

# FAST TIMES AT D&D HIGH, Episode 8: Awakening

## CONTENT WARNINGS

Player Swearing - Sexual Innuendo

EMBER DEW: Hello lovely listeners. Ember Dew here to let you know this episode is kindly sponsored by Le Fae Rouge Intimates on Etsy. They make all sorts of underwear and lingerie, ranging from the geeky to the salacious or better yet, both. Be sure to check them out and make sure to keep an eye out for the new line of gaffs to service the trans community. I'm particularly looking forward to the dice ones. Now without further ado.

NED: Hi, Ned here with a brief commercial break! Have you heard about the Fast Times Patreon?

SURI: It's the place on the Crysnet where you can support all of our adventures... antics...

[*INSPIRED, Kevin MacLeod*]

OLLIE: And thievery.

SURI: Hey! We don't steal! ...Right?

OLLIE: Riiiiight.

CECIL: [*stammering*] And anyway, heh, you can get early access! Uh, plus, there's all sorts of other content on there, like character sheets and texts between all of us, and-and more. I-I-I even hear you can get a personalized shout-out during the show!

HUDSON: Yeah! Stop by in between searching for where the third sword goes! ...I'm still looking.

OLLIE: So run off to [patreon.com/FastTimesDND](https://patreon.com/FastTimesDND). That's [patreon.com/FastTimesD](https://patreon.com/FastTimesD), the letter N, D.

NED: I hope we see you all there!

HUDSON: Okay, no, but really, where does the third sword go?

PERSEPHONE: Welcome to Fast Times at D&D High,

NED: Where little guys...

NEGA-NED: [*dark aura*] ...Become big problems. [*reverberating voice*]

[*FIRST GOOD BOUNCE, Derrick B Perry and Ashley Abbott*]

PERSEPHONE: I'm your host, Persephone, joined by our players, Nuance;

NUANCE: Hi. I play Suri. And yeah, big problem.

PERSEPHONE: Wren;

WREN: Hi, I play a Cecil. And again uncomfortable.

PERSEPHONE: Elise;

ELISE: Hi, I'm Elise and I play Hudson.

PERSEPHONE: Caro;

CARO: Hi, I'm Caro and I play Ollie.

NEGA-NED: [*reverberating voice*] Well let's get started, shall we?

NUANCE: ...I gotta go.

WREN: That got real sexy.

NEGA-NED: [*reverberating throaty laugh*]

SURI: Last time on Fast Times, it was really scary. Ricky scouted out the side cavern and we all rushed in to find Grange, Buster, and Matilda dangling poor Ned over the edge of the cliff. Hudson demanded that they put him down and Ollie created an illusion of a big bat to try to scare them away from the edge. And it probably would have worked, except Ned saw it first and kicked and flailed so hard that Buster...Buster dropped him. Ollie jumped after him almost immediately and so did Hudson. Hudson was so upset that I think he forgot that gravity existed? And was suddenly able to fly! But in the end, neither of them were able to save him. And Ned just kept falling.

Except that same weird magic thing happened to Ned again, only instead of a hundred Magic Missiles in the classroom, he turned into a grown man. You'd think that would be enough

to let us know that he wasn't the right Ned, but I wasn't thinking. And then I got Charmed. And turned against my friends. Called Ollie a jerk. I hope Ollie knows that I'm really sorry. Cecil saved us, though. In the fight, they threw a magic rock and it slammed right into Ned's temple. I finished him off with a slap and then he kind of exploded in bright light or something? All I really know is I got knocked off the edge of the cliff, and then the cliff itself started falling apart. Hudson tried to catch me, but he ended up getting hit by one of the boulders that were falling. The last thing that I remember seeing was Ollie and Cecil on a slab and they were falling, too. I don't know how we're gonna get out of this.

I hope someone tells my parents that I'm sorry. I guess I was a disappointment right up to the end, huh?

*[wind whooshing]*

PERSEPHONE: When we last saw our heroes, they were tumbling down to the bottom of a cliff. Ollie and Cecil, atop a slab of stone that separated from the cliff itself. Surissisah, thrown through the air and tossed down the bottom. Hudson, crushed by a boulder in midair and now tumbling towards the ground. What is going through each of your heads right now, in the moments before everything went black?

*[A PRAYER, E.J Irish; covered by Nuance Vivian & Derrick B Perry]*

NUANCE: So, Suri got knocked backwards by this giant burst of energy. And, for a minute, she doesn't even know what's happening, it's just a bright flash of red and her feet leave the rock. And then there's just--nothing. She wants to scream, she almost tries, but it's like her voice has been snatched away. And so she's hurtling backwards through the air, a single hand up, like she could almost reach to her friends. Except she can't, and she knows it. And so she closes her eyes, folds her hands back together and just begins,

SURI: *[echoey singing]* Here I am, so weak and small  
My future isn't bright at all  
Everything's gone wrong  
I'm up against a wall...

CARO: Ollie has not yet submitted to the idea that they are falling, or that they're going to die, or that he can't, through sheer force of will, somehow fix the situation. But his first and main concern right now is that Cecil is right in front of him and looks scared. And he takes hold of Cecil his hand and just squeezes it and says,

OLLIE: It's gonna be okay.

SURI: *[echoing song continues]* Light is gone, my faith is dim,  
My possibilities look grim  
Give me strength, I pray

Please give me faith within...

PERSEPHONE: You reach out for Cecil's hand. And what is going through your mind now?

SURI: [*cont*] I am weak but you are strong  
Hear my prayer today  
Give me strength to carry on  
Lead me in thy way.

WREN: Oh. Well, there's a lot of things. I mean, first and foremost, really is that whole thought that you know, parties definitely are absolutely a bad idea. But, really the next most pressing thought is that, yet again, we've found ourselves in a situation where everyone else proved that they were just way better at being assertive in a situation and fighting. And Cecil was just useless. And Ollie was so brave--oh, that's Ollie's hand. Umm. Yeah.

SURI: [*cont*] Here we are, lost and afraid  
We have no light to guide our way  
Show us what to do, please give us faith we pray  
Show us what to do, please give us faith we pray

ELISE: As Hudson gets knocked back, the last thing he really sees aside from the side of the cliff, off in the distance his friends, is Suri also flying off in another direction. And he tries while he's still in the middle of his flying rage to reach out to her and get to her. But the rocks are falling and he's torn between dodging the rocks and trying to find Suri. And in his distraction, gets hit in the chest with the rock. And makes one last reach out to see if he can grab her...and grabs nothing.

