

### **Sangfielle 34: Passage on the Jade Moon Pt. 3**

Transcriber: robotchangeling

**Austin:** *Sangfielle* is a series that draws on elements of dark fantasy, horror, and gothic fiction. As such, a list of content warnings will always be made available in the episode description.

**Austin:** We all were on a boat, and the boat was pulling in to the Bridge Cathedral. As a reminder, this cathedral is this kind of massive bridge that houses a number of train lines passing through it.

**[Music begins: “Sangfielle” by Jack de Quidt]**

**Austin (as job giver):** There's an infestation on the *Blue Wind*. More annoying than anything, a little dangerous. Any takers?

**Austin:** And everyone kind of like, [groans].

**Dre (as Chine):** I'm not from around here, but I'm a Cleaver, so if you've got an infestation...

**Keith:** I was just gonna like take something from the church or something.

**Keith (as Lyke):** I just— I feel like I have a job now. I didn't...

**Dre (as Chine):** I mean, you don't...you don't have to. I'm not like...I'm not forcing you.

**Keith (as Lyke):** I can't just not...you're gonna get yourself killed. Or at least if you did, I would feel really bad about like going to the bookstore or something.

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** What are you guys up to over here?

**Keith (as Lyke):** Oh, hey, Hazard. We're... [sighs] Chine signed us up to go on the train. Do you know Chine? This is Chine.

**Austin:** Hazard, looking up from the ground in front of it, you see all of that kind of magnetized musculature start to like—

**Sylvia:** Oh no.

**Austin:** —shake and vibrate and undulate. It starts to— the whole gandy king, all of its many mouths start hacking and coughing. And then, pulling itself through their mouths, arrives the Ravening Beast, howling, a sort of sleek, black, bloody canine in front of you. Well, the gandy king's been dealt with, everybody! [Keith laughs]

**Sylvia:** All right! Uh, mission accomplished. Let's get out of here!

**Dre:** Uh, Chine does not.

**Austin:** All right.

**Sylvia:** Uh...

**Keith:** No?

**Dre:** No!

**Jack:** Oh no! [Sylvia and Jack laugh]

**Austin:** My hands—

**Jack:** This is a fucking money pit. Oh, dear me.

**Austin:** [into hands, pained] Oooh! Aaah!

**Dre:** You didn't have to come with! [Sylvia laughs]

**Jack:** You should have gone through the portal! You should have gone through the portal!

**Austin:** You find yourself writing two stories at once, about a great Cleaver who refused to back down and who fought everything she could. The kind of end of it is she realizes that, in giving her life to the hunt in this way, she has started to recognize that everything can be hunted. And you don't remember writing this, but the Course flew through you.

**[song ends]**

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

**Dre:** Hey. You can find me on Twitter at [@swandre3000](https://twitter.com/swandre3000).

**Austin:** Ali Acampora.

**Ali:** Um, hi. [laughing slightly] You can find me over at— what happened there? [laughs]

**Austin:** I don't know. [laughter]

**Dre:** You good? You good?

**Austin:** You good?

**Jack:** You okay, Ali?

**Keith:** Sorry, at...?

**Ali:** My voice did a thing like I was from the 1970s. I— sorry. [Sylvia laughs] [Ali clears throat] Hi.  
[Ali and Art laugh]

**Austin:** Did you say— wait. Did you say your voice did a thing from—

**Janine:** This is what happens when you don't get it out of your system beforehand.

**Austin:** Did you say your voice did a thing from the 1970s?

**Jack:** From the 1970s.

**Art:** That is what Ali said, yes.

**Sylvia:** Uh huh.

**Keith:** Time.is, that's time-based.

**Austin:** It took me a few minutes to register. What's the thing that voices stopped doing in 1980?

**Ali:** [laughs softly] It was like in— I was like, um...I was a *Columbo* villain for a second there.

**Austin:** Mm, mm-hmm.

**Ali:** Hi.

**Janine:** Was that also the 70s? [Ali laughs]

**Keith:** Hi, Ali.

**Ali:** I'm Alicia Acampora. You can find me over at [@ali\\_west](#) on Twitter. You can find the show over at [@friends\\_table](#).

**Austin:** Also joining us is Sylvi Clare.

**Sylvia:** Hi, I'm Sylvia. You can find me on Twitter at [@sylvibullet](#) and you can listen to my other show *Emojidrome* wherever you get your podcasts.

**Austin:** Jack de Quidt.

**Jack:** Hi there. You can find me on Twitter at [@notquitereal](#) and buy any of the music featured on the show at [notquitereal.bandcamp.com](#).

**Austin:** Art Martinez-Tebbel.

**Art:** Hey, you can find me on Twitter at [@atebbel](#), and if you want to email the show, it's [friendsatthetable@gmail.com](mailto:friendsatthetable@gmail.com), but I'm only checking those emails on Mondays, so. [Austin and Jack laugh]

**Ali:** I answer most of them. [laughs]

**Austin:** Ali does. [Jack and Janine laugh] Ali, shoutout—

**Keith:** 'Cause Art only checks on Monday.

**Art:** [laughing] 'Cause I only check 'em on Monday.

**Austin:** Yeah. [Keith, Ali, and Janine laugh] Shoutouts to Ali who recently responded to... [Ali and Austin laugh] Someone emailed us—and also every other podcaster I know, by the way—to ask if we wanted to do some NFT work.

**Janine:** No.

**Jack:** Oh no.

**Austin:** Not actually doing NFT work, right? Just selling their NFTs, advertising their NFTs maybe, something like that.

**Janine:** Oh, okay, well, fuck off. That's...

**Austin:** Well, good news. We got Ali on the email. And so Ali just said, sent back, uh, let's see, "Please never contact us again." [Austin, Ali, Janine, Jack, and Keith laugh] Wow, they followed up! They followed up on Monday!

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** What the fuck?

**Keith:** Wow.

**Ali:** I blocked them. It's fine. [laughs]

**Art:** I check it on Monday, so if it was after I checked, I'm not gonna see it till tomorrow.  
[laughter]

**Austin:** Okay. Great.

**Ali:** Til the next Monday.

**Art:** Right.

**Austin:** You've also heard the voice—

**Art:** I don't check it *all* Monday, that's outrageous. [Keith and Ali laugh]

**Austin:** Oh my god. Janine Hawkins is here.

**Janine:** I'm [@bleatingheart](#) on Twitter.

**Austin:** And Keith Carberry.

**Keith:** Hi, you can follow me on Twitter at [@KeithJCarberry](#) and find the let's plays that I do at [youtube.com/runbutton](#).

**Austin:** As always, you can support the show by going to [friendsatthetable.cash](#). Doing such ensures that we get to send emails like “never email us again” to NFT dealers. [Ali and Austin laugh softly]

**Janine:** We'd do that anyway. Come on.

**Austin:** We would. You're right, we would. We would.

**Janine:** We'd do that shit for free.

**Austin:** Yeah, that's true. Today we are continuing our downtime episode. [laughs] This is our third recording of it. [Sylvia laughs]

**Janine:** Our downtime season.

**Austin:** A downtime season. Yeah, exactly. Last time, y'all fought on a— in a cathedral. Y'all fought in a train hanging from chains in a cathedral. There were some rituals that happened. Things spun out of control.

**Janine:** It was more y'ome than y'all, though.

**Austin:** It was more what?

**Janine:** Y'ome than y'all.

**Austin:** What's that mean? What's y'ome than y'all?

**Janine:** Like, "you some," versus... [laughs softly] It's fine. It's— we can just move on. [Sylvia laughs]

**Austin:** You some, I see. You're doing a— I see.

**Janine:** Uh huh.

**Austin:** Uh huh. Like "you all" becomes y'all—

**Janine:** Uh huh.

**Austin:** And you're saying "you some" as in y'ome.

**Janine:** 'Cause I can't say y'some.

**Austin:** To break that down.

**Janine:** Y'some is weird.

**Austin:** Yeah, I gotcha. Y'some is a *Bloodborne* god, I think.

**Janine:** Yes.

**Austin:** Some say Y'some. Um, now you're back on a boat, and you've arrived at Cantbank, which I've described as being sort of a...from where you can see it on the boat—on the dock—anyway, a sort of big scaffolded marketplace made of, you know, wood and metal and...it has a real spit and glue vibe. Do you know what I mean? Like, you don't know how any of it's hanging together, honestly, but it goes up this huge tall bank of the river, the eastern bank here. It's built like alongside, you know, the bank. And it's almost like looking up at a cliff face that has a bunch of wooden scaffolds built up alongside of it. I think you're seeing this in the daytime. So it's, you know, it's pretty clear to make out, you know, dozens of people moving around on these planks and ladders and climbing ropes and...the whole thing is like a storefront or many storefronts. You can see that some of these people have, from what you can tell, little alcoves dug into the side of this riverbank, this kind of cliffside riverbank. And then I think there were a couple of notable people or characters that maybe you saw. You saw what looked like a big black cat, like a panther kind of strolling along some of the beams and planks of the scaffolding, that no one seemed to pay much attention to. There was a knight, a Shape Knight looking to board. Was there anything else that I...am I forgetting anything? I think that those are the big

things. Anyway, yeah, this is a D10 Supplies Landmark. So anyone who needs to heal Supply stuff or go shopping or look to trade stuff around, the scaffolded market of Cantbank is kind of a renowned place in some ways for getting weird things, getting things that you're looking for. I'll also— and I guess, as a reminder, note that you brought on board Etienne who is a doctor, and there is some Mind— oh, that's the other thing that's gonna happen today is the Broken Quartet is gonna come on board and do some performances tomorrow. And so there is...that is gonna give you some better Mind Stress healing as they begin to perform on board. Also, there's dance lessons tomorrow, so that's fun. Um, who wants to do some stuff?

**[0:10:02]**

**Ali:** I have some things to buy.

**Austin:** Okay. [Ali laughs softly] Marn goes shopping. Marn, you stepped off the boat. I think a thing worth saying is I think there's a lot of Carpana here. I think that this is a place...I mean, I know the history of this place. You don't know why this is. And like, in your lifetime, you just know that it's a place that there are lots of Carpana. I guess maybe that's what I'll say for now. If I don't— if we don't get to it in this episode, check the episode description for some lore about this place. [laughs] So yeah, a lot of Carpana around as you kind of scuttle up the bank to where you could begin kind of exploring and shopping around. What are you looking to buy?

**Ali:** So, I have two things here.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Ali:** I have to heal my Supply Stress, which I think mechanically, I just have to spend a resource and then roll it?

**Austin:** Just spend a resource and roll it. Yeah, very easy.

**Ali:** Okay. And then I'm also looking for a Cursed item to dissect.

**Austin:** Oh, interesting. Okay. [Ali laughs] What sort of...to dissect. Dissect really has like a...

**Ali:** Sure.

**Austin:** That makes it feel like it's...you know? [Ali laughs] Alive.

**Ali:** I don't know that it like *needs* to be organic.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Ali:** I could get like...I could get like a plant that like blooms every time someone's sick in a family.

**Austin:** Plants are organic. But I like that idea. That's a fun thing to look for.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** A plant that blooms every time someone's sick in a family? [Ali and Keith laugh] Does it— okay. I have lots of questions.

**Ali:** I have one other idea, which was a—

**Austin:** Wait, let me—

**Ali:** Okay.

**Austin:** I wanna ask you a question about this plant first.

**Ali:** Okay.

**Austin:** Does it bloom whenever, quote, unquote, “someone in a family” meaning someone in the household? Or is it tied to a family and so if you have it on your like, your windowsill, right? And I look over to it and I see it blooming, I know that like my cousin is sick, [Ali laughs softly] even though my cousin's not around? Do you know what I mean?

**Ali:** Oh, sure. Yeah, I think it would be like...

**Austin:** Household-based.

**Ali:** No, like lineage-based.

**Austin:** Lineage-based, fun.

**Ali:** I think your cousin should be...

**Austin:** Interesting.

**Keith:** Wait, so, do you...your brother's sick, so you find a plant that's in bloom while your brother's sick, and then you wait till someone else gets sick to be like, “Oh, it bloomed. This one might be for us,” and then... [Ali laughs] Or—

**Austin:** I don't know. We're not botanists, Keith.

**Keith:** I don't know.

**Ali:** I mean, yeah.



**Keith:** Does it take several illnesses to make sure, “Yeah, yeah, this one’s ours.”

**Austin:** It works, yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah. Everyone's gotta find the one that blooms and then: “Oh, it was just a coincidence. Two people were sick and it bloomed, but now grandma's sick, and so we've gotta get— it's not ours.”

