerity's skills, you were able to open the observatory door, which was locked; but when Ember eagerly entered the building, he triggered an Alarm spell.

Esther: This attracted the attention of two people, Carden Audactus, and a man named Alivance, who appear to be Hellknight Armigers. You all scattered, leaving Carden and Alivance with Ember, who distracted Alivance while Carden apprehended Oom and attempted to interrogate them in the main room of the observatory.

Esther: Professor Z and Temerity, the two of you hid in an adjacent chamber. Professor Z, you were eventually discovered and you headed back toward the main entrance, making excuses for why you were there. Temerity, you tried to gather information from papers in this chamber and instead found a strange preserved hand.

Esther: Oom, while all this was happening, you met three gnomes who seem to work at the observatory: Tilldee Twinkleglass; Aster Silverdown, Tilldee's assistant; and Beacon Wander. They shared with you that they are building instruments to detect magical functions in the stars and skies, and to watch for major shifts of magical energy. Carden seemed disturbed by Nommie as a draconic presence at the observatory, and was very suspicious as to why you brought Nommie there. Carden, Alivance, Temerity, Professor Z, Ember, and Miv then collected near the front entrance. After a tense moment, Carden raised her crossbow at Professor Z and Ember, you attacked.

Esther: That is where we left things, and where we enter the story again. So we've all rolled initiative and Miv rolled extremely well and is going to go first. And what they are going to do is to Inspire Courage, beginning to play a tune on the dulcimer that is like very peppy, has a strong, strong beat.

Esther: And you will all gain a plus one Status Bonus to your Attack rolls, to your Damage rolls, and any saves against Fear Effects while this spell is going on. That's actually all they're going to do for now. They're just going to Inspire Courage and kind of see what goes down next.

Esther: Carden is up next in our turn order.

Esther: Justin, can you describe to me what Ember did at the close of last session and I'll describe to you how she's gonna respond.

Justin: The way I saw it... so, Carden, kind of, right... raised the crossbow. So I think Ember was probably already kind of defensive and growling, and so this would probably be prepping to lunge, but Carden beat me at Initiative. So I assume Carden sees it coming.

Esther: Okay. Carden, will probably see it coming, and she is going to... move, like, back here, away from you. And then she will actually aim her crossbow at you and say, in her most commanding voice, like her whole body assumes this very confident stance. She's going to say " Stay!" And hold her hand up like she's giving a dog a command. Professor Z, you're next.

Alex: I think Professor Z is going to use this moment to call out to Buster, and request that Buster enter the building. And I don't know that Professor Z will necessarily do anything else, although maybe... turn to Temerity and say, what should we do? I think Professor Z at this point-- like, Ember attacked because Carden raised the crossbow. But I don't think Professor Z is like, ready to strike back at this moment. I dunno, party, does that make sense from where we are, like...?

Justin: Sure. That's reasonable.

Alex: Alright.

Fai: is Temerity hidden or nah?

Esther: I believe you rolled extremely well on Stealth last time, so...

Fai: Okay.

Alex: Okay. So maybe Professor Z, then, does not turn to Temerity. I forgot the good Stealth roll. So I think Professor Z is just going to call out to Buster and say, "Buster, get in here!" And Buster will clankily move in.

Esther: All right, Ember, your turn.

Justin: First off, I will Rage, releasing a loud howl. And then I am going to go find my new friend and eat her face. So that would be Rage, Stride, Strike. And that will be Wolf Jaws. It's a 24 to hit.

Esther: You hit her. Yeah. Your jaws find a weak spot in this plate, maybe at like, at the junction somewhere, and they sink through and your teeth go into flesh and you hear her just give a muted noise of pain, like "Mmmh!" And..

Justin: Sorry, 25. Thank you, Miv.

Esther: Yes, 25. Thank you, Miv! That doesn't crit, but you do inflict nine points of piercing--

Justin: 10!

Esther: 10!

Justin: It's Inspire Courage.

Esther: -- Points. Yes. Thank you for reminding me.

Esther: Do remind me, because I-- it'll just leave my brain. So yeah, 10 points of piercing damage. Awesome. Wow. Let me go ahead and adjust her health.

Justin: And I believe that is my whole turn.

Esther: I believe that is your turn. Alivance is up next. And is going to use the first two actions of his turn to make some gestures and begin saying some magical words in a language that Temerity... do you speak Infernal?

Fai: Abyssal.

Esther: Oh, well, I guess you don't recognize it.

Fai: Did you tell me that Infernal or Abyssal was the one that was more pertinent to one's Tiefling connections?

Esther: I think Infernal would be more appropriate for yours.

Fai: Okay, so in that case, we talked about it; I just didn't change it on my sheet.

Esther: Okay!

Fai: So, yes! Can I change it now?

Esther: Yes! Yes, you may. Okay, so you will understand he's casting a spell in Infernal. And Ember, I will need a Will save.

Justin: Is this Fear-related?

Esther: It does not have the Fear trait.

Justin: Okay. Alas, Inspire Courage...

Esther: I know.

Justin: [sighs] This is going to be bad. 11!

Esther: Well, it's not a Critical Failure.

Justin: Yay. I'll take what small mercies...

Esther: He is going to say, "Stay where you are!" And the first action of your next turn, you have to use a single action to do as he commanded you. For his next and final remaining action this turn, he's going to draw his weapon. Temerity, you are up.

Fai: Yikes. Okay. So I'm hidden, but Z is not. Correct?

Esther: Correct.

Alex: Z is not hidden because Z was making excuses to... that's what started all this, right?

Fai: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Alex: Kind of my fault.

Fai: Okay, so...

Alex: Thank you very much.

Fai: The question, I guess is... we don't, we don't know where Oom is, right? We don't know. We don't know where they are.

Justin: I did howl very loudly. Like, Oom might be... might've heard it.

Fai: But do we know where Oom is?

Justin: I don't think so.

Fai: Do I have any reason to know that Oom is in this building?

Esther: I think it would be a safe guess to assume that Oom is somewhere in the building. Maybe you heard a few echoes of conversation from the main room earlier.

Justin: My recollection is that when Carden and Alivance were talking, they were mentioning bringing Professor Z to "the other one."

Esther: Yes. Yes. I think Carden was asking Professor Z why Oom brought Nommie to the observatory. So it's safe to assume Oom is somewhere on the premises.

Fai: It's getting pretty real in here and we would probably not be best served by going apeshit. And it wouldn't be good if these people were injured. So... I think I'm going to try to talk Ember down. Yeah, that's what I'm going to do. Wait, what is Ember like, mid-lunge, Ember has lunged, Ember is retreating? That's what's happening?

Justin: Ember has like, bitten into Carden's arm or something. Like, there is blood.

Fai: Okay. But in this moment, are you retreating from Carden?

Esther: I would guess that like, the bite happened, the bite has been released, and now Ember's just like, standing there.

Justin: Looking very like, threatening, like planning to attack again, you know, Rage...

Fai: Oh, Ember's Raging. I don't know if I can talk him down, he's Raging! Fuck! Okay. Well, I'm going to give it a try. We're going to try to persuade for, for the gods here, my darlings. Okay. I'm going to say, "Ember, these are not our enemies. Come here please." And that's my turn.

Fai: I guess I'll like, you know, obviously I've erupted from behind this pillar that I disappeared into smoke behind to say this. And, uh, that's it. Yeah, I'm just gonna, I'm just going to try to like, try to talk to him. I don't, you know, like, how much does Temerity know about Ember's Barbarian Rage? We're pretty new friends. Let's give it a go.

Esther: I will say at this point, Oom, you are in the main room being shown around many telescope instruments that are in the process of being created. And Tildee Twinkleglass is in the middle of saying something like, "... and this is such an interesting instrument! We calibrate it with the help of our wizards to detect specific magical energies."

Esther: And then you hear a commotion beginning in the front hall, and a few seconds pass. You hear this deep voice saying, "Stay where you are!" And, uh, you've heard before that a little noise of like, "Nnnh!" And something that sounded like a dog growling and maybe biting into someone. So you gather that there's a little bit of a, a scuffle happening up front. And Tildee's like, "Oh my goodness, what could that be? Oh, I hope they're not getting into a fight."

David: "Well, Tildee uh, Aster, Beacon, it's really been a pleasure, but I think I might want to see what's happening there."

Esther: Beacon says, "Are you sure? You could stay back here with us or, or we could go with you." And Beacon's going to grab like, a wrench -- again -- and say, "I don't think you should be going up there alone. I mean, they can be really intense about their work."

David: "If they're intense about their work, maybe it's, it's better if you hang here with Nommie and stay safe. I'll just check it real quick. Don't worry about it."

Esther: [anxious noise] All three of them are kind of looking at each other, but if you want to like, go ahead and head out to the front hall-- so you want Nommie to remain behind?

David: Yeah. Nommie will continue acting kind of like a cute house cat if they'll let him try to hang with them.

Esther: Okay, cool. Switching back to the action up front: it's Miv's turn again, and they are once again, gonna, gonna maintain Inspiring Courage, and probably try to catch Temerity's eye. Temerity, are you, are you looking any particular place?

Fai: I'm looking at every place, trying to figure out a way out of having to fight and potentially kill these people to get out of here. I don't want to do that! I'm new in this town. I ain't tryin' to get tossed in jail! Or whatever-- I don't know what the justice system is here, but I don't want to entangle myself with it.

Fai: So yes, looking around very like, uh, looking for an option, looking for what's happening, what's happening, what's going on, what's the deal?

Esther: Miv's face is going on a very expressive journey to you, like arching one eyebrow, making like, "What is going on? What do you want to do?" Like one hand strummin' the dulcimer, and then one comes up really quickly and starts making like a running motion with two fingers, and then a little bit of a gesture like, "Tell me what you want to do?" And they're just going to try to communicate with you that way for a moment.

Fai: I will receive that communication.

Esther: Guess I could add them cast Message, but this is more fun.

Fai: It's much more fun. Well, I can't respond to that until my turn, right?

Esther: You could spend a Hero Point.

Fai: To respond now?

Esther: Yeah.

Fai: Nah. See how this plays out.

Fai: See if Oom shows up and we can fucking book it.

Esther: That'll be what they do this turn. And now it is Carden's turn again. And having been bitten by this dog, the gloves might come off a little bit. Carden's

just gonna like, crack her neck and be like, "Well, I really didn't want it to come to this, but you leave me no choice."

