

University of Illinois Student Life and Culture Archives

Interviewee: Elias Jackson

Interviewer: Fey Jensen

Length: 00:53:43

04/16/2026

Fey Jensen: Alright, um, [pause] hi, uh, my name is Fey Jensen, I am here with—

Elias: Elias Jackson.

Uh, the date is April 16th, 2026, and the time is 6:20, um, we are currently located in one of the Champaign Public Library's private study rooms. Um, okay, first question, please tell me a little bit about yourself.

EJ: Oh boy! [Fey laughs] Um, so, I am, uh, my name is Elias, I am thirty years old. Um, I am originally from Bloomington, Illinois, which is, eh, an hour and some change, okay, I'm from Bloomington-Normal Illinois.

FJ: Okay.

EJ: Which is an hour and some change, um, north of Champaign. Um, my family is from, uh, Taylorville Decatur area, so south Illinois. Um, I've been in Champaign since, well, Champaign and assorted sundry areas, since 2015. 20— 2015? 2014? Right after college. Um, er, right after high school. God— [Fey laughs] Um, and, uh, let's see do you want the full alphabet soup identity, or—

FJ: Yeah, sure!

EJ: Just whatever? Okay.

Transcriber's Note: This transcript keeps the stutters, interjections, and filler words of the interviewer and the narrator intact. This aims to maintain the integrity of the interview and provide a transcription that is as close to the original audio as possible. It is important to note that this transcript is not verbatim and has been edited by Elias. Any requested edits are enclosed in brackets.

FJ: Whatever you're comfortable with.

EJ: Um, I am, a, uh, transmasculine, nonbinary individual, um, [chuckle] aro, ace pa-polyamorous- [Fey chuckles] So if you wanna-

FJ: Alright, alright.

EJ: [inaudible] Long walks on the beach, I- [Fey laughs] Um, yeah. I've been on testosterone for about two years-

FJ: Awesome.

EJ: Um, and, I have been so- largely socially transitioned. Um, yeah.

FJ: Very cool, very cool. Did you say pronouns?

EJ: Oh, uh, he/they.

FJ: Awesome, cool. Um, alright, uh, can you tell me how you became involved in the SCA [Society for Creative Anachronism]?

EJ: Okay, [sigh] [Fey laughs] So, uh, we actually have to start back before I got into the SCA, which, I have been in the SCA for two years now.

FJ: Okay.

EJ: It's 2026, right? Yeah, it's 2026-

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Okay. So, I got involved in 2024-

FJ: Right.

EJ: Bef- Oh God, yeah, um, before that I did about a year, in, um, foam fighting, um, Belegarth, it's a, another, um, cause, it's, it's, it's a, uh, another group here in town, basically.

FJ: Right.

EJ: Um, and I just, I wasn't really vibing with the environment, um, the particular fighting style was not my thing, um, and I had actually originally thought about joining the SCA-

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: But then I was like, one, I don't want to fence. That's, looks dumb. [Fey laughs] Um, which is wild. Um, and then, I was like, also I don't have money to have, like, armor and stuff.

FJ: Right.

EJ: Um, and, y'know, I still don't have money, but, I, y'know I fence now.

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Um, [chuckle] so, I, um, originally, I got into sword fighting because, I was in my late twenties, and realized that if I was not careful, I wasn't going to be able to, like, y'know, squat, and like—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Y'know, my knees were going to give up on me, and it was either this, or get on a treadmill.

FJ: Right.

EJ: [sigh] No. [Fey laughs] Um, [chuckle] and, so, um, I, it was like, [pause] June? I remember specifically it was the last practice on the Quad.

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: For that year. Um, students had already left, and it was—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Just that, the last practice. Um, and I, [chuckle] um, messaged on the web forum, and got Caleb.

FJ: Right.

EJ: Um, and, uh, to be like, hey, cause the Sh— Caer Gwyn does a fantastic job of, um, saying where they're going to be like—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: On the website, and everything.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Um, so I messaged the forum, and was like, hey, I'm just going to show up, is that okay? And got an email that was like, yep! Um, but I didn't check that email, and so in between I had messaged my cousin, who's friends with somebody here in town that doesn't really play—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Um, [chuckle] who messaged Ursus I think?

FJ: Uh huh.

EJ: [chuckle] And told them I was coming.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Um, so I went to, my first, y'know, my first practice, and they put a sword in my hand, and I had a good time, um, and I came back, and I'm still here, y'know, two years later. Yeah. Um, yeah.

FJ: Very cool. So, you, um, you're from the area so you're—

EJ: I am, yeah.

FJ: You would be from Caer Gwyn.

EJ: Yeah.

FJ: Um—

EJ: I, well, yeah, cause I'm—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: I'm, I'm what we call a townie.

FJ: Yeah. [chuckle]

EJ: Um, I live in town, and I don't leave.

FJ: Yes. Yes. They just can't get rid of you. [laugh]

EJ: Uh, there is technically a, there is a Shire, um, in Bloomington—

FJ: Uh huh.

EJ: That is not as active.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Um, they don't have, they don't have weekly practices, I think they've got, like, monthly meetings, and they're not as good about outreach.

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Um as our, as the Shire is. So—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: As our Shire is.

FJ: Yeah. Um, well, uh, I'm interested to hear about if your queer identity intersects with, um, kind of, your identity within the SCA, or maybe your persona.

EJ: Um, [sigh] my perso— my persona is a fluid thing—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: I don't really play into, the, I don't do a whole lot of, like, the roleplay stuff.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Um, I'm definitely more dramatic, I think. M— My persona is also how I present when I work at the planetarium so—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: It's just, it's very, uh, [pause] elevated? Bonus? Wai— Y'know, y'know—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Amped up.

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Um, I do not know, that, like, my, [sigh] I mean, I say my queer identity doesn't intersect with my persona in the way that science fiction authors say their work has nothing to do with politics, right?

FJ: Right, yeah. [chuckle]

EJ: Like, it, it does, like—

FJ: Uh huh.

EJ: Like, my queerness affects pretty much every aspect of my life at this point.

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Um, I, [pause] because, um, I think, there is a inherently trait in any kind of LARP—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Of, you are intentionally creating a, a persona—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: To present yourself as, that is, I would say, very, very ripe for exploration in any way.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: It's not just LARP, right?

FJ: Yeah, yeah.

EJ: Do you, there's a joke about the DnD players that they play a tiefling sorcerer— [Fey chuckles]. And then, ohh no they came out? Like— [Fey laughs] a year later? Who could've ever predicted this?

FJ: Right, yeah.

EJ: Um, y'know, and it happens with, it happens in all kinds of communities. Um, I will say that, you know, uh, the SCA certainly, like, didn't, like, uh, did not, like, slow that, that, any of that down at all—

FJ: Mmhm, yeah.

EJ: Right? Like, there is, I, [sigh] [pause] I probably would have come out anyway—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Just given everything, um— [Fey chuckles] but, um, I probably would not have, like, I, I don't think I would've, [pause] [sigh] I don't want to jump too far ahead in your, like, questions or anything, so I—

FJ: No!