**Austin:** Or is grandma not my— was my grandmother not involved the way I thought she was in this family lineage?

**Keith:** Oh no!

**Ali:** No. Well...

**Austin:** Big drama plant, honestly. [Ali and Keith laugh]

**Ali:** Sure, yeah. I guess so.

**Janine:** Does it recognize marriage?

**Ali:** It should, right?

**Austin:** Yeah, marriage is a ritual, so it does.

**Janine:** Okay. Okay.

**Ali:** Oh, see, there you go.

**Austin:** Yeah. What was your other— okay, so what was your other non-plant idea?

**Ali:** My non-plant idea was a clock— no, sorry, a watch that makes the wearer late to all their appointments. [Sylvia laughs]

**Austin:** That's very cursed. [Ali laughs]

**Dre:** Damn.

**Jack:** Just take it off!

**Dre:** Well, it's cursed.

**Ali:** Well, you don't like know. Like, that, you know?

**Jack:** Oh.

**Ali:** That's the thing with a curse, where it's like...

**Janine:** It's also lineage-based. [Ali laughs]

**Jack:** And you wouldn't suspect your watch, right? 'Cause you're like, "Look, this is my watch."

**Ali:** Right.

**Jack:** Why would it be that?

**Austin:** Right. Well, let's see if you get either of those things.

**Art:** What, have you never watched a *Twilight Zone*, Jack? You can't just take the watch off. [Ali, Austin, and Jack laugh]

**Ali:** They don't have TVs here. Nobody knows the techniques. [Sylvia laughs]

**Austin:** That's true. Yeah.

**Sylvia:** I thought you were gonna say they don't have TVs in England. [Ali laughs]

**Austin:** Oh my god. [Sylvia laughs] Oh.

**Jack:** It's a bad place. [Ali and Sylvia laugh]

**Austin:** Mm. Alright, I'm gonna say you can go ahead and give me your— what are you spending for your Supplies Stress heal? Let's just handle that.

**Ali:** Oh, for my Supplies Stress, I'm gonna go ahead with this, uh, bottle of blessed tree bark.

**Austin:** Okay.

**Ali:** R.I.P. to that.

**Austin:** That sounds— yeah, I think, you know, you hand that over to somebody who like recognizes what it is pretty quickly, maybe asks you some clarifying questions, and then kind of slotted into..in my mind they have like almost like...imagine a lattice. Imagine like latticed shelves, you know, like little diamond cubby holes basically. And they slide the bottle like side— like, almost like a wine glass. Or not a wine, a wine bottle, where it's like at an angle into one of these little cubbies. And happily, you know, give you, uh...you know, trade you enough stuff for your Supplies to come back to...and I guess you should roll that whatever it is. D6, right?

**Ali:** [softly] Jesus christ.

**Austin:** You make a bad trade, Ali.

**Ali:** Yeah, I sure do.

**Austin:** You rolled a one.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** You just don't get that much for it. You just get hustled here. You start to wonder if you are already carrying a cursed object that is affecting your rolls.

**Ali:** Oh, damn. Maybe I do.

**Austin:** You rolled a— you did a D6, too. You like— you did the conservative thing of trying to sell a good thing instead of selling one of your D4s.

**Ali:** Yeah, I was like, you know, three isn't likely.

**Austin:** No.

**Ali:** But it's not that, you know. [laughs softly]

**Austin:** I mean, I'll take that charged wicker finger off your hands if you want a little bit—

**Ali:** No, I want to dissect that!

**Austin:** Okay, okay, okay. [Ali laughs softly] Anyway. It sounds like you should then do a...do a Discern Haven check to try to find your Cursed item.

**Ali:** Okay.

**Austin:** Take Mastery because of where we are, which I've already said is like a particularly good place to do this.

**Ali:** Okay.

**Austin:** Look at that.

**Ali:** That's a ten.

**Austin:** There's a critical success. Look at that. [Ali laughs] That means that you're gonna find something Cursed that is like Good quality, I believe. That's how I'm gonna roll— er, rule that. [sighs] You know, it's like, I'm gonna give you three things you can buy. And you can buy— you can buy any of these things. It's the two things you said.

**Ali:** Okay. [laughs]

**Austin:** Strange watch, you know, Cursed D8.

**Ali:** [impressed] Oh.

**Austin:** That, you know, I don't think the person selling it is gonna tell you that it makes you late for things, but they are gonna say, "I've been heard that it makes you appreciate the time you have more."

**Ali:** Mm. Real time.is quote.

**Austin:** Actually, no, what they say— yeah, what they say is "Time and money are almost always saved to be wasted." [Ali laughs] That's actually what the first person said to convince you to pay too much. [laughs]

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** The second thing is the plant that is tied to a family, but it's tied to a family...you don't know what the family is. You haven't done the ritual to like tie it to your family.

**Ali:** Oh, right, yeah.

**Austin:** So it's currently in bloom.

**Ali:** Aw.

**Austin:** And you don't know who it's in bloom for, but somewhere someone is sick. The third thing is a sort of...god, I don't know how to describe this type of radio. It's a sort of radio that appeared in...I guess if you do a search for like art deco radio, you kind of get close. This kind of like half circle, almost like a mini jukebox shape. Do you know what I mean? Like the archway that has like an arch that has like a...I'm gonna paste this. This looks close enough to me. Sort of like egg, almost egg-shaped like radio, you know what I'm talking about?

**Ali:** Hmm.

**Austin:** This.

**Ali:** Oh, sure, sure, sure.

**Austin:** Like one of these, right? I don't know. Does anyone else have a good idea for how to describe the thing I'm talking about?

**Keith:** Oh, you—

**Ali:** It's like an archway, more?

**Austin:** Yeah, like an archway. Almost like a door.

**Keith:** It's like a standing radio.

**Austin:** A standing radio. Like an old-timey table radio.

**Keith:** This is like a tabletop version of...

**Austin:** Yes.

**Keith:** Yeah, a table radio.

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And the person selling to you—who's also a Carpana with like dark fur with kind of beige spots—says that it plays music from the air and that it lets you know if something bad is coming.

**Ali:** Ooh, I get a *Silent Hill* radio. Thank you.

**Austin:** You get a *Silent Hill*— desktop *Silent Hill* radio. Now you have to buy these. You don't just get these.

**Ali:** Oh.

**Austin:** You found them. That's what that roll was for.

**Ali:** Man. [laughs]

**Austin:** That's how it works! That's the rule.

**Ali:** No, I know. No, I know. [laughs]

**Keith:** Damn, you found this radio so good, we're just giving it to you.

**Austin:** [laughs] Yeah, exactly.

**Art:** Don't all radios kind of tell you something bad is happening?

**Austin:** Well, there's different types of bad things.

**Keith:** Oh, yeah, it's called the news. [Ali laughs]

**Austin:** Yeah, uh huh.

**Keith:** Yeah, good point.

**Austin:** So I think these are a D6, D8, and D10, respectively.

**Ali:** Okay.

**Austin:** So you're gonna have to decide what you want here. So D6 watch, D8 plant, D10 radio.

**Ali:** Geez Louise. And then I trade for...

**Austin:** You're just trading kind of one for one. You can try to talk them down with Compel Haven, but that's a roll, you know?

**Ali:** You know? I feel like if I buy them all, I should be getting a discount. That's how flea markets work. I'm gonna do this Compel.

**Austin:** Do the Compel.

**Keith:** Buy them all?

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Wow.

**Austin:** Compel Haven. No Mastery on the Compel. Like, the Mastery's for finding stuff. They're just as good at talking you up as you are at talking them down.

**Ali:** Sure. Yeah, yeah, yeah. No, no, no. This is a full time...

**Austin:** You can get help from somebody if you want to try—

**Ali:** They're waiting for people to come off those boats, you know?

**Austin:** Yeah, exactly. Exactly that, yes. [Ali laughs] We should make sure— you don't have any moves around anything, right?

**Ali:** I'm looking.

**Austin:** For this.

**Ali:** I'm just double checking.

**Austin:** Not especially.

**Ali:** I have like “people are always nice to me” moves.

**Austin:** Yeah, that's true. I don't think they're nice enough to not— to give you the radio for cheap, you know?

**Ali:** True. No, I know.

**Austin:** [laughs softly] All right. Give me your Compel Haven.

**Ali:** Yeah, yeah. Okay. Sorry, I was just double checking.

**Austin:** All right. That's a success. Eight. So yeah, I'll reduce each of those by a die, right? So D4, D6, and D8.

**Ali:** Ooh.

**Austin:** But they'll continue to be—

**Ali:** Okay.

**Keith:** Damn.

**Austin:** D whatever, D whatever, and D whatever I said before.

**Ali:** Oh, shucks. Okay. Well.

**Austin:** So what are you— yeah.

**[0:20:01]**

**Ali:** Oh no. Okay. [laughs]

**Austin:** Uh huh. You can— it's just totals. Total's what matters, right?

**Ali:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. I'm just— okay. I have raw feast mushrooms, a D4.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Ali:** I have prayer beads, a D6.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Ali:** That's D10.

**Austin:** That's— no, that's only D8 together.

**Ali:** Oh, okay.

**Austin:** You're not doing a r— the D4— it's like— it's step-based.

**Ali:** It's— okay, yeah.

**Austin:** It's weird design.

**Ali:** Okay, so a D6, a D6, and a D4

**Austin:** Would be a D10 and—

**Ali:** —a D12?

**Austin:** That's correct. That would be a D12.

**Ali:** Okay. [laughs]

**Austin:** This system is very good for rolling, and it can be kind of weird for this, you know?

**Ali:** No, it's okay. We got there. We get there. [laughs softly] In that case, I'm going to take...am I really gonna use—? I am gonna use this radio, and I want it. So I'm gonna get the radio and the watch.

**Austin:** The radio and the watch. Okay, so that means the radio, again, I said would cost you D8. The watch would cost you D4. So that would mean you need D10 worth of stuff.

**Ali:** Oh, I don't need D12 worth of stuff? Okay.

**Austin:** No.



**Ali:** In that case, I'm keeping these mushrooms, and I'm doing the prayer beads and the slow burn tar.

**Austin:** There we go. Okay.

**Ali:** D6 plus D6 is D10.

**Austin:** Perfect.

**Ali:** Yay!

**Austin:** Yeah, done. [Ali laughs] Alright, so yeah, you get this radio. We'll have to think of a better name than cursed radio. [Ali laughs softly] And then I'll give you...and then, yeah, this watch.

**Keith:** Extremely cursed radio.

**Austin:** Yeah, extremely cursed radio. Cursed radio— it is cursed radio, good. Put that as equipment, since you can use it to detect danger.

**Ali:** Oh, right, okay.

**Austin:** And also listen to music.

**Ali:** Ooh.

**Austin:** Which is weird.

**Ali:** Me and Bucho can have a great time.

**Austin:** And then, yeah, this watch. [Austin and Ali laugh softly] Does just having it make you late for things? Do you have to wear it? You have to wear it, probably.

**Ali:** You have to wear it, I think. Yeah.

**Austin:** Okay. Great. Exciting. I think, while you're looking at this shop, the big black cat is like watching you do this exchange in kind of curiosity, because you're really...you've found a shop that specializes in questionable things, like especially so, and so that's a curiosity to this big cat-shaped creature. Also a note, now that you're like, you're here and shopping around, when you're up here looking and like kind of...the shops, again, are almost like built into the side of this wall, right, into the side of this riverbank. What you are...what you realize is the...they're not just like little...they're not just little alcoves or little like chunks, cubbies carved into the kind of cliff wall. They're holes. They keep going. It's like there's a door at the back of this that then opens into a hallway of tunnels. And you begin to get the impression that, oh, people...like, this

is someone's storefront. And then on the— you know, if you just walked through the back door here, it would go into their like home. And then there's a city built into or residences built into the underground here, basically, if that makes any sense. So. I'm sorry, it's not a Big the Cat shaped creature, Dre. It is a strange— it is strange, though, as you kind of begin to make your way around and if you find yourself looking at it closer. You realize it has like...it doesn't have fur. It has something else.