Esther: Ember, she is going to attack you with her very giant flail. What is your AC?

Justin: 15?

Esther: Oh, that does hit! And you will take 7 bludgeoning damage.

Justin: 3 of those are Temporary Hit Points and then 4 of them will come from my actual HP.

Esther: And actually she's just gonna do the exact same thing again. Ooh, I actually think even with a penalty...? Do you have a benefit to your AC from what Miv gave you?

Justin: No, it's-- you're thinking of Inspire Defense.

Esther: Right, I am. I think that's still gonna hit. Yikes.

Justin: I assume so. Barbarians are bags of hit points with not-great AC.

Esther: Indeed. Yeah, it just does. Okay. And you're going to take 9 additional points of damage and then she is just gonna go for it because she's really riled up and... yiiiiikes! Okay. Well, that was exceptionally good, but it doesn't hit because it was her third attack and yeah.

Justin: Good.

Esther: Mmhm. Mmhm! That will be her turn. Professor Z, you are up.

Alex: I think Professor Z is going to take a cue from Temerity, like trying to, trying to calm Ember down and basically be like, let's get outta here, and run for the door.

Esther: So you just want to spend your, your actions moving away?

Alex: Actually, I think what I want to do is I want to -- first action, I'm going to say "Buster, create a diversion!" And then I'm going to use my other two actions to move towards the door and towards Miv.

Esther: Okay.

Alex: Who I've probably noticed motioning, maybe thought Miv was motioning to me, even though Miv was definitely not motioning to me. Does that make sense?

Esther: That makes sense.

Alex: Okay. So I'm going to move towards the door. Buster, who has two actions, is going to move like, once into the middle and start making lots of noises and like bulging in different places and really just gettin' riled up. And I think... can I send Buster into Overdrive?

Esther: Yeah. I think so!

Alex: Like that's what I'm thinking about. Yeah. Okay. I'm going to try to throw Buster into Overdrive then. That's that's...

Esther: Let me put it this way: if you can't officially, you can for my purposes. Send Buster into Overdrive!

Alex: We're sending Buster into Overdrive. So I'm going to roll Overdrive and so we can see what happens.

Fai: I can't wait to find out what that means.

Justin: I know...

Esther: Okay. Throwing an array of small gadgets and gizmos into Overdrive, attempt to Crafting check with a standard DC for your level. Okay. So roll me a Crafting check.

Alex: Alright. Crafting... there's my Crafting check.

Esther: Yeah, that ain't bad at all. You're going to successfully throw your gadgets into Overdrive. And what's your Intelligence modifier?

Alex: Intelligence modifier is a four.

Esther: Yeah. So this is going to be at half your Intelligence modifier. So it's a two. So whatever Strikes in this case Buster is going to make, Buster will deal

damage additional to half your Intelligence modifier. So two additional damage. I think you will have to have Buster make a Strike, but this'll be, it'll last for one minute.

Alex: I don't know if Buster will-- Alivance s cast a spell, right?

Esther: Yeah. Alivance cast a spell on Ember.

Alex: And because I don't speak Infernal, I probably wouldn't have known it's a spell. Like, only Temerity knows it's a spell?

Esther: Um...

Alex: Or would I have known?

Fai: I mean, there are other components to a spell. Like, presumably if there, if he's doing all of this shit and speaking in a language that you've never heard, you could-- and you've seen people do magic before. You, you would be able to tell, right?

Esther: You are around a lot of magic users. So I actually think it's not unreasonable you would think that's what he's doing.

Alex: Okay. So if I, if I knew that and I'm asking Buster to make a distraction, I think Buster's going to Strike Alivance then.

Esther: So you used one of Buster's actions to go into Overdrive...?

Alex: I used one of Buster's actions to move. My action was to send Buster into Overdrive.

Esther: Okay. Got it.

Alex: Does that makes sense?

Esther: Yes.

Alex: Like, I told Buster to go into Overdrive and then I ran for the door.

Esther: Right. Okay. And now, Buster's second action is going to be to Strike Alivance?

Alex: Buster has stepped into the middle of the room and is now going to Strike.

Esther: Okay. Make that Strike.

Alex: So we're going to do Unarmed Strike, which I'm imagining -- Buster doesn't have arms, so I'm just imagining, like, I don't know, you know, a cast iron pipe comes jutting out or something.

Esther: Alas. It does it just, just misses. You come so close. Like, maybe it just, it hits the armor, but it kind of glances off.

Justin: Inspire Courage?

Esther: I know, I have factored that in. So close, so close, alas. Very distracting, though. And that's your turn?

Alex: I think so. Yeah. That's-- I think I've done everything I can.

Esther: Were you moving? Buster had two actions. You had an action telling Buster what to do...

Alex: And I move towards the door.

Esther: And you move towards the door. Okay. Perfect. Ember, you are up. You have to spend the first action--

Justin: Yep.

Esther: --doing the thing.

Justin: So I will stay with my first action. As a note to those of you attempting to convince me, I cannot stop Raging until I fall unconscious, or I can perceive no enemies. I cannot voluntarily stop Raging. I think he's going to keep attacking this round. I'm actually going to attempt to trip Carden. Which I believe is Athletics?

Esther: I believe so, yes.

Justin: Yes. So, I will roll Athletics. 19.

Esther: Yeah, I actually think you will succeed in tripping her up a little bit.

Justin: So that Wolf Fang that you attached to me earlier, Temerity, will activate. So I actually get...so inventory: Wolf Fang. Trigger: you successfully trip a foe. And I am trained in Athletics. This wolf canine is bound to strip of leather and tied to a buckle or strap. When you activate the fang, you deal bludgeoning damage equal to your Strength modifier to the target of your trip. So Carden takes four points of damage. That Wolf Fang is used up because it was a Talisman. I do love Talismans. Okay.

Esther: Four points of damage?

Justin: So that is my -- yeah. Four points of damage. So now Carden is on the ground and therefore flat-footed so I am going to make a second-- well, an actual attack. I'm going to reroll. Wow. Really?

Justin: Nevermind. Yeah, that was worse. It should have, should subtract five from that. So, 11 with the Inspire Courage.

Esther: That does not hit her.

Justin: I'm not surprised.

Esther: She looks very annoyed at you.

Justin: Okay. Well, I'm glad.

Esther: That's your turn?

Justin: Mmhm.

Esther: Alivance is up next. And is greatly annoyed by this collection of jangling parts at his side, and will raise his weapon and just bring it down on Buster. And what is Buster's AC?

Alex: Hold on, I'm checking. 17.

Esther: Alright. Well that is going to hit, and Buster will take seven points of bludgeoning damage. And then Alivance is going to move to be beside Ember here and is then going to try to hit Ember. You will take three points of bludgeoning damage.

Justin: I will be hurt. I am still above half HP, so. I'm a big bag of hit points.

Esther: Alivance took out-- Alivance wields a mace, and took it out and just, wham! That is his turn. Temerity, I think it's your turn now.

Justin: I will growl in response.

Fai: Oh god, I don't know what to do at all. Okay. Well, I'm gonna, this is, this has been making a, a din, right? Like, it's loud in here?

Esther: Yes.

Fai: Okay. So I'mma go ahead and, move a little closer to the door. Professor Z has the right idea as does Miv, who I'm going to be like, kinda like, "Yeah, we do need to..." Like, I'm just gonna give the like, "Yeah, we do need to get the fuck up outta here, though" look as I make my way closer to the door, with fervent hopes that Oom will hear this noise and show up so that we can get the fuck out of here.

Justin: We don't have any particular reason to believe that Oom is not restrained.

Esther: It's true, you don't. I mean...

Fai: That's a, that's a good point.

Alex: Some of us default to academic institutions not tying people up.

Justin: [Justin laughs] I don't know how many academic institutions I've been to where the guards wear full plate, though.

David: And are cornering this poor dog, like...

Fai: This poor dog that is a Barbarian and leaped at them when they told it to simmer down, come on now. I'd be losing it, too.

Justin: I can't simmer down.

Fai: This dog looks like he's about to kill these folks, bro. They--

Justin: I am Ember. I do not simmer down.

Fai: Oom is cool and I would like for them to make it out of here, but we also literally just met and I like myself, so I want to position my ass by the door so that if the scenario rolls around that Oom does come in and we can leave that I can leave. And if that scenario doesn't come around, then we're going to have to reevaluate our situation in that moment.

Esther: Oom, you will have made your way down the corridor and will arrive taking in, a, a rapid series of Ember having bitten someone, these two Hellknight Armigers attacking Buster and then Ember, and it will be your turn to do as you wish.

Fai: I don't know what Oom is about to do to these people. Oom loves Ember more than anybody loves Ember, so...

Justin: Ember is probably a little bloodied. Ember's been hit twice with a flail. And once with a mace.

David: Yeah, I, if, if I saw them attack Ember, irrespective of anything else, like, shit's going down. Sorry. [laughs] So...

Justin: [laughs] We're in this.

David: Yeah. We're, we're in this. Uh, I think we're going to Magic Missile three times.

Esther: Alright.

Justin: Nice.

David: And we are targeting, yeah. Carden's... So sorry. I did not see any hand signals or escape suggestions. I only saw our lovely dog being attacked. So I don't know if the plus one thing happens to each of these, or if it's... since they're individual.

Esther: What is the rule on this? This is confusing.

Justin: I'm not actually sure. I would just pick something and we can look it up later.

Esther: I like giving y'all things! It does apply! To each of them! So go ahead and roll that damage.

David: So that would be a 12 plus 3, so 15.

Esther: Alright. 15 damage for Carden. Each of these missiles, like, impacts in her chest and she's like, "Augh! Ugh! AUGH!" Seems to be a little surprised. And that was three actions, right?

David: Yep. I am done.

Esther: Okay, perfect. Miv at this point is like, "Aw, hell no!" having seen Ember be attacked and, and then having seen Oom go for it and is going to keep Inspiring Courage, but then will drop the dulcimer and take out their crossbow and load their crossbow, and that's going to be their whole turn.

Esther: Carden is going to use an action. Carden's not... you haven't grappled Carden in any way? She can stand up, right?

Justin: She can stand, yeah. It's just an action to do something.

Esther: Okay. She's going to use an action to stand, an action to hit you... Ooh. I think that is gonna hit for five points of bludgeoning damage. You know, fortunately she hasn't managed to crit and that's really good for you.

Justin: Yes, yes it is.

Esther: Then she is going to move towards you, Oom, and that will be her turn. Professor Z, it is now your turn.

Alex: Okay. So I had a mid-turn idea of like, could we convince Ember to set Buster on fire as part of his Raging, but I guess that doesn't work because Buster can't set th-- uh, Ember can't set things on fire while Raging?

Justin: Not yet! Someday, but not, not today.

Alex: Okay.

Esther: But it is not this day!

Justin: I need the Moment Of Clarity feat. At this moment I have no moments of clarity.

Fai: A mood for real.

Alex: [chuckles] I think then... So I presume that Buster is still in Overdrive and I don't have to like, re-command Buster every turn, right?

Esther: No.

Alex: Like Buster will just keep Buster-ing. So I think-- how many actions does it take me to load my crossbow?

Esther: If it's out, one.

Alex: Okay. So I think maybe I use one action to move, one action to take out my crossbow, and one action to load it.

Esther: Perfect.

Alex: So I'm like, loaded and ready, but I want to be like, closer to the door and Temerity. That will be my turn. Yes. But I think Buster can still Buster?

Esther: I think you have to spend an action to let Buster Buster.

Alex: Oh, do I?

Esther: Yeah.

Alex: I thought I had to spend an action to Command Buster, but I thought because Buster is like, I told Buster to make distractions and Overdrive Buster would still be clanking and doing things.

Esther: You don't have to spend an action to put Buster in Overdrive again, but you do have to spend one action to let Buster have two-- to do whatever Buster's going to do.

Alex: To let Buster do something?

Esther: Yeah.

Alex: Okay. So maybe I just move and take out my crossbow. And then I also say "Buster..."

Justin: Bust?

Alex: Yeah, Buster, bust!" And then Buster can attack Alivance again.

Esther: Alright.

Alex: So Buster moves there. He's going to try this time with that same cast iron pipe that is, I don't know, on a swivel somewhere.

Esther: You need to like, just a little bit higher, just a little bit higher, even with Inspire Courage. So close. Ugh, I'm sorry. Does not hit. However, it does attract Alivance's, uh, ire again. Glances right off that armor, but Alivance is looking very annoyed with Buster's presence. That'll be your turn.

Esther: Ember, what would you like to do?

Justin: Step, Strike, Strike. I am flanking with Oom, correct?

Esther: Yes, you are.

Justin: Yeah. Okay. So then first Strike... was awful! We're using my second and last Hero Point to reroll that. That's not much better, ugh! A three and a five. I assume even... even with the fourteen of Inspire Courage in against a flat-footed opponent, it still does not hit?

Esther: It still does not hit.

Justin: Okay. Attack two... that's much better. That was a natural nineteen. So that's twenty-three with thirteen points of damage.

Esther: It is your second attack, right?

Justin: Yeah. Nineteen plus eight minus five.

Esther: Right. Oh, fabulous. Yeah, that does hit! And thirteen points of damage?

Justin: Yeah.

Esther: Once again, she's going to be like, "Ugggh!" and and look just extremely annoyed that you're managing to like, kick her ass. Uh...

Justin: Ha! I would make her fear me more if she would stop leaving. I could use Intimidating Glare.

Esther: Carden is looking a little rough right now. Like not, not like she's on the verge of collapsing, but like, lil', little bit rough. Now it will be Alivance's turn.

Justin: Ember is two hits from falling unconscious. So, you know,

Esther: Well, Alivance is going to turn his attention on Buster. And will say, "Would you -- clanking machine, just cease!" And is going to hit Buster with his mace one time. Buster's AC is lower than twenty, right? I believe you told me it was lower than twenty last time, so I'm assuming that hits--

Alex: Buster's AC is seventeen.

Esther: Yeah. Buster's going to take nine points of bludgeoning damage. And then --

Alex: Ouch!

Esther: Yeah. Alivance is going to spend the rest of his turn casting another spell. And it's gonna be... gonna take two actions. And once again, will begin making these like hand motions and speaking words in Infernal and Ember. I... ooh

Justin: Has it gotta be Ember?

Esther: Yes, it has to be Ember. I need you to make a Fortitude save.

Justin: Okay. I'm actually -- that's just as bad as Will. Sixteen.

Esther: Okay. Actually I think you succeed that.

Justin: Oh, hey, there's a first time for everything. Does it say Basic Fortitude save?

Esther: Yes. It is a Basic Fortitude save. You take half damage?

Justin: So half damage.

Esther: Yeah. Okay. You take three points of damage.

Justin: Better than six, for sure.

Esther: Alright. And that is Alivance's turn. Temerity?

Fai: Did Miv shoot their crossbow or just take it out?

Esther: No, their actions had to be taking it out and then loading it.

Fai: Okay. I will say "Oom, you are making the situation worse! Everybody get the fuck out!" And I'm going to fucking leave. 'Cause you guys are like... we need to get out of here! We came here to be quiet and you guys are setting off a goddamn bomb. I'm gone! Everybody's in the room? I'm leaving. Bye.

Esther: Alright. You can take yourself off the map if you would like!

Fai: I'm not gonna, like... when I say I'm leaving, like, I do mean that I'm going like, [anxious sound] I'm, I'm at the door, the door's open, my foot's through the door, but I'm still like, looking to see if everybody's going to actually follow me. You know? Like I'm movin', but I'm checkin'. If y'all are trying to go, great. If you're trying to go and there are complications, I will come back to help you.

Fai: If you're trying to stay and fight, just cause you're trying to fight... be blessed. That's where I'm at. Do you follow me? A leg through the door, an eye over the shoulder. That's the picture I'm trying to paint here.

Esther: Alright.

Fai: Yes? Okay.

Esther: Oom, you are next.

David: I will shout back "They're attacking Ember!" And it doesn't look like Ember's moving, so I'm doubling down. We are shooting Carden with another round of Magic Missiles. Let's see. [laughs] Sorry!

Fai: Can Buster carry Ember. Buster's pretty big.

David: That's a good question!

Alex: Buster's pretty big. I don't know that Buster really has arms, though. Right? I mean, I guess there are things like, Ember could hop into Bus-- like hop onto Buster and Buster like, could...

Fai: Well, okay, so here's... A) you did make some sort of thing for Nommie to be able to perch on...

Alex: Yeah, yeah, yeah, the perch, yeah.

Fai: There's something there for us to potentially flop an unconscious Ember who has finally chilled the fuck out over, right? Is that --?

Alex: Yes. Buster has abilities equivalent to a forklift is how I would put it, right? Can't like, grab something, but could lift something and carry it.

Fai: He has the mass necessary or whatever, to be able to like, actually support the weight of and move under the weight of Ember.

Alex: I mean, he's like, all cast iron and, and steam-powered. So yeah, I think so.

Justin: I do intend to have Ember at this point, having made his point of dont-threaten-my-friends, attempt to flee.

Fai: Okay. Well.

David: Okay, well if he does that I may change my mind.

Fai: If he goes down during the fleeing I will come back for him, but if Oom is just trying to stay and start some shit, I'm not coming back is, is the --

David: Yeah, yeah.

Fai: --is what I'm telling you.

David: I mean, all I saw was them attack Ember. So I didn't see the beginning part of this.

Fai: You can see that they have been riddled with injuries from Ember, though.

David: No! Now they are because we, we started fighting, but the time, right?

Fai: When you came in the room, homegirl was already raggedy --

David: He had taken one bite and Ember was, was the one that was more damaged when I came in.

Esther: So...

Fai: Alright.

Justin: Magic missile?

Esther: So--

David: So yes, that's, yes, that's thirteen towards Carden.

Esther: Towards Carden. At this point, Carden is looking pretty rough. She just takes these impacts to the chest one after the other.

Esther: And is like, "Ugh! [gasps]" And panting kind of heavily. And that'll be your turn. She doesn't look great. And Alivance is actually starting to look really concerned and a little bit intimidated, perhaps. Like, oh shit, this is not going down how I thought it was going to go down.

Esther: Miv's turn is next. They are going to move inside next to Professor Z, and they are going to continue Inspiring Courage, and then they are going to fire their crossbow at Carden.

Esther: Oh! And that is going to be a Critical Hit that knocks Carden unconscious, just [whooshing sound effect] like, right, right through the juncture of some of that Hellknight Plate. And she just with a small "Ahhh" slumps down on the floor. Alivance starts to look a little bit panicked, but is also like, assuming a stance of, "I am a Hellknight Armiger in training; this is my duty. Now it's up to me!"

Esther: Miv is gonna be like, "Huh! Always does the trick." We're going to skip Carden's turn. Professor Z?

Alex: Professor Z, I think, is going to follow Temerity out the door and say, "Buster, let's go." I think Buster moves like two squares a turn, so one... two. So Buster's like at the door with Miv.

Esther: Alright Ember?

Justin: Ember is going to turn around, give Alivance a really intense glare of "this is what happens when you mess with my family." And he's going to use Intimidating Glare for a sixteen, but, you know. And then Ember is going to peace.

Esther: Remind me what-- is there any kind of save involved in Intimidating Glare?

Justin: Yeah, so it's just it's Demoralize. So it's just against the Will DC.

Esther: Right. Okay.

Justin: I doubt that will succeed. But you know, he made his point. One, two, three, four, five, six... is action one and pewm! Out the door.

Justin: But he will stick with Temerity and like, look over at Oom of like, "let us peace, even though your pseudodragon is not here."

Fai: Question: a pseudodragon is something that you're like, empathically connected to right? Or wrong?

David: Yeah. Within a certain distance. I don't know how far we are away from Nommie. I can shout towards Nommie.

Esther: I believe your familiar, you can connect up to a mile away, so. However, really quickly, Alivance is gonna follow you, is going to draw a different weapon, is gonna draw a bow, and is gonna fire it.

Justin: At me?

Esther: Yeah. At you!

Justin: Cover? I got cover 'cause I got friends between us. I have plus two to my AC.

Esther: Alright. Actually in, in that, in that instance...

Justin: So it's seventeen. Yeah.

Esther: Where is Buster, exactly? Like, where are people's exact positions right now? Is Buster where Buster is on the map, or like closer to Professor Z. I need to know who is, who is actually going to theoretically get hit.

Justin: I assumed it was correct.

Alex: I guess I'm having trouble understanding the door. Like, I thought Professor Z was out the door with Temerity.

Fai: Temerity was not blocking the door, but was in the doorway. So if you went out of the door, you would have gone past Temerity who is still looking back to kinda make sure that people are coming before officially committing to like, bookin' it.

Alex: Professor Z, I think, is in the process of booking it. So I think Professor Z is beyond Temerity and did command Buster to book it, but I don't know how fast the Buster's booking it is, so I don't know what order we've gotten to the door.

Esther: Buster's also probably through the door.

Alex: Okay.

Fai: So it's probably me.

Justin: I am behind Temerity, but in front of Professor Z, because Temerity has more than twice the HP that I do.

Esther: Okay. Now that I understand where everybody is, something different is going to happen.

Esther: Alivance is going to run towards the door, use the original weapon he was carrying, and try to hit you, Temerity. What is your AC?

Fai: My AC is 20.

Esther: Cool. You will take seven points of bludgeoning damage. Then Alivance is just going to go ahead and make a second attack.

Fai: Wait a minute!

Esther: Uh-huh?

Fai: Can I Nimbly Dodge?

Esther: Yeah, I believe you can.

Fai: So I potentially can-- or I can, but does plus two help?

Esther: No, you're still going to take seven points of bludgeoning damage.

Fai: Okay. I'll take it.

Esther: However, the next swing of this mace goes totally wide and that will be Alivance's turn. And Temerity, now it's your turn.

Fai: Okay, cool. So it is now my turn? Yeah, I'm gonna fucking book it. I'm gonna get out. Like, he's hitting me. Everybody is like, on their way out. The only person who's in there with Oom is unconscious. So Oom's not in danger. I'm gone. I'm running as fast as I can run.

Esther: Think you can run at-- at least 30 feet.

Fai: Yeah, my speed is 30.

Esther: Okay. All right. Oom, You are up.

David: Is talking an action? How does that work, or...?

Esther: You can run while you're talking.

David: Alright. So I will use one action to, yeah, instruct Nommie that it's time to book it. And I will try to talk to Alivance and be like, "Look, we're really sorry. Can we, can we stop fighting?" while I'm while I'm booking it.

David: I think I can catch up to them with the remaining two actions.

Esther: Miv will follow you all. And actually, so will Alivance. Miv is bringing up the rear, as it were, so So you're all actively running away at this point. Miv is gonna just say, "I think this one's pretty mad. What are we going to do? What's your plan?"

Esther: [everyone talks at once]

Alex: Plan?

David: Yeah, I think Oom is just fleeing.

Justin: Ember just growls.

Alex: [cast laughs] Did we have a plan?

Esther: "I mean, it seems like he might want to keep chasin' us or, you know, maybe, um, maybe he's going to, like, wake up his superiors. So I think maybe we should have up some kind of a place to get to real quick."

Justin: About to be very tired. (laughs) So we may have a big problem.

David: Can we just (laughs) discourage him and fight?

Alex: I guess we could have like, Buster try to do something to him, like--

Esther: "I think he's maybe, you know, the less-muscley one of the two of them. I bet we could take him. We don't have to, but if y'all want to, I bet we could. Or we could just really run away."

David: I'm fine with it. I mean, we already, we already--

Fai: If he's unconscious we can run away. We're already fucked. It'll give us time to escape if he's unconscious... I guess we have to?

Esther: No, you don't have to. As your GM, you definitely do not have to. Miv is just like, "Whatever you want to do. If you want to run I'm follerin' you, if you want to fight him, I'm right here with you."

Justin: We could do that thing where we run and like, pretend to run through some bushes and then just stop immediately in front of a cliff. Can we do that?

Esther: I say we take a break, consider what to do over the break, and then come back and find out what happens next.

Fai: Wonderful.

Justin: Six on one, I think we should just... make this poor man unconscious.

Fai: Well, I sure the fuck hope that we rattle his brain so he don't remember what I, the only green tiefling in this entire fucking city, look like.

Fai: So, you know.

Esther: We will see what happens.

Fai: We better scramble that egg pretty good.

David: Ember's pretty bloody. Uh, I, feel like it was, it was fair to defend our furry companion.

Esther: We're back from break. As I understand it, the plan is that you are going to engage Alivance in combat.

Justin: That's my plan.

Esther: So I'm gonna--

Fai: Even if it, wasn't the plan that's what's happening, so...

Justin: Yeah! We have a feral dog on our hands, so...

Esther: So, Miv will keep Inspiring Courage and will also reload their crossbow. And actually like, why not? Will just, will just take a shot at this person who is in hot pursuit and we will see what happens.

Esther: Ooh, that's going to hit and deal six points of piercing damage to Alivance, and that will be Miv's turn, and Professor Z, you will be up next.

Alex: Have we communicated this plan? I guess Professor Z is going to... Professor Z had taken out his crossbow, right. So...

Esther: Yes.

Alex: Okay. Professor Z has his crossbow out. I think he's going to take one action to say, "Buster, get out of the way," and then he's gonna load his crossbow and fire it at Alivance.

Alex: And Buster's going to move over. I would like to Hero Point that.

Esther: That's better. It's still not going to hit, but it's better.

Alex: Well, that's better than it just like... I don't know, shooting myself in the foot?

Alex: At least I missed, but yeah. All right. You're welcome, party, for my great contribution to this battle.

Justin: So is Alivance still on the other side of the threshold?

Esther: Yes. Like basically on the threshold.

Justin: Okay. So I'm going to use Sudden Charge to make a big wide arc and come at Alivance from this direction. And since I end Sudden Charge next to an opponent, I get to make an attack.

Justin: So I will do that with Wolf Jaws! And I am out of Hero Points so this is whatever it is. Uh, 26.

Esther: Yes! You will deal 13 points of piercing damage.

Justin: 14, Inspire Courage is still up, right?

Esther: That's right.

Justin: Yeah!

Esther: Yes. Thank you for reminding me. Alright.

Justin: And so, Sudden Charge is two actions, so I still have an action left, and I will make another attack with my Wolf Jaws!

Justin: That's not hitting. So that's my turn!

Esther: Alivance cries out in pain as you just bite into him like, " Oh!" and looks really surprised that like, this is what's become of this rather unexpected encounter in a rather unexpected day. And now it is Alivance's turn.

Justin: I continue to growl, like smoke streaming from my mouth.

Esther: Alivance is going to try to cast a spell again. Ember, I need another basic Reflex save.

Justin: Uh, (singsong) doo-doot-doo, that's my worst one! Seven-teen! That's pretty good.

Esther: That is pretty good. Yeah. So you are going to take half damage again... that's four points of negative damage. This like ray of probably like, reddish light comes out of his palm and, like, hits you square in the chest and you take four points of negative damage.

Justin: I will like, yip in pain.

Esther: And then he is going to use his remaining action to move away from you and down here. And Temerity, it's your turn.

Fai: Does Ember visibly look like he is going to collapse soon? Like he looks beat to shit? Is it obvious that if he gets hit one or maybe two more times he's gone down?

Justin: I would say it looks kind of like Ember is running more on adrenaline than HP at this point? That is how I would phrase that. (laughs)

Fai: I guess what I'm going to have to do is attack this guy. Follow-up question: what are the... I can't remember. What are the rules about throwing one's dagger?

Esther: You can throw one's dagger.

Fai: What would, I mean, like, does it does it...

Esther: They have a range of, is it, like a range of 10 feet?

Justin: Yeah.

Esther: Yeah.

Justin: Range of te..range of 10 feet. Try not to throw through people? The way that range works in Pathfinder is that you can throw outside of your maximum, out of the range increment of the weapon. There's just a penalty that ensues.

Fai: Okay.

Justin: So if you throw something to 20 feet away, it's minus two or 30 feet away, it's minus four and so on.

Fai: Okay. Alright, alright, alright. So I will simply, I've got plenty of movement to approach him to, to get close enough, to throw it without a penalty, right? That's what I will do. I never, like in normal circumstances, I wouldn't throw my dagger because then I would have to go get it back, but hopefully he's going to be down by the time I need my dagger back. So we'll see! And just that, right? Is that right?

Esther: That's right, and that's going to hit!

Fai: Eyyy!

Esther: Wow, for, eight points of damage! Alright! Yeah. He like, cries out like, "Uh!" It just impacts this junction, like right between his arm and his shoulder. And he stares at it. His eyes are growing very, very wide and he's looking kind of rough.

Esther: Oom. You're up.

David: "We're really sorry about this." (laughs) Since, you know ...

Justin: Betray the party. (whispers)

David: Guess Magic Missile's probably overkill, huh? (laughs)

Esther: I don't know.

Fai: You tryna send him to sleep or the underworld? Damn.

David: Uh, well, hopefully I won't miss.

Justin: I'm better... it's better safe than sorry. And Magic Missile at least will hit for sure.

David: Yeah. All right. Yeah. "Sorry! We did say not to fight."

Esther: Does Oom say this?

David: Yeah! We said, (giggling helplessly) we said this as we were fleeing, that's what I shouted.

Fai: I mean, that, that is true. You did. But he did also watch his homegirl and/or boss get...

David: Magic Missiled, like, and bitten, and...

Fai: Yeah. Like just get fucking ravaged. So like, on the one hand...

Justin: The obvious thing to do is to chase the people who, who destroyed their boss.

Fai: He has an infernal duty!

Esther: I don't know that you would think she was his boss.

Justin: She was bossy, but, you know....

Fai: I think that you went there because Esther talked about the guy being kind of green and new maybe?

Esther: They both...

Fai: They both are?

Esther: They would both appear to be the people who are working not the main shift, who look fairly young.

Justin: Carden just oozes a confidence that I do not sense in Alivance. That's how I would phrase it.

Esther: So, I will say... he's not going to drop his weapon or put his hands up or anything, but he is going to say, "What is it you want?"

David: "We didn't really want anything."

Esther: "Why did you bring this dragon here?"

David: "It's just my familiar, it's just a friendly..."

Esther: He's shaking his head, but again, not dropping his weapon. And you may do whatever you like with your turn.

Justin: I think Oom cast three Magic Missiles, right?

Esther: Okay, you cast those -- okay. Ooh. Yeah. That's-- that's going to do it. He's going to say that, then the missiles impact. And then he's just gonna rather gracefully clank to the ground. If one can gracefully clank in full plate.

Fai: If you're hot enough, you can, right.

Esther: If you're hot enough, you can... and you just hear this. "Oh! Ohhh..." and he falls to the ground with a clank and he is unconscious. All goes relatively quiet.

(laughter)

David: Check to see that they're okay?

Esther: He seems to be breathing.

David: I'm mostly concerned about Ember, though so I'm probably not gonna check him first. I'm probably going to check Ember first.

Justin: Now that there are no enemies, I can finally stop Raging. I would say Ember looks a little weary.

Fai: A little tired, but not officially fatigued because that's not the thing anymore, or?

Justin: Yeah. Ember will just say, "They threatened Professor Z. They are bad."

Fai: Temerity's going to have the expression of somebody who knows that they're going to be the one who has to pull this all together.

Justin: Ember is probably like, back arched, panting heavily. Just really exhausted.

David: Yeah. I mean, Professor Z doesn't look injured at all, right? So I'm probably going to look to Temerity for translation, Temerity or Miv. Like, what happened? (laughs)

Fai: "Okay. This affair has gone entirely off the rails. It would be great for us to discuss it, but not here. We need to go."

Esther: Miv has gone up to Ember and is going to cast Soothe. And --

Justin: I appreciate that. (laughs) I've taken so much damage today.

Esther: Regain 11 hit points.

Justin: Cool. That brings me up to half.

Fai: Well, Justin, I'd be happy to, uh, treat wounds, but I have Risky Surgery. So that means that one would have to deal 1D8 slashing damage.

Justin: Well, I can take that now.

Fai: But if one does and rolls a success, it's a critical success.

Justin: I would take that.

Fai: So that's information for all of y'all for future purposes. If you want it, you can have it, but you might take eight damage. Do you want that to happen?

Justin: That's like a 10 minute thing. I'm good to leave.

Fai: Okay. So we can leave and then we'll perform some risky surgery later.

Esther: You will all hear sounds beginning to come from inside the observatory. Someone saying, "Oh my goodness, she looks seriously injured! I think she's unconscious. I didn't, I didn't know it was going to be that serious. Where did, where did Oom go?" And you hear another voice. "I don't know. Maybe I should look outside. This seems serious. Maybe we shouldn't have trusted them. Maybe, maybe the king was right all along."

Fai: (whispers) Right about what?

Justin: Maybe we should look outside sounds like DM hint for--

Fai: Get the fuck out!

Justin: GTFO.

Fai: It sounds like listen to the Rogue!

David: Unless we could convince them that we're not... really that bad of people.

Fai: Um, okay. Are you saying that in character, out of character? Just question.

David: Yeah. Out of, out of character, not saying this out loud.

Fai: Okay. Uh, we all heard that, Ember is conscious, I am running. I'm gone.

Justin: Ember will like pant a bit and then like, start trotting and then loping afterwards.

David: Yeah. If Ember's fleeing, I'm fleeing.

Alex: Prof Z wanted to flee earlier, so is definitely fleeing.

Esther: And Buster?

Alex: Buster's coming too

Esther: Miv will be like, "Guess we're skedaddling out of here. All right." And follow along.

Fai: As we run, where the fuck are we going? Or, (Arabic accent) "Where the fuck are we going? (cast laughs)

Fai: "Excuse me, frog in my throat." (cast laughs)

Esther: " Well, I don't know. I'm just along for this ride, coming with you. I mean, I mean, do you want a suggestion from me or are you asking the whole group?"

Fai: That's for the whole group. Z has a house, or we were staying at the... what's the place called again?

Esther: The Lilyfrost Inn and Tavern.

Fai: The Lilyfrost, thank you.

Fai: Okay.

Fai: "Lilyfrost or Z's house?"

Esther: "Did, uh, did anybody, did anybody say their name? Professor Z? Did you give them your name?"

Alex: "I don't remember. I don't think I gave them my name."

Fai: I think you did.

Justin: I think you did.

David: You did. (cast laughter)

Fai: You definitely came out with your hands up and was like, "Hi, I'm Professor Z, I'm a member of The Tinkerings, this is my address and blood type."

Alex: Out of character, I don't think we should go to my house. In character, professor Z is not always the most savvy about such things.

Justin: It's true, but I think Temerity... Temerity was there for that.

Fai: I'm just going to head toward the Lilyfrost. Here I am saying "I saw you!" and not remembering that I saw.

Esther: "Do y'all think it's wise to be staying there for too long, because I bet if this gets out, they're going to sweep all the places that strangers might be staying in town."

Fai: "That's a great point. Do you have a suggestion?"

Justin: "We could go to the woods." Or, natural region around here that may or may not be woods because I don't remember what geography is.

Esther: "I mean, we can probably make it back to the Tavern in time to get our stuff and then find another place for a little while to lay low and it'll take them awhile, I reckon to, to get all their stuff in line. But maybe we oughta lay low for a little bit."

Fai: "That sounds very wise."

Justin: "I can make us a burrow."

(laughs)

Justin: It will be very small.

Esther: Okay. It'll take you a slightly shorter time than it probably did coming to get back, but still on the order of like at least an hour, traveling rather briskly, but you will be able to make it back to the Lilyfrost Inn and Tavern. Is there anything you'd like to talk about on your way there?

Justin: Ember will say kind of confidently. "We went up there to find the bad people and we have hurt the bad people."

Fai: "Ember, are you feeling okay?"

Justin: "I am a little tired."

Fai: "Okay. Well, you know, maybe I can help you with a little bit of surgery when we get to our destination, but... hmm, how to say this?"

Fai: It's wonderful that you care about your friends and you want to protect us. Bu-uuuut... what we really went there for was information and we didn't come away with any information because we got in a fight. Usually it's the best choice... to do everything you can to avoid a fight, if possible. Sometimes you simply have to fight, but if someone, you know, if someone points a bow at your friend, that's terrible. But until someone shoots your friend, that's a situation that we might be able to change."

Justin: Esther, I have a clarifying question that is going to go way into backstory and is probably not going to matter, but it might. How was Oriana killed? Was it with a bow or a blade?

Fai: Hold on a second. Hold on a second, Justin. I'm about to call bullshit on you because if you claim that you don't know if Vroth'rien killed her, but you know, Mira, but okay.

Fai: If you claim that you don't know the person who killed her because you weren't Awakened, even though you're a dog and she's the most important person in the world to you--

Justin: No, that's not what I'm claiming.

Fai: No, cause that's-- like, I have been watching old episodes as I transcribe and that is what you claimed, sir!

Fai: I'm sorry. I'm getting too hot.

Esther: Okay. (through helpless laughter)

Justin: Wait. So it was it, was it, was it a spell? Was it, was it an attack?

Esther: Well, I don't believe we ever established this in conversation--

Justin: Right, we didn't, right?

Esther: You would have not seen her killed with a weapon.

Justin: Okay. The point of clarification was that Ember, I think, would respond that, "But then it might be too late."

Fai: You know what... I mean, this dog's traumatized. What am I supposed to tell him? I'm just a dude, I'm not a fucking dog therapist. I ain't even a people therapist. Okay. Um.

Justin: It was just, if it had been a bow attack that had taken her down I would have been, I would have been like, I'm not waiting for someone to shoot someone.

Fai: Yeah, yeah, no. And I mean, it's, it's fair. Uh, mmm... "You know, Ember, I, I think I understand. You, you were doing what you thought was right. And nobody's angry at you for that. But... since we are all traveling in a group together, we have to all make our decisions together. So we have to decide together if we're going to get in a fight. Do you understand?"

Justin: "They're bad people. Bad people should be fought."

Fai: "From their point of view, we were bad people. We went... the door was locked and we broke in. We're not supposed to be there."

Justin: "We are not bad people."

Fai: "No, we are not. And so we don't know if they're bad people. They don't know if we're bad people, but they thought we were. And that's why they were fighting. So if we, if we don't hurt them first, it's a little bit less likely that they will assume that we are bad enough people that they will try to kill us."

Justin: You can just see like gears in his head, just grinding and getting very stuck.

Fai: "I understand this is very confusing, Ember, what I want you to maybe try to remember is that we can't always tell very easily who is doing something good or who is doing something bad, but I'm sure that Professor Z appreciates that you want to keep him safe. Maybe next time, ask him if you should attack before you do it. Just to make sure he feels like he needs your help. And like the rest of us should get in a fight too. Do you see?"

Justin: He's going to process for a couple of minutes.

Fai: "You only did what you thought was right, Ember. We all only do what we think is right. But sometimes we have to think about later and decide if that was right or not."

Justin: "Bad people make threats. Good people don't make threats. So they were bad people."

Fai: "Does anybody else want to jump in here?"

David: "I'm not going to give our lovely dog a morality lesson." (David and Justin laugh)

Esther: Miv is going to like, gently play the dulcimer.

Fai: "He can talk, he wants to learn how to read, he can learn to fucking moralize, okay?" (cast laughs) Wait, I don't know if you were in or out of character when you said that. Sorry.

Esther: Miv is going to gently play their dulcimer and say, (sings) "Ember, it's a big old world out there..." And like go into this like very folksy song and sing about how choices are complicated.

Esther: " And we don't know what the other person might be a-thinkin. And, um... (cast laughter)

Justin: Ember's going to think about the like... "They think we are bad people. You do not like what I did."

Esther: To Miv?

Justin: Then he's going to whine a bit. No, no, to Temerity. Then he's going to whine a bit and be like, "Am I a bad dog?"

David: "You are definitely not a bad dog."

Justin: "But Temerity is unhappy."

Fai: "Ember, I, I'm not mad at you and you are not a bad dog at all. You're a very good dog, but, we, we got in a lot of trouble today. And tomorrow we don't want to get in trouble. So we have to think about what we did today, and how tomorrow we can do things that will allow for us to live for another day."

Justin: "If I am quiet and ask to fight, will I be a good dog?"

Fai: "Ember, you are a good dog."

Esther: Miv is gonna say, "Ember, if I was to tell you that people and dogs, any kind of critter, can have both good and bad inside of them - you can be a good dog and a bad dog all at the same time - what would, what would you think of that?"

Justin: He will just laugh and be like, "You cannot be good and bad."

Esther: "Oh, but you can. You can, you can be good and bad all at the same time, and we call that complicated."

Fai: Very well-put.

Justin: Just kind of chuckle a little bit less and be like, "This is a joke." (laughs)

Esther: "Now, do I look like I'm joshin' with you right now?"

Justin: "You are Miv. You are not Josh."

Esther: "Do I look like I'm making a joke?"

Justin: "I have difficulty with humor."

Esther: "Well, I am not making a joke. It is the truth. I swear by Nivi Rhombodazzle."

Justin: "Hmm. I will think on this."

Esther: "Complicated. I'm gonna, I'm going to sing you a little song about being complicated."

Fai: (sings in an exaggerated Miv impression) (laughs) Avril?

Fai: "How you gonna go and make things so complicated?"

Justin: I don't know if we have the rights to that song.

Esther: I think we can reference it.

Fai: Yeah.

David: You're totally fine.

Fai: I didn't play the actual song.

Justin: Fair enough. Fair enough.

Fai: We're good.

Esther: (Esther attempts to recover from laughing fit) "He was a dog, they were a gnome..." (cast laughter) Okay. So. Everybody continues on their way.

David: When, when the morality lesson seems like it's, it's toned down a little bit and as Ember's processing that, I'll share with everyone what I managed to glean regarding the various instrumentations and the magical functions in the stars-tracking and the, you know, tracking the major shifts.

Fai: Did we talk about that? Did we talk about that in the recap? Okay. Then you don't have to explain it again for me.

Esther: I'm happy. I'm happy to explain that again though.

Fai: I appreciate it, I'm sorry.

Esther: That's totally fine. That's what a GM is here for. What Oom would be able to share with you is that they are building a series of telescope instruments to go with this big telescope that will detect magical functions and energies in the stars.

Esther: And that will be able to detect like, major shifts in magical energy that are happening in the heavens and that these gnomes have been... it seems like brought there to work specifically on this, but don't have other ties to Brastlewark and don't even necessarily go into the city a lot. Like they're kind of up there, probably living up there, and guarded by at least two Hellknight Armigers and possibly their superior officers who were asleep.

David: "They seem very nice."

Fai: I'm trying to put together essentially what we have ultimately figured out about that place. It's secret. It's *so* secret that they got people living there to do that work. Oh, shit, there was something that the people, the people who were inside about to bust us, the ones that Oom had talked to, there was something they said that I didn't write down and it was something about... Ah, shit, I can't remember.

Justin: We know that the observatory is somehow designed to, you know, track like magic in the sky. And we also know that the Armigers are, or at least Carden was particularly, I would say paranoid about Nommie, which I think is important because it connects to the dragon thing. There's no way Ember would draw this connection. It would not seem unlikely to me coming from my understanding of how they use gamma ray telescopes for things that it possibly has a connection of either trying to track or perhaps locate dragons. That would be my guess.

Fai: Oh, I remembered what I was trying to remember about the people that you had talked to and what they were saying before we left, which was, I believe that one of them said something like, 'do you think the king was right' or something like that?

Justin: Yeah.

Fai: So, right about what?

Justin: "Do you think what the king is doing is right?" So it's, it's complicated and--

Fai: I thought they were saying, "do you think the king is right?" Like, the king has gossip or whatever, like he has a theory. Do you think his theory is right? That's what it sounded like, right?

Justin: I see.

Justin: (sings) I have a theory.

Justin: It could be dragons.

Fai: It could be bunnies. (Justin and Fai laugh)

Fai: Okay. So, so what you're saying is that you think they're trying to locate more dragons with this technology?

David: Or that they're scared of a dragon approaching?

Justin: I think it is intended to be used tactically against dragons. That is my guess, but like, as to the function, like the exact function, I don't think we know enough.

Justin: Because it is a telescope I'm kind of, you know, saying that perhaps locating or tracking would be a reasonable thing to do in like nearby areas. It would be kind of interesting for someone who knew more things about telescopes than my dog to see if the telescope, you know, can actually point closer to the, like, below the horizon a little bit, because normally a telescope wouldn't be able to do that.

Justin: And it would be, if it was going to be used for that purpose, that would actually make a lot of sense, because you'd want to actually like, look down into like, foresty areas, and it would be a subtle thing that most people would not pick up on.

Esther: I'll clarify something for you that Oom would have gotten. They were talking a lot about observing the stars and the heavens -- were the terms they were using -- which doesn't mean your theory is wrong, but--

Justin: Yeah.

Esther: The strong sense Oom would have gotten is they are, they're looking at the stars and the heavens. And I think it's worth me reminding you that Temerity felt like there was a sense of connection to the Church of Asmodeus or like Infernal magics going on in this building as well.

Esther: Just to add that to the theorizing pile.

Justin: Yeah. Anyway, I think we should get to the tavern and pick up all of your stuff. I am down one of my, like, three items, unfortunately.

Fai: Okay. So, but I mean, like, it takes us a while to get to the tavern so that we can talk whatever we need to talk while we're on the way to the tavern, right? So what's the, what's our next steps is the question.

David: Does anyone know more about, I guess, yeah, Asmodeus then?

Justin: Do I know more about Asmodeus?

Fai: Do I? I do have Religion trained,

Justin: As do I.

Esther: Both of you roll me Religion. And we'll go from there.

Fai: I think I want to Hero Point that.

Justin: That was bad.

Fai: I'm going to have to, you know what, Temerity's got a lot of stuff on his mind.

Justin: Got a plus five if you want to roll it, Esther?

Esther: Okay, perfect.

David: I mean, I'm looking forward to hearing what Temerity's theory is about this religious dragon sex cult.

Fai: The dragon sex cult?

David: Of Asmodeus now.

Fai: I think Temerity really needs to like, meditate on it for a while to, to connect the, all of the strings of this theory.

Esther: Okay. So Temerity, you actually do know a fair amount about the Church of Asmodeus having grown up in, in Cheliax. There is enough on your mind right now that it's just all kind of a jumble. And what is coming to you is like that the hierarchies of Hell and the fact that there's Asmodeus, but then there's all these like archdevils and their subordinates, and you can make contracts with them and get stuff, and House Thrune and, and it's, it's just kind of all a jumble right now. And you feel like you need to take some time.

Fai: That one guy who tried to get me to sign a contract, like all of these kinds of... yeah.

Esther: Yeah. Like it's a lot to sift through. So you feel like you'll need to take some time and like, think more in detail about it. Ember, you actually have a great degree of clarity right away. What kind of information are you trying to remember about Asmodeus, the Church of Asmodeus? Like, anything in particular or just general stuff?

Justin: Yeah, I would kind of like to know, cause like we've seen these people, so I... Ember has no particular knowledge of their motives or anything. So just like general knowledge about what's going on in Asmodeus-land would be good to remember.

Esther: You know, that Asmodeus is the Lord and Damner of Hells, and he is one of the most powerful regarded deities in existence. There's many myths about him penning the Contract of Creation and having a hand in the creation of the--

Justin: Did I get a natural 20? What happened?

Esther: World as you know it. (laughs)

Esther: I said you rolled and had a great degree of clarity. So...

Justin: Okay.

Esther: Yeah, so you're aware that he's like a powerful force and he's thought to be someone who wants to amass power and influence. He cares a great deal for lawfulness, but he's willing to work with other deities a lot of the time, even if he does so with like, slight tricks embedded in his very lawful contracts, or things that will work to his advantage, but that are subtly included long-term. And sometimes he feuds with other people. He has a very strong hold in Chelias because of Infernal contracts that were made with Abrogail Throne the First, not quite a century ago, probably like 70, 70 or so years ago.

Esther: And, hmm, does that, is that giving you what you were hoping like--

Justin: Yeah.

Esther: That kinda stuff?

Justin: Yeah, that is.

Esther: Okay.

Justin: Ember will say, "I know of Asmodeus because the Bad Master would often call me a Hellhound and would put symbols on me. And would I suppose, try to make me appear to be of that nature. Asmodeus is bad, the baddest bad. And I have no sympathy for those who follow him."

Esther: (laughs) Just to clarify, I did not say Asmodeus is the baddest bad, but I'm happy for you to say it. Just, just to clarify.

Justin: I, I know you said that, but I am working with a dog attempting to understand divinity.

Esther: I know, I know.

Justin: I have such a limited scope.

Esther: I just want to clarify that that is not the sense I gave you.

Justin: I know. It's the only way that I can contextualize this information for Ember.

Fai: So like, yeah, there's demonic shit and Hell shit and all of that, like baked into the country or whatever, that's normal for me. What I want to know is, if you're from such a land where that is normal, is that bad?

Fai: You know what I mean? Like...

Esther: Are you asking me?

Fai: Yes.

Esther: I mean, it's kind of up to you to define Temerity's overall like, view of morality and what is good and bad. I would say in my mind, there would be levels of like normalcy to it and, and understanding that...

Esther: The powers of Hell are going to use the materials and, and abilities at their disposal to try to skew things in their favor. But so are the powers of Heaven. And you could make a strong argument that both have done rather manipulative things to each other and to people over the years, and that what is good or bad can be relative to someone's experience and someone's knowledge.

Esther: So they are not necessarily pure (dramatic voice) evil.

Esther: It's complicated.

Fai: The theme of, the name of the episode, maybe. Okay. So I guess what I am trying to ask to figure out where Temerity stands is... I mean, you've given me some great information. I just need a little bit more. What's the overall like, societal or cultural way that Hellish stuff is received? Is it only normal in Cheliax, and it's like, yikes elsewhere? You know what I mean? Like, is it complicated in Cheliax and yikes elsewhere? Do you follow what I'm asking?

Esther: I follow what you're asking. So I think the way I'll answer it is talking about the three places you've spent the most time that I'm aware of.

Esther: Is that okay? All right.

Fai: Yes.

Esther: In Cheliax it's very normal. Some people are going to think it's yikes. Particularly the people who are like more affiliated with the Church of Iomedae, but this is just life for the past 70 or so years in this country. And it is pretty common. Nobody is like horrified or like, 'oh, that's so transgressive, terrible!'

Esther: Like, yeah. It's, it's like everyday life. The Church of Asmodeus is everywhere. And... you look like you have a follow-up question about that before I get to the other places.

Fai: I do, I'm sorry.

Esther: It's okay.

Fai: So you just said four 70-ish years, and that means that during my lifetime, this change occurred.

Esther: Yes.

Fai: Is that something that we're prepared to get into more now? Like, can I ask you those questions or would you rather, we talk about that more later?

Esther: I'm happy for you to ask me these questions.

Fai: Okay, great. So that means like, until I was well into my grown ass adulthood, Cheliox was not a devil-worshipping -- or whatever the word we want to use --nation. Right?

Justin: How old is Temerity?

Fai: 200.

Justin: Oh, yeah.

Esther: Yeah.

Esther: So Cheliox primarily used to worship Aroden, who died in your lifetime. And that caused massive like, global upheaval. Aroden was the God of Humanity and he was prophesied to make a return, I think in Cheliox. And instead of returning, he died! And now there's a giant hurricane near The Shackles, and a bunch of stuff happened to the world, and prophecy stopped functioning and Cheliox was kind of thrown into disarray.

Esther: And so Aroden's Herald, Iomedae, who was one of the four mortals to ascend the Test of the Starstone, has kind of stepped up to be in his place, but there was like a Chelish civil war. It was nasty, lots of different factions going and to unite the country, Abrogail Thruene the First made a deal with Asmodeus, an Infernal contract to secure her family's place as the rulers of Cheliox.

Esther: And for the past 70 years, it has been an Infernal nation. Officially.

Fai: Okay?!

Esther: That's all very common knowledge.

Fai: Didn't realize I lived through the downfall of a god.

Esther: Yes, you have.

Fai: Uh, cool. Cool cool cool cool cool. Okay. Thank you. What about the other places?

Esther: Okay. In Kyonin, Infernal influence is not very common. In fact, so you would also know this, there is Abyssal influence directly outside of Kyonin in the Tanglebriar.

Esther: That's demonic instead of devils, but there's a lot of friction there and the two are linked enough that it's not welcome. And the Elven Pantheon and several other famous deities tend to be worshiped in Kyonin, but this is not something you would like... there are no temples to Asmodeus.

Esther: If you want to find that you go underground. That's not to say no one there worships him, but again, it's not something you advertise.

Fai: It's not normal or chill or--

Esther: No.

Fai: Okay.

Esther: No. It's definitely not normal in Crying Leaf. Also no temple to Asmodeus there. I will say that like, there in the areas around it, it's not normal, but that's not their primary concern at all. So you're not going to have someone being like Asmodeus, oh, no! It would be very uncommon that you met someone who worshiped Asmodeus there. But if you did, it's kind of an interesting collection of people and there's interesting stuff going on and like, again, not their most pressing issue.

Fai: Okay.

Esther: I'm guessing people also wouldn't like, be announcing it like, "Hello, I'm new in town, I worship Asmodeus!" (cast laughter) But. "Just wanted you to know that there's a giant red star on my chest."

Justin: I was trying to think of like the greeting and I worked, I came up with, up with was "may his cloven foot rest upon your head".

Fai: (cast dissolves into extended laughter) Beautiful, thank you.

Fai: Okay. So, um, now, okay. So the reason that I asked for all of this is because Ember said that Asmodeus was like, a bad guy,

Justin: I doubt that that would be an uncommon opinion in the world, but I don't know. I'm a dog.

Esther: Yeah. There's a lot of people who think Asmodeus is a bad guy.

Fai: Is it safe to assume that Oriana was one of them?

Esther: You didn't know Oriana. Gnomes can be interesting.

Fai: That's true.

Esther: Druids can be interesting.

Fai: I guess what I was really wondering is like, which would Ember have that, that thought/belief because of her or in relation to her?

Justin: Ember only gained sentience after she died. So any, like, any religion she has is fuzzy at best. So most of what he's gotten was from Vroth'rien. Like, an individual who uses deception and magic to subjugate and you know, who basically talks my character up as a Hellhound. Yeah. Ember has some bad associations with this deity.

Esther: David, what were you going to ask?

David: Like, I guess I was wondering like, from a societal standpoint, like for example, did Mengkare have any opinions of any of what's more common knowledge. So like Asmodeus in general or society's view of what's happened in Cheliox?

Esther: Hmm.

Fai: Hermea is out, is outside of Cheliox, right?

David: Yeah. It's an island just far--

Fai: It's way far? Okay.

Esther: It's much nearer to Crying Leaf than it is to Cheliox, I think. I think I'm right about that. So if you asked Mengkare what he thought of Asmodeus he would have told you that Asmodeus is a great deceiver, who has been an enemy of dragonkind since the beginning and has done much harm to, and he would say "our people." And that Asmodeus has Cheliox in the foul grip of his cloven hoof, and that there are many people who have fought for its liberation and they are to be admired and their, their struggle is to be admired. And what was the other question... like, Cheliox?

David: Yeah, just as a societal view, like what Hermean society would view Cheliox society like.

Esther: Basically, they need your help.

Esther: Like it's, it's very hierarchical. Very inflexible, incredibly legalistic. Their ways of being with one another are not conducive to a utopian society in the way that Mengkare would think of it.

Fai: I imagine them looking at Cheliox like the rest of the world, like, "You guys have to have GoFundMes to pay your hospital bill?" and they're like, "In Cheliox, they have to make Infernal deals just to get healing."

Fai: You know? That's the, that's the vision that I just had.

Esther: The church of Asmodeus is like, "Our Lord and Damner gives us free healing for a small price. Look at what he provides to this whole entire country."

David: Really, we're just wondering like, "People don't just help each other?!" You know? " We have socialized medicine, and, you know..." (laughs)

Esther: I will also point out that it would occur to all of you, if you wanted to get a little bit more information that the Temple of Asmodeus might be a good place to go and try to check things out.

Justin: I was thinking that, actually, that it would be a good next stop.

Fai: Although, you know, like.... (noise of hesitation) there were just Hellknights from that -- presumably -- church that we just fucked up and we're going to go to the church and be like, "Hey, how's it going? So what do you guys do in here?"

Fai: Is that the thought process?

David: If the law is reason free from passion, then, you know, we kinda just, we were just doing our own duty. (laughs) They might see the... logical sense of things.

Fai: Once again, I look forward to being the only green Tiefling in town. This is going to work out fucking great for me.

Justin: Like that's something that you're going to have to get used to.

Fai: Well, I mean, it's certainly something that Temerity is used to, and that's why when he goes around, he doesn't try to kill everybody he meets.

Justin: Details.

Esther: So...

Fai: That's why his mummies said, "Words first, my darling."

Esther: Are you going to go by the temple on your way back to the inn? Are you going to go to the inn first?

Justin: No, I think we're getting our stuff.

Esther: So, you probably back to the in by now. You can certainly keep talking but Vivi Lilyfrost will say, Hi, you all look like you're in a bit of a rush." Like you come in like looking a little bit, a little bit worse for wear. "Rough day?"

Justin: I think Ember is going to go scrounging for garbage when, while the rest of the people pick up their stuff.

Fai: "It's an exciting city you have here."

Esther: "Yeah, certainly is. But most of my customers don't come back looking like this. Something, something go wrong?"

Alex: " Got lost in the woods."

Fai: That's not really a lie, entirely?

Justin: Wow. Dang it. I was hoping I had a moment where I was like, if Alivance was kind of like, burly, you could say that we were attacked by a bear.

Fai: (laughter) I think I'm just going to let we got lost in the woods stand and see how that goes.

Esther: Are you intending to check out or like, leave without payment or something like that?

Fai: Oh, no, we gotta pay.

Esther: So do you, would you like to tell her, inform her now that you're going to be leaving or later after you get your stuff?

David: I was going to get my stuff first just in case.

Esther: Yeah, right?

Esther: Okay. Cool.

Fai: I think that's probably the best way to do it, but you know, like if she... does she seems suspicious or just curious?

Esther: Curious right now.

Fai: Oh, okay. I'll go ahead and like, I can stay behind and kind of chitchat to make us seem less like we are disheveled, running in, grabbing our shit, and getting the fuck out. So like, I guess... like, Oom can go to the room?

David: Yeah, I would probably have the foresight to grab Temerity's stuff too.

Fai: That would be, that'd be great. Yeah. So, you know, like I'll just stay behind and talk to her and be like, "We've done some exploring, we... we're going to go maybe do some more."

Esther: " Oh!"

Fai: " And, we've been lucky enough to-- I've been lucky enough at least-- to make friends with Professor Z here. And he has a place here in the city, so, you know, we're, we're thinking that maybe we'll just go stay with him. And, I understand the, the Festival of Flight is soon, right?"

Esther: "Yeah. It's in about 10 days, I believe. And you know, everybody always floods into the city at that point. Well, I suppose it's in some ways good for me if I have more spare rooms, but you'd always be welcome to stay. As long as the rooms are full."

Fai: " Well, that's very kind of you and you know, even if the rooms are full, you still have a bustling tavern here and you serve good fare."

Esther: " Oh, well, thank you! That's very kind of you."

Fai: "You'll see us again."

Esther: "Oh, I certainly hope so. Miv has been such a great form of entertainment. It's fabulous. Well, I'm glad you've been having fun exploring."

Fai: "It's been such a pleasure. Do you have any more suggestions on places that we can, we should explore or the ones that you like the best here?"

Esther: "Well, does anything in particular interest you?"

Fai: "Ah, you know... me. I like art, but I suppose that maybe that, do you think that the Festival of Flight counts as that, you know?"

Esther: Art can mean so many things to so many different people, but yes, I would say so. You might like the Temple of Shelyn, they have some beautiful artwork there.

Esther: Um, lots of weaving, mural painting. I mean, any kind of, any kind of forms of art, actually. A lovely, lovely place. I love the Lavender Walk near the Palace District. It's absolutely beautiful. But lastly--"

Fai: "The lavender walk?"

Esther: "Yes."

Fai: "That sounds lovely."

Esther: "Yes, I, I think... I just really love a lot of our city."

Fai: " You know, I've only been here for a short time, but I'm, I'm very much enchanted by it."

Esther: "Well, that's very kind of you."

Fai: "I like the suggestion of eternal change, you know?"

Esther: "Well, that... um, it helps us keep our colors bright." she seems a little sad when she says that.

Fai: Can I, should I Perceive, or is a little sad about as much as I'm getting?

Esther: Would you like to perceive?

Fai: I'll Perceive.

Esther: Okay. Yeah, she, she just seems a little sad. Like maybe, maybe it wasn't quite enough for someone once.

Fai: Oh, That's so sad. I don't know what I want to say to her! I feel like I want to ask her if she needs anything!

Fai: "Are your colors staying bright? It looks like it from my perspective."

Esther: It feels like it."

Fai: "You seem a little sad."

Esther: "I am it, it. Um, it wasn't enough for someone I really loved, but, um, they're okay."

Fai: I'm so curious. Like, does that mean that they left or does that mean that their colors faded and that they're still okay. But they're like, (whispers) a ghost? I don't know.

Fai: I don't really know her well enough to be asking her business like that, so. I'm kind of torn because I do want to know her business though.

Fai: "Are you okay?"

Justin: Do I find any garbage? (laughs) Sorry, please continue.

Esther: You will find some really good scraps of bread and like little bits of sausage.

Fai: Jackpot.

Esther: Were are you going to ask her something?

Fai: "Are you okay?"

Esther: "Yes. Yes, I am. As, as okay as I can be."

Fai: "I suppose that's as much as we can usually ask for. Miss Vivi, it's been such a pleasure to meet you and stay in your establishment. We're gonna check out, like I said, move on to Professor Z's place. Can I go ahead and pay for our rooms and our tab and everything?"

Esther: "Absolutely. Absolutely. Yeah. And, and I'll, uh, knock a little bit off for what Miv helped to bring in."

Fai: "That's very kind of you."

Esther: "Are you sure everything's all right?"

Fai: Okay. Uh, I don't know, like, is this someone we should trust with our business? I don't know!

Justin: I feel like it's best not to implicate her.

Fai: Sure. Okay. "Vivi, is there anything weird happening in this town?"

Esther: "You're in Brastlework, love. Everything here is a little weird."

Fai: "Well, that's what I mean. You know, there's, there's the normal kind of weird, which is delightful and I'm thriving in it, might stay here for a while really. But then there's -- then there's a suspicious kind of weird, right? Do you think there's anything suspicious-weird, or is everything as normal?"

Esther: "I guess that would depend on who you ask. I think there are strange things that happen here, but for the most part, I try to keep my head down and not get into trouble.

Esther: If someone were to look at the, uh, more interesting things that might be going on and were leaving an establishment where they'd been staying, I might tell them to go a little bit north of the city, north of Dwarvenhold into the forest. And, um, look for someone who lives there. They might be able--"

Fai: Dwarvenfold, in the forest?

Esther: Dwarvenhold.

Fai: North?

Esther: North of Dwarvenhold, which is a..

Fai: Dwarvenhold, not fold.

Esther: Uh, yeah, a neighborhood in Brastlework and it's like in, in the north of the city.

Esther: "Yeah, I'd go north of Dwarvenhold, to the woods and, um, see who you find there."

Fai: "Thank you. That's very interesting information for someone who might need it."

Esther: Do you speak Gnome?

Fai: I don't. Okay. I speak Elvish, Infernal, and Sylvan.

Esther: "If you were to meet someone in the woods, some tell 'em..." and she's going to say like a really simple phrase in Gnome, which is still a little complicated, but like phonetically sounded out for you.

Fai: Okay.

Esther: "You got that?"

Fai: Yeah, I have Multilingual, and I intend to take it again, so hopefully I can get a phrase, right?

Esther: Yeah. I think, I think you can.

Fai: I'm gonna... "I got it."

Alex: I think Professor Z was, probably didn't bother to come in to the inn this whole time, but you could like...

Fai: Yeah, I'm probably gonna go to y'all and be like, hey, what does this mean?

Alex: Yeah.

Esther: "Well, thank you , Temerity. It's been lovely to meet you, hope you come back soon. Enjoy the Festival of Flight and whatever else you get into in the city.

David: Was this enough time to have grabbed her things and to, uh --

Esther: Yes.

David: Arrive back?

Esther: Actually, it will be enough time, but Miv is going to follow you upstairs and quickly get their own things. But as you're like, gathering yours and Temerity's, Miv is going to like, pose in the doorway and say, Oom, mind if I ask you something?

David: "Sure."

Esther: "Carrying something mighty powerful, aren't you?"

David: How did you know that?"

Esther: "Well, I was wanderin' around a little stealthily during all those goings-on when everybody else was doing their own thing and, um, seeing what I could find. And then I was like, crouching just outside and I was trying to see what kind of magical auras they might have going on in there, what kind of powerful things. It's funny when I was doing that detecting, the most powerful object in the room came up on you."

David: " It's...yeah. Just something I'm hoping to..."

David: Can I Perceive, actually?

Esther: Yeah, absolutely. What are you trying to perceive?

David: Just kind of overall motive or intentions, whether it's more curiosity or if it seems... darker than that?

Esther: Okay. What's your Perception modifier? I can roll it for you.

David: My perception modifier is... overall it's plus five.

Esther: Okay. Miv seems curious.

David: "It's just something I've, I've been holding and I'm hoping to give to people that may have more use for it than I."

Esther: "It's none of my business what it is. If they had caught you, something like that, though? My guess is it wouldn't have gone too well."

David: "I mean, I think it wouldn't have gone well, if they had caught me at all."

Esther: "Yeah. But you, uh, go into a place they're awful sensitive about with, um, something I take it may be as powerful as what you have... I don't know if that would have done you any favors for what they seem suspicious of."

David: " That's true. I mean, it is a risk just being, you know, with people we've just met, but hopefully it's a risk worth taking."

Esther: "Now, it ain't none of my business what you have, and I don't want it. I don't need it. Be careful."

David: "Thank you."

Esther: " Well, we ought to begin getting the, making ourselves scarce, I reckon, 'fore anybody comes to check us out."

David: "Yes. Yes. I, I agree." I'll make my way down and, if I know that Temerity's already paid, I'll also try to give a tip on top of that.

Esther: Miv will, um, drop several gold coins into Vivi's hand and be like, "Eh, I'll cover it all. It's just uh, give them whatever they need. Let me take care of it."

Fai: "Very kind of you, Miv."

Esther: "Oh, it ain't no hair off my back. What's the plan?"

Fai: I would say let's be moving outside before we talk about the plan. Cause obviously she knows, but we don't need to be talking about our stuff like that much in public.

Justin: Ember will be sitting contentedly outside with a link of sausages in his mouth.

Fai: Okay. So she told me north of Dwarvenfold?

Justin: Dwarvenhold.

Fai: And -- Dwarvenhold, sorry, Dwarvenhold itself is north? So we should head north, right?

Justin: We probably want to stop by Professor Z's place to pick up any of Professor Z's stuff.

Fai: That's true, and potentially, uh, fix Buster? Okay.

Justin: Might be prudent.

Justin: It'd be a slightly better place to lay low for an hour and lick our wounds, literally.

Fai: And talk about what's going next, yeah. Yeah. I think that's a smart idea. So to Z's?

Esther: Do you ask what the Gnomish phrase means?

Fai: Oh yeah, yeah, yeah. On the way to Z's, provided there are no people around me, I will ask, "Hey, what does..." and I'll say it probably, maybe not great! As good as I can after hearing it a couple of times, to the gnomes.

Esther: Gnomes, it means "your mom says hi." (cast laughs) That sounds like a your mom joke! It's not. It's "Your mother says hello."

Fai: Yeah.

Fai: Okay. Well is somebody, is somebody going to translate that for me?

David: Yeah. Yeah.

Esther: "Your mom says hi!" (laughs)

Fai: "Your mom says hi."

Fai: Okay. Okay. My mother. Okay. Okay, cool. Well, um, when we get to Z's house I'll oh, you know what, if they don't ask why I say that I'm not going to say it. I'm just going to say, hey, what does this mean? And then Oom's like "your mom says hi" or whatever. And I'm like, okay. And then continue on to Z's house where we can potentially talk a little bit more privately because we don't know who's in these streets.

Fai: Everything's all jumbled. Somebody could be hidden any old anywhere.

Esther: The implication is a little bit warmer than hi. Like it's like, your mother sends her, her warm affectionate, greetings, like.

Fai: So she's, she's sending us to her kid maybe?! I thought it was like a code phrase, I didn't even put it together like that.

Fai: Okay. Is that her kid that she's sending us to?

Justin: Presumably?

Fai: Yeah, that took me a second, sorry. That took me several.

Fai: Okay okay okay!

Justin: 'Your mother says hi' could also be very code. But it sounds like it's just literal.

Fai: Well, you know, like 'the crow flies at midnight', 'your mother says hi', like I just didn't, they didn't connect, but they're connected now. I'll be thinking about that as we make our way.

Esther: All right. I think we should leave it there on the way to Professor Z's house. And I do have a couple of wind-down questions at the end of session today. For everybody: how is your character feeling right now?

Justin: Very confused. So very confused. He's struggling with like duality of antitheticals. Not something that is really within the mindset of a effectively one year old.

David: I was thinking just very worried that someone knows I'm carrying something.

Fai: I would say that Temerity is tired. Temerity just wants to sit down and chill and, Temerity is wondering how he has somehow become the voice of reason. I'm sure, you know, it's maybe it's probably happened to him before. He's been around for a while. It's just one of those moments of like, oh, this is the, this is the mix I've gotten myself in.

Fai: Okay. All right. And also very like this town, there's some, there's something going on. And I... like the more I hear about dragons, the more I'm convinced there's something going on with dragons. And then the king, what's the king, right about? Is it dragons?! Like there's a, there's like too many processes running.

Fai: And, um, there there's a lot happening in there.

Alex: Z is frazzled. Like this has been a lot for Z. You know that like, adrenaline high kind of frazzled? Yeah. Z is definitely in the adrenaline high kind of frazzled.

Esther: All right. So you all gain one Hero Point for everything that went down today and I wanted to leave you with next session's warm-up question, which is going to be: who is your character's favorite author, and which of that author's books are their favorite book and why, or what story is their favorite story and why if they can't read?

Fai: We'll get there. We'll get there.

Justin: Story, I can do.

Fai: I don't know what I'm going to make up.

Justin: Oh, I know. I actually have a really good idea.

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