EJ: Okay, so, I think that without the SCA, I wouldn't have the same kind of role models that I do—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Um, [pause] which is a big thing.

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Especially when it comes to, like, y'know, queer identity.

FJ: Yeah—

EJ: I guess.

FJ: Mmhm. That makes sense.

EJ: Yeah.

FJ: Um, well, I mean, speaking of role models, I mean, how, how does that impact your play in the SCA, I guess you could call it.

EJ: The SCA, um, for me, [sigh] what it has done, is, you, okay, so, [sigh] [pause] there comes a point, like, when you're a kid, and you're told, let's find a role model—

FJ: Right.

EJ: And that means absolutely fucking nothing. [Fey chuckles] Um, and then all of a sudden, you're twenty-five—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Um, you're drowning in everything that's being an adult—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: No idea what you're doing—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Um, you don't really have much of a social life because you don't drink, you, uh, hate the sound of, uh, ha— hate too many loud sounds—

FJ: Right. [chuckle]

EJ: Um, y'know, kinda nerdy, and so, you're not really interested in dating cause the whole ace thing—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Um, and the SCA, for me, answers the question, well, answers a couple of questions—

FJ: Uh huh.

EJ: One, um, there's this comic, uh, Hannah Gadsby, I think, that has a bit about, where do the quiet queers go?

FJ: Oh, interesting.

EJ: Um, which, the, which, uh, wild to consider the SCA quiet but—

FJ: [laugh] Yeah, yeah, it really is.

EJ: But y'know, I'm not, I, I don't have any interest in clubs—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: I don't have any interest in [pause] drinking, or drugs, or y'know any—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Any more louder aspects.

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Um, I've never been to a drag show. I probably should go cause my mom's been to one, and I haven't. [Fey laughs] That feels weird. [Fey laughs] Um, [chuckle] but, um, yeah, so it's, that's just not for me.

FJ: Right.

EJ: Um, it also answers the question of, okay, if I hadn't come out, if I hadn't done a lot of things, if I would, if I was still in the church that I grew up in—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: I grew up very evangelical.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Um, I would not have that problem—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Because I'd be at church—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: And there'd be a lot of older adults around me—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: And I would kind of know what to do.

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: The prob— I have, you know, I've got friends I Dn— I play DnD with, right?

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: I don't have older grownups that aren't, like, workmates.

FJ: Yes.

EJ: Right? [laugh]

FJ: Yeah, yeah.

EJ: Um, so, the SCA does, like, what does being an, a nerdy adult look like?

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: You know—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: And, how do, what is it, you know, especially, I think, I mean, I don't know if you've had a similar experience, but, like, my family, it's very much, like, once people reach a certain age, they basically, like, losed all their, lost all their hobbies, and, like—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: You know, sit in the recliner to die kind of thing?

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Yeah.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Um, so yeah, what does, what does, adulthood, nerdy adulthood, where you're still interested in doing things, what does that look like?

FJ: Mhmm, mhmm.

EJ: Um, and, how, how do I become a grownup beyond just surviving?

FJ: Right.

EJ: I guess.

FJ: Yeah. Having fun too.

EJ: Having fun. Yeah.

FJ: Yeah. Um, I, [sigh] I'm curious as to your experience with the Shire of Caer Gwyn specifically, and how, um, that might differ to other Baronies and Shires you've seen so far. I mean, I know you, you've pretty much always been a part of the Shire of Caer Gwyn—

EJ: Yeah—

FJ: But just from your own experience.

EJ: I, uh, know tangentially that we are very queer. Um—

FJ: Yes. [chuckle] Yeah.

EJ: Which that is, ah, that is something that has been, like, [pause] cultivated.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: And I think with any kind of minority group, uh, SCA, this is going to be a tangent, I'm so sorry.

FJ: No, please.

EJ: Okay. So the SCA, chronically, if you go on, if you go on the Reddits, if you go on the You—Facebook—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: The, the whatever, people are always like, we need people. Yada yada yada.

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: And there's also the, why don't more people of marginalized identities play in the SCA.

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Um, and, um, cause I, you can't hear it in my voice, but I am a person of mixed race. Uh, my dad's black—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: And I look more black some days than others. Um, [chuckle] but, um, and I've talked about this with others that, [pause] if you go to a new event, imagine you are a brand-new person—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: And you go to an event, and you don't see anybody that looks like you—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: There is a low chance that you are going to go back. Especially, if, uh, you know, you might, if there's other people that look like you, you might give them three, three bad interactions.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: If nobody else looks like you, it's one.

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Um, and so that's, you know, that's racial identity.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Queer identity is, [pause] I would say, um, lik— uh, less, harder to see at first glance? I mean, it's kinda, that's kind of how it is.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Um—

FJ: It's a spectrum.

EJ: It's a spec— yeah, it's a spectrum, but also, you know, there's, there, y'know— there's people that are, [pause] I, uh, I'm trying to sa— say this without sounding like a 2000s era—

FJ: [laugh] [inaudible]

EJ: There's people that are definitely more, like, flamboyant than others.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Um, and so like, the big thing that hit me with Caer Gwyn—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: One was, um, immediately, was name pronouns.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Like, just from everybody, you know, everybody's got the little, or assorted people have the little, the ribbons—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: That have the pronoun ribbons on them—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Um, that we tend to clip to, um, clothing and stuff—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: For ribbons especially.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Um, and so that was a big thing.

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Um, the other thing was, um, you know, just not blinking an eye at people who have names that fall outside of the, their presented, er, presented gender.

FJ: Right.

EJ: Um, so you know, that's a huge thing. Um, I also, like, I came into Caer Gwyn, [pause] [chuckle] approximately, oh God, yeah. Because I started in April-ish, April, May of, it must've been May, yeah. Of 2024.

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: And [chuckle] um, the election and my sudden like flip to transition—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Was that fall. [Fey chuckles] Um, [chuckle].

FJ: Got it.

EJ: Which, there's a, something about walking into practice, telling Ursus, um, hey, I think I'm a guy and I go by Elias now, and Ursus going, cool.

FJ: [laugh] Yeah, yeah. Yes.

EJ: [laugh] And they're like, wait, mundanely or in the SCA? Because those are two different things—

FJ: Right.

EJ: We have to worry about. [chuckle]

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Um, um, so, you know, that was, that was, like, that was a huge thing. I think there's also something to be said about, like, so you create that space where people don't feel weird about that and are immediately accepted and that's cool.

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Um, there's also, like, keeping that. I remember specifically, [chuckle] when we had somebody visit, um—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Uh, Ajax, um, means nothing to recording, but whatever— [Fey chuckles] Um, you know, somebody comes in and there are, you know, there's obviously, there's neo-Nazi and white supremacist, like, dog whistles—

FJ: Of course.

EJ: That show up in SC— SCA garb all the time.

FJ: Of course, yeah, yeah, yeah.

EJ: Um, and it was, I remember all of us sitting in the room that they gave us somewhere in the Union—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: And Ajax came in; the man is in full Centurion—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Like, outfit, because he was ready for heavy practice—

FJ: Yeah, yeah.

EJ: The poor guy. Um, and everybody's just casually, like, sidling up to him. Like, you know, uh, Roland's got his, like, rainbow, uh—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Armband on, um, uh, Umbra comes by back and forth—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: You know, a couple of times.

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Um, you know, we're sh— throwing around she, him, they, whatever.

FJ: Uh huh.

EJ: Um, we need people with neopronouns in the Shire— [Fey laughs] Actually, that would be, ma— make it a little faster.

FJ: Yeah. [laugh]

EJ: Um, just basically kinda seein' like, how do we, how, is this guy cool? Like—

FJ: Right.

EJ: This, what's going on?

FJ: Right.

EJ: Um, and you know, then he was cleared, and we're all like, oh, okay, cool [breath].
Everybody breathe a sigh of relief.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Like, but that kind of, like, if you want a group that is going to be queer friendly, you have to fight for it.

FJ: Right. Exactly.

EJ: Y'know.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Physically, not physically, whatever. You can't, you can't let yourself become the Nazi bar, right?

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: The Na— y’know—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Where you let one group of Nazis in, and then all of a sudden, all the Nazis come in.

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Um, yeah. So that's kind of, that's been my experience with Caer Gwyn. Um, I know like, cause you know, you're, the [sigh] thing is, like, I don't think while I've talked about, like, the LARP being, LARP, and putting on a persona being queer—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: There's nothing inherently queer about the SCA.

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: The SCA is an organization. It's a, it's a social club.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Right. Like, it's like anything, you're going to find weird, like, pockets that are more queer or—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Pockets that are very not—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Um, anywhere. It's like, it's like the boy scouts.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Right?

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: You know, for every, for every troop you have that has girls, and trans gir– uh, and trans boys, and all of that, you also have ones that are only made up of, like, five families that are only, like, white boys.

FJ: Right.

EJ: So–

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Yeah.

FJ: I mean, I think that that's kind of what's so unique about the Shire of Caer Gwyn specifically–

EJ: Oh, yeah.

FJ: Of, of how, just how, like, welcoming–

EJ: Mmhm.

FJ: It is in terms of queer identity and, and neurodivergent identity.

EJ: Mmhm.

FJ: Um–

EJ: Well, in Caer Gwyn specifically, like, there's a ton of sword clubs in Champaign.

FJ: Oh yeah.

EJ: More than there should be. [Fey laughs] Like, an absurd amount of sword clubs.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Um, and while I know that HEMA is fairly, you know, they're, they, I, or at least the one HEMA club that I'm aware of, um, is fairly, like, they, eh, they put the rainbow flag in the, their window–

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Which honestly, for me, is enough some days.

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: [chuckle] Um, um, Caer Gwyn is more like, they, you know, they are more, um, [pause] quick to make the stand of, hey, yes—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: This is, this is who we are. This is what we stand for. And, um, so it gives the people that, you know, are looking for that kind of group—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: And want to do sword things, or want to do other various historical reenactment things, um, gives them, [pause] gives them a little more to grab onto, a little, a little, a little safer spot to be at.

FJ: Yeah. Mmhm. I mean, [clears throat] how, where do you see yourself within that structure of Shire of Caer Gwyn? Do you see yourself more just as a participant, or more, like, as a leader, um, of a propagator, of, of, the safe space or?

EJ: Um, I like to think of myself as a propagator—

FJ: Right.

EJ: At the very least. Um—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: I don't, I, I think it, I'm at the point where, eh, you know, there comes a point with, like, especially the Shire, because—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: There's po— politics and stuff, but like, you know, I'm a townie, so—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: I'm in town all the time, so—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: I'm, you know, I'm, I'm a constant presence. I, I'm a, um, I'm the Chatelaine, which means I'm the, um, local new person [pause] committee, welcoming commit- whatever- [Fey chuckles] For Chatelaine.

FJ: Yeah, yeah.

EJ: But I actually, I think I'm in the library archives as, or the, uh, Champaign library list as like, the, um, uh, Membership Director, or something, [chuckle] cause Rue had to put something down.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Um, and then, um, I'm also, I'm the Chronicler so—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: I'm trying to pull together history stuff, slowly but surely.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Um, [chuckle] and so I think, to that certain extent, like, and I'm also, I'm also helpy. Um, [chuckle] I want to at least maintain the space as it is.

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Um, for someone who is the Chatelaine, I'm not exactly extroverted.

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Like, I don't mind talking to new people, giving them ru— run down, but I don't know that I can be the buddy for the buddy system.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: I'm not good at that.

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Um, [pause] so yeah, I, you know, I try to maintain. I hesitate to call myself a leader cause that feels weird. [Fey chuckles] Um, that's a, that's a title somebody di— identifies you as, not as someth— you, it's like a nickname, right?

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Yeah. [chuckle]

FJ: That's, I, yeah, that's, that's accurate. I mean, I know you, um, you're responsi— you're responsible for Gold Key, right? And you're helping—

EJ: I am!

FJ: To—

EJ: Um, in that it lives in my garage—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: And I try to make sure that it gets to where it's supposed to go.

FJ: [chuckle] Yeah. Which Gold Key is the, the loaner gear—

EJ: It's all the—

FJ: Garb.

EJ: Loaner garb.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Um, which, God, the Gold Key needs work. [Fey chuckles] But, c'est la vie.

FJ: [chuckle] And, um, I, I believe you're also involved in the project to kind of revamp the forge, right?

EJ: Um, off and on—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: In that I have told people, hey, if, when you're ready, let me know, and I'll show up with a wire brush. [Fey chuckles] Like that's, that is my role in a sense is—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: And that's kind of just who my per— what my personality is—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Is, call me, and I'll show up.

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Like, you know, I don't, I'm not, [sigh] I'm not good about reaching out, but I will show up for people at the very least.

FJ: Mmhm. Um, I know you have, uh, kind of, the history of Würmwald under your care—

EJ: I do—

FJ: Right?

EJ: Yeah.

FJ: Yeah. Um, I was interested, if, you wanted to talk a little bit about that, and maybe, what you've found—

EJ: Oh God.

FJ: Um—

EJ: Oh.

FJ: And just, I mean, obviously it's harder since—

EJ: Yeah.

FJ: You haven't, uh, you weren't, kind of, around during that era, but, how, maybe, you've seen the Shire change from the Barony of, and the culture, from the Barony of Würmwald—

EJ: Something, cause I've done a little, I've done, well, okay. So, I've done some things—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: What I've done is, um, there was a book that was gifted to me, um—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Big air quotes— [Fey chuckles] um, [chuckle] by a Shire member, um, who pulled it out, who had it from when it was pulled out of storage—

FJ: Uh huh.

EJ: Um, that was originally a project done by the Barony of Würmwald, which predates Caer Gwyn—

FJ: Uh huh.

EJ: Um, they ended in 2019, that's when Caer Gwyn starts.

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Um, the Shire, or the, uh, Barony, [pause] and Shire, honestly, of Würmwald, starts in 1979—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Um, and there is literally, cause it's ver— it's very, it's done in, I won't say in persona.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Um, where it talks about, um, this guy, went to one of the big events up in Chicago—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: And be— with Ayreton, um, and decided, he came back down, and he decided that he wanted to, um, start a group here—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: And so he did.

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Um, his name's Albert, or something like that. I'd, have to look it up, it's—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Honestly, it's not really that important. [Fey chuckles] Um, and there, you know, the, the focus there is, uh, fighter practice, and talking about all the events—

FJ: Right.

EJ: Um, there are several people from Würmwald—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Würmwald, whatever– [Fey chuckles] um, that, go on and be, and win Crown, and become the–

FJ: Oh–

EJ: King–

FJ: Really?

EJ: And, you know, Queen of, uh, of, um, uh, the Middle Kingdom–

FJ: Right.

EJ: Which, uh, for the record, um, in order to become a King and Queen in the SCA, um, generally it's Queen, uh, King, cause let's be honest, like, we know, we know what the demographic looks like–

FJ: Right.

EJ: Um, the, you have to win a, uh, a armored combat tournament–

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Basically. Um, and then whoever reigns with you as consort is the Queen, or could be King, one day, God willing. [Fey laughs] Um–

FJ: We'll get there.

EJ: We'll get there. Um, and, so yeah, there are several of those in Würmwald that are, like, the first couple of Kings and Queens–

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Or Kings really. Um, and actually, [chuckle] the one, [chuckle] wildly, um, you wouldn't know this cause you've not been down this rabbit hole–

FJ: No.

EJ: Um, Michael of Boarshaven–

FJ: Hmm.

EJ: Um, is, like, the dreaded King in Midrealm history—

FJ: Oh, really?

EJ: Um, and I've been doing, h— he popped up, and the, he's a whole research rabbit hole that I'm kind of going down and also, periodically, I'm like, this is an actual guy that's probably still alive somewhere, and I need to calm it. [Fey chuckles] Um, but, uh, he, yeah, he won Crown, and it was his first year of the SCA—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: And, um, then promptly, he is the reason that there are crown jewels missing in the—

FJ: Ooh.

EJ: Uh, crown. He is, um, there, his consort was the first Queen to ever abdicate.

FJ: Ooh.

EJ: It was bad—

FJ: Ooh.

EJ: Um, and he's vilified a lot in, like, the SCA, like, the annals of history—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Um, and then, I've read some other accounts that are like, yeah, this guy, um, in his day job, he got a traumatic brain injury—

FJ: Oh.

EJ: Right after Crown—

FJ: Interesting.

EJ: And it fucked him up.

FJ: Interesting.

EJ: I don't know if I can sa— sorry if I can't—

FJ: No.

EJ: Swear. Oh, okay cool.

FJ: Yeah, you're fine.

EJ: Um, which, you know, that's, something. And I haven't decided what I'm going to do with it. Um, having the whole, like, the book has really, [pause] I've been debating a lot about what needs to be done with it. Um—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: I hear— somebody said that it should be donated to the library as just, like, you know, an evidence of the RSO—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: And I'm like, that's cool, but also, it's ours.

FJ: Right—

EJ: Um—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: And I'm like, I would like to finish it—

FJ: Right.

EJ: Or, at least, Würmwald's part of it—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: And then, I don't know, if we start something for Caer Gwyn, or if we just combine them.

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Um, but a lot of that, you know, so there's a lot of that focus on, um, armored combat. Then, you get into, um, I went through the Daily Illini's, all of their, um, ads, and, like, car— um, columns and stuff.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: And, you know, there used to be a calligrapher's night. Um, there is this whole thesis that somebody wrote, 2016? 20– 2006, maybe? I don't know. That talks about Würmwald having a dance guild–

FJ: Mmm.

EJ: At one point. In fact, um, Sofya and Guenin, their, um, upstairs–

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Um, were you up there when–

FJ: Briefly.

EJ: Briefly, okay.

FJ: Yes.

EJ: They used to practice dance up there.

FJ: Oh, nice.

EJ: Um, and so, like, um, and it, I, I forget who tol– told me this. Probably, it might've been Rue or Roland. Um, but, you know, the Shire, er, the Barony, grew, and it shrunk–

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: And it grew–

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: It's, [pause] being in a college town–

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Everybody's transient when we, when you get down to it.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Um, people come, they go, interest waxes and wanes. One bad apple chases everybody else away and then–

FJ: Right.

EJ: People decide to build it back up from the rubble.

FJ: Right.

EJ: Um, Würmwald, also, is not just the only precursor to Caer Gwyn, there's also St. Carol on the Moor—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Have not found nearly as much about that. I need to perhaps fist fight the Kingdom historian cause I want to see—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: If he's got anything.

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Um, probably not literally fist fight. [Fey chuckles] Eh, maybe. Um, but, uh, it's, like, there is, [pause] it's, it's been changing ever since. And—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: You know, it's, it, [sigh] and then, um, Caer Gwyn, right, comes into inception in 2019, right before the lockdowns of the pandemic—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Um, which is a whole nother, like, big, uh, part of the history.

FJ: Right.

EJ: Um, [pause] so yeah. I'm going through, [sigh] um, more annals, and I'd like to get at least, like a, I don't know, it's not even a Wikipedia, but, like, some kind of timeline, or something, to share with people at some point.

FJ: Mm.

EJ: I find, cause, you know, people come, and get into the SCA for all sorts of things—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: I mean, they like to sword fight, they like to craft, they [pause] like to do archery. I'm thinking of other things that they do in the SCA. [Elias and Fey chuckle] You know, they do bardic, they like to create, they like to help, they—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Like to be part of community.

FJ: Right.

EJ: I think [pause] the anthropology and, like, the folklore that comes up within the SCA

FJ: Mm.

EJ: Is fascinating.

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Because it is only, like, you know, uh, starts in, what, like, the sixties—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Or something. [inaudible] that's what AS, a, a, anno societatis one is.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: And we're at [sixty-one].

FJ: Oh!

EJ: Yeah.

FJ: Nice.

EJ: Um, so, you know, it's, [pause] I find it really interesting why, you know, how people have allowed this society to grow—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: And, how, this particular area has kind of been a part of that.

FJ: Yeah. Yeah.

[pause]

EJ: So yeah.

FJ: Very cool. [chuckle] Um, in terms of, like, awards in the greater SCA, I wanted to touch on that. Um, do you have a particular award or, um, accolade that you've earned that you're especially proud of?

EJ: I've got [chuckle] an AoA. That's it.

FJ: [laugh] Oh—

EJ: Um—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Yeah. AoA is the Award of Arms. It's the, um, you have stuck around for at least a year, and we really like you, so we'd like you to stay—

FJ: Right—

EJ: Please.

FJ: Yeah, yeah.

EJ: Here's, here's this, here's this cool piece of paper. [chuckle]

FJ: Yeah, yeah.

EJ: Um, and it's, you know, it's nice. It's—

FJ: Uh huh.

EJ: Whatever. Um, I'm glad to, kinda, check that off my list. I'm not a, I don't, um, [pause] I don't know that I'm really aspire to any particular Peerage. So, I'm not really—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Like, actively looking at anything at the moment.

FJ: Mmhm, mmhm.

EJ: Um, but yeah. It's cool. I think, um, something, cause the Middle Kingdom, Midrealm, um, is the only one that does, um, scrolls and stuff, and makes—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: The AoA into an actual, like, feels like an award—

FJ: Right.

EJ: Um, which, I think is just, kind of, a really interesting little bit of inter-kingdom anthropology—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Um, that also, kind of, feels very Midwestern to me.

FJ: Yeah. [chuckle]

EJ: Ho— Honestly, like, there are certain aspects of the middle, mi— uh, of Midrealm that feel so Midwestern.

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Cause you, you know, have you, have you ever seen them when they pa— call all the Pelicans up—

FJ: [chuckle] Yeah.

EJ: It's like—

FJ: Yep. Yes.

EJ: 75% of the, like, [laugh] [the audience] yeah.

FJ: [laugh] Yeah, yeah.

EJ: They're like, it is, you know—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Yeah.

FJ: Do you, do you think that's, maybe, kind of a, a core part of the Shire? Is that kind of, like, helping, like, we're all going to pitch in?

EJ: I think it is a, like, one is an incen— I think it is probably the only reason that it has lasted, you know—

FJ: Uh.

EJ: Through the waxings and the wanings.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Um, is that, there is, there are, are at least people willing to bow out, and then take up another, you know, to step in.

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Um, [pause] I, [sigh] I heard some, I think of Markéta, talk about us having, like, a big service culture, um, which I didn't realize that, one, that everybody wasn't like this but—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: You know, whatever. Um, [chuckle] but, it is, like, [pause] to me, it speaks to, very, of like, [pause] people who were always raised, you know, look, look for something else to do, look for something else to, if I stop, I'll die kind of thing.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Um, which, boy, that's a— [Fey chuckles] yeah, that's a trauma response itself but— [Fey laughs] um, it is, I do think, it is, it is, part of the culture, I—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Mean, we've got two Pelicans in Shire that are active.

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: [pause] Yeah, two. That I can think of off the top of my head. Um, and so, I mean, many more that have, I, I haven't looked, but I would be almost positive that Dragon's Heart, which is the, um, very beginner, entry level service award—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Is probably the most common. Or no, I'm sorry, it's not Dragon's Heart. Purple Fret.

FJ: Purple Fret, yeah.

EJ: Um, which is the beginning level service award, is probably one of the most common, um, awards in the Shire.

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: There's actually a Purple Fretty, which is the group version of that—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: For the Shire for—

FJ: Uh huh.

EJ: Something. I think it's a maidens somewhere.

FJ: [sigh] Yeah, that sounds—

EJ: I can't—

FJ: Right.

EJ: I can't rem— I've got copies of it— [Fey sighs] at home somewhere.

FJ: Nice.

EJ: Yeah.

FJ: Um, are there any people that you've talked to, or, um, anyone that you know that's, kind of, been a part of the culture prior to the Shire of Caer Gwyn that you've been in conversation with?

EJ: Not really.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Um, I mean, I'll, you know, Ursus, and, uh—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Uh, Rue and Roland will chatter periodically—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: And I just sit there, and I listen. [Fey chuckles] You know.

FJ: Absorb—

EJ: Absorb—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: And I'm, like, "Oh, that's interesting."

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Um, I know that it hasn't always been like this—

FJ: Right.

EJ: I mean, you know, it's, the, especially, I know Rue and Roland have been a big proponents of—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: You know, of, keeping, keeping, keeping things good.

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: [laugh] Um—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: But, uh, [pause] um, and, you know, everybody pitches in on it. But there's, I, you know, I hear that, you know, we had a huge falling out a couple years, er, not, before the Shire, I think, formed or something like that, and—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: A bunch of people left, and then—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Some people came back—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: And, you know, it's just, [pause] things change—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: People change.

FJ: Do you think, uh, that's, kind of, part of why the, the culture of the Shiregwyn, uh, the Shire of Caer Gwyn, has shifted so much, is because—

EJ: Oh, as a reaction—

FJ: People are—

EJ: I, I think there's some of that, yeah.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: I think it's also, like, you can say that it's reaction internally within the Shire itself—

FJ: Right.

EJ: But it's also a reaction to the world at large—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Right? Like, you're too young, but— [Fey laughs] [Elias chuckles] I mean—

FJ: Right.

EJ: I grew up, I grew up in the early 2000s—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Where, like, you know, the, the, the big, uh, dramatic soap opera reveal was that a character was gay—

FJ: Right.

EJ: Like, like—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Right, you know, like—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: God forbid they'd be trans too, y'know?

FJ: Yeah, yeah.

EJ: [laugh] Um, but, you know, people have, you know, the, there's something that I think is really interesting, and, I've, I've seen people comment on it online and stuff, is that, um, we're periodically in the history, you know, you know, there will be this permissiveness about homosexual— [sigh] sorry— [Fey chuckle] Um, about queer identity, eh, homosexual behavior, whatever.

FJ: Yeah, yeah.

EJ: Um, that's how they put it.

FJ: Uh huh.

EJ: Um, [chuckle] that, um, it'll be really permissive, it'll be really cool, and everybody will be really chill, and then something, like, cracks down—

FJ: Right.

EJ: You see that, you see that Na— with the Nazis.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Um, and, um, something somebody's put out is, it has become, because of the internet

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Ugh, um, it has come to the point where you can't put it back in the closet as easily.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Whereas before, it was something that, you know, was in very small groups, it has blossomed into, you know, you have online communities all over the place, and you're able to connect with people in your community without being afraid that they're gonna, you know, throw you in jail or—

FJ: Right.

EJ: Something like that.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Um, and that, like, so that permissiveness definitely allows for the Shire, I think, to be a lot more open about, hey, we're LGBTQ friendly.

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Um, and, that cracked, attempted crackdown, by the current political administration—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Is, allows, or causes the reaction of, hey, we are LGBTQ friendly.

FJ: Right.

EJ: And we will be. And you are safe here.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: And fuck the haters, I don't know.

FJ: Yeah, yeah.

EJ: Yeah.

FJ: No, I, I think that's really powerful, [chuckle] and, um, it's, I mean, I think you've already kind of answered this question, but, um, do you think that's part of the reason why the Shire, or specifically the Shire of Caer Gwyn, appeals to you so much, and the SCA appeals to you so much?

EJ: Um, [pause] yes and no.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Um, so I was already involved in the SCA before I came out.

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: And I think if they had, if it had been not as friendly, I would not have stayed.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Um, but because it was, and I felt like it was a safe space to come out, I did.

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Um, and, like, that, I, yeah, because, like, um, I mean, I was just, [sigh] because you can have more about me, whatever.

FJ: [chuckle] No, you're fine.

EJ: Um, so, I grew up, I grew up evangelical.

FJ: Right.

EJ: Um, I, you know, I, the more I think about it, the more I do think that I had, like, a weird bringing up, even within that sphere.

FJ: Uh huh.

EJ: Because I don't know how you raise f— four children as gender neutrally as possible under a very, like, patriarchal, like, heavy-duty evangelical Christian religion, but my mother somehow did. Um, so she's got, you know, because she's got a trans ki— a trans kid, a non-binary [chuckle] kid, uh, a, agender kid? No, I think, female these days, so a, a, a, girl and a boy.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Um, [chuckle] the whole set. Um, but I, you know, I didn't hear about the term non-binary, my first introduction to the idea that trans women existed was probably a joke somewhere.

FJ: Right.

EJ: My first introduction to the idea that trans men existed was an interview on an Oprah at some point—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: That was a, um, a guy that was pregnant.

FJ: [inaudible]

EJ: Full beard, and was pregnant, y'know, that's, that was the—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Shocker.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Um, I didn't hear the term non-binary until, [chuckle] I was, [pause] twenty-one, living my first apartment—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: In, [pause] 2019? No, not 2019, no, actually, I think it was, yeah.

FJ: Mm.

EJ: It was, uh, whenever Steven Universe, um—

FJ: Oh God—

EJ: Like, right around Stevonnie, or something like that—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Or no, it wasn't Stevonnie, because they were on Homeworld, it was after, this is, so not relevant, I'm sorry. [laugh]

FJ: No, please—

EJ: So, this, this was—

FJ: Go for it.

EJ: After Steven gets back from Homeworld—

FJ: Right.

EJ: Um, I, like, had binge-watched all of Steven Universe—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: In the course of, like, a week.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: It was my first apartment, I was living by myself, I was very lonely, I–

FJ: Right.

EJ: Had a crappy computer, and I was just watching this show that my siblings told me, uh, to watch.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: So, heard non-binary for the first time in regards to, like, the Rebecca Sugar. And I was like, oh, cool. That feels weird.

FJ: Uh huh.

EJ: Um, but I was still, like, I was still heavily involved in the, in the org– in the cult at the time.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Um, and then COVID hits, and I realized, oh, I need to stop doing all of these things that are making me feel bad. I remember, specifically, like, getting up to put a me– a skirt on to go to a meeting, or to go–

FJ: Uh.

EJ: Go to a meeting, and, like, just bawling, and realizing I couldn't do it anymore.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Um, and so, you know, I, so, I was just non-binary for a little bit. Um, and I still, like, very closeted. Like–

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: You know, I was, basically, I was trying to get out of the cult and avoid everything else.

FJ: Right, yeah.

EJ: Um, and then, you know, when, you know, finally leave, and I'm doing my things, and everything's good, and whatever. Still kind of feel weird. Um, I [chuckle] saw, um, 2024, I saw, um, have you ever seen I Saw the TV Glow?

FJ: I need to.

EJ: Okay.

FJ: I need to—

EJ: Movie—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: So good it made me, um, get, get a per— get a uh, uh, an, a testosterone, uh, appointment. Um, [chuckle] and it, there's this whole idea in it, basically, that, um, it's not too late. It's never too late.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Um, and, [chuckle] Trump was elected, like, a month later—

FJ: Ooh.

EJ: And, I didn't have my passport—

FJ: Right.

EJ: My friends were all, like, were all, because we were also talking about, like, doing an a, uh, a, um, trip, la— uh, 2025, so last year.

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Um, but I need to get my passport anyway. So, I went to the post office, and I got my passport with the X on it, and my previous name, which is probably not gonna bi— come back to bite me in the butt. Um, if it is, this is, you know, this is historical foreshadowing, or whatever

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Um, [chuckle] and, um, [pause] um, so I got my passport, got my testosterone thing, um, decided on a name, tested it out to the group chat—

FJ: Yep.

EJ: And the group chat was like, yeah, sure, we'll go with that. And I was like, oh, okay, cool. Um, and then I literally, I walked into practice that Tuesday, and I was like, "Ursus, I think I go by Elias now." [Fey laughs] He was like, "Cool." [Elias and Fey laugh] Um, but, like, I wouldn't have done that if I didn't think the answer was already gonna to be cool—

FJ: Yeah. [Elias laughs] Yeah.

EJ: Like, you know—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Like, I don't, there's, um, there is a very common refrain in the queer community, especially, like, on the very chronically online kids that—

FJ: Mmm.

EJ: You have to live your truth, no matter what, even if it's your, dangerous for you. You shouldn't.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Don't do that. Take—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Care of yourself.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: There is always time.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Um, don't get me wrong, I, trust me, I understand what it feels like to want to die. Because of where, the box you're in—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: But, like, you know, don't come out until it's safe. And, eh, once you have that safe place, cling to it with every fiber of your being.

FJ: Oh, yeah. For sure.

EJ: Yeah.

FJ: Um, let's see. [pause] Do, uh, do you have heraldry, is that—

EJ: [inaudible] I do have heraldry. Um, I, well, okay. I have heraldry that's currently in comment, um—

FJ: Ah.

EJ: And I've been going back and forth with [chuckle] Meryem—

FJ: Right.

EJ: For a while—

FJ: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

EJ: Trying to figure it out. Um, the most recent iteration that I think is going to be okay, I actually, I need to send it to her so I can, we can get it conflict checked—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Or whatever. Um, I'm not gonna, I don't know enough French to tell you the blazon. [Fey laughs] Um, but it, blazon is the fancy, like, French term for what the heraldry des— the heraldic description is.

FJ: Right.

EJ: But it is, um, a blue shield with a white, like, point—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: I think. Or was it white? No, it's not with the white point. It's with the, um, white, uh, ring around it—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Um, and then it is, uh, dandelion with three heads.

FJ: Oh, nice.

EJ: Um, the three heads is new because—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Apparently all flowers is flowers in heraldry—

FJ: Uh huh.

EJ: Um, and, uh, there was, I was gonna have to fight somebody in, like, Meridies for it, or something—

FJ: Ooh.

EJ: Who has got a ca— chrysanthemum.

FJ: Oh, I see—

EJ: Um—

FJ: I see.

EJ: [laugh] Um, they, cause heraldry all has to be, like, individual, you can't—

FJ: Right.

EJ: You can't have somebody else's—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Without special permission. [Fey chuckles] Um, and you wanna know why? [sigh]

FJ: Yes—

EJ: I might as well. Well—

FJ: Please—

EJ: Okay.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: So, when I was 10 years old, which, oh, God, okay. [Fey chuckles] So, when I was 10 years old, my mother hands me this book series called Protector of the Small by—

FJ: Uh huh.

EJ: Tamora Pierce.

FJ: Okay.

EJ: Um, Tamora Pierce is a fantastic, um, writer. She wrote, um, feminist, um, teenage girl novels, basically—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: From 1993 to 2004. She's still writing, but those, these the, the, ma— main ones.

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Um, it's very second-wave femini— I think it's second-wave feminism.

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Um, so, yeah, some of it doesn't hold up today, but—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: She's not actively defunding trans, uh, rights. So, she's got something on her [that puts her above JK Rowling]— [Fey chuckles] Um, [chuckle] um, and anyway, and, um, my favorite one was Protector of the Small, which is literally the only protagonist that doesn't have any magic.

FJ: Right.

EJ: Um, it's Kel. She's great, I still want to be Kel when I grow up.

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Um, fantastic.

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Um, and there's this whole thing about, she is the first girl to openly train as a knight in, like, two hundred years or something like—

FJ: Oh, okay.

EJ: That. And they revive the heraldry for lady knights at the end of Squire—

FJ: Oh.

EJ: And the lady knights have a distaff border—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Which is the white border that goes around the edge of the shield.

FJ: Right, yeah, yeah, yeah.

EJ: Um, so I decided I want that for my heraldry.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: We're going to see if I get it, God willing— [Elias and Fey laugh] [And] the creek don't rise and all.

FJ: Yeah—

EJ: That.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Um, and then the dandelions are [sigh] resistance. Dandelions are great, you can—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Eat them. Um, you can eat pretty much every part of them. Um, they are infinitely reproducing—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: I don't know if you've ever tried to get rid of dandelions or, you know, you know de— what it's like—

FJ: Oh, yeah.

EJ: Right?

FJ: Oh yeah.

EJ: Um, you can't get rid of dandelions—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: And they're pretty.

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: They're, they're an invasive weed, but they're not doing any harm.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Um, and I like them. So, dandelions.

FJ: What more do you need?

EJ: Yeah.

FJ: Um, does that tie into your SCA name at all?

EJ: No. [Fey and Elias laugh] My SCA name, um, is a bad joke at this point—

FJ: Ah—

EJ: Um—

FJ: Okay.

EJ: I, because my SCA name, actually, uh, I chose it originally at Belegarth.

FJ: Okay.

EJ: Um, where you, also, you have to have a persona name. Um, and so it was Lye cinder

FJ: Oh.

EJ: Which, if you're making soap, you take the ashes from cinders to—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Make lye.

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Um, and there was a, there was a joke that, you know, it's either you need the soap to wash out all the dirt afterwards, because you got your ass kicked—

FJ: Uh huh.

EJ: Or you, you know, eventually you're so clean, that, you know, it's, like, soap, clean fighting—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Or whatever. Um, and, you know, Lysander's not really a historical name. So, I was like, oh, Lysander, that's, it follows actually the same, like, construction that I chose for picking my mundane name—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Which is, um, I need something that sounds enough like what I have been called my entire life. [Fey chuckles] That I'm going to turn around and not look like an idiot when people are yelling across the hall, room for me.

FJ: Yeah, yeah.

EJ: Um, a lot of my, uh, uh, criteria for tur— changing, or for choosing names does seem to rely on me assuming that somebody's going to be yelling at me from across— [Fey laughs] somewhere, which probably should be analyzed at some point. [Fey laughs] But, it's fine. [chuckle]

FJ: That's okay.

EJ: Um, so Lysander of Caer Gwyn, um, of Caer Gwyn is like, it's the newbie thing.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Um, and honestly, I'm probably going to keep it until I find something I like.

FJ: Uh huh.

EJ: I'm not, like, a period name, like, guru.

FJ: Uh huh.

EJ: So, I don't care enough that I want to actively find a Greek, or Elizabethan, um—

FJ: Right.

EJ: Last name to go with it. Um, but, because also, like, I'm very, I'm a very strong proponent, I thi—think to a certain extent where you're, where you come from does matter.

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Not in the, like, the judgy way—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: But in the, every place you live leaves a mark on you in some way.

FJ: Yeah, for sure.

EJ: Um, so, I'm, you know, I'm keeping the Caer Gwyn thing. My persona as it sits, um, [chuckle] is a very, it's very, like, Elizabethan, like, actor-ish almost. It's very, they don't have this in, in period, so pre-1600s—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: But it was very, like, dandy.

FJ: Mm. Mmhm.

EJ: Um, you know, uh, Georgian dandy, or Regency dandy.

FJ: Uh huh.

EJ: And very much, like, I am, um, a professional guest. I am, you know—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Just wandering. I have no money, but I'm showing up at people's houses, and I'm regaling them with wild tales—

FJ: Right.

EJ: And probably sleeping with their daughters in [Fey laughs] the process, so—

FJ: Right.

[inaudible]

EJ: But yeah, not really. But it's, I would say, that, the, I'm probably keeping the name, but, um, the, uh, heraldry probably means a little more to me than the name—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Does.

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: So.

FJ: Um, in terms of events—

EJ: Yeah.

FJ: Are there any that you particularly look forward to, or that, past events that you have specifically fond memories of or?

EJ: Um, [chuckle] so my first event [chuckle] was Midlands Regional War Practice—

FJ: Ah, okay.

EJ: In, out somewhere around Illiton.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: This is not a regular event it—

FJ: Right.

EJ: Moves all the time—

FJ: Yeah.

Elisa: It was, like, 90-degree heat, and I really wanted to go do sword things—

FJ: Yeah, yeah.

EJ: And I got, probably got heat stroke in the process.

FJ: Oh. [laugh]

EJ: Um, that's where I got authorized, it was fun.

FJ: Uh huh.

EJ: Um, and so, that was great.

FJ: Uh huh.

EJ: Um, I, um, after that, I think the next event was MAD—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Uh, which is Midlands Academy of Defense—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: And I enjoy MAD. I'm going to try to do a better job this year, and I said this last year, of, like, trying to not just walk around and be awkward and—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Actually, maybe go to a class, [laugh]

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Because I feel constantly, like, oh, I, I don't want to do this, but I don't want to do this, but I don't—

FJ: Uh huh.

EJ: Want to just stand here.

FJ: Uh huh.

EJ: Um, [pause] I, um, and then, so I did MAD, and then I did Maidens next. I think Maidens was my next one that I did—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Yeah. Um, and Maidens was cool.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Um, I still, like, I really enjoyed this last Maidens, even the [chuckle] one that we did in the, uh, um, iHotel was— [Fey chuckles] that was insane—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: And we should never do it again. [Fey laughs] Um, [chuckle] but, you know, it was great.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Um, I really enjoyed, uh, Royal, er, Royal University of the Midrealm—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Up in Chicago.

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: I don't think we're going to get that again. I think it'd be cool, but I don't think it'll happen.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Um, but RUM is also one of those things that, I do this, you know, I will put on RUM lectures while—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: I'm just, like, cleaning or something—

FJ: Mm.

EJ: Because I'm a nerd.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Um, cause I, you know, I like history shit.

FJ: Uh huh.

EJ: Um, so RUM was cool. I do, don't get me wrong, I love going to events and fighting, even though I get my ass kicked every time—

FJ: Uh huh.

EJ: But I also, like I go, like going to events and not fighting, and getting to do the, all the cool class stuff—

FJ: Right, yeah.

EJ: And there's that overlap there that you can't really do everything—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Um, and breathe at the same time. [chuckle]

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: So, um, Awakenings is nice, because I, Awakenings feels very springy to me. I—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Don't know, did you go last year?

FJ: I did not. Um, my first one was going to be this upcoming one, actually.

EJ: Oh, yeah, nice.

FJ: Yes.

EJ: Excellent.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Um, yeah, Awakenings is cool. Um, I have a fondness for Courting on the River—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Um, because it was, like, the first event that I decided I wanted to go separately—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: And when Roland showed up, it, we were both, like, what are you doing here? [Fey and Elias laugh] Um—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Um, but it's up in, ah, Quad Cities—

FJ: Uh huh.

EJ: And my partners live up there, so I—

FJ: Oh, nice.

EJ: Was going to go up there anyway—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: That's that kind of thing.

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Um, yeah. I think that's really all the big ones I've been to.

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: I've got plans to go to more this year, but [sigh] we will see. I had plans to go to more last year, and then—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Everything happened with my house, so—

FJ: Ah.

EJ: I couldn't.

FJ: Right.

EJ: Yeah.

FJ: Um, I know you talked about this a little bit earlier in the interview in terms of the positions you hold in the Shire—

EJ: Mmhm.

FJ: Um, do you have any hand in helping plan for events that the Shire puts on at all?

EJ: Um, not really. I have considered autocrating an event of—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Some sort. Um, but I've been told that I'm not allowed to put my hand up for anything anymore.

FJ: Ah.

EJ: Um, [chuckle] so I don't.

FJ: Right.

EJ: Mostly what I do is, I'm like, okay, cool, so we're gonna do x, y, and z. What do you want me to bring?

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Um, because I also, like, I've got the loaner garb but—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: I also have, like, the big water jug things.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Um, so, like, for MAD, I am, the, I am, er, texting Ursus, like, what do you want me to do? Like— [Fey chuckles] what do you want me to do with this?

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Um, I try to volunteer for carpool—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Even though I, sometimes, I really want that drive home to, like, decompress. [chuckle]

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Um, so, you know, I do periodically, um, especially with, like, MAD, I was like, yeah, I'll ferry people back and forth, it's fine.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Um, um, I also, like, I, you know, I go to the meetings—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: So, I do try to make sure that I voice, like, things about, you know, my thoughts on things, at least.

FJ: Right.

EJ: Like, with the new practice space, and that—

FJ: Right.

EJ: Kind of thing. Or when, um, because we switched this last year from instead of doing the Pride Parade—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: To having a table—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: I think that was a great switch. [laugh]

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: I'm hoping we're going to keep it.

FJ: Uh huh.

EJ: Um, of, like, I was like, yeah, okay, let's do this, and I'll sign up, I'll do a couple of shifts, and that kind of thing.

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: So, I've been, at least there in a supporting role. Um, I don't know if I'm at the point where I want to plan things, mostly because I would be exhausted trying to do—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: All of the things I do, but—

FJ: No, that's fair. That's very fair. Okay, well, I think this might be my last question.

EJ: Okay.

FJ: Um, in terms of the Shire of Caer Gwyn's community—

EJ: Mmhm.

FJ: Um, what, or, I guess, just in general, community, what, what does that mean to you? Like, when you think of community, or maintaining community?

EJ: [pause] Maintaining community, I think, is weird—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Because, like, I mean, it is, I have said that it is something that needs to directly be maintained—

FJ: Right.

EJ: But the heart of community is just living in it—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Right? And living in it means being present, at the very least.

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Um, I also, like, I know I carry a lot of baggage from, like, my upbringing and stuff—

FJ: Right.

EJ: Um, and so, a lot of that is, like, well, is so-and-so here? Well, if they're not here, like, are they okay, we haven't seen them recently.

FJ: Uh huh.

EJ: Um, so, I guess it means being aware of people.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: At the very least. Um, if not, you know, in their business. [chuckle] Um, it also means, [sigh] I don't know, it means to me being, like, like, I don't completely unmask when I'm at eve— when I'm at, uh, Shire meetings—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: But I'm, like, 90% of the way there.

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Like, it means, for me, it means showing up and being more myself than I am at work.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Or at home.

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: I, the, there's a lot of talk about third spaces right now—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: And, [pause] I am firmly of the opinion, [sigh] that you cannot intentionally create a third space, and anybody who says so is trying to sell you something.

FJ: Oh, okay.

EJ: Um, the idea of a third space is, you know, you've got home and you've got work, and so you need somewhere to exist outside of that.

FJ: Right.

EJ: Um, there is a problem, I don't know, I don't, this is gonna be a tangent—

FJ: No, please.

EJ: There is a problem, there is a problem with third spaces, and, like, what do you do about homeless people, right?

FJ: Uh huh.

EJ: Like, that's the thing.

FJ: Uh huh.

EJ: So, I less consider a third space to be an actual physical space—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: And more consider it to be a place that you can go—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: With people.

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Um, and the people are the space. [chuckle]

FJ: Right, yeah.

EJ: Um, so, yeah, I show, you know, I, means showing up to meetings. Um, I will go to fight practice because it is the, you know, it's our weekly time anyway with everybody.

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: I will go, [chuckle] even if, um, even if I don't feel like fighting, and I'll just sit.

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Or if I know that I'm going to be horribly overstimulated by fighting, [chuckle] I will just sit—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Um, and hang out. Um, it means, you know, [sigh] I keep an ey— ear to the ground if, like, I'm chronically online, [sigh] um—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: So I'm on my phone. And, you know, if something pops up in the Discord, I try to at least look at it—

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Even if I don't respond to it.

FJ: Right.

EJ: Um, and it just means being, [pause] keeping, [pause] keeping abreast of what's going on.

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Even if I'm not directly involved in it.

FJ: Yeah. That makes sense.

EJ: Yeah. [pause]

FJ: Well, if there's any other closing thoughts you have, feel free to share.

EJ: Um, fuck. [FJ and Elias laugh] You know, I don't know. Like, it's, the, the, the [sigh] I don't know. SCA is a bunch of nerdy shit—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: And, you know, I'm, I've only been officially queer, I think, since, for, oh, no, it's been seven years now. I don't even have to say, give it the caveat anymore. [Fey laughs] Um, but it's, [sigh] it's probably been the, one of the better choices I've made to continue to involve myself in. Like—

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: To at least keep myself sane.

FJ: Mmhm.

EJ: Yeah.

FJ: Yeah.

EJ: Yeah.

FJ: Well, thank you very much for sitting down with me today I very—

EJ: No problem.

FJ: Much appreciate it.

EJ: No problem.

FJ: Um, let me know if you have any other questions. Um, you're always welcome to email me, or, the [sigh] um, my professor whose details are—

EJ: In there somewhere.

FJ: On the sheet—

EJ: Yeah.

FJ: I gave you, yep. Um, this, uh, just to close out, it is now 7:13 PM. Um, and this is the end of the interview. Thank you—