**Ali:** [intrigued] Something else.

**Austin:** It's like...at first you're like, “Oh, that's really shiny fur,” and then you're like, [apprehension] “Is that scales? What's going on?” [Ali laughs] You're not sure. You'd have to get really close to look, and it's a big...it's a black cat that is like much larger than you, Marn. [laughs] So, I don't know. And it's prowling around.

**Keith:** Little predator.

**Austin:** You know, a little bit.

**Ali:** I can feel this cat's eyes on me, though.

**Austin:** Oh yeah.

**Ali:** I look over my shoulder, and I'm like, “What's that about?”

**Austin:** Oh yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah, the... [laughs softly]

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** The cat's interested in the store, and Marn is like, “Am I lunch?” [Austin, Ali, and Keith laugh softly]

**Austin:** What else is going on here? Anyone else shopping or looking for a conversation, investigating a cat, et cetera.

**Keith:** I'm broke.

**Austin:** You are broke. This is true. You're not broke, but you have less than you normally do, Lyke. [Ali laughs softly]

**Keith:** Right. No, I really would consider myself broke this time.

**Austin:** You got a book and a coupon, right? And that's kind of it?

**Ali:** Didn't you just get a gift basket?

**Keith:** Yeah, that was change. Yeah, we went back, and I did get some change from getting healed. But yeah, I have—

**Austin:** You— right.

**Keith:** I have my D10 book and a D4 change from the Triadic Pyre temple.

**Austin:** Right, right. Fantastic. All right, yeah, door's open. Who else is looking to do some stuff here? Also, to be clear, Marn, you're not investigating this cat, right? I'd give you the opportunity, but I don't want to like shove this cat...

**Ali:** I would like to, but I feel like that should be like a two, three person scene.

**Austin:** We can wrap— yeah, that makes sense. Yeah.

**Ali:** You know? [laughs]

**Austin:** That's fair.

**Janine:** I'd investigate a cat.

**Ali:** Ooh.

**Austin:** Yeah? Okay.

**Sylvia:** I'm also kind of cat curious.

**Dre:** Uh, you know, if you want to investigate strange creatures, Chine would be down to help.  
[Ali laughs]

**Janine:** I don't want to fight it, I want to be clear.

**Ali:** Yeah, this is...

**Sylvia:** Oh yeah, no.

**Dre:** I'm not gonna fight it just because!

**Austin:** Wow!

[crosstalk]

**Janine:** [laughs] I'm not saying 'cause of—

**Sylvia:** I feel like, after the train, that's fair.

**Keith:** Yeah, Chine, no one's trying to kill and eat. [Ali laughs]

[crosstalk ends]

**Janine:** I'm not saying that because of last time.

**Austin:** One at a time.

**Janine:** I just want to be clear that I don't want to... [Dre laughs]

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Janine:** I just want to investigate it.

**Austin:** Sure.

**Janine:** I'm curious.

**Austin:** What's that— what does approaching this cat then look like as a group of four people?  
[Ali laughs]

**Janine:** That's a good question.

**Art:** A thing that cats love.

**Austin:** Yeah. [laughs]

**Dre:** Going like, making kissy noises at it, like, [kissy noises] "Hey, kitty!"

**Sylvia:** Oh my god.

**Ali:** Ooh.

**Austin:** Oh, it does not like this at all.

**Janine:** Mm-mm.

**Sylvia:** I don't either.

**Austin:** This is not the type of animal it seems to be. [Ali laughs]

**Janine:** Should we break off into two groups and come at it from different sides? [Janine and Sylvia laugh]

**Austin:** Oh my god.

**Keith:** Does anyone have something loud to bang? [Austin, Ali, Janine, and Keith laugh]

**Janine:** How about water?

**Dre:** I've got a D6 water spray bottle.

**Keith:** Any trash bags? [Ali laughs softly]

**Janine:** My initial strategy, when I wasn't sure how many people would be involved, was looking at the cat for a while and trying to see where it's going.

**Austin:** Sure.

**Ali:** Oh.

**Janine:** Which I guess just ends up being me stalking Marn. [Ali laughs]

**Austin:** Right, that's the thing.

**Janine:** Indirectly.

**Austin:** Well, maybe that's—

**Janine:** Like, by proxy.

**Austin:** Maybe that's been happening while this thing has been stalking Marn looking for cursed objects, and then the scene kind of can happen after Marn has bought a big radio and a cursed watch and can, you know. This cat has kind of come to rest watching, watching as that happens, and Es, you can now lead the small people who I kind of imagine you've collected as you've moved through. You know, again, to be clear, you're like climbing ladders and, you know, there's a little rope swing you have to do at one point to get across some of this scaffolding. I'm not making anybody roll for it, 'cause it's all built to be traversed. But like, it's not pretty in any way. It reminds you of something, I don't know that you can place it immediately, the kind of way that this place is built. But you...you and who else is it? Chine and someone else?

**Ali:** Hazard?

**Sylvia:** Oh yeah, I was gonna be there too.

**Austin:** Oh, and Hazard. Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Just 'cause I'm curious about the cat.

**Austin:** Yeah. Then I think yeah. Janine, was your thought like, if I just look at it, it will respond at a certain point? Or was that just a...

**Janine:** Honestly, kinda yeah. Like, it seems so interested in Marn who's just kind of like hangin'.

**Austin:** Okay.

**Janine:** Running errands, that like, it seems like this big cat thing will eventually notice it's being followed and maybe...

**Austin:** Yeah. So yeah, I think there's a point at which, in my mind, we get a shot of Marn turning around with cursed objects. The group of of Chine, Es, and Hazard. And then this cat, you know, up on a perch basically. And the cat like realizes the three of you are watching it. And it just turns and looks at you. You can see that, yes, it has sort of plates or scales instead of fur. And it goes:

**Austin (as cat):** [drawling voice] Oh, hello.

**Janine:** Es curtsies.

**Keith:** (??? 28:42)

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** Hi. [Dre chuckles]

**Austin (as cat):** I'm sorry I didn't see you. Your friend has quite a taste, dangerous things.

**Austin:** Hops down and begins to like prowl between you and like does that thing of like walking little, you know, circles around you.

**Janine (as Es):** Is that a...is that a worrying thing or just a curious thing?

**Austin:** You tell me how Es responds to that.

**Janine:** No, no, I'm...I think that's what Es says in response to...

**Austin:** Oh, oh, that's what Es is saying to the...

**Janine:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Right, right, right.

**Austin (as cat):** Very curious. This is one of my favorite little shops. I don't think it gets enough attention.

**Janine:** [amused] I was about to say, "Oh, so you're like the night mayor here."

**Austin:** [laughs] Yeah.

**Janine:** As if Es has that knowledge. [Ali laughs]

**Austin:** [in cat voice, jokingly] I'm the night mayor of Cantbank. [Janine laughs]

**Janine:** The cat mayor.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm. [Dre laughs]

**Keith:** Oh, I thought you said nightmare, like...

**Austin:** [menacing] I'm the nightmare of Cantbank. [Keith laugh]

**Dre:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. That's how I took it at first, too. [laughs]

**Austin:** [enunciating] Night mayor, you know.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Janine:** Mm-hmm.

**Dre:** Mayor.

**Austin:** Mayor.

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Janine (as Es):** Well, then it's...I suppose the custom is good, then.

**[0:30:00]**

**Austin (as cat):** How's the ride been so far? Haven't seen the *Jade Moon* in quite some time.

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** Oh, does it come through here often? I mean, I guess not.

**Austin (as cat):** Not recently. No, that's what I'm saying.

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** Yeah. [muffled laughter]

**Sylvia:** Hazard kind of just like looks at their feet a little bit. [laughs softly]

**Janine:** Aw.

**Sylvia:** Like, head tilted down a little bit like, oh, I don't know why I said that.

**Austin (as cat):** Oh, don't be embarrassed. I put a lot of people off with my appearance, at least this one.

**Dre (as Chine):** Oh, you got two?

**Austin (as cat):** Three, four, a dozen. This is a favorite.

**Austin:** Does a little stretch.

**Austin (as cat):** Anyway, is there anything else you need here today? Any introductions, any questions? I'm feeling social, you see.

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** Well, what's your name?

**Janine (as Es):** Are you offering to make introductions or do you want an introduction?

**Austin (as cat):** Oh, I could have any introduction I please. So, the former.

**Ali (as Marn):** Hey, everybody. [Austin and Janine laugh]

**Janine (as Es):** Hey, Marn. Do you want to get introduced to someone?

**Ali (as Marn):** Uh, yeah, most times, yes.

**Austin (as cat):** Who are you looking for?

**Janine (as Es):** Now I'm just curious who you'd bring us to. [Ali laughs]

**Sylvia:** I'm—



**Austin (as cat):** It doesn't work quite like that.

**Janine (as Es):** Oh, well, that's no fun.

**Sylvia:** I might try my luck with the card thing.

**Austin:** Ooh.

**Sylvia:** Be like:

**Janine:** Mm.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** Hey, do you happen to know any devils with one horn?

**Austin (as cat):** I have the feeling you're not just looking for a devil but *the* devil.

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** Semantics.

**Austin (as cat):** Mm. Revenge is rarely about semantics, normally particulars.

**Sylvia:** I think like specifically when they mention that it's like for revenge, Hazard gets a little like rigid in their like stance.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** Just because that hasn't been brought up to anybody here yet, really.

**Austin:** Uh huh. I think at this point, you know, hops back up to be looking down at you from a kind of higher beam and says:

**Austin (as cat):** He took more from you than you know.

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** He took everything, so.

**Austin (as cat):** Hmm.

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** That's...I guess that's both not surprising and surprising at the same time.

**Austin (as cat):** The count of cards, yes?

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** I— yeah, sure. Didn't even leave me with a name.

**Austin (as cat):** Mm.

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** So, thank you.

**Austin (as cat):** He's...he's in flight now, but I suspect he'll come down to nest west of the mountain range soon.

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** Thank you.

**Austin:** There is something in the way its eyes meet yours, and you realize the eyes specifically move like a bird's, not like a cat's. The kind of quick flickering around, taking in a little bit more at a time than kind of a single focal point, you know?

**Sylvia:** I think I know who this cat is.

**Austin:** Mm. [Ali laughs softly]

**Keith:** Who's the cat?

**Sylvia:** I think it's...I don't know if I'm gonna say this in character, but it's Kaitankro is a lot of the signs being pointed to here.

**Ali:** Oh.

**Sylvia:** Is my guess, at least, with the like, not fur but like kind of weird scaly thing, but also all the like crow imagery going on.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** I don't know.

**Austin:** This is true. Yeah. Hazard makes a good guess, takes a good—

**Sylvia:** I'm just doing fan theories.

**Austin:** Uh huh. Yeah. Uh huh. [Ali and Janine laugh] Anyway.

**Sylvia:** Does anybody else have any other questions? 'Cause I don't. I'm sorry.

**Austin:** Mm-mm.

**Ali:** I'm good.

**Austin (as Kaitankro):** I can bring you to a good meal.

**Austin:** Big cat tooth grin.

**Janine (as Es):** One dollar sign, two dollar signs, or three dollar signs? [Austin and someone laugh quietly]

**Austin (as Kaitankro):** My treat.

**Ali (as Marn):** [interested] Hm.

**Austin:** Hops down and begins to walk into the shop that you were just in. Like, does a little purr at the person you were just dealing with, Marn, and then like through the door, their back door, into this kind of tunnel system, these warrens that make up the interior of Cantbank. And just kind of assumes, like, if you want to follow, you'll follow.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Janine:** Yeah, sure.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, why not?

**Dre:** Yeah, free food sounds great.

**Austin:** I don't have more here. [Ali laughs] I think Kaitankro's gonna take you to a place that they know where there's good food. Good, like, probably fish. They live off the riverbank, right? Fish and let's say like mushrooms, 'cause they live inside of this like weird cave system. It's good. Kaitankro himself just kind of lays on the ground and lazes and like is interested in— you realize is like really interested in overhearing your conversation and just kind of like...you know how cats like voices sometimes? [Ali laughs softly] It's one of those, but it's also like...it's also a little bit like a spy eavesdropping and trying to piece together some information they might not yet have, you know?