SURI: [*cont, very echoey now*] I am weak but you are strong  
Hear my prayer today  
Give me strength to carry on  
Lead me in thy way

Here we are, lost and afraid  
We have no light to guide our way  
Show us what to do, please give us faith we pray  
Show us what to do, please give us faith we pray

PERSEPHONE: All of these thoughts, inside each and every one of your heads, twirling around in the space between you, the ties that bind you as friends.

SURI: [*spoken*] And please make it so that my friends will be all right.

PERSEPHONE: Your worries, your fears, facing certain death. And then everything goes blank. And silence, rich and deep, grasps you in its claws.

I want each one of you to select a d4. Roll it, and tell me what that number is. Suri?

NUANCE: 3.

PERSEPHONE: Ollie?

CARO: 2.

PERSEPHONE: Cecil?

WREN: 1.

PERSEPHONE: Hudson?

ELISE: 2.

PERSEPHONE: The first two awake are Ollie and Hudson. [*cave noises*] You feel the hard bite of the ground against your back, your neck, your shoulders.

OLLIE & HUDSON: [*assorted pain noises*]

PERSEPHONE: Your mind feels fuzzy, soft around the edges. Your vision is slow to clear, blurry at first as you open your eyes. But then it does. And what both of you see as you look up--and up and *up*--is a clear blue pool of water. It shimmers with opalescent light, ripples thrown out from the center moving towards the edge. And beyond it, you see tall cliffs wavering in the image of the water.

[*LIGHTLESS DAWN, Kevin Macleod*]

Around you, turning your stiff necks to the left and right, you see crystals, [*crystals chiming*] blue and sparkling, line the walls of the cliff. Beneath you in the gravel are flecks of the same crystals. Will both of you roll an Arcana check?

[*dice roll*]

CARO: I have a 10 total.

ELISE: I rolled a nat 20.

CARO: [*whispers*] Yes.

PERSEPHONE: Ollie, you're still too fuzzy to pick up on really anything. You don't even know if what you're seeing is real.

OLLIE: [*softly groans*]

PERSEPHONE: Hudson, you're a bit more clear. You recognize this crystal; it's impossible not to, it's been in your textbooks over and over for ages. This is Arcanium, the magic fuel of the world.

ELISE: What our phones are made out of?

PERSEPHONE: What your phones, what your cars, everything. It's what stabilizes and creates portals. It's the fuel for magic itself. You know that clusters of this are refined and turned into what you know as crystals. You also know that seeing this much in one place, where it gathers on the walls, flecks of it in the ground, is rare. And if it's not already a place that is mined, it's nigh-impossible to think that no one would have found it anywhere near Cadence.

If you look at your bodies, you look down, you feel stiff. But you're not injured. You're not bleeding. You have no broken bones. You're otherwise whole and healthy.

OLLIE: [*groans*] Are we dead?

HUDSON: I don't know.

CARO: Ollie sits upright and looks around for Cecil and Suri.

PERSEPHONE: They're not there.

ELISE: Hudson sits up and does the pat down and realizes his shirt is damaged again. Somehow. He's like,

HUDSON: Aww, not another one!

OLLIE: Mate, we've got bigger problems than your shirt.

HUDSON: Oh. Wait. Where is everybody?

OLLIE: I think we're dead!

HUDSON: Are we dead?

OLLIE: I-I don't know.

HUDSON: Why are you here, if I'm dead?

OLLIE: I don't know. Why are *you* here if *I'm* dead? This is not my heaven!

HUDSON: Huh. Maybe it's mine.

OLLIE: Oh shit, I'm in hell! [*echoes*] Fuck! Oh no, I'm trapped with you? For eternity?

HUDSON: What? I thought we were friends.

OLLIE: Yeah. We're friends. Not jealous of you or anything like that.

HUDSON: Why would you be? Ollie, you're so cool!

OLLIE: Yeah. [*scoffs*] Yeah, definitely. Ah, all right. W-w- Maybe we're not dead. Um, w-we got to try to figure how to get out of here.

HUDSON: Hang on, give me a sec.

ELISE: Hudson moves his hand and tries to go through the ground. Or any other solid object near him. He goes,

HUDSON: All right, well, I'm not a ghost, so...

OLLIE: [*derisive laugh*] Oh god.

HUDSON: I think we're alive.

OLLIE: All right. Uh...

PERSEPHONE: Roll Perception.

ELISE: [*laughing*] "You're actually a ghost, Hudson, congratulations!"

[*dice roll*]

NUANCE: Is being dead *good* for Hudson?

ELISE: No!

CARO: A 12?

ELISE: I got a nat 1!

CAST: [*chuckling*]

CARO: I have a 12.

PERSEPHONE: About 10 feet away, there's a hole in the wall; a break in between the crystals wide enough for two people to walk.

OLLIE: Where's... Uh, Ricky, hey, can you--? Rick--? Ricky? Ricky!

PERSEPHONE: No response

OLLIE: ...Shit.

HUDSON: Oh.

OLLIE: Uh, Hudson, there's, uh, a crack in the-the crystals over there. We could--I was gonna see if I could get Ricky... I, uh--have you seen Ricky?

HUDSON: I haven't seen him, no. Also, isn't it wild that there's all these crystals here?

OLLIE: Yeah. It is. Is a lot of crystals.

HUDSON: Could make so many phones.

CARO: How valuable are crystals like this?

PERSEPHONE: You failed your check, so you have no idea.

CARO: Okay.

ELISE: Hudson goes to check out the crack.

PERSEPHONE: You look into the opening in the wall. And beyond it, you see that it leads to another cavern, much larger. The ceiling above you, which is hundreds of feet tall, is filled with clusters of these crystals that glow with this light that moves in and out, and casts a blue sheen across the ground in front of you.

ELISE: I pat my pockets. Do I have my phone on me? Or is it gone?

PERSEPHONE: Roll a Luck check. 10 or higher, I'll say you have it.

*[die rolls]*

ELISE: 2.

PERSEPHONE: Your phone is gone.

ELISE: Phone's gone.

HUDSON: It's just another cavern over here. It's even bigger. It's got even more of these crystals. This is wild! Maybe we're like in an old mine or something.

OLLIE: Yeah, that was-- Oh, wait a minute. What was it that that voice said?

HUDSON: What voice?

OLLIE: Remember the voice? Th-that was the whole point why we came here. I-I guess we succeeded.

HUDSON: Uhhh.... Oh, yeah!

OLLIE: Yeah.

HUDSON: Hang on, let's check out this big cavern.

OLLIE: All right, let's go.

PERSEPHONE: You go check out the cavern, while we switch pages, a bit. Cecil, you start to come to. The first thing you notice is a feeling of dampness, wet, clinging to your clothes, like there's too much humidity or you've been sweating for a long time. And as you open your eyes, blurry at first, you see that you are sitting next to a smooth pool of what looks like water. Above you, you see the same eerie body of water that's floating in midair, above which you can see the cliff face. But right next to you there is water, too. Except it has a strange sheen to it. You look at your body, you test the feel of your arms, your legs, you're not injured. Roll an Arcana check.

WREN: Did my glasses stay on my face?

PERSEPHONE: Roll a Luck check, first.

*[dice roll]*

Wren: Okay, well, Arcana check was a 19. Luck check is a 3.

PERSEPHONE: You do not have your glasses. However, you squint at this pool next to you, and then you squint at the ceiling. With a 19 Arcana check, you don't know what is going on up above you. But you know that next to you is not water, it's a pool of liquid mana. A vein of it. The kind that, well, you hear about in storybooks. Whereas crystals are the main fuel of magic, there are other sources too. There are other ways it can be used, and other ways it can appear. What you see next to you - this liquid that doesn't waver, doesn't move - is incredibly volatile magic. You can consider it in our world like a less ambiently-damaging liquid uranium.

CECIL: Ollie? *[echoing]*

PERSEPHONE: No response.

WREN: Does the sound of my voice, like, echo?

PERSEPHONE: Yes.

WREN: Okay, sit up a little straighter and squint around and try to see if there's any other, like, if there's any other shapes of humanoids on the ground,

PERSEPHONE: Please roll a Perception check with disadvantage.

*[die rolls]*

WREN: 14.

PERSEPHONE: You squint out into the darkness and you can make out some shapes. But they're not humanoid, they're stalactites? Stalagmites? You're not really sure what the difference would--Actually you *would* know which one is which. They're the ones from the ground.

CARO: Stalagmites.

WREN: Thank you.

PERSEPHONE: You squint out into the darkness and you see some shapes, but they're not humanoid. And after really racking your brain, you realize they're stalagmites rising from the ground. Just beyond them, deeper into the darkness, you can just make out a bit of glowing blue light beyond.

WREN: Cecil will attempt to scramble to their feet after giving a bit of a cursory sort of pat around the ground for their glasses.

PERSEPHONE: Roll Investigation. With disadvantage because you can't see.

*[die rolls]*

WREN: I did this to myself. 4.

PERSEPHONE: With a 4 you start to look at the ground and you take a step and you hear a crunch. *[glass crunching]*

WREN: Cecil sighs and then reaches down and grabs the--the frames?

PERSEPHONE: Your frames have been shattered.

WREN: And pockets some of the bits.

NUANCE: Are the *lenses* okay?

PERSEPHONE: Cecil can't tell; it's too dark.

WREN: I don't want to cut myself, so I'll just grab the the crumpled frames and stick them in one of my vest pockets--oh wait, I don't have my vest on. Stick them in one of my pockets.

CECIL: Hudson? [*echoes*]

PERSEPHONE: No response.

CECIL: Suri? [*echoes*]

PERSEPHONE: No response.

WREN: Audible Gulp. And start walking towards the blue light, but kind of putting their hands in front of them, so they don't smash into any of the stalagmites, because their depth perception is not real good right now.

PERSEPHONE: You start to wander towards the blue light. And again, we shift. To Surissisah. Surissisah, you start to awaken. You feel your muscles ache. Meat of your legs is tender. And you start to open your eyes and look around. And then up and up and up. In front of you, you see two tall, white doors, made of marble. [*ominous magical hum*]

[*CITY OF RUINS, David Fesliyan*]

Instead of black or gold veins running through it, there is magical crystal, shimmering blue in and out. And the lines all twist through the stone, running down to the doorknob in front of it. Surrounding the door are arcane crystals and craggy stone, glowing with that same blue light. When you look up past the doors, you see a craggy ceiling with clusters of crystal above you, hundreds of feet high. And you are alone. Your dress is torn. Your knees are scuffed, but you're not injured. What do you do?

SURI: [*echoing*] Hello? Ollie? Cecil? Hudson? Anybody?

NUANCE: So, Suri will stand up, kind of look around. Can I roll Investigation or Arcana or anything to try to figure out like, because there are big doors.

PERSEPHONE: Roll an Arcana check

[*die rolls*]

NUANCE: 18.

PERSEPHONE: You know that these magical crystals--you get about the same information as Hudson did; that these are raw magical crystals, very rare. The door itself--to weave these threads of crystal through the stone is incredibly powerful Geomancy. It's something that you wouldn't think of seeing; it's not something that would have crossed your mind. But you know, it's incredibly powerful. You may not be that well-versed in the arcane arts, no matter how you pretend. But you know that. And as you look closer, you see that in the center of these doors, there's a slight impression. And you squint at it, and you realize that there's some sort of faded indentation, you can't really tell what it is.

NUANCE: Well, the first thing Suri is going to do, is actually take her shoes off because they're high heels and Suri wasn't doing so well with those in the non-cavern scenario. Is there a part of the wall that doesn't have crystals in it?

PERSEPHONE: Behind you. You look behind you and you're in a massive cavern. [*cave noises*]

SURI: ...Ohhh wow.

NUANCE: She's just going to go to one section of floor or wall that just doesn't have any crystals, because she doesn't want to break a crystal. But she does want to bang the heel of her heels against the floor until she knocks the heels off, so then she just has flats. It's not good for the shoe, but better than barefoot.

PERSEPHONE: That is fundamentally not how heels work. But anyway. You bash the heel [*banging*] off of your shoes and have makeshift flats, now.

NUANCE: I mean, there's probably a hole in the back. But, you know, again, Suri, doesn't really get how heels work, puts them back on and approaches the door. The first thing she's going to do is just lay a careful hand on the door, palm flat, probably still whispering prayers like, "Oh, this might hurt. Please don't let this hurt. Ma'Mahu, if you're around, please just help?" and just kind of touch the door.

PERSEPHONE: You touch the door and a crack of electricity travels up your arm, up into your head, down to the soles of your feet. You see the veins of crystal through the door start to glow white, and shimmer. And that indentation in the center of the door starts to light up. And forms the shape of a crystal in white light. [*ominous magical hum*] A beam cuts down through the center of the door from the top to the bottom and into the ground. And the doors, with a groan of moving stone, start to open. [*stone grinding*]

NUANCE: So, unless Suri is unable to move, as soon as, like, the glowing happens, she's going to kind of dart to the side. Because the last time a bright light shone she got flung off a cliff.

PERSEPHONE: Fair. Fair.

NUANCE: But once the doors start opening, she's going to kind of shuffle forward a little bit first and again, peer through, kind of looking through the light, trying to see if she can see anything through the doors.

PERSEPHONE: We'll pause there, Hudson, Ollie, Cecil. Please roll Perception checks.

[*dice roll*]

PERSEPHONE: Ollie?

CARO: 9.

PERSEPHONE: Cecil?

WREN: 6.

PERSEPHONE: Hudson?

ELISE: Nat 20.

CARO: Yessss.

ELISE: Whyyyyyy?

PERSEPHONE: Well, Ollie and Cecil, you hear something like rock being smashed together but you have no idea where it's coming from. Hudson. You, on the other hand, can tell the direction that's coming from. You walked into this cavern with Ollie in tow. And you hear this groan of stone on stone. [*stone grinding*] And you see a beam of light that cuts through the room and look in that direction, and see white doors about 100 feet away.

ELISE: Hudson's adorable pointy little ears are twitching in the dark. [*cave noises*] And he stops, he puts a hand out, like, against Ollie, and goes,

HUDSON: Hang on a second. You hear that?

OLLIE: I...hear something?

ELISE: Twitch twitch.

HUDSON: We should go--in that direction! I think there's something over there.

OLLIE: Alright, can you stop touching my chest?

HUDSON: Oh, sorry.

ELISE: And they make their way over towards the light.

PERSEPHONE: Cecil you heard this, but you have no idea where it's coming from. And you have very limited eyesight, right now. You sort of stumble with your hands out in front of you down the path wherever you are. [*cave noises*] Please give me another Perception check.

[*die rolls*]

WREN: 17.

PERSEPHONE: With a 17, you walk out not knowing where you are, not knowing what you're seeing. Your hands brush this shiny substance, this blue, cool stone, and it starts to light up underneath your fingers. [*cave noises*] And that light travels down into the ground, bright enough for you to see, and traces along the earth, moving forward across the ground in a trail that you can see and follow.

CECIL: Whaaaaaat?

WREN: I guess Cecil will follow. A little hesitantly.

PERSEPHONE: You follow this pathway of light. Hudson, you pull Ollie along towards the door. And Surissisah, you peer into the doorway. You see a shimmering portal, just a handspan away, reaching up and up and into the rafters far above you. [*ominous magical hum*] Through it, you can see a temple, water and white stone. [*ominous magical hum*] The light beyond the portal spills from it casting a glow on the ground and stones around you.

SURI: Ma'Mahu?

[*ominous magical hum*]

NUANCE: And with the hope that she's correct, and this has just been kind of, like, a waiting room before she's taken into the bosom of her goddess, or whatever happens after death, Suri's gonna step forward through the portal. [*teleportation*]

PERSEPHONE: Hudson and Ollie you get close enough that you can see this large portal through these doors. And you watch Surissisah go through.

OLLIE: [*gasps*] Suri!

HUDSON: Suri!

PERSEPHONE: No response.

HUDSON: All right. Well, we gotta get there.

OLLIE: Wait, wait, if-if Suri was down here, that means that Cecil and Monette must be down here, too.

HUDSON: Maybe they're in the room already.

OLLIE: Uh, we should split up. I'll-I'll try to find them.

HUDSON: I don't think that's a good idea, buddy. Neither of us knows where we are.

OLLIE: Well, we can't just let Suri go off alone.

HUDSON: Let's check the room, and if the other guys aren't in there, then we can keep looking. How about that?

OLLIE: Okay. All right.

HUDSON: I don't want to lose you too, Ollie.

OLLIE: Right, uh.

PERSEPHONE: Roll Perception.

[*die rolls*]

CARO: I have a dirty 20.

ELISE: I have a 10.

PERSEPHONE: So Hudson, you used all your good intuition up.

NUANCE: This just feels so much more normal, I feel better.

PERSEPHONE: Ollie, just as you're about to turn and look for the others, you see that there is a pathway of blue glowing stones that shimmers underneath your feet. Cecil, please roll a Dexterity saving throw not to walk into Ollie.

[die rolls]

WREN: 12.

PERSEPHONE: You walk into Ollie.

OLLIE: Ooof!

CECIL: Ah!

OLLIE: Cecil! Ahh!

HUDSON: Cecil!

CECIL: Ollie!

CARO: Ollie throws his arms around Cecil,

Ollie: Oh my god, I'm so glad you're okay!

CARO: And then realizes he's hugging Cecil and then lets go.

ELISE: Too late! Hudson is hugging the both of you!

CECIL: Hi.

Ollie: Are-are you okay?

CECIL: Mostly!

HUDSON: Aww, I'm so glad you're okay! We just saw Suri go through that, uh, thing and then--

Ollie: Portal, maybe?

HUDSON: Ollie's worried that Monette's down here still, but I don't know where we would start looking for her.

Ollie: Uh...

WREN: Cecil squints in the general direction of where you point.

Ollie: Oh, where's your glasses, mate?

WREN: I'll pull out the crumpled glasses frames bits.

OLLIE: Uhh....shite. Sorry about that. Bad luck.

HUDSON: I might have a pair of sunglasses, if you want to borrow those.

OLLIE: Oh wait! Does anyone have their phone? We could, uh uh, use the-the-the lights on them and maybe look for Monette. [*calling*] Monette! [*echoes*]

PERSEPHONE: No response. Roll a Luck check, Ollie and Cecil - not Hudson because we already determined you don't have your cell phone - to see if you have your cell phones.

[*dice rolls*]

CARO: Alright, I have a 17.

WREN: 12.

PERSEPHONE: You both do have your cell phones.

CARO: [*Relieved sigh*] All right. Pull up my crys and try to flick on the flashlight.

PERSEPHONE: You try to turn it on. And the screen works for a second and then goes completely berserk.

OLLIE: Gah!

PERSEPHONE: Twitchy and then fuzzy.

OLLIE: Uh...

HUDSON: I wonder if it's not working because we're in like a crystal cavern, with all these other crystals in it.

OLLIE: We, uh--ooooooooooooooooooh.

CAST: [*cracks up*]

ELISE: Not sure what's crazier--

CARO: Ollie looks like he just won the fucking lottery.

PERSEPHONE: Light dawns over Ollie's head.

ELISE: What's weirder, this cavern, or the fact that Hudson knew something Ollie didn't?

NUANCE: Ollie's so excited about being in the middle of a money cavern that it doesn't even, like, sink in that Hudson knew something and he had not figured it out yet. Later.

CARO: Later.

PERSEPHONE: Ollie, can you please roll an Insight check for me?

*[die rolls]*

CARO: That's a 10

PERSEPHONE: With a 10, you start to think. The conundrum presents itself to you. Which is more important: finding Monette, who may or may not be down here, or finding Suri after she walked through an unknown portal? You don't know what's beyond there.

OLLIE: *[long, drawn-out groan]*

PERSEPHONE: Decide, Ollie.

OLLIE: Fuck! Uh... Shit, shit. Um. Uh

CARO: Ollie takes out a coin. Flips it.

WREN: *[gasps]*

NUANCE: Well, okay.

ELISE: Ollie's got a girl problem.

NUANCE: Suri will remember this.

CARO: *[laughing]* Suri's not here!

PERSEPHONE: Well, which side is which?

ELISE: Suri is obviously heads.

CARO: All right, on a 3 or 4, we go after Suri. On a 1 or 2, we go after Monette. Ollie throws the coin up in the air *[coin toss]* and before he even catches it, he's like,

OLLIE: We gotta go after Suri.

PERSEPHONE: The portal looms in front of you. [*ominous magical hum*] What do you do?

[*CITY OF RUINS, David Fesliyan*]

CARO: Walk over towards the portal.

OLLIE: We got--you all ready?

HUDSON: Yeah, buddy.

CECIL: I... You're sure Suri went in there?

HUDSON: Positive!

OLLIE: Yeah, we saw.

CECIL: Alright.

[*ominous magical hum*]

HUDSON: Here we go.

OLLIE: Uh, maybe we should, um, hold hands so we don't lose each other. Just in case.

HUDSON: Aww, of course, little buddy.

OLLIE: I'm not little. I'm not little!

ELISE: Hudson grabs--

CARO: I take Hudson's hand, squeeze it extra hard.

OLLIE: I'm not little.

CECIL: Yeah, I mean, I think I'm shorter.

CARO: Reach out for Cecil's hand.

PERSEPHONE: [*ominous magical hum*] You gather your companions' hands. And together, You walk through the portal. [*teleportation*]

Now what I'm about to describe is what Suri sees first, minutes before the rest of you.

[RELAXING GREEN NATURE, David Fesliyan]

PERSEPHONE: Surississah, the portal settles around you, as if sinking to a warm bath, and then stretches out reverse in a bubble when you walk out the other side. In front of you is a temple, lit by the light of the sun above. Blue skies, in a small circle above you, around which are tall, stony cliffs. Where you're standing is covered in low-lying grass. And beyond that there's sand on the shores of the lake. At the center of the lake, you see a temple. It is round with tall, white columns. And you see that there are statues in there, but you can't quite make out what they are. As you unconsciously take a step forward to check out the lake, stones rise one by one from the water in front of you, leading the temple. And that is when the others walk through.

NUANCE: So you all see Suri kind of looking up, moderately confused, at the sky. Because she's pretty sure if this was for Ma'Mahu, it should be dark, because the moon would be up. I don't think I hear any of you enter, because it's a pretty silent portal. So she's just looking up in confusion at the sky, and then taking one step forward onto one of the stones that has arisen in the water.

HUDSON: Suri! Suri!

OLLIE: Suri! Suri!

SURI: [*gasps*] You guys! You're here! Oh! You're okay!

NUANCE: She spins around and starts running towards the three of you.

HUDSON: Arms open for hugs.

NUANCE: Gonna be hugs. So yeah, like, she's going to be heading for the three of you, just to wrap her arms around whoever she gets first. I don't even know. There's three of you, she's just running, like, at this point she's probably begun crying. There are definitely tears floating out behind her, a la very anime.

SURI: [*crying*] Oh I was--I thought all of you--I didn't know--I thought I was dead! [*tearful sigh*]

HUDSON: No, you're definitely not dead because ghosts can't hug, because we'd go through each other.

NUANCE: Suri doesn't even pause.

ELISE: Patpatpatpatpat

NUANCE: She's got her arms, I guess around Hudson, and is just like clinging and trying to grab everybody in for a giant hug. Just sorry, Cecil, there are hugs happening.

SURI: [*soft crying*]

CARO: Ollie looks, like, really confused about what to do. He had initially gone like he was going to hug Suri, and then saw Hudson hugging Suri, and then he, like, drops his arms to his side and kind of awkwardly looks at Cecil, and then, like, looks back at hugging everyone and takes a teeny half step back.

NUANCE: At that point, Suri's arm reaches out, probably grabs you by the front of your shirt there, Ollie, and drags you in. Because I'm serious about her trying to hug everybody, like no. She will probably be nicer to Cecil because Cecil is a tiny bean.

WREN: Not that small!

CARO: Oh, I like being on the other side.

NUANCE: Not in size!

CAST: [*laugh*]

NUANCE: No, Cecil has a very large projection of "Mmm, maybe don't touch."

WREN: Yeah, Cecil will...

PERSEPHONE: Nuance, I have a question.

NUANCE: Yep.

PERSEPHONE: How aware is Suri of how damaged her dress is?

NUANCE: [*scoffing noise*] Pfft. She was focused on making sure she could walk with her shoes. And then, like, you know, going into the creepy doors, followed by her goddess's portal. She doesn't know what she looks like, she's lucky if she remembers she's wearing, like, a party dress and not her regular clothes.

PERSEPHONE: Ollie, I'll leave it to your imagination but there is a little bit more skin showing than there was before.

OLLIE: [*stammering*] Uhh. Euhh. Ahh. Mmm. Ehh. Uh, what happened to your shoes?

CARO: Ollie takes his vest off and hands it to Suri.

SURI: What? My shoes?

NUANCE: She's, like, looking at the vest like, "Shoes?"

SURI: That's--that's not. I-I broke them?

CARO: Ollie's staring at Suri's feet.

SURI: I broke them? Oh, okay. Cause I didn't want to walk on-on heels, cause I'm not very good? Cecil, it's so good to see you, too. Cecil, oh.

WREN: It's like a 'pat pat.'

NUANCE: She's got her hands on people's faces and just like,

SURI: I woke up and I was alone and...did you all wake up together?

CECIL: No, no.

OLLIE: Just me and Hudson, but we found Cecil.

SURI: I thought--I thought I-- Cause the w-whole way down, I just told...I told Ma'Mahu that it was okay, if... Just if I-- So long as you were all-- And then I showed up here, and I thought that was her temple and I thought it was-- But it-- it was gonna be okay, because I thought you were okay. But now, I guess we're all okay.

...Are we okay?

PERSEPHONE: As you ask that, everyone please roll Perception.

*[dice rolls]*

NUANCE: 11.

CARO: 12.

WREN: Nat 20.

ELISE: Nat 20.

CAST: *[laughter]*

NUANCE: Jesus!

CARO: Whaaaaat?

NUANCE: What is this?

ELISE: Whyyy? I can't do anything in a fight. Hudson's just like, "I'm on it. What's going on, guys?"

PERSEPHONE: Okay, so, Suri and Ollie? You don't notice anything.

WREN: Oh, wait, I didn't roll with disadvantage. 13.

PERSEPHONE: Okay. Well, that's sad. You don't notice this either. Hudson, on the other hand...

ELISE: What do my adorable, pointy elf ears pick up?

PERSEPHONE: Not your pointy elf ears, but your big, elf, anime eyes.

ELISE: My big brown anime eyes, so soft and dreamy.

PERSEPHONE: Yes. The portal in front of you shimmers once. Then twice. Then is gone.

HUDSON: [*groans*]

PERSEPHONE: Replaced by a cliff face of stone.

HUDSON: I g--uhhhh. I'm so happy to see everybody right now.

SURI: I'm glad to see you, too.

HUDSON; And I'm so glad that you're not all ghosts. I don't like ghosts, but. Uh. I guess the temple is the only way out now.

CARO: Wow.

ELISE: And just sort of like vaguely points to where the portal was.

SURI: Oh.

OLLIE: [*whispered*] Bollocks.

SURI: ...okay

HUDSON: So I guess we should, uhhh, go that way?

CAT: Y'all are late.

CECIL: What?

OLLIE: Ricky?

[*TELLER OF THE TALES, Kevin MacLeod*]

PERSEPHONE: You look left, right, and eventually, you look down. And you see, sitting on the first stone, staring up at you, is the black cat.

CAT: Did I stutter? Fucking rude. Making a cat wait all day.

OLLIE: Uhhhh....?

CAT: Whyntcha take the cotton outta your ears?

OLLIE: Sorry...?

SURI: I didn't know we had a curfew? [*gasps*] [*whispers*] Oh no. Curfew.

HUDSON: Oh sh--!

CAT: Girl, curfew is like the least of your problems right now. You really gotta sort your priorities.

SURI: I can worry about a lot of things all at the same time.

HUDSON: Does everybody know this cat but me?

SURI: This was the cat from school. This was the cat that Cecil was following. Right?

OLLIE: Oh!

HUDSON: Oh. I never met the cat.

OLLIE: Hello, what's your name?

HUDSON: Hi!

CAT: That's need to know information only, I'm afraid.

OLLIE: What?! Can we call you something, then?

CAT: Y'all find out my name soon enough, if you can pass the test.

HUDSON: [*guessing*] Cat!

OLLIE: Alright. Uh, is this like, uh, maths?

CAT: Now why don'tcha come along? Y'all can follow simple instructions, right? Or follow a cat, can'tcha?

PERSEPHONE: And a cat bounds across the stones.

OLLIE: Okaaaay? Uh, we should follow him?

ELISE: We follow.

NUANCE: Yeah, Suri is definitely grabbing onto some people's hands. Like, whoever wants to hold hers--Suri's reaching for hands.

CARO: Ollie takes Suri's hand.

ELISE: Hudson leads the way.

SURI: Cecil, do you want to hold hands?

WREN: Cecil was sitting there, watching you clutch for hands and just kind of hoping you'd grab Hudson's hand. It's not a statement about how they feel about you! It is just a comfort level.

NUANCE: [*laughing*] It's okay. That's fine.

ELISE: Hudson went to go follow the cat. So he did not notice the hand holding.

NUANCE: It's fine. In that case, Suri will just cling to Ollie's hand.

PERSEPHONE: Poor, hormonal Ollie.

OLLIE: It's okay. This is fine.

PERSEPHONE: You all follow the cat across the stones, hopping from one to the other, until you get to the temple. It sits in the center of the lake. Not on an island, but just sort of floating on the surface.

[*COMFORTABLE MYSTERY, Kevin Fesliyan*]

Tall white columns loom above you, a dome-shaped roof etched in gold. And you walk up the front steps and inside, you see a platform at the center. A raised simple dais of white stone. And around it, almost in the positions of clock, counting the hours, are statues. You recognize, now, the statues of the great heroes, Isidiah Varnum and his companions. At the head, directly in front of you, across the dais stands Isidiah Varnum.

Now you've all seen portraits or images of Isidiah Varnum in your time, once or twice, here and there. They're very common. But though you recognize this as him, this looks different. Most of the depictions of Isidiah Varnum depict him with a certain level of...gravitas or dignity. This variant has a shit-eating grin, a longer nose, and is winking. To his right is Baledwin Hearthstone, who is looking sidelong at Isidiah, as if he's trying to resist smiling. He's about as tall as Isidiah's shoulder, which means he's about five-eight or so. And has a hood covering just the top of his head. To Varnum's left, are two women embracing. Neither one of them is someone that you recognize, and that's pretty odd. They are at the same height, but where one has long, straight hair and a cool, regal smile, the other has curly hair and is in the middle of laughing. The one with straight hair is wearing a gown carved so that each fold looks real. And the other is dressed like a warrior with light armor, greaves, and a bow on her back. You go down one by one, and the others you recognize. You see Lizbeth Harkin, the half-elf wizard that turned into a warlock. You see James Callum with white dreadlocks, finger guns pointing towards the center of the room, making a winky face. You see Oriana Soretooth, the fearsome dragonborn. In most depictions terribly serious, but here, she has her head cast up high, mouth open with laughter, holding a clawed hand against her armored belly. You also see the twins, Hecate and Elias Lothmorin. Elias kneels on the ground looking up at Isidiah, whereas Hecate stands beyond and turns her face towards the center platform, a hand raised out, a pensive look on her face. These statues are so realistic, it's almost as if they were captured in a moment. A 3D photograph, frozen in white stone.

HUDSON: You know, when they're, like, statues like this, they actually look pretty nice. Like nice people.

SURI: Why would we have, uh, the founders?

OLLIE: I don't know. I suspect this has something to do, though, with, uh, whatever happened to us at Varnam.

SURI: I mean, that would make sense.

OLLIE: Maybe, it's another puzzle.

SURI: Uh...

CARO: Ollie walks up and touches the statue of Varnum.

PERSEPHONE: You touch the statue of Varnam and Varnum's eyes light up white. [*music note*] One by one. Each of the statues' eyes light up a different color. Isidiah's are white. Callum's are yellow [*different note*]. Oriana's are orange [*different note*]. Elias's red. [*different note*]. Hekate is blue. [*different note*] Baledwyn's eyes turned black. [*different note*]. So on and so forth.

As you touch that, the cat moves past the rest of the party and jumps in the middle of the dais, and says,

CAT: I think it's time to get this show on the road, innit?

[*BELIEVE, David Fesliyan*]

PERSEPHONE: And each of the statues' eyes start to glow, brighter and brighter and brighter.

OLLIE: Uh-oh.

PERSEPHONE: And when it fades, you're all standing on the dais at the center of the room. But you cannot see the others. You're alone, surrounded by statues. They start to spin, the different shades of their eyes blur together in a tornado of color. [*wind whooshing*]

[*BORN AGAIN, David Fesliyan*]

Ollie, you stand at the center of the whirlwind. In it, you see four colors. Silver, green, red, and purple. And you hear a voice.

BREATHY FEMME VOICE: [*echoing*] I see. A plucky boy then chafing at the walls he was born in. How curious. Tell me, what is more important? Freedom? Or saving others?

OLLIE: There's no right answer.

BREATHY FEMME VOICE: You must choose.

OLLIE: Saving others.

BREATHY FEMME VOICE: How interesting. And tell me, what does a secret mean to you? Is it something to gather for knowledge? Or a way to gain power over others?

OLLIE: Knowledge.

BREATHY FEMME VOICE: Knowledge then, for the sake of knowledge. [*chuckles*] And would you use that knowledge to expose those who harm others?

OLLIE: Of course.

BREATHY FEMME VOICE: Or would you rather have the ability to raise others against them, with the truth?

OLLIE: That's like the same thing, right?

BREATHY FEMME VOICE: I'm afraid not. In one, you stand against a growing tide. The other, you have allies to stand with you. Which, then, do you choose?

OLLIE: Allies.

BREATHY FEMME VOICE: I see. How...entertaining.

PERSEPHONE: You see that the colors still. And they're overtaken by silver.

PLEASING BARITONE VOICE: [*rich laugh, echoing*] This, I suppose, figures, doesn't it? Underneath that straight little spine of steel of yours lies a core of silver. May it's gleam cut through the darkness, and guide others to your light. Take my gift.

PERSEPHONE: And the world goes silver bright, sparkling like moonlight on dark water.

[*wind whooshing*]

[*TEARS OF JOY, David Fesliyan*]

Cecil, you stand at the center of a whirlwind. From the spinning colors around you, four colors are stronger than the rest. Yellow, blue, red, and orange. You hear a voice shimmer out from the howling wind.

ACCENTED TENOR VOICE: [*echoing*] Lonely child of the earth, who cherishes life and the feel of sunlight on their back, I ask you which is better: to be flexible and flow like water? Or be rigid in the face of adversity?

WREN: Cecil's still squinting and looking around, because they weren't quite sure that everyone blinked out or just kind of got real blurry, because of the lack of glasses.

CECIL: Y-- Uhh. Are you--? You-you mean, you mean me, right?

ACCENTED TENOR VOICE: There's no one else around.

CECIL: Fair.

ACCENTED TENOR VOICE: Answer.

CECIL: I-I've never really...I've never really been one for swimming, myself. I-I-I--I feel like, probably, if I were really being idealistic, I would definitely be a lot stronger face in the face of adversity--adver--adversity, I, uh. Probably the rock, if that's what you mean, cause w-water above my head freaks me out.

ACCENTED TENOR VOICE: I see. Then which is more powerful? To expose those who hide in the darkness? Or to drown them where they hide? Or to place them at the bottom of a landslide?

CECIL: Y-Yeah, drowning sounds real scary, like I--like I just kind of said. So I guess that one, probably? I don't-I don't like this line of questioning, though?

ACCENTED TENOR VOICE: That's not an answer.

CECIL: I forgot exactly the question, then?

ACCENTED TENOR VOICE: Which is more powerful? To expose those who hide the darkness or to drown them where they hide? Answer.

CECIL: Uhh, drowning! Where they hide!

ACCENTED TENOR: Must there be a balance to life and death? Which is more powerful, the will to live? Or the finality of death?

CECIL: Well, I've seen some clerics do some things. So, hmm, I... That's a tough one. I suppose...I mean, ultimately, probably...second one. Uhh...Death, I guess?

PERSEPHONE: You see the four colors in the whirlwind still. And they're overtaken by the growth of the orange one. And do you hear a different voice from the whirlwind.

FIRM FEMME VOICE: [*echoing*] Nature gives and breathes life. But to stand against the tide, you must have the strength of the mountains behind your stance. Take my gift.

PERSEPHONE: And the world goes orange, with the warmth of sunlight on your back.

[*wind whooshing*]

[*POWERFUL, David Fesliyan*]

Hudson, you stand at the center of a whirlwind. Around you colors swirl: silver, deepest brown, fiery red, and orange. But as they turn around you, the silver disappears. You hear a voice from the darkness.

HARSH MASC VOICE: [*echoing*] Why do you value strength? Is it to help others or defend yourself?

HUDSON: To help others.

HARSH MASC VOICE: Then do you agree that it's wrong for the powerful to do nothing to help the weak?

HUDSON: Absolutely!

HARSH MASC VOICE: If you had to choose, would you take the will of the mountain to stand and face the sky? Or to force the earth beneath it to raise you higher?

HUDSON: Uhh... Well, that's hard.

HARSH MASC VOICE: Answer.

HUDSON: First one.

HARSH MASC VOICE: Are you--are you certain about that? You don't sound sure. You can't just be wishy-washy, you got to be sure on this.

HUDSON: I think I would rather be... Yeah! I would rather be strong than have someone else have to be strong for me.

HARSH MASC VOICE: Right, I-I-I guess? [*sighs*] This is not supposed-- [*sputters*] This is fairly straightforward! [*aggrieved sigh*] Okay, do you want to help the weak or quell the powerful?

HUDSON: Help the weak.

HARSH MASC VOICE: [*sighs*] Well, then.

PERSEPHONE: The same voice answers in the whirlwind.

HARSH MASC VOICE: Then it's my gift you accept. I hope it guides you forward. And also *makes you less frustrating*.

HUDSON: Aw, thanks! I didn't get you anything.

PERSEPHONE: The whirlwind turns red.

[*wind whooshing*]

[SACRIFICE, David Fesliyan]

Surissisah, you stand at the center of a whirlwind. In that, you see darkness, a deep crimson, and iridescence that shimmers around all. But then, the crimson leaves. You hear a voice from the whirlwind.

CULTURED FEMME VOICE: [*echoing*] Do you wish to be free?

SURI: Um. Uh, Y-yes? It would be really nice if you'd let me and my friends go.

CULTURED FEMME VOICE: Do you wish to have the power to change? To untie yourself from the threads fate have bound you in?

SURI: Uh. I mean. Well, that's kind of-- That's a really difficult question, because I mean, I guess it depends on what fate... I guess... Yes?

CULTURED FEMME VOICE: Then which is more powerful? To transform yourself within to become who you wish to be? Or to bear the secrets of the world from those that would use them to harm?

SURI: I-I-I mean, the person that I would wish to be w-wants to still help others. I mean...So I guess the answer is both? But. I think. I-I-I guess, to transform within? So that I-I can?

CULTURED FEMME VOICE: Then I suppose you're one of mine, then. This is who you are.

SURI: Um. Uh?

CULTURED FEMME VOICE: I hope that you embrace it. And with that, we form a contract. Take my gift.

PERSEPHONE: The iridescence takes over and shimmers through the whirlwind. And that brightness, fades. In the next moment, the whirlwind's all around you. The colors fade away. And you return to the temple.

PERSEPHONE: And that's where we'll end our session! With player tears!

NUANCE: [*high-pitched shriek*]

CARO: NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!

WREN: Suri just got like some fae contract shit!

CARO: MORE! MORE!

NUANCE: Right?!

WREN: That's what I wrote in my notes was "FAE SHIT!" That sounded like some fae shit.

[*BORN AGAIN, David Fesliyan*]

ASMR!PERSEPHONE: This has been Fast Times at D&D Hlgh. Hi, I'm Persephone. And you can find me @Persephiroth everywhere online.

ASMR!CARO: I'm Caro and you can find me on all the things @Car0mur spelled with a zero.

ASMR!NUANCE: I'm Nuance and you can follow me @shadowravyn, that's -ravyn on Twitter, and booksomewench on Twitch. Check out Dun-gyms and Dratinits, my Pokemon homebrew.

ASMR!WREN: I'm Wren and I'm being punished with ASMR by asking everyone to do a straight run through of this.

CAST: [*laughing*]

ASMR!WREN: And I live on Twitter @AtomicFirebird. I'm also @make\_believe\_ on Twitch where I run indie system one-shots and do a weekly interview show.

ELISE: Hi, I'm Elise, I'm several sentient otters, and I'm not on the internet. Don't @-me.

CAST: [*laughing harder*]

SULTRY!PERSEPHONE: You can also find all of us on twitter @FastTimesDND. That's @FastTimeD, the letter N, D. If you want to support us please visit us at [patreon.com/FastTimesDND](https://patreon.com/FastTimesDND).

SULTRY!NUANCE: If you want to know more about the world, the players or--

SULTRY!PERSEPHONE: --Nuance has her mouth full.

CAST: [*giggles continue*]

SULTRY!NUANCE: If you want to know more about the world, the players or the characters, check us out at [FastTimesDND.com](https://FastTimesDND.com) that's again, Fast Times D, the letter N, D.com.

SULTRY!CARO: Written transcripts of our episodes are provided by Nuance Vivian. If you want to help us out, leave us a review on iTunes, comments on Podbay, and all other fine stores.

WREN: Um, Fast Times at D&D High is an ArcanaCast production, copyright 2020. All rights reserved. I think our editor is Derek B. Perry, whoever that is. Our theme song was produced by that same Derrick B. Perry guy and Ashley Abbott? Our background music is courtesy of Kevin MacLeod and David Fesliyan, and it's licensed under Creative Commons and you can find individual track listings in our show notes.

ELISE: That's, ah, that's all the things, guys.

PERSEPHONE: We're very sexy.

ELISE: Wow.

CARO: Oh yeah. Thanks for listening.

PERSEPHONE: Have you been a dirty dirty boy?

CARO: You know it.

PERSEPHONE: Okay, I'm done.

WREN: This is a show about high schoolers!

PERSEPHONE: We're not talking about them right now!

ELISE: [*Hudson voice*] What's going on here?

PERSEPHONE: We're not talking about them right now, are we?

ELISE: [*Hudson voice*] I'm so confused.

NUANCE: We'll talk to you later.

PERSEPHONE: Tune in next time to hear the story unfold.

WREN: [*Cecil voice*] I'm really nervous.

PERSEPHONE: Oh God, don't do that, that's creepy.

WREN: I didn't mean for it to be!

PERSEPHONE: Oh, poor Cecil.

WREN: I didn't mean for it to be creepy like that I meant I'm just Cecil and I'm uncomfortable.

PERSEPHONE: Poor Cecil!

ELISE: C'mon, Stencil.

PERSEPHONE: Oh my god. Bye y'all, bye.