

Follow the Leader Episode 1.1: Five Cups of Vodka  
Featuring Alix as Persimmon and Grace, Dora as Parker and Marius, Han as Lucent and Kuiper, and Kales as Merrill and Zephyr

Dora: Hi folks, welcome to Follow the Leader, a podcast focused on telling character driven stories through the use of GM-less tabletop games where we can all take the lead. Today we're playing Follow by Ben Robbins. For those of you who are new to this game, here are the basics. Follow is a game about working together to achieve a common goal: slay the dragon, cure a disease, overthrow a tyrant, get your candidate elected. We'll pick a quest together to decide what kind of genre of game we want to play. Can we stay united and succeed, or will our differences tear us apart? We'll play and find out. Follow isn't about us coming up with the best plan or a clever solution, it's about seeing what these characters do, for better or for worse. We may even intentionally make bad choices because they seem like decisions our characters would make. But even if we do everything perfectly, our quest may still fail. As players, we can push for the outcome we want to see, but we cannot guarantee it. Our story may surprise us, and that's part of the fun. I'm Dora, and you can find me at harpydora on Twitter, and my pronouns are they/them. Playing with me today we have...

Kales: Hi! I'm Kales, and you can find me on Twitter at citadelofswords, and my pronouns are also they/them. And also playing with me today...

Han: [laughs] Hi, I'm Han, you can find me on Twitter at mercutioes, and my pronouns are they/them. And, last but not least...

Alix: I'm Alix, you can find me on Twitter at kismetnemesis, and my pronouns are also they/them. [laughs]

Dora: All right, and our lines, which are things we absolutely do not want to see, are homophobia and transphobia, violence against children, sexual assault, domestic or intimate partner violence, attacks by dogs, and unwanted pregnancy. Our veils are things which we're fine with addressing but we'll just fade to black on, are steamy situations and graphic depictions of bodily harm. Now that we've got all that, let's get started.

[theme music begins in background - dice shaking, cards shuffling]

Alix: We have to be really careful when we boil water, so that there's not a steamy situation.

[everyone laughs]

Kales: Way to break the ice. [crosstalk] Way to break the ice.

Han: We're off to a good start.

Dora: Yes.

Kales: Yes!

Dora: It is a good start.

Alix: I'll break the ice, but I'm not gonna heat it up too much.

Dora: Oh my god.

Kales: No that's good. No, that's fine with me.

[theme music plays]

Dora: So, um, the first thing that we need to do is we need to pick our quest from the list of quests that is in the book. And we actually did this already, and we chose to do The Show. Which, the little blurb about The Show is, "We're putting on a show! The lights, the applause! Our goal is to put on a great performance that the audience loves." It should be really fun. So the next thing that we have to do is we have to determine what makes our quest difficult, and some of the options that we have are: we have almost no idea what we're doing, the last show we did or the last show in this space was a complete disaster, the script is a mess (what there is of it), we have a shoestring budget and/or no place to perform, our subject matter is somewhere between obscure and totally opaque, or we're being heavily censored by the powers that be. And honestly, I think we had a couple of ideas already in our document. So the ones that we'd highlighted so far were we have a shoestring budget, the script is a mess, and the last show was a disaster, so obviously, if anybody has other picks that they really like, or anything they wanna veto...

Kales: I just really like that this show is just gonna be a complete mess.

Han: Mm-hmm.

Alix: Yeah.

Kales: Like everyone's going in going, "All right, we need to figure out how to make this not messy."

Alix: Yeah.

Kales: That's like the big problem.

Alix: I always like the one that's like, "we're being censored by the powers that be," but I feel like we've already kind of moved away from that tone in like, the prep that we've done.

Han: Yeah, I feel like censorship is not an issue that we're going to deal with in this, like, light-hearted show romp.

Dora: Yeah.

Alix: [laughs]

Dora: Yeah. I think just about any of the other ones would be good. Although based on your minor character, Alix, I think maybe we probably ought to pull shoestring budget off the table.

Alix: Okay, yeah. You will have a shoestring budget if my character ends up unhappy.

Dora: Well...

Han: That's true.

Alix: Yeah. But I really like "the script is a mess" because like, that means that we can just improvise whatever lines we want. [laughs]

Dora: [laughs] Yeah.

Alix: And just say they changed it. Um, so "the script is a mess" and "the last show was a disaster", or...?

Dora: Yeah. I'm down for that.

Han: Yeah sure. Yeah, that's fine with me.

Alix: Okay.

Dora: All right. So, going back to- that's Divine||Mundane, that's not relevant.

[laughter]

Han: Me every day of my life.

[laughter]

Dora: Okay, so, we decided what made our quest difficult, and so now the next thing we need to do is we need to come up with our fellowship. And, um, each of us will have two characters in the fellowship: a main character and a minor character. Both of them are part of the fellowship, but our story is about our main characters.