**Janine:** Mm.

**Austin:** The other thing about this place is like, it's like local good. Because there are restaurants on the outside of Cantbank, but this is like...this is like, locals eat here, you know what I mean?

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** It's a difference. So, so yeah. What's that conver— what is dinner conversation among this set of people? [Ali laughs] Who like, Hazard, you don't even know Marn and Es yet, right? This is when you're meeting.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, no, I just know Chine. [laughs softly]

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Janine:** I guess that's true. Yeah, it's just the...the card dealer is here.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Ali:** But— okay. I feel like after like, ten minutes ago, there was like a overwhelmingly vulnerable conversation with— [laughs softly]

**Janine:** Yes.

**Ali:** Maybe not overwhelmingly.

**Janine:** Yeah.

**Ali:** But we overheard some shit. [Sylvia laughs]

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Ali:** I think maybe at dinner it's more of like an icebreaker, like: [Austin and Janine laugh]

**Ali (as Marn):** Oh, how do you like card dealing? We study...we've been working together as a group that is for hire to help people not be cursed or, you know, in distress.

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** Well, sounds a lot more interesting than playing cards, I'll tell you that. [Ali laughs softly] Wow. I do fine, you know.

**Ali (as Marn):** Well, it's honest work.

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** Eh. [Austin and Janine laugh softly] It gets a bit boring now and then,, but I guess so.

**Janine (as Es):** Just out of passion?

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** I— just something I'm good at, you know?

**Sylvia:** And I think they like doing little card tricks at this point, just to show off. [Janine laughs] Like fancy shuffles and shit like that.

**Dre (as Chine):** They've got a cool gun.

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** Yeah, I mean, you know. You did— everybody needs protection out here. What? We don't need to— let's not talk about my cool gun. [Austin and Ali laugh softly]

**Dre (as Chine):** I was— I just thought it was cool.

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** Hey, so what's your dog's name?

**Sylvia:** And points at the thing that clearly isn't a dog. [Dre and Sylvia laugh]

**Austin:** God. Right.

**Janine:** Mm.

**Dre (as Chine):** Oh, uh, it hasn't told me yet.

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** You're an interesting fella, Chine.

**Ali (as Marn):** Do y'all talk?

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** Us? Or them and the dog? [Ali laughs softly]

**Ali (as Marn):** I mean Chine and the...the dog.

**Dre (as Chine):** Eh, sometimes.

**Austin:** The creature is currently eating a whole fish, unscaled. You know, just the whole fish. Just a whole fish. [Ali laughs softly]

**Janine:** Is it slightly too big because it's still young and it's—

**Austin:** Yeah, a hundred percent.

**Janine:** It's soldiering on anyways? That's adorable.

**Austin:** Yes, a hundred percent that. [Ali laughs]

**Sylvia:** Super adorable when you remember how its mouth opens in four directions. [Janine, Austin, and Dre laugh]

**Austin:** Yes. Ahh.

**Ali:** What's it been saying?

**Dre (as Chine):** [sighs] Just— lately, just a lot of being hungry.

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

**Dre (as Chine):** Uh, kind of bored.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Dre (as Chine):** Less bored after the last stop.

**Ali (as Marn):** Oh, yeah?

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** I mean, I'd hope so.

**Austin:** [laughs softly] Right, do Marn and Es even know? [Sylvia laughs]

**Dre:** Mm...

**Austin:** Marn and Es just having a nice boat trip.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** During all of that.

**Sylvia:** Is that what dinner— the dinner conversation becomes? [Ali laughs] Us telling them about how like everything just kept messing up? [laughs]

**Austin:** Oh, that's very...

**Janine (as Es):** Why did everyone come back all bloody and messed up?

**Sylvia:** It's like Chine and Hazard being able to piece together.

**Austin:** [laughs] Yes, exactly.

**Ali (as Marn):** Yeah, I thought y'all were going to the doctor. [Austin laughs]

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** [sighs]

**Ali (as Marn):** You should've come to trivia night with me and Es. [Austin and Janine laugh]

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** I've been on this ship for weeks. I know all the answers already.  
[Dre laughs]

**Ali (as Marn):** Oh, you should come with us next time! [Sylvia, Janine, Art, and Austin laugh]

**Austin:** [sighs] That sounds like a good cut for that scene. [Ali laughs]

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Love it.

**Janine:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** All right. People— uh, so that's Duvall, Lyke, and Pickman. Still on the ship? Getting up to your own stuff? What's going on?

**Art:** Yeah, I'm sort of just waiting for a chance to get some Blood Stress healed.

**Austin:** You can do that right now. You're good. There's a doctor on board now.

**Art:** Uh, last time, I was encouraged by people not to pay for it.

**Austin:** Oh, I see.

**Art:** To get that taken care of among friends.

**Austin:** Right, friends. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Art:** So I'm just sort of like waiting for a chance to like get that taken care of. But like, I don't want to shoehorn myself into anything right yet, so I think I'm...I think Duvall is just in the background, you know, browsing books.

**Austin:** Yeah, sure.

**Art:** Stuff like that.

**Austin:** Being bugs. Yeah. Classic stuff.

**Art:** Yeah. Wait, what did you say?

**Austin:** I said being bugs.

**Art:** Being bugs, yeah, uh huh.

**Austin:** Classic stuff like that.

**Art:** Sorry, I just—

**Austin:** No, you're good.

**Art:** I was just gonna agree to anything you said. [Ali laughs softly] You could have been like, “Committing casual murder?” and I would’ve been like, “Yeah, mm-hmm.”

**[0:40:01]**

**Ali:** Mm. [Janine and Austin laugh]

**Art:** You know. But not that. I want to explicitly say not that, now.

**Austin:** Right, of course. Yeah.

**Art:** Yeah.

**Austin:** I guess, Lyke and Pickman, either of you up to anything particular? I know, Pickman, I have something that's gonna happen with you. [Sylvia laughs softly] But, you know.

**Jack:** [sarcastic/concerned] Oh, great. [Austin and Ali laugh]

**Austin:** I already teased it! There's a Shape Knight coming for you. You have that Fallout. We have to, you know. It has to happen.

**Jack:** Oh, yeah, Pickman doesn't know. Pickman has no idea about that, right?

**Austin:** No, no.

**Jack:** This isn't like one of these Fallouts where, you know, it's like you're...you can't see or you can see ghosts or something, where you're like “Oh! I have a Fallout!” Pickman has absolutely no idea. I think I'm sleeping. I think I'm...I think Pickman feels like the worst of that first, you know, queasy illness is beginning to pass or is beginning to break. And is just, you know, in her bunk.

**Austin:** There is a knock on Pickman's door.

**Jack (as Pickman):** Who is it?

**Austin:** Um, god, how would he...? I think he would say:



**Austin (as Shape Knight):** A compatriot.

**Jack:** Just like, door opens a crack. Pickman's like, you know, goat pupiled eye peering through the door.

**Jack (as Pickman):** Who are you?

**Austin:** You see a...middle aged, let's say, human Black man—in my mind, this guy is Chiwetel Ejiofor, the actor—in what looks like ceramic or porcelain Shape Knight armor. Er, it's armor. I guess it doesn't look like Shape Knight armor to you, because it's not made of train bones, right? And as soon as you open the door, I think he moves to step inside and close the door behind him, as if there's a conspiracy you've already signed up for.

**Austin (as Shape Knight):** You're Pickman, yes?

**Jack (as Pickman):** Who's asking?

**Austin (as Shape Knight):** My name is Alekest. Alekest san Geraint. I'm the Margrave of Tescano in the west.

**Jack:** Is that a place in Sangfielle or is that outside the Ringed City?

**Austin:** It is, uh, western...it's like near the Unschola Republica, sort of. It's like, uh...north of where Erlin the wet god is on our map, west of Vish by a little bit.

**Jack:** [laughs softly] Okay.

**Jack (as Pickman):** You a Shape Knight?

**Austin (as Alekest):** Yes.

**Jack (as Pickman):** That—

**Austin (as Alekest):** And it's because I'm a Shape Knight that I knew where you'd be.

**Jack (as Pickman):** I don't follow.

**Austin (as Alekest):** And there's...you're a wanted woman, Pickman.

**Jack (as Pickman):** Huh. [someone laughs]

**Austin (as Alekest):** Thankfully, I want you for something other than bounty.

**Jack (as Pickman):** And?

**Austin (as Alekest):** You've seen it, haven't you?

**Jack (as Pickman):** Is this about that model?

**Austin (as Alekest):** It's about the city itself.

**Jack (as Pickman):** I'm not interested in talking to you.

**Austin (as Alekest):** No, no, no. You need to understand this is larger than anything.

**Jack (as Pickman):** I'm sure it is. If you could leave my room.

**Austin (as Alekest):** I will not be doing that, not until we have a chance to speak. This is imperative.

**Jack (as Pickman):** Give me a reason not to throw you off the boat.

**Austin (as Alekest):** I dare say I would be a hard man to throw.

**Jack:** Do I get this impression?

**Austin:** There is something about that armor that is weird. He's smaller than you, being a human. And he's in his— he's, you know, 50 or something, right? Graying, five o'clock shadow. Hair is thinning. Eyes are a little receded. But there's an insistence that makes him seem...he seems very convinced of what he has just said.

**Austin (as Shape Knight):** A conversation with me would be easier than a fight and over sooner.

**Jack (as Pickman):** What's your game?

**Austin (as Alekest):** No game. [pauses] My game is that they wanted me to find you and bring you in, but I could sense that you'd seen it. And that I've been haunted by it my whole life. And that I think you could bring me to it.

**Jack (as Pickman):** What makes you think that?

**Austin (as Alekest):** Because you're closer than anyone I've ever spoken to. You can't feel it on you? Its residual energy.

**Jack (as Pickman):** So?

**Austin (as Alekest):** It structures you even now.

**Jack (as Pickman):** I was in the room with four of my friends. I'm sure that one of them could show you to the city. I want nothing to do with it.

**Austin (as Alekest):** Those friends are not Shape Knights. They don't know the weight.

**Jack (as Pickman):** What weight?

**Austin (as Alekest):** Hmm. The weight of the way the world works on you. The limit of the rail. The pace of the motor. The way an engine burns.

**Jack (as Pickman):** Are you sure you have the right person?

**Austin (as Alekest):** Certain.

**Jack (as Pickman):** Let me be clear. I have no interest in your city. And I have no interest in parleying with those that seek it to bring it into existence.

**Austin (as Alekest):** [sighs] I need only visit it. I have no grand plans besides relief.

**Jack (as Pickman):** What, so it's an idea that has been compelling you for a long time and you want to go to the city?

**Austin (as Alekest):** [stammers] Not an idea. A vision, a place, a dream. I'm not alone in this.

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

**Austin (as Alekest):** But I am driven in a way few are.

**Jack (as Pickman):** Yeah, I'd like to go to Kay'Va. We're in Sangfielle.

**Austin (as Alekest):** You can get a ship to Kay'Va. You can— you can hire a convoy.

**Jack (as Pickman):** And I'm sure you can find a way to your city with another Shape Knight.

**Austin (as Alekest):** You would have me work with the Wrights? Villains. You would have me give the knowledge I have, the...the value of my estate to charlatans? No, I think I will remain on board. When you're ready to talk, find me.

**Austin:** And steps out.

**Jack:** Everybody's got plans. Everybody's got schemes. [Austin and Art laugh] Everybody's got plans and schemes, and all I want to do is make sure that me and my friends don't get eaten by something. [Austin laughs softly] What's this guy's name? Uh, begins with an A?

**Austin:** Alekest. Alekest san Geraint.

**Keith:** That's an evil name.

**Jack:** Alekest san Geraint introduces himself and says, [mocking accent] "Oh, I do not want to work with the villainous Wrights. I'm a perfectly normal friendly man."