Alix: Uh, real quick, did we say what kind of show it was?

Dora: We'll get there.

Alix: Oh, okay, it just came before it in the document, so.

Dora: Yeah, that's because I don't know how to organize for beans.

Alix: That's fine.

Kales: That's fine.

Han: Very fair.

Alix: We don't have to organize the beans. [laughs]

Dora: Why not?

Han: Gotta sort the beans.

Kales: Sort beans, one by one.

Dora: Yeah... So. Our characters. One of the things we need to do is when we create our main characters, there are, uh- there's a list of character archetypes for The Show, and we need to say which archetype our main character is and talk a little bit about our character- their name, and just a little summary. Kales, if you'll do the honors?

Kales: Sure! So, my main character is named Merrill. She uses she/her/hers pronouns. That is not spelled like Meryl Streep, just to be clear. [laughs] The archetype that I chose for her is she is the stage manager, which means she's just going to be utterly exhausted and done with everyone's crap for the entire show. And she absolutely does not get paid enough for this, come on guys, let's just, let's just make a show. And then, what she wants from the quest is caution. And I've sort of condensed it into a statement as saying, "We're doing something really innovative here, so we have to make sure everything goes smoothly."

Han: Cool, so I can do mine- me. Okay. So my main character is named Lucent Seomoon, uses he or they. His character archetype is the glory hound. He's- I will say he's like the embodiment of "Primadonna" by Marina and the Diamonds [laughter]. Like, that song is his. And what he wants from the quest is fame, and to condense that down to the statement, "I'm the most talented person here, and soon everyone will know it." That's him.

Alix: Incredible. My main character's name is Persimmon Harlow. They use they/them pronouns. Their archetype is victim of stage fright, so they're also an actor, but their whole thing is that what they want is "meaning, challenge the audience," and what they believe is that acting is like, art. It's like, serious art, you guys. And is like, very shy and again, like a victim of stage fright but is like, "this is like, true art that I have to do." And I guess they look like Karen, Karen Gillian or whatever. What I googled was like, actress who looks like Karen Gillian, [laughter] because I have a very specific image in my head which isn't quite Karen Gillian, but... I guess it's just Karen Gillian. Anyways. Dora?

Dora: Sorry. Yeah. It's me! [laughter] The character I'm playing is named Parker Young, and he uses he or they pronouns. And the archetype I'm using for him is stagehand. What he wants from the quest is family, because sometimes the real stars are the friends you made along the way.

Kales: Aw.

Alix: Aw.

Han: Oh no.

Dora: He's energetic and unrelentingly cheerful. This is probably just an internship for him that he was so excited to get, and he's just excited to be here, y'all!

Han: Oh, he's gonna get torn apart, huh?

Dora: Oh yeah.

Kales: Yeah!

Dora: This is not going to end well.

Kales: He's gonna frickin' die!

Dora: This is not gonna end well for him at all.

Kales: Oh, buddy.

Han: He's gonna fucking die.

Dora: So, the next thing we need to do is we need to determine what we want from each other, and so typically this is done by going from the left, but- usually it's character to the left, but we'll just go in turn order. So Kales, you'll want something from Han, Han, you'll want something from Alix, and so on.

Han: Cool.

Kales: Great. I 100% know what Merrill wants from Lucent- is it Lucent?

Han: Lucent.

Kales: Yeah. Okay, so I know what Merrill wants from Lucent. She wants respect.

Han: Okay. [Alix laughs]

Kales: She's not gonna get it! [laughs]

Han: No...

Kales: No, she's definitely not gonna get it.

Han: Okay, so I think I know... God.

Alix: I know.

Han: I think I know what Lucent wants from Persimmon.

Alix: Mm-hmm.

Han: And I do think... I do think it's glory and I do think it's glory, specifically, it lists "give me your part".

Alix: Oh no!

Kales: Ah!

Han: I'm sorry.

Alix: Oh my god, this is gonna be good. Okay. [laughs]

Han: Yeah. No, I wasn't kidding when I said my only conception of this character was "huge bitch".

Kales: You know...

Alix: I... Love him.

Kales: It's fine. This is going to be so much fun.

Alix: Mm-hmm.

Han: And like- when I just need to, like, have a fall-back character that I can play on autopilot, it's automatically just like, a mean girl. That's it. I'm like...

Kales: Yeah, my fall-back character is just me, [laughter] so I was like...

Han: I mean, I'm not saying it- that's not me, like, that's [laughter] It might be me.

Alix: Really calling yourself out here.

Kales: All I'm saying is that like, first time recording, I just was like, "All right, I just need to play a character that's easy."

Han: Mm-hmm.

Alix: Mm-hmm.

Kales: So, myself.

Han: That's fair. Yeah...

Alix: The characters I always play are always like, really strong ladies who are like, repressed. [laughter] Or like, very nervous twinks.

Han: Mm-hmm.

Kales: That's not a bad thing.

Dora: Yeah.

Alix: No, it's good.

Han: I just go straight for twinks that are tops. That's it. Like, that's the whole... [laughter] The whole deal.

Alix: Yeah, yeah, I'm aware of your deal. [laughs]

Han: Thank you.

Alix: It's good. [laughter] It's good. Oh god, I really have to think of- Oh, I think I figured it out. Which I think is love. I think that-

Kales: Aw.

Alix: Persimmon has a big crush on Parker.

Dora: Aw. And he's just too oblivious to notice.

Alix: Yes.

Kales: Aww!

Dora: Um, shoot. So that means that I have to- now I have to think of something, don't I? That's how this works.

Kales: That's how this works. [laughs] That's how you play Follow.

Dora: I know, right? [laughs] I've never played a Follow in my life. Anyway, um, let's see, what could Parker want from her that she wouldn't give him... Ooh. How about this? How about this isn't the first time Parker's worked with Merrill before? And maybe, he maybe kinda sorta has a hand in why that last show was a disaster.

Han: Oh no.

Kales: Oh my god.

Dora: And so, he would like forgiveness from Merrill for that.

Kales: Aww.

Alix: Oh no.

Han: Baby.

Kales: Oh my god. Great. I get to be that stage manager.

Dora: You don't have to be that stage manager, but...

Kales: No, I'm not going to be that stage manager, I'm not that stage manager.

Dora: Okay. So now that we know what we want from each other, we have our minor characters. So each player makes a minor character who's also part of the fellowship. We just



pick concept and a name and a brief description, we don't really create wants or anything like that. So, Kales, who is your minor character?

Kales: So, my minor character is known as Zephyr. They use they pronouns. The archetype that I chose for them is washed up star, but that's about- that's- that's the important stuff.

Han: Okay, um, my secondary character is named Kuiper Jasco, and she is- this wasn't listed under the archetypes, but she is the reporter from the local newspaper that was assigned to cover this show while, like, the arts writer is on maternity leave. [laughter] And she does not wanna be here, and she doesn't know shit about theater.

Dora: (softly) Oh no... [laughter]

Alix: I love her.

Han: She's very tired.

Alix: Um, yes. So my secondary character's name is Grace Mitra, she uses she/her pronouns. And her archetype is moneybags. I think she's just like, a very rich lady who has an interest in the production, and her facecast is that lady who always looks like she's somehow divorcing you.

[laughter]

Han: I'm looking at her right now and I feel like I'm being divorced.

Alix: Yeah.

Dora: See, I am getting divorced, and that's exactly what it feels like, except she's really hot-

Alix: [laughs] Oh no.

Dora: -and I wish she weren't divorcing me. Um. Okay, I'm sorry. So...

Alix: Well- [laughter]

Dora: We're all relentlessly gay here, unfortunately.

Kales: It's fine.

Dora: Nobody ask us to do math, it'll be fine.

Kales: Wait, I can do math.

Han: I can do math.

Dora: Oh shit. Can neither of you drive though?

Kales: [crosstalk] I can't drive.

Han: [crosstalk] No, I can drive too. [gasp] [another gasp]

Kales: I can't-

Han: I know. Listen, I-

Alix: Are you even gay?

Han: I have a driver's license and a biology degree.

Dora: Holy shit, you're too powerful.

Alix: I don't think you are even gay. [laughter]

Han: Hmm...

Kales: See, I don't have a driver's license, but I do have a 5 on my AP Calculus exam, so...

Han: Holy shit.

Dora: Jesus...

Kales: Yeah.

Dora: Yeah no, I can't do math to save my live but I- I can drive.

Han: Nice.

Dora: So, My secondary character is Marius Favors, and they use they/them pronouns. They're the playwright, and they're actually the replacement playwright. They're a student of the subject that the play's about, why did you give them this shitty, shitty script? It must be fixed and they are stressed. [laughter]

Alix: I love them.

Dora: So, now that we've got that, the next thing that we need to do is we need to actually play. So, to complete the quest, our fellowship will face three challenges. We won't know what challenges will confront us at the start. We'll only know as they arise. So each challenge is something that we need to do to move closer to our goal. If we succeed at a challenge, we are more likely to succeed at the quest. If we fail or ignore or refuse a challenge, it doesn't mean the quest immediately fails, but it makes it harder for us to win in the end. For this we get three rounds, which are three challenges, and for each of the three rounds, we follow the same steps, which is: pick the challenge and describe why it's difficult, play scenes to explore how our characters deal with the challenge and each other, and draw stones to see if the fellowship succeeds or fails at the challenge and whether any of our characters were lost or betrayed the fellowship. The third challenge is a little different. Its outcome determines the success or failure of the entire quest, but our wins or losses in the first two challenges influence our chances for victory. So, let's see what our first challenge should be. The options that we have are: fix the script, add a catchy musical number, cut 20 minutes from the runtime, get a place to perform, build the set, get costumes, rehearse or memorize lines, get the critics on our side with a sneak preview, get the word out, sell lots of tickets, and perform.

Kales: Okay, I have an idea for a challenge right off the bat but I don't know if it fits better as the first challenge or as a later challenge.

Dora: Well, what's your idea?

Kales: I want to- I think we need to cut 20 minutes from the runtime. [laughter]

Dora: Mm-hmm.

Alix: I think that's a fine place to start.

Han: [crosstalk] Yeah.

Dora: [crosstalk] Yeah.

Kales: You think that's- I was thinking it would be an okay place to start but I didn't know if someone else wanted to try and do something first.

Dora: No, that sounds great. So, why is this challenge difficult?

Kales: Um, because our script is, like, half of a story, so we have to figure out how to cut twenty minutes from the runtime without losing the entire plot.

Dora: Legit.

Han: I think part of what makes it difficult too is like, we're mid-switching playwrights, and like-  
[laughter]

Kales: Yeah. Yeah.

Han: And this playwright is very intent on making this script good, but I don't know if they will have that... that kind of time.

Alix: Mm-hmm.

Dora: Yeah.

Kales: We're just looking at this pile of paper that's getting taller and taller and taller, and there's like-

Han: Mm-hmm.

Kales: -no end in sight, we're like, okay, wait, hold on. Hold on.

Dora: Yeah.

[laughter]

Dora: It's getting a little out of hand here. Okay, cool. Those sound like really good reasons for this to be difficult.

Han: So I guess that means Kales, you pick who would best address this challenge, in your opinion.

Dora: Yup.

Kales: Yeah... Oh no... [laughter] Oh, that's... Oh, the problem [crosstalk] is it's me.

Han: [crosstalk] I will say that I have an idea.

Kales: Please do it because otherwise it's me.

Han: Okay. So... Here's what happens. I think the like, movie version of this game- like the first scene opens with Lucent, like, busting down the door where Marius is doing the rewrites.

Dora: Yeah. That sounds- that sounds legit.

Han: Yeah. And I'm trying to think who else would be there... I think I'd like for Persimmon to be there too.

Alix: Okay. I was going to suggest that I should be there anyways.

Han: Yeah. Yeah.

Alix: So do I come with you or was I already there?

Han: I think you're already there. I think-

Alix: Okay.

Han: -this needs to be him just like, busting the fuck in.

Alix: Okay.

Han: So I think what happens is that he just busts down the door, and like, tosses his marked-up, highlighted copy of this script that's definitely falling apart on the table, and turns to Marius and just says,

Han as Lucent: I counted. I counted and I highlighted. And... I see what you're doing.

Dora as Marius: Yes, I'm trying to do my job.

Han as Lucent: Does your job involve- okay, so we're cutting? We're cutting. I don't think it's a coincidence that a good 70% of what you're cutting is my role. I don't appreciate what you're trying to do here.

Dora as Marius: Your role isn't integral to the- the integrity of the mythology, the mythos. Have you never studied this? Obviously, based on the look on your face, you're not the one who has a masters degree in this subject.

Han as Lucent: Okay. Okay... [mutters] Okay.

Alix as Persimmon: I... I would just appreciate if next time you knocked, maybe, 'cause you scared me pretty bad. [giggling]

Han as Lucent: Duly noted. Anyway, I [sighs] Okay. Let me try- Let me say this another way. So, I need to get my equity card in the next like, year. And I need to make a good impression for these critics, and there are things that I need that you are not giving me. And I think it would be in all of our best interests to maybe, as we go on cutting more of this script, to maybe shift our focus a little bit, if you wouldn't mind.

Alix as Persimmon: No I- I agree, I think is here- is that we have way too many jokes in this script. I mean, I totally agree with Lucent. We need like, real drama.

Dora as Marius: Real... drama... This was... supposed to be... a comedy.

Han as Lucent: Well but like, it's one of those Greek comedies where they're not actually funny. [laughter]

Dora as Marius: I reiterate: which one of us has a masters in this subject?

Han as Lucent: [crosstalk] Listen, I... I was in Antigone in high school.

Alix as Persimmon: [crosstalk] I've taken a lot of acting classes.

Han as Lucent: I know my shit.

Dora as Marius: Of course.

Alix as Persimmon: Why would we want to make people laugh when we could make them cry?

Han as Lucent: See? Persimmon's got the right idea.

Alix as Persimmon: Thank you.

Dora as Marius: Why would you want to make my life easier when you could make me want to cry? [laughter]

Alix as Persimmon: Oh I'm sorry, I-

Dora as Marius: No it's a turn of speech, it's fine, it's fine! I'll take it under advisement.

Han as Lucent: Okay.

Alix as Persimmon: Just- nobody really listens to the actors around here, you know? [sighs]

Dora as Marius: It's impossible to ignore them!

Alix as Persimmon: Acting is work. [long sigh]

Han as Lucent: Listen. I will leave you to your work. I just hope you take what I said into... consideration. I'm going to go work on my lines, which I assume will all be there when I get the next version of the script. Thank you.

Alix as Persimmon: I'm gonna work on my lines too. I- I- It's important to do that. For acting?

Dora as Marius: Yes, yes, of course. And... do tell Lucent what happens when you assume.  
[Han laughs]

Han: That has to be scene, right? Yeah.

Alix: Yeah.

Kales: Good! Good.

Han: Good shit.

Dora: I'm sorry, I forgot to mention that Marius is kind of a jerk.

Han: I love them.

Kales: Y'all. Y'all. This is every meeting I had in college theater. [laughter] Every single meeting.

Han: Oh, oh same.

Kales: All of them.

Han: This is every depart- this is every theater department faculty meeting that I ever had, so like...

Kales: Oh true! True! [laughter]

Dora: Oh my goodness.

Alix: Mm-hmm.

Dora: So, that means Alix's scene next?

Han: Mm-hmm.

Alix: Yes. Okay, I think I want a scene with Merrill.

Kales: Okay.

Alix: I think... Yeah, Merrill is just like- I think this is some, like, some part of backstage that's like, everybody has to pass through to get to different places, so it's kind of crowded. And Merrill is

just like, in the middle of trying to do something important, and you know, has a clipboard or whatever, and is talking on a headset or whatever. [laughs]

Kales: Delegating.

Alix: You know what I mean?

Kales: Delegating, delegating.

Alix: Yeah. And so basically, because everybody's walking by, if you feel like your character-like, it would be good if your character showed up, that could totally happen.

Kales: There's just people passing between us as we're talking.

Alix: Mm-hmm.

Kales: Yeah.

Alix: Yeah. So I think Persimmon goes up to Merrill and just says,

Alix as Persimmon: Merrill. Merrill. Merrill.

Kales as Merrill: What? What? What's up?

Alix as Persimmon: I- Listen, can I talk to you for a sec?

Kales as Merrill: Um, yeah, give me a second. Hey, make sure- no, no, don't put the lumber there, put it on the other side of the stage. Okay.

Dora as Parker: Yes ma'am. Yes ma'am. [laughter]

Kales as Merrill: Thank you. Thank you. All right. Sorry. What's going on?

Alix as Persimmon: I think they're gonna cut my part.

Kales as Merrill: Why do you think they're gonna cut your part?

Alix as Persimmon: Because, I don't know. It was all- It was really scary, first of all, Lucent came in and just yelled at everyone and just-

Kales as Merrill: Oh. Yeah.



Alix as Persimmon: And I think... [sighs] I think he wants my part, and like, he's really good, it's just like, this is my first real show, and I just... You know. You remember what happened when I was supposed to be in that blackbox production and I just, I couldn't do it. I just, I-

Kales as Merrill: Yeah.

Alix as Persimmon: -I need this, and I just- Merrill, I just need you to make sure that I'm... I need to keep my part. Please, okay?

Kales as Merrill: Yeah.

Alix as Persimmon: Just don't [crosstalk] Just don't take this away-

Kales as Merrill: [crosstalk] Listen, nothing- It's okay. It's okay. Nothing is going to happen to your part, okay? Okay? Lucent actually has no control over it whatsoever.

Alix as Persimmon: Okay, but he's like, scary. And tall.

Kales as Merrill: I know. Yup. I know he's scary and tall, but he has no control over it, it's up to the director, it's up to Marius, it'll be fine- wait hold on a second. [farther from mic] No, no, don't put the light there! Don't put the light there! We need to put it- okay. All right. Great. Got it handled. [deep breath] Sorry. Um... What was I saying? You're- don't worry about it. Okay? It'll be fine.

Alix as Persimmon: Okay. I know we have to cut a lot of stuff, I just... We should maybe cut, just like... Wait, you understand this is supposed to be serious acting, right? We can just- we can cut- I... You know, some of those jokes, and like, there's that whole stage fight, and I don't think we really need that, and just like- are you writing this down?

Han as Lucent: Merrill!

Kales as Merrill: That's- what- sorry, what?

Han as Lucent: [huffs] Someone moved my contour palette.

[pause]

Kales as Merrill: All right. Okay.

Han as Lucent: Where the fuck is it?

Kales as Merrill: I didn't move it. So, go ask one of the stagehands, okay?

Han as Lucent: [sighs] Ugh, fine.

Kales as Merrill: [sighs] Sorry. Sorry. There's so much happening right now. Listen, it's not really up to me, but if you really think that, you should go talk to Marius or the director, okay?

Alix as Persimmon: But- but you're- okay. You're the one who actually gets things done, so...

Kales as Merrill: [sighs] Yes, but not... Not really until tech starts. At this point, I'm just making sure that no one dies!

Alix as Persimmon: Is this not tech? I saw somebody... Isn't... [crosstalk] carrying-

Kales as Merrill: [crosstalk] We don't have a script yet!

Alix as Persimmon: [sighs] Okay. All right. I guess you're right.

Kales as Merrill: It'll be all right. Okay? No one is going to get cut.

Alix as Persimmon: Well I mean some people probably should get cut, just not me. [laughter]

Kales as Merrill: All right. All right. Go... Listen, listen. Go work on your lines or talk to Marius, I'm going to- Oh. Uh oh. Oh. Hold on a second, I think someone fell off the stage.

Alix as Persimmon: I- I- I am going to go practice my lines. 'Cause I'm professional.

Kales as Merrill: Yes.

Alix: And I think that they basically announce this to the middle of the room. [laughter]

Kales: Merrill has just walked away because she's like, "Did someone fall off the stage?"

Alix: Yeah. [laughs] I think that that's-

Han: Does insurance cover that?

Kales as Merrill: I do not get paid enough for this!

Han: Mm-hmm.

Alix: Okay. I think that's probably a good place to end it. [laughs]

Han: Mm-hmm.

Dora: Okay, so, I think it's only natural that Lucent should probably go harass a stagehand in particular after finding out that somebody moved his color palette.

Han: [laughs] Sure.

Dora: I mean, [crosstalk] might as well get this out of the way.

Alix: [crosstalk] Yeah, though.

Han: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Okay. So where... Where like- where do I find you?

Dora: I think that... I don't know a darn thing about being backstage, but I'm assuming if you would think that this poor child would know where your contour palette is, it's probably somewhere in costuming or makeup.

Han: He's probably- he's probably been like assigned by whatever, like, frazzled person is in charge of the costuming department to sort out the makeup or something. Like sort out the disgusting tubs of makeup that are, like, backstage.

Dora: Fair. That sounds exactly like the sort of thing that he would do and be bad at and still be happy to be doing because he's helping.

Han: Mm-hmm. It's an internship.

Dora: Yeah!

Han: Sometimes you clean out the gross makeup.

Dora: Yup.

Han: Okay... So I don't know if there's like a door to knock down on this one [laughter], but if there is, it's been just, [crosstalk] demolished.

Dora: [crosstalk] Lucent knocks down a random door. [laughter] There's a door going by that a couple of other stagehands are-

Han: Mm-hmm.

Dora: -you know, transporting.

Han: Yeah, it's just a prop door, and he just-

Dora: Yes.

Han: -punches it open, and is like, I've arrived. [laughter]

Kales: It's one of those shoddy prop doors where it just falls off the frame and onto the floor.

Dora: Yes.

Han: Right, one of the prop doors, where either it's like it won't close, or it will not open.

Kales: Yeah. You had those too?

Han: Oh yeah.

Han as Lucent: You. Uh, what's your name?

Dora as Parker: Oh!

Han as Lucent: What's your name?

Dora as Persimmon: Oh, Mr. Seomoon, my name's Parker. How can I- How can I be of assistance?

Han as Lucent: Who told you to call me Mr. Seomoon?

Dora as Persimmon: Um... My mother said that it's polite to refer to people as Mr., Ms., or Mx., and their last name?

Han as Lucent: Jesus Christ, okay. Um. So someone- someone took my contour palette, and I need it back, and it looks like you are elbow deep in... makeup. Did you take it?

Dora as Persimmon: Um... Well, uh, I did collect the-

Han as Lucent: No no no, hold up. Do you know what a contour palette is?

Dora as Persimmon: (nervous) Do I look like I know what a contour palette is?

Han as Lucent: I don't know, that's why I'm asking.

Dora as Parker: I really really don't, sir.

Han as Lucent: Okay. Um...

Dora as Parker: I've got all of this makeup here. I can help you go through it, but... [crosstalk] but no I-

Han as Lucent: [crosstalk] Yeah, that's... No that's... No, that's not what I'm looking for. Mine is, uh... [sighs] That was bought at Target. I don't do that. Was anyone else- who gave you this job? Who's- Where's- Where's the head of makeup, whose name I need to make up really quick. Where's uh... Where's Clarisse? Where is she?

Dora as Parker: Um, I think Clarisse went out on a smoke break three hours ago. [laughter]

Kales: Oh, they would too.

Han as Lucent: Did you see anyone else around... [sighs] You don't, you don't know shit, fu-God damn it.

Dora as Parker: I mean, I can help you look?

Han as Lucent: No, no it's... You don't even know what it is, it's fine. Listen-

Dora as Parker: How will I learn if you don't tell me? I'm here to learn.

Han as Lucent: Are you training to be a makeup artist?

Dora as Parker: Well, no, but if people are going to [crosstalk] ask me...

Han as Lucent: [crosstalk] Then who cares?

Dora as Parker: Fine.

Han as Lucent: Okay, listen, you're... You're like... new to the theater, right? Like, you're kind of an- you're an outside perspective, in a sense.

Dora as Parker: Yeah, I guess you could say that. Mm-hmm.

Han as Lucent: Okay... [sighs] So like, I know that this whole show is a goddamn disaster, but do... Does it look like that from, you know, like, the untrained eye? Is that... [sighs]

Dora as Parker: Well, I mean nobody's any body parts yet, so I feel like that's doing better than the last- uh- um- uh-huh.

Han as Lucent: Okay. No, that's... That's fine. I'm gonna go look for my- look for my palette, and you keep sorting out... that. And... Good luck, uh... Fuck, what was your name?

Dora as Parker: Uh, Parker, sir.

Han as Lucent: Parker. Okay. Goodbye Parker.

Dora: And that's scene.

Han: Mm-hmm. [laughter]

Dora: Thank you for bullying my young child. [more laughter]

Han: No problem.

Kales: Oh, god.

Alix: Oh no.

Kales: This is so real, y'all.

Han: Mm-hmm.

Alix: Mm-hmm.

Han: I love to bring my expertise.

Kales: Yeah, yeah me too. [laughter] Um, okay. So it's my scene.

Han: Mm-hmm.

Kales: And I... We're gonna bring it right back and I'm not right clicking, oh my god computer please. Um... We're gonna bring it right back. I want a scene with Marius [laughter], we're gonna talk about this script.

Dora: Oh boy.

Kales: Does it have a plot yet? [laughter] Does it have a-

Dora as Marius: Excuse you, it has a plot, this plot has been told countless times before, it is a classic of the genre, and I spent six months working on an article for the journal about this particular plot and all of its nuances. How dare you tell me that it does not have a plot.

Kales: She's got her head in her hands, like, oh no.

Dora: I'm sorry, I didn't mean to interrupt you, but it just happened.

Kales: No! No, that's good! It's good. It's fine. Start in medias res. It's fine. She's just like,

Kales as Merrill: Yeah. It's... 140 pages. That's... far too long of a show. We're not even talking about 'that's too long of a show for me to call'. No one is going to want to sit through an hour- a two hour show with no intermission. No one!

Dora as Marius: Well then we can put an intermission in! Wagner's Ring Cycle- how long was that?

Kales as Merrill: That's... [sighs] Okay. Nevermind. Listen. Listen. Is there any way you can cut this show down to two hours without losing the integrity of your... precious story?

Dora as Marius: [sighs] I suppose, if we wanted to cut out all of the nuance of the true vision of the hero's journey, and if we wanted to reduce it to its basest components, and completely scrub it of everything that makes it worth telling...

Kales as Merrill: So we cut out the jokes, is what I'm hearing.

[laughter]

Dora as Marius: Fine. We can remove some of the humor.

Kales as Merrill: Great. That will help, at least. Just... get it done by tomorrow so that we can actually give our actors a script they can work with?

Dora as Marius: Yes. Of course. I will do as you bid.

Kales as Merrill: Thank you. Oh god, I need like, five cups of vodka. [laughter]

Kales: And she leaves. And that's scene.

Han: I like that it wasn't shots of vodka, it was cups of vodka, as if you're filling a cup to the brim. [laughter]

Kales: I- She needs a stiff drink.

Han: Mm-hmm.

Kales: Also I forgot what a glass was. [laughter]

Han: A pint glass just of vodka.

Dora: Yeah.

Alix: Yeah, it's like a- it's a tarot card, the five of cups of vodka. [laughter]

Han: Yup.

Kales: She's hardcore, man, she's hardcore.

Dora: Yup.

Kales: She's a stage manager.

Dora: All right.

Han: She also has three livers, apparently. [laughter]

Dora: Yes.

Kales: She's a heavyweight.

Dora: Okay, so that- That brings us to... a page number that I forgot to mark.

Han: It is... page 30.

Dora: Yes. So- actually, I wanna start on 29. So after every player has made one scene for the challenge, we see if the fellowship succeeded or failed. So the way that these challenge draws work is... Since we're doing this over the internet, it's gonna work a little bit differently, but. We start with no stones in the pool, we add one white and one red. Then each player takes two red. If your main character is unhappy with the path the fellowship has taken, hold one red stone. If your main character actually wants the quest to fail, hold two red stones. Otherwise, hold no stones. The maximum is two stones, even if the answer is yes to both. And we decide secretly and then reveal simultaneously and add those resulting stones to the pool. And if we put in any stones, we'll briefly explain why.

Han: All right, we ready?

Alix: I'm ready.

Kales: I'm ready.

Dora: I'm ready. Three, two, one, go. [giggles] I'm not surprised.

Alix: Okay.



Han: Yeah.

Alix: I said to cut out the jokes and they cut out the jokes.

Dora: As far as Parker's concerned-

Han: There you go.

Dora: -he's doing a good job of sorting the makeup.

Han: Yeah...

Alix: Oh Parker. I love Parker.

Han: Lucent was not promised that his lines were, like, safe, so, in his eyes, a failure. Also someone took his contour palette.

[laughter]

Kales: Merrill did not want to be calling a two hour show, and she also knows that like, no one is gonna wanna sit through a two hour show. She wanted to go down to like, an hour forty. So, she's like, ugh we didn't really do what- I mean, we cut twenty minutes out of it, sure, but like, it's not great. It's not what she wanted.

Dora: Yeah, it's not five cups of vodka. [laughter] Okay, so each player will take one white and one red stone. As a player, do you think the fellowship did what was necessary to succeed at the challenge? Hold white if yes, red if no. [pause] Three, two, one, go.

[laughter]

Alix: Okay.

Dora: All right.

Kales: This is fine.

Dora: Yeah, so-

Alix: This is fine.

Dora: -we have three white and one red. The red is from Alix.

Alix: Yeah, I just... It just doesn't seem like anything productive happened. And like, I don't think that we really, like- I feel like we cut twenty minutes, maybe, but like, we're gonna get it back in like, people stumbling around and trying to remember what their lines are.

Dora: That's fair. I think, um... I think that ultimately, Marius did agree to make the changes, so, it's not like it didn't happen at all.

Alix: Mm-hmm.

Kales: It's like, this is technically not Merrill's job. [laughter] So like...

Alix: Mm-hmm.

Kales: She did more than she was required to here. Where's the director? No one knows. [laughter]

Han: Yeah, that's a really good question. I love that-

Alix: Yeah.

Han: -none of us decided to play them.

Kales: None of us decided to play them or name them.

Dora: Yeah.

Han: Mm-hmm.

Kales: Let's just call them "the director" for the rest of the...

Han: No one knows their name, it's part of their art.

Alix: Nobody even knows-

Kales: They're a cryptid.

Alix: Yeah, nobody even knows if [laughing] there is a director. No, there must be a director.

Dora: Eventually it will be revealed that the director's name is Lucretia. Um. Anyway... [laughter]

Alix: Ugh. My god.

Dora: Anyway. Sorry. Except I'm not. But it's okay! Um, so...

Han: Who wants to pick the next quest?

Dora: Yep, um... Put the stones in a cup. Without looking, draw one stone and reveal it. Then draw and reveal a second. And don't put the first stone back before drawing the second. And then we'll look up our result. So instead of drawing from a cup, because we're on the internet, we have four of each, white and wr- white and red. White and wed! God, I've gone uwu, [laughter] I'm so sorry.

Kales and Alix: No!

Dora: So we'll be rolling a D8. And one through four is red, five through eight is white. [pause] Woo! Okay, so our first draw-

Alix: Okay.

Dora: -is white, 'cause we got an eight. And now we'll do a [crosstalk] mythical D7.

Alix: [crosstalk] One through seven now.

Dora: Where one through four is still red, and then five through seven is white. Oh.

Alix: Okay.

Han: Okay.

Dora: Yeah, that-

Han: Well, we lose the challenge and lose the character.

Dora: Yeah.

Alix: Okay. Well. Great.

Dora: Yeah, so we got a white and then red. So we lose one character and then lose the challenge. So... based on this... Which character does- which character does it make sense for us to lose? Do we just, uh...

Han: Does Marius walk out?

Dora: I'm thinking either Marius walks out or Marius cuts somebody, cuts either Persimmon or Lucent.

Alix: Yeah, I was gonna say-

Kales: Yeah, I was-

Alix: I think it was either- it was either gonna be Marius or Persimmon. I don't think Lucent is giving this up, no matter what. [laughter]

Han: If you cut Lucent, Lucent like lives at the theater now. [laughter]

Dora: Yeah.

Alix: Lucent is now the ghost.

Han: Mm-hmm.

Alix: Um... So which do we think is more interesting?

Han: I'd like to see more of Persimmon.

Dora: Yeah.

Han: Just like...

Dora: Yeah, so Marius-

Han: You know.

Dora: -just like, throws all of the papers in the trash and goes the fuck home-

Alix: Oh my god.

Dora: -and doesn't come back the next day. [pause] Ugh.

A: Good.

[theme music begins- dice shaking, cards shuffling]

Dora: Extremely good.

Alix: And then- and then Persimmon fishes all the papers out of the trash the next day and is like, "Well I'm just glad that they cut all the jokes." [laughter]

Dora: Yup. Good. Good.

[theme music plays]