**Austin:** Mm-hmm. Yeah.

**Jack:** Fuck off. I'll see him in the bar.

**Austin:** [laughs] You will. Lyke, what are you up to?

**Keith:** Uh, I don't know. I...my plan for this stage was always to spend some money, but I don't have it anymore.

**Austin:** You can always play— you can always try to spend Supply. Or just roll Supply, right?

**Keith:** Yeah, and I do have...I do have a little bit of Supply Protection, too.

**Austin:** That's what it's for.

**Keith:** That is what it's for. And so, okay, remind me how this works? Is it instead of or does it compound? Like, if I roll Supply and get like D4 worth of stuff, can I combine that into a D6 or D8 or whatever it is?

**Austin:** You can— sorry, say what you just said again?

**Keith:** Can you combine a Supply roll and a resource into...?

**Austin:** Uh huh. Yeah, totally.

**Keith:** Okay. I wasn't sure how that worked.

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah. So like, if you needed to do...if you were trying to buy a D6 thing, and you only had a D4 thing, you could give the D4 thing and then also roll D4 Supply Stress.

**Keith:** Okay. And I actually am pretty sure that I can roll or I can heal Supply in my...

**Austin:** You can now do that in your place, yeah.

**Keith:** I can do that.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Can I just go on kind of a Supply roll run? We can just do some quick Supply rolls and be like...

**Austin:** Yeah, let's do some Supply rolls. Yeah, wheelin' and dealin'.

**Keith:** 'Cause there's not been a ton of Supply rolls, right? I think Ali did one in the first downtime, right?

**Austin:** A while ago, yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Keith:** Okay. Yeah, I'll...

**Austin:** So what are you trying to— what are you trying to buy?

**Keith:** I'm looking for Occult stuff.

**Austin:** Right.

**Keith:** I'm looking for Religion stuff.

**Austin:** Right. There are some...there are some...they're listed as unappraised rocks, but as soon as you walk past them, you recognize that they—

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** They are not...okay, so you know how a rock has like...not like a smooth rock, but like a sort of jaggedy, you know, uneven rock. It has—

**Keith:** Sure. Yeah, I know all the different ways rocks can be.

**Austin:** You know how rocks are, right?

**Keith:** Yeah. [laughs softly] Oh, I know about rocks.

**Austin:** [laughs softly] Oh, you know about rocks? This rock looks like— it's like among a bunch of other ones, and it looks like, “Oh, okay, this is a rock that someone picked up off the ground, and that's why it's in this barrel of unappraised rocks.” But you recognize that this rock's shape is actually very carefully honed, that this has been worked on with tools in order to inscribe a certain sort of ritual power into it.

**[0:50:08]**

**Keith:** Mm. Can I smell it?

**Austin:** Yeah, go ahead. It smells like, um...

**Keith:** [sniffing sounds]

**Austin:** God, what is the equivalent?

**Keith:** [more sniffing sounds]

**Austin:** I mean, what I'm gonna tell you it smells like is licorice.

**Keith:** Anis?

**Austin:** It's like— like anis.

**Keith:** Fennel?

**Austin:** Yeah, uh huh. Yes. That's what it smells like. What's that mean? I don't really know, for magic.

**Keith:** Sure.

**Austin:** But potent is maybe the thing that's core about it, right?

**Keith:** Potent. Pungent.

**Austin:** There's a potent— yeah, exactly. But also not easily reducible into another sort of flavor, right? Like, it's not like, “Oh, well, this is what fire smells like,” you know what I mean? Like, no.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** It's not from a family of of smells in that way. Which is...which means you could probably use it, right? This is, um...I'd say that this is a D6.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** Occult rock. Licorice rock. So yeah, what do you want to trade for that? You want to trade that the Triadic Pyre scrip and do a Supplies roll to see what's rolling around your bag?

**Keith:** Well...

**Austin:** Or do you want to just do the roll?

**Keith:** I just want to— I think I just want to do the roll. I'm in...Lyke is in like accumulate mode.

**Austin:** I see. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Keith:** Like, I feel like...

**Austin:** Uh huh. [sarcastic] Oh, really?

**Keith:** Like the pack is empty.

**Austin:** Yes, I see what you mean.

**Keith:** The pack is empty, and I'm like, what if I need—

**Austin:** You don't want to give up— right, I gotcha.

**Keith:** Anything.

**Austin:** So then, yeah. So then, give me your— give me a D6 Supplies roll.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** There's just like— you're just gonna get this Stress. You know what I mean? Like, just to be clear, there's not a roll you—

**Keith:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Austin:** Or, I guess what I could say is—

**Keith:** Oh, there's not a roll.

**Austin:** The roll is how much Stress you take. You could try to talk them down like before, and that would be—

**Keith:** With Compel.

**Austin:** And that's Compel Haven, right.

**Keith:** Which I don't have. Well, I have Haven, but I don't have Compel.

**Austin:** You have Haven. Yeah. The problem there is you could end up just taking Stress, failing that roll, you know?

**Keith:** Right. And is that Supply Stress? Like, is that something I can rely on my Protection to...?

**Austin:** You would get...I would say you'd get Supply Stress there, yeah, trying to talk down the price. And it's like, maybe it ends up not costing as much as you get, you know? Maybe you succeed and...

**Keith:** Right. Okay.

**Austin:** It's possible, certainly.

**Keith:** Let's try.

**Austin:** So you give it a shot.

**Keith:** Let's try. Let's try.

**Austin:** Let's see how it goes.

**Keith:** Let's give it a shot.

**Austin:** That's Haven. And then, yeah, I don't think you have anything else that's...that works here. And yeah, so let's go Compel, Haven.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** And let's roll it and see what you get. You're gonna roll two dice.

**Keith:** All right.

**Austin:** Always a chance.

**Keith:** Ten!

**Austin:** Unbelievable.

**Keith:** That's a ten.



**Austin:** Unbelievable Lye Lychen gets a ten. Incredible.

**Keith:** Gettin' stuff is my specialty.

**Austin:** Yeah, well, so like, now it's a D-fucking-nothing. It's a D2.

**Keith:** I've seen your rocks. I've seen these rocks.

**Austin:** Yeah, okay. How about this, then? Let's go— I'll give you a choice. Either...you know what, no. I'm just gonna say what that ten gets you is that it is not a D6. It is not a D6 rock. It's a D8 value licorice rock instead, but it costs D4 at this point.

**Keith:** Sick.

**Austin:** So it kind of goes up in that direction, because the crit gives you a second success effectively, right?

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** So.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** So. So yeah, so maybe it's that you've—

**Keith:** So it's better than it was for sale for, and I'm getting it at a bargain.

**Austin:** And you're getting it for cheaper. So give me D4 to your Supply Stress.

**Keith:** Okay, and that...so, two.

**Austin:** Just roll D4. No, roll D4.

**Keith:** Oh, I just roll— I have to roll. Okay, great.

**Austin:** Yes, yeah.

**Keith:** Ah, this is what it was. I knew there was a roll. Okay.

**Austin:** There's a chance you get no Stress here, if you get a one or two.

**Keith:** Right, 50/50 chance.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Roll one D4. Four.

**Austin:** You roll and get a four, so you take two Supply Stress. Give me your Fallout test.

**Keith:** Okay. No Fallout.

**Austin:** No Fallout. All right, there you go. So, yeah.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** So, take that sick licorice rock. You're back in the game.

**Keith:** Back in the game.

**Austin:** I can't believe Lye Lychen's gonna do the paperclip thing of...

**Keith:** Paperclip thing?

**Austin:** Oh, it was like that famous thing on the internet like decades ago.

**Keith:** Oh, right.

**Jack:** The thing where they trade a paperclip for a fucking house.

**Keith:** They trade a paperclip for a pen and the pen for a candy bar.

**Austin:** Yeah, until you get a house.

**Keith:** And a candy bar for a...yeah.

**Jack:** Go and visit Zevunzolia. [Austin laughs]

**Keith:** Right, yeah. Right. That— there's no way anyone ever did that. That is...

**Austin:** No, that one dude did it. But like, making it a thing is why it doesn't count to me. You know what I mean?

**Keith:** You mean, like anyone could...look how easy it is, you can get a...you can basically manifest a house through trading? Like...

**Austin:** Right. Because, like, once you've made it a story that someone else can be part of, that's part of what the trade— you can no longer say anybody could do this.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** Because some of the value you're trading is association with this stupid thing.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** You know? Like, I just looked at the page for this. It's called "one red paperclip." And multiple people who traded big things are like "radio personality so-and-so" and "recording artist so-and-so" and...

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** It's like, well, these other people have Wikipedia pages, you know? Like, 'cause they're also trying to get attention for shit. Anyway.

**Keith:** Right. Okay, yeah, that's— yeah.

**Austin:** So.

**Keith:** Yeah, it never occurred to me that someone would know that they were part of this thing before the trade. Like, it always felt to me like that would be secret. Like, 'cause that means that you're inherently making a bad trade.

**Austin:** Right. Yes. Anyway.

**Keith:** Okay. Well, if we have time later maybe I'll do one more of these.

**Austin:** This— I found the— okay.

**Keith:** Oh, no, no, I'm...

**Austin:** I found the trade that's annoying. I found the trade. The trade that's annoying on this set. So. Paperclip for a fish-shaped pen. Pen for a hand-sculpted doorknob. Doorknob for a camp stove. That's already a jump. Camp stove for a Honda generator.

**Keith:** No.

**Austin:** No.

**Keith:** Wrong.

**Austin:** Someone's getting...yeah, wants to be part of the thing. Honda generator for a, quote unquote, "instant party: an empty keg, an IOU for filling the keg with beer of the bearer's choice, and a neon Budweiser sign."

**Sylvia:** This is not— what?

**Austin:** Then that for a Ski-Doo snowmobile.

**Keith:** No.

**Austin:** No!

**Keith:** Fake.

**Austin:** Fake.

**Austin and Keith:** [in unison] Fake.

**Austin:** Bullshit. Doesn't work like this. All right, moving on.

**Keith:** That's like, what? Maybe \$500 for like a \$6,000 thing?

**Austin:** Yeah, absolutely. A hundred percent.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** It's complete bullshit. Anyway.

**Art:** Maybe it's like broken. It's one of those like...

**Austin:** It better be. It will be when I'm done with it. [Keith laughs] I'mma find it!

**Keith:** You watch out, motherfucker! [Austin laughs] Red paperclip guy!

**Art:** I feel like you're threatening me right now, and that just seems just inappropriate.

**Austin:** Did you get that snowmobile? Are you next? [Art laughs] Are you the person who traded that snowmobile for a two person trip to Yahk, British Columbia?

**Art:** No.

**Austin:** Okay, well, then you're probably fine.

**Art:** It's like, now we're talking about cursed items for real, though.

**Keith:** Here's why this thing sucks, though, is that like, I know about this because they made me study it in fourth grade.

**Austin:** Ew!

**Keith:** Or like fifth grade. Yeah, like, I know about this because my teacher like handed out a thing on this like in grade school.

**Austin:** I hate this.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Alright. Duvall, you still doing backgroundy stuff? Rest of the crew, you've come home from from a dinner, I'm guessing? No other business at night?

**Sylvia:** Yeah, I don't have anything.

**Austin:** It's perilous to walk— I'm not gonna make you roll, but it's perilous to get down the side of this thing at night, with like the suns gone. Even by big— even by long moonlight, it's still hard to...it's like extremely that part of a Souls game where suddenly you're just like in a bunch of sticks taped together, and you're like, [sarcastic] “Oh, this is fucking great. I'm gonna get poisoned any second now.”

**Jack:** I have a question.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Has the moon been doing— are we seeing any Long Moon bullshit?

**Austin:** You haven't seen—

**Jack:** Just as a casual observer?

**Austin:** No, no. Mm-mm.

**Jack:** Moon seems fine?

**Austin:** No. Yeah, moon seems fine. Moon seems okay for now.

**Jack:** Okay, good.

**Austin:** For you, at least.

**Jack:** Anybody here talking about the Long Moon? Or was that a—

**Austin:** I mean, are you studying the moon?

**Jack:** Nah, Pickman doesn't give a shit about the moon. I'm just— [laughs softly]

**Austin:** See, well, then I can't give you any information.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Austin:** You know?

**Jack:** Just curious if, you know, it was getting visibly longer or something.

**Austin:** You'd have to...if you studied the moon, I could tell you some stuff.

**Jack:** Nah.

**Austin:** But Pickman doesn't care.

**Jack:** I'm interested in it, but Pickman isn't.

**Austin:** Yeah. I gotcha.

**Keith:** Well— okay, well, hold on now. Maybe I'm studying the moon, 'cause I think Lye Lychen does care.

**Austin:** Lye Lychen cares about the moon. So yeah, so you've finished your shopping trip.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** You're up on, you know, some high up tier of this place which gives you a good view of the moon. Nothing's in the way. You know, you're able to look up and see it. Give me a Discern...

**Jack:** Discern moon roll.

**Austin:** It's Discern Cursed.

**Keith:** Discern Cursed, huh. Well, I don't have Cursed. Does anybody else who cares about the moon want to help watch the moon?

**Austin:** Lye Lychen just kind of go moon watching with people tonight, you know?

**Jack:** God.

**Ali:** So, here's the thing. If I was—

**Austin:** Bucho cares, right?

**Ali:** Yeah, I was gonna talk about the moon later, 'cause I was gonna ask you if there was a way to remove the Stress that I gave Bucho.

**Austin:** Uh huh. Yeah, there is.

**Ali:** Because that's what NPC bonds are, like, you give them your Stress?

**Austin:** Yes. Yeah. [laughs softly] Uh huh.

**Ali:** But I didn't want Bucho— [laughs]

**Keith:** Poor Bucho.

**Ali:** I gave Bucho a Fallout, and I like don't...

**Austin:** You did. [Ali laughs]

**Jack:** Oh, yeah, Bucho's really worried about the moon.

**Keith:** Have you noticed?

**Austin:** Bucho is worried about the moon. [Dre laughs]

**Keith:** Have you noticed Bucho's more like...

**Ali:** Yeah, and I like really wanted to have some— I was...yeah. I didn't bring up the moon, but it's been on my mind.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** He's only taken a step and a half. [Ali laughs]

**Austin:** Oh my god.

**Keith:** For a little bit now.

**Austin:** [laughs] Yeah, there are ways to...I would say that you can clear Stress from Bucho the same way you would for yourself. I don't believe that— it doesn't explicitly say how to clear it. But I think you can clear it by the same way you would clear Stress on yourself, basically.

**Ali:** Okay, so—

**Austin:** Take Bucho out for a night of...I mean, I guess what type of— was this Echo? What type of Stress was this? Do you have this written down?

[1:00:00]

**Ali:** This was Forboding.

**Austin:** Forboding.

**Ali:** I have it marked down as “Forboding: Long Moon.”

**Austin:** [overlapping] Oh, I see. Yeah, uh huh.

**Ali:** So. [laughs] And then Forboding is Fortune.

**Austin:** Forboding is Fortune, right. I mean, the thing that it explicitly says is that, if they suffer Minor Fallout, they have a problem that needs solving and ask for your help. So, that's what we need here.

**Ali:** Okay.

**Austin:** Is Bucho needs to do that. [Ali laughs softly] If they suffer Major Fallout, they're in serious trouble. If they suffer Critical Fallout, they are removed as a bond. If they're still alive, they might really hate you.

**Ali:** Okay.

**Austin:** So yeah, maybe Bucho has a favor for you, right? I don't know what that is at this moment, but it's probably moon related.

**Ali:** Sure.

**Austin:** I think Bucho— [sighs] in my mind, Bucho's in a really weird place. Because when I introduced Bucho—

**Keith:** Damn.

**Austin:** Bucho, in my mind, was like... [Keith and Ali laugh] This is roleplaying, okay?

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Bucho was like one of the best, you know what I mean? Really well regarded among other Shape Knights, but very like in the institution. Had a lot of flexibility, because he could go



where— because he was successful historically. And he took this big L and got turned into a scarecrow.

**Keith:** We fucking ruined Bucho's life.

**Ali:** No, no, no. We s— [laughs]

**Austin:** And then...and then he came back, and then he was like caught up with y'all. And so, you know, in a different world where he's just in, you know, Sapodilla, he's not with you now. He's like with the train knights. He's with the Shape Knights, like trying to make plays and keep the trains from coming into Sapodilla to attack everybody. And now he's like on this boat thinking about what his life is, you know? And like looking out at the fucking moon. He's like, [weakly] "That moon feels like it's getting longer to me." [Ali and Keith laugh]

**Ali:** Sure.

**Jack:** Oh, Bucho.

**Sylvia:** To be fair, he would still be a scarecrow if it wasn't for us.

**Ali:** [laughs] Sure.

**Austin:** Right, this is true! And he's not— and he's thankful. He's grateful. You know?

**Jack:** God. We ma— he's small Bucho.

**Keith:** Wow.

**Ali:** No!

**Austin:** Wow.

**Ali:** This is just the experience you have on a boat sometimes, like... [Jack and Austin laugh]

**Sylvia:** That's true.

**Jack:** You know, when you're on a boat.

**Ali:** Maybe Bucho needs the time to work through this.

**Keith:** You know you fucked up when someone's like, "Look, I'm really grateful that you guys saved me from being a scarecrow, but..."

**Austin:** [laughs softly] But. [Jack laughs]

**Keith:** But.

**Austin:** I'm having some thoughts.

**Ali:** I was just about to say we didn't cause his city to turn to rubble, but... [laughs]

**Austin:** Oh, that's extremely not true at all!

**Ali:** You know, that's like a 60/40. [Jack laughs]

**Dre:** Well, he also made me go to jail, so I don't feel bad at all. [Ali laughs]

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Keith:** We were deeply involved in destroying the city, but it would have been worse if we weren't there.

**Austin:** Right. Uh huh.

**Ali:** Exactly.

**Austin:** This is true. This is true.

**Jack:** And isn't he glad he's not a scarecrow? [Ali laughs]

**Austin (as Bucho):** Sometimes, I'm not so sure.

**Keith:** It's really peaceful being a scarecrow, I bet.

**Jack:** Aw, Bucho! [Austin laughs] I'm a huge Bucho fan. I think...yeah.

**Austin:** He just needs some time.

**Art:** Can I address the audience directly for a second? [Ali laughs]

**Austin:** Yeah. Yeah, go ahead.

**Dre:** You should.

**Ali:** If you need to.

**Austin:** Mic is yours.

**Keith:** That's a rhetorical device.

**Art:** I think it's sort of passe to specifically request fanwork in any way. [Austin and Ali laugh]

**Dre:** Uh huh.

**Art:** But at some point in this last sequence—you can go back and check or check the *Friends at the Table* transcript project—Austin said “the Bucho in his mind.” [Ali laughs]

**Austin:** Oh my god. [Austin, Jack and Sylvia laugh loudly]

**Art:** And like, if you are a musician or have a band—

**Dre:** Oh my god, Art!

**Art:** —and you want to do a cover of Fozzy’s “Judas” about Bucho? That'd be great. I'd love it. It would be fantastic.

**Austin:** Not where I thought it was going!

**Ali:** Wow. Don't do that.

**Austin:** Mm-mm. [Jack laughs]

**Ali:** I mean, if you'd like to, sure, but. Oof.

**Sylvia:** Ahh.

**Austin:** Oh my god.

**Art:** Just like a parody song. Like, if Weird Al is listening to this. [Ali laughs]

**Austin:** Big fan.

**Keith:** Oh, I would love that, if Weird Al was listening.

**Austin:** Yeah. [Ali laughs]

**Art:** Yeah. Hi, Weird Al.

**Keith:** Someone get this in front of Weird Al.

**Austin:** Oh my god. Can you imagine how confused he'd be by what this is? [Ali laughs]

**Dre:** [singing] You're a train knight on the inside.

**Keith:** No, I mean— sorry, I mean someone get the whole series to Weird Al.

**Austin:** That's what I meant. I meant wouldn't it be confusing. [Keith and Ali laugh] We do a confusing thing.

**Keith:** I feel like Weird Al's along for the ride.

**Dre:** Yeah, totally.

**Austin:** Yeah, that's probably true.

**Dre:** Listen, he wrote "Albuquerque." Weird Al's down for anything. [Austin laughs]

**Keith:** Can I say, I listened to that CD about a thousand times when I was like ten or nine or whatever. And I literally...and I feel like I wasn't that dumb of a kid.

**Austin:** Oh no.

**Keith:** But I literally didn't put together that the reason that song was called "Albuquerque" was 'cause it had "Al" in it 'cause his name's Al.

**Austin:** Uh huh. His name's Al.

**Keith:** Until like two years ago. [Ali and Dre laugh] Not that I did a ton of thinking about "Albuquerque."

**Austin:** You're not helping our Weird Al chances right now, I feel like.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Or maybe this is endearing. Al, let us know. [Ali laughs]

**Dre:** No, Keith is saying that's the depth of artistry.

**Austin:** You know, we could—

**Keith:** I used to...I used to, like, know all the words. It's like 13 minutes long. I used to be able to say the whole thing to it, 'cause I was a weirdo, and I would like sit—

**Austin:** Yeah, uh huh.

**Keith:** —and just say the words to that as a nine year old. [Ali laughs softly] In my bedroom alone.

**Austin:** Like Bucho.

**Keith:** Like Bucho's doing in his head now. [Austin laughs] The Bucho in his mind is Albuquerque-ing. He's trying to order doughnuts, but the donut shop's out of all the doughnuts.

**Austin:** Okay, yeah.

**Ali:** Okay, so—

**Keith:** That's one of the plot points in "Albuquerque."

**Austin:** I understand now. Yeah, I figured. I kind of put that together. Ali?

**Ali:** I had like a day seven plan with Bucho, but I don't...

**Austin:** Sure, we're there. We're at day— we can be at day seven as soon as we want to.

**Ali:** Oh, are we at day— I didn't know if we were doing moon stuff first.

**Austin:** Oh, I guess Lyke wants to do moon stuff, right.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Lyke wants to do moon stuff that night.

**Keith:** Yeah, this started where Marn was potentially gonna help me with a roll to Discern the moon. [Ali laughs]

**Austin:** Right. Right.

**Art:** And instead we ended up talking to Weird AI for a second, I mean. [Ali laughs]

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Right, which I loved, actually.

**Ali:** Our email is at the beginning of this episode.

**Art:** Try to email on a Sunday, and you'll get a response. [all laugh loudly]

**Keith:** Or *very* early on a Monday.

**Austin:** Very— you never know.

**Art:** Yeah, I don't know what timezone Weird Al is in. [Keith laughs]

**Austin:** Yeah. Oh my god.

**Keith:** I feel like— yeah, I feel like Weird Al's LA. [Austin sighs]

**Ali:** Okay, what's—

**Austin:** Both of those letters are right there. It's Al backwards, so. [Ali laughs]

**Keith:** Oh, but he tours still, so yeah, who knows. He could be anywhere. He's a jet setter.  
[Austin sighs]

**Ali:** What are we rolling?

**Austin:** Are you helping with this roll?

**Ali:** Yeah. Discern?

**Austin:** What are we rolling? What's happening?

**Keith:** Uh, Cursed is the thing that I need help with particularly.

**Austin:** Discern, Cursed. I mean, you have Discern.

**Keith:** Somehow, I don't know about a lot of Cursed stuff. It feels like it...

**Austin:** Cursed stuff is rare here is what I'll say.

**Keith:** Yeah, fair.

**Austin:** Yeah. Cursed means a very specific thing in my mind with regard to what we do.

**Ali:** I have a Discern, if you just want the plus one. I'm willing to—

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Ali:** [laughing slightly] I don't know what this would do, and I shouldn't offer it, but I'm willing to bring my Cursed crystals down to a D4, 'cause they're Cursed.

**Austin:** Oh my god. They are Cursed.

**Jack:** Oh my god. What if you bring— can you pick up radio signals from the moon, Ali? [Ali laughs]

**Austin:** You could try.

**Ali:** I sure could.

**Austin:** You want to bring this?

**Ali:** Oh yeah, that's cursed.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Oh, well, I'm sure that I could—

**Ali:** And it's equipment.

**Austin:** Yeah, uh huh. It is equipment. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Keith:** I'm sure I could hyperdirectionalize that signal. [Ali laughs]

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. Bring the radio. You're just up on the— are you just out on the deck of the ship at night here?

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Okay.

**Jack:** Gonna tune into the moon. [Ali laughs]

**Austin:** You're like tuning in. You're— you got some crystals out. You got— uh huh.

**Ali:** Lyke is going out there. Bucho seems stressed about it. Let's go check out what's going on with the moon.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin (as Bucho):** [mumbles] Why do you...why is...what is this box that you've brought?

**Ali:** Oh, Bucho's with us. [laughs]

**Austin:** Yeah, Bucho's here now I've decided.

**Jack:** Uh oh.

**Austin (as Bucho):** [sighs] What is this?

**Austin:** You know, he goes down to take a look.

**Keith (as Lyke):** Bucho, we're gonna listen to the moon.

**Austin (as Bucho):** [dismayed] No.

**Ali (as Marn):** Yeah, someone told me it'll make a sound if I, you know, if something's gonna happen.

**Austin:** Do you have the— where is—? Do you have it up on a table? Like a bench? Like, you know what I mean? Like a picnic table bench or like a side table next to like your lounge seats. Like, where's the radio at?

**Keith:** I'll put it on the ground. I don't care. [Ali laughs]

**Austin:** Okay, put it on the ground. [Art laughs]

**Ali:** But maybe we're sitting on a bench.

**Austin:** Yeah, okay.

**Ali:** Like a park bench but on this boat. Fine, whatever.

**Austin:** On this boat. [Ali laughs] Eh, I know you mean. Yeah. A boat bench.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Sure. Give me a Discern Cursed. Take Mastery. Take the plus one and take Mastery, Keith.

**Keith:** Ten!

**Ali:** [quietly] Yes!



**Austin:** There's a ten. So, you begin to tune the radio. Keith, what are you doing? Tell me what you're— tell me what Lyke is doing as part of this.

**Keith:** Uh...

**Austin:** Or like what this looks like on your side.

**Keith:** So, it's Ali's radio, so I'll let Ali tune the radio.

**Austin:** Okay.

**Keith:** I think that what I'm doing is like amplifying the signal in order to like get it so that you can even get something from the moon.

**Austin:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Keith:** Like, it's just so far away that you've gotta, okay, I know— I can tell that this radio is like receiving something.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** I'm going to increase how well it does that with some magic.

**Austin:** Yeah, gotcha.

**Ali:** Ooh, smart.

**Austin:** I love this. Alright, so, and you got a ten. You got a crit. So. 'Cause I could give you a lot. I guess...I'll do a thing I've done before. This reminds me a lot of when Chine ate that lightbulb. [Austin and Ali chuckle] You get some questions about the moon and stuff. What do you want to know? And I can tell you how— I'll figure out a way to like communicate it to you in strange, occult ways.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** You don't have to say these questions out loud. You know what I mean?

**Ali:** Right.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** Like, you the player can ask me some stuff. [Ali sighs]

**Keith:** The sorts of things I want to know about are...

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Is the moon getting longer? Is this moon the Long Moon?

**Austin:** Alright, well— let's—

**Keith:** Okay, we're—

**Austin:** One at a time here. So. [Ali laughs]

**Keith:** Well, oh.

**Austin:** You find the—

**Keith:** I'm just sort of pitching these.

**Austin:** Yeah, I—

**Keith:** But I don't want to accidentally run out of questions.

**Austin:** Okay, let's say you have three questions.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** Let's give you that number.

**Ali:** Each, or...?

**Austin:** No. Total.

**Ali:** [laughs] Okay.

**Keith:** Total. Okay. Can we workshop these before we ask them?

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, go ahead.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** I'm not gonna— I'm not— yeah. Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Okay. So, Ali.

**Austin:** I will “Is that your final answer?” you, you know?

**Ali:** Mm, mm-hmm. [laughs]

**Keith:** Right. The things that popped up was: is the moon definitely getting longer?

**Ali:** Okay.

**Keith:** Is the moon...is the moon more dangerous? Is this moon the Long Moon? Is a different moon the Long Moon?

**Ali:** Oh, sure. Okay.

**[1:10:00]**

**Keith:** Do you have anything?

**Ali:** [laughs] I think my question was the second question, which is like, we know specifically that the Long Moon is forboding.

**Keith:** Right.

**Ali:** Like...

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Ali:** What do we have to be aware of?

**Keith:** So, is this moon the Long Moon? How do we protect ourselves against the Long Moon?

**Ali:** I'm just gonna read Forboding. “Something bad is about to happen. [laughs softly] GM, hint at an ominous future event—smoke in the distance, the tremors before a pulse, the frantic music of a carnival. This Fallout can be upgraded to Crisis.”

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Ali:** So we definitely need to know, in what ways do you have to be prepared?

**Keith:** Maybe we broaden it to: what is the Long Moon? [Ali and Jack laugh]

**Austin:** Okay, so, the...you've tuned the radio. You're hearing strange music. At first, you're picking up...you're picking up the sound of a radio station, which I don't know is a thing you know that exists yet. Do radio stations exist in this world? Probably not, right? And I think this is a very *Kentucky Route Zero* infused moment of like...what's the name of our band that's coming tomorrow? The Broken—

**Austin (as radio host):** And that was the Broken Quartet with—

**Austin:** And, you know, it kind of, you keep tuning. And eventually you tune into something where, in my mind, we're kind of listening to 19, you know, 30s standards. You know, just kind of like, there's a string and a horn section, and someone is crooning something. And the dial gets stuck in place, and you can't turn it anymore. And besides the sound coming out of the speakers, smoke begins to pour out, heavy smoke that falls out of the radio and onto the deck. And it begins to cover the deck. Like low hanging fog almost, but thick. It's like liquid smoke, right? It's like liquidy. You know, it's cold to put your foot into it. And you can't not put your foot into it, 'cause it's covering up this whole section of the fucking deck. And that's— feel free to react to this before I get to the next part. [Ali laughs softly]

**Keith:** Uh, is it magic, first of all?

**Austin:** Yes!

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** Well—

**Keith:** What's it smell like?

**Austin:** Mm.

**Jack:** God, poor Bucho.

**Austin:** It's a...this is a cavalcade of smells. It's, you can't unpack one smell from this set. It's rapidly spinning between different smells. It's overwhelming and gauche. And like, there's too much in here. Every once in a while, it's like...

**Keith:** It's like incense?

**Austin:** No, no no. It's like biting into something where like...you ever eat something that's like, "Oh, there's not a lot of flavor here." And then you're like, [overwhelmed] "Oh my god, I found all the flavor. The flavor was all in that one bite," you know? There's like moments like—

**Art:** Biting a cardamom pod.

**Austin:** Yes, exactly. This is what the—

**Keith:** Or like a cookie with a clump of baking soda in it.

**Austin:** Ick, yeah, totally. Or the opposite, right? A really...sometimes you'll get like a really bad cookie, and then you'll be like, "Oh my god, wait. This one part had the right amount of everything in it, and this part was good," right? Or, "Oh, these aren't very hot. Like, I got these like buffalo wings, and they're just not very hot," and then it's like, "Oh my god, wait. For whatever reason, here it is." Like, this is the heat, here's the heat. That sort of feeling. This is what the Course smells like. The kind of raw, that raw— again, it's not even magic in the way that like you interact with on a day-to-day basis. It's this second layer. Or it's this not second layer, it's this deeper layer of of it. It's this like, uncut, pure reality.

**Keith:** It's magic skin.

**Austin:** It's deep— no, it's like magic muscle. It's like, you deal with magic skin. You deal with the skin of magic.

**Keith:** Oh.

**Austin:** This is like magic blood. This is like deeper in. This is what— because it's not just magic, right? The Course is a little of every— it's raw reality, right? It's being itself, in many ways. And so it's very overwhelming to smell in that way. And you also can't trust your smell. You're like, mm, there's definitely other smells here that like I don't have the capacity to smell. It's like, you know, there are other spectrums of light that you can't see happening here. From this fog, this smoke, you start to see pillars grow or tall shapes. Maybe they're tree trunks. And they're like, it's almost as if...maybe you land on tree trunks. And it's as if they are growing over time, getting bigger and bigger and bigger. You're not really sure what the scale is. But then some of the tree tops lift away from the trees and become an orb in the sky. And the orb begins to grow bigger and bigger, until finally, there's this big kind of sphere of smoke hanging above this deck. And it begins to grow until it's bigger than the forest below it and until it actually touches the tree tops again. It is like, you know, the size of an elephant or something at this point. It's huge and above you, this just like smoke reflecting the moonlight out around everything. And it consumes the trees below. It like, until the whole sphere is there. You are like, need to back away from this part of the deck so that you're not consumed by this smoke as well. And then it recedes until it's just...it's just a small moon in the sky again. And—

**Keith:** Of smoke.

**Austin:** Of smoke. Yeah, yeah, yeah. And it begins to grow again, and it seems more stable. It doesn't seem like it's growing quickly again, but it is growing...it is growing literally wider, almost disclike, like, reaching across the whole of this smoke forest in terms of its like length. It's no longer growing like deep and wide. It's not like it's...it's not like it's gonna consume the forest again. It might touch it, it might like lay on top of it, but it's not growing into it. It's not like

crashing into the forest anymore in this way. It is just, you know, like blotting out the sky above these pillars, above these trees. That is how the answer to what— to, you know, “what is the Long Moon?” is given.

**Keith:** Mm, so it does seem bad. [Ali laughs]

**Austin:** Seems bad. Yeah.

**Keith:** Radio worked.

**Austin:** Radio is working.

**Keith:** Okay. So we’ve got our—

**Austin:** Two more questions.

**Keith:** We've got the “what is the Long Moon?” and it seems—

**Austin:** Sort of. Yeah. It's still a little confusing, obviously.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** I guess here's what I'll give you, Keith. You're smelling this. In this moment, when the Long Moon happens, all of that wild, you know, strange melange of smells that is just like, I can't quite make out what everything is in here, becomes incredibly...it's not that it becomes a single thing, it's that you suddenly can start to pick out all of those different smells. And you realize that there is something very, very potent about the moment of the Long Moon that is like, “Oh.” Okay, here's a good way to think about this. There is...your spells all, in hypotheticals, the way we talk about your spells require like reagents and components and stuff, right? You're mixing a little bit of crystal—

**Keith:** Uh huh.

**Austin:** And, you know, turpentine and little twine dolls. You know, you're doing stuff with stuff. That's what you do. Sometimes something can exist in the world where you're able to draw on its power directly without it being your thing, right? So it's like, oh, we're in— this is partly how gods work for you, right? Where you're like, “Oh, I'm tapping on one of the strengths of these gods instead of getting my components together,” for instance, right? Or like, you know, theoretically, maybe you're in a lake. It's probably easier to do water magic in the lake, because there's water all around you, right? The Long Moon is like a free reagent for anything at all times, when it's there. You can feel that like you could draw upon it, as if it were...as if it were like every component you would need to do a spell, right? Which opens up a lot of possibilities, because there's lots of things that you just cannot get. And so, if you were a powerful magician,

this would be a really good moment to do some very powerful magic. It's almost like the equivalent in a lot of fantasy fiction of like, oh, the stars have aligned. Right?

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** The Long Moon is a moment of power because— you don't know if it's 'cause of proximity or because what the moon represents with the— you don't know the metaphysics of this. But in that moment, because of the way the smells kind of like become available to you, you can understand how like, oh, in this moment, it's almost as if I would have Mastery on every roll. You know?

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** I would have every skill and domain for any spell I was casting, for instance, right?

**Keith:** Does...I'm pretty sure that I remember that my *Sa'Ferna-ta-Fera* book is not magic.

**Austin:** It's not magic, correct.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** No.

**Keith:** So there's nothing about that...about the moon that reminds me of—

**[1:20:00]**

**Austin:** No, that just has all of those things because it's a really good book.

**Keith:** Because that person's really smart. [laughs softly]

**Austin:** That person's really smart, and that conversation was extremely wide ranging.

**Keith:** Okay. I just wanted to make sure.

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. No relation.

**Keith:** 'Cause it's the only other every domain thing I've ever seen.

**Austin:** Totally.

**Keith:** It's like, ah, maybe this person would have known about the Long Moon. The question that I have that I'm not— not an askable question, I don't think, but I can't tell if the part where

the moon comes and crushes everything before it goes back up and then widens out, if that first part has already happened, or if it's the whole thing is part of the Long Moon.

**Austin:** Yeah, I don't know.

**Keith:** I don't know.

**Austin:** I don't know that— you just got the image, you know?

**Keith:** That's my— that is my—

**Austin:** It's a good question.

**Keith:** My note for later is—

**Austin:** Yeah. [Ali laughs]

**Keith:** Can we expect to all be crushed or just blotted out? [Austin laughs softly] Okay. Ali, do you have a— do you have a question? Or maybe a direction for the next— for question number two?

**Ali:** Yeah, I feel like my question is, like, how do we avoid the upgrade to crisis?

**Austin:** Mm.

**Ali:** You know?

**Austin:** Yeah. [Ali laughs]

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** You see more...I mean, I think, you know, the vision continues. And there at the base of all of these trees, you see more figures. You see little figures moving around. Or you see, like, you know what I'm gonna say is it's like absences in this kind of ground smoke that represent action and movement. And soon, new trees, new pillars are built, that reach up towards the— that kind of widen the area of this forest and these pillars, right? These vast tree trunks. So it's like, the...let's say there were 20 of these trees before. Now there are 30, and now there are 40, and they're growing. And as that happens, it seems as if the width of the moon, the length of the moon, the reach of the moon gets reduced. So. I don't— you know, is that as simple as plant more trees? [Ali laughs] Is there something metaphorical happening here that the trees represent? Could someone see this and jump to really bad conclusions? Probably. One more, if anyone has any other questions.

**Ali:** Yeah, I don't know. I, um...



**Austin:** It's weird stuff. I know. [Ali laughs] I'm not, uh...to be clear, I don't think that there are obvious questions about what you're seeing here. This is weird, you know?

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Keith:** I have a question. Can I have some of the moon smoke?

**Ali:** Mm.

**Austin:** That could be your— the answer of that is yes. That's your third question. Is that acceptable? [Ali laughs]

**Keith:** Yes.

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. Take some...take a jar, a D8 jar of Course smoke, of...it's not liquid, really. It's gaseous, I guess.

**Keith:** Course gas.

**Austin:** You can call it moon smoke.

**Keith:** Course it's gas.

**Austin:** Course it's gas.

**Ali:** Does Bucho still have this? [laughs]

**Austin:** No, I think this is...this is clarifying for Bucho.

**Ali:** Okay.

**Austin:** It's not actually clarifying. What it is is it gives Bucho...Bucho is like:

**Austin (as Bucho):** This was more productive than I could have imagined. I have a lot to think on. I will retire tonight, but I would love to get breakfast with the two of you tomorrow.

**Ali (as Marn):** Yeah. Yeah. Have a good night.

**Keith:** Sure.

**Austin:** And when you see him tomorrow, he has that second step back.

**Ali:** [quiet, victorious] Yeah.

**Keith:** Wow.

**Austin:** There is something about having this thing to work over instead of it being this single iconic image in his brain of the Long Moon. To be like, okay, well, what do those trees mean? What's— did the moon—

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Did the moon already expand and then...? Is it doing it again or are we— is this loop? What's going on?

**Keith:** Yeah, something to consider instead of just being like, "What the fuck?" [Ali laughs]

**Austin:** Yeah, exactly. Exactly, so. So yeah, there you go.

**Ali:** Hell yeah.

**Austin:** Anything else? Or should we get to day seven? Okay. Um, what is next? Is it the next day? Does anyone else have anything to do here on day six or should we jump ahead to day seven?

**Keith:** I thought we were already on day seven.

**Austin:** No, we were on night six.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** Day seven.

**Keith:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. I just—

**Austin:** We would've known it was day seven, 'cause it says dance lessons here. [Ali laughs softly]

**Keith:** Oh, wow.

**Art:** And that's one of the last days— oh.

**Austin:** [laughs] Well, listen. Nine to eleven is stay inside, remain inside. So just don't do anything, and you'll be fine.

**Art:** No, I want to know what's happening outside.

**Austin:** Oh my god. Okay.

**Ali:** Oh.

**Austin:** Yeah, sure. Fantastic. Well, we'll get there when we get there. For now, dance lessons. Day seven, bright and early. Bucho is hanging— there's a continental breakfast available every morning. Bucho is hanging out. [Art laughs]

**Jack:** What continent?

**Keith:** Yeah, can I get a sampling of the kind of, uh...

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** ...breakfast you can get at the continental breakfast? Is it very much like our own continental breakfast?

**Austin:** It has to be similar, but then a little different, right?

**Ali:** Mm.

**Keith:** Griddle cakes. Bacon.

**Janine:** Eggs. Bacon.

**Austin:** Eggs.

**Janine:** Croissants. A big bowl of wax.

**Austin:** Yeah. Yeah, classic, regular stuff.

**Dre:** Mmm.

**Keith:** Can we at least get some interesting egg variation? Like, is there, instead of scrambled, we get something else.

**Austin:** Yeah. What's a way that we don't make eggs but they do?

**Janine:** Cooked in gravel. Cooked in hot gravel. [Keith laughs]

**Art:** Wait, doesn't a continental breakfast usually not have eggs at all?

**Austin:** Wait, what doesn't have eggs? Oh, continental.

**Art:** A continental breakfast?

**Austin:** No, continental breakfast'll have...continental breakfast'll have like—

**Keith:** Scrambled eggs, yeah.

**Austin:** Some scrambled eggs, a scrambled egg.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** A heated scrambled egg plate, like tray.

**Dre:** They won't be good.

**Art:** I'm going (??? 1:25:37)

**Austin:** You're not gonna get like a fried egg. You know what I mean?

**Keith:** You can— we can scoop our own poached egg right out of the big vat.

**Ali:** Ooh.

**Austin:** What if ever— yeah, big vats of poached eggs. What if they really are into egg whites here and they separate the yolk and then they fry up egg whites into little— into like, you know, fried egg white like saucers, you know what I mean?

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Like a regular fried egg. And they just— it's just like you open one of those metal tray things, and inside is just— it's almost like egg— it's like a burger but made of egg whites, you know?

**Keith:** The bread is or the meat is?

**Janine:** That sounds repugnant.

**Austin:** Like an egg disk, you know?

**Janine:** [sighs] Well, that's—

**Keith:** Oh, like at Dunkies.

**Janine:** Okay, that's McDonald's. You're talking about an Egg McMuffin, is the thing you're describing. [laughs]

**Austin:** Yeah, but without the yolk. Just the whites.

**Janine:** Okay, you're talking about a 1980s homemade calorie wise Egg McMuffin.

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Yeah, and those are widely available and enjoyed in Sangfielle.

**Janine:** Boo.

**Keith:** Wow. No one told them that, uh, staying away from egg yolks is mostly a scam?

**Austin:** Yeah, they— no one pushed that here.

**Janine:** And we're worried about the moon here? Hmm.

**Austin:** They're saving the yolks for later.

**Ali:** Mm.

**Keith:** Oh, they're making carbonara with them.

**Austin:** Sure.

**Keith:** They're making tons of carbonara for dinner.

**Austin:** A ton of it, yeah. Anyway, yeah, so Bucho's down there. Alekest, the Shape Knight who visited Pickman, is there. The two of them are of course hanging out, because they're both Shape Knights.

**Ali:** Oh, sure.

**Jack:** Yeah, you know how Shape Knights are.

**Austin:** Yeah. Alekest has purchased brunch cocktails for everybody in the restaurant.

**Ali:** Wow.

**Janine:** Uh oh.

**Keith:** Do you know, I've never had— I've never really had a Bloody Mary, but I've always imagined that I would like to be someone who could really enjoy one.

**Ali:** Mm.

**Jack:** [chuckles] Aspirationally.

**Austin:** I think you would. I think you would. There are things about a good Bloody Mary I think you would appreciate, Keith.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** So.

**Keith:** And I'm saying this as me, but I'm also saying it in character. [Ali laughs]

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Dre:** Sure, yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Janine:** Mm.

**Austin:** You know, I think that you're invited to pull up a seat and try one.

**Keith:** I should try— I should try one. Both, same, in character, out of character.

**Austin:** Yes. I understand. [laughs softly]

**Keith (as Lyke):** I *should* have this.

**Austin:** You should.

**Austin (as Kaitankro):** Pour yourself one.

**Austin:** [laughing] From the group Bloody Mary dispenser.

**Keith:** Right, a pitcher. Big pitcher of Bloody Mary.

**Ali:** Ooh.

**Austin:** There's a big pitcher of Bloody Mary. Yeah.

**Janine:** I have like two things that compel me to overindulge.

**Austin:** Oh, uh huh.

**Keith:** One: Bloody Mary.

**Janine:** On this thing. But also, I'm terrified of missing the dance lessons. [Keith laughs loudly]

**Austin:** Okay. I— fair.

**Ali:** Yeah, I have to...

**Janine:** As a player.

**Austin:** There will be Bloody Marys tomorrow. There will be other— you can—

**Janine:** Okay.

**Austin:** This isn't the one day.

**Janine:** Okay, so maybe this is just...we're just getting a little taste for it and being like, "I could do this every day."

**Ali:** Ooh, sure.

**Austin:** Right, uh huh.

**Janine:** Okay.

**Austin:** Dance lesson start at noon.

**Ali:** Oh, perfect.

**Austin:** I don't know anything about the Broken Quartet per se, [Ali laughs softly] because Jack told me about them. Is there like an emcee for the Broken Quartet? Do they travel— or is there just an emcee here on the ship that would introduce them tonight?

**Jack:** There's probably an emcee on the ship, but I think that the Broken Quartet have a—

**Austin:** Do they have a manager?

**Jack:** They have a bandleader. Their cello— oh, no, their violin player is the bandleader.

**Austin:** Mm.

**Jack:** And I imagine he would probably introduce them.

**Austin:** Yeah. I feel like that being— I want someone a step away from the band who would organize this dance, these dance lessons, but would still be associated. Do you know what I mean? But it doesn't have to— maybe this is just—

**Jack:** It could be someone that they met in Cantbank, right? And they're like...

**Austin:** Oh, sure.

**Jack:** We're all...we can both get paid if we work this out.

**Austin:** If we work it out.

**Jack:** You need a band, and we need a dance caller, so.

**Austin:** Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. So yeah, there's a dance caller. Big Ojantani lady who has like a really nice kind of peach dress on. Great voice, deep voice, very like, um... [sighs] Very able to fill the room, you know, and like own the room. And so after everyone's had breakfast, you know, tables are cleared away, and that space is turned into a dance hall. And, you know, I really do imagine that it is the sort of dance that has a caller the way like square dancing has a caller, right? I've only done square dancing once.

**[1:30:06]**

**Keith:** What is a caller? What is a dance caller?

**Austin:** Uh, it's...

**Art:** Oh, you never— like square— like, someone in square dancing will tell you what to do, you know, like...

**Keith:** Oh.

**Austin:** Yeah. That's when...

**Keith:** No, I've never been square dancing.

**Art:** "Swing your partner, do-si-do," is an example of calling.

**Janine:** Yeah, that's the classic one.



**Austin:** That's the classic one.

**Keith:** Oh!

**Austin:** "Now promenade." Promenade.

**Keith:** That's not just a thing that they made up for movies?

**Jack:** "Down the outside."

**Austin:** Down the out— exactly.

**Keith:** You know, we need a character who explains what's happening, because of how fucking weird it is. [Austin laughs]

**Janine:** Just 'cause people stopped memorizing it and shit. Like...

**Austin:** Mm.

**Janine:** You know, there's a whole like tradition of like country dances were like everyone— you know, whenever you watch any fucking Jane Austen movie, everyone just knows 16 different country dances, and they just know when the music starts playing which one they're fucking doing somehow.

**Keith:** Right.

**Janine:** And that stopped being a thing, so you definitely need a guy who's like, "please take someone's hand and then walk around in a circle." [Ali laughs]

**Keith:** Mm.

**Austin:** Right.

**Art:** Mm-hmm.

**Jack:** And also at like a ceilidh.

**Dre:** Uh huh? [Janine makes amused sound]

**Jack:** At like a ceilidh in the UK or in...yeah, in Scotland and Ireland, it might be like at a big wedding or at a party, and there might be like a lot of people or children or people who aren't familiar with the dances. And trying to like, like Janine said, yeah, like, martial 80 people to be like: [claps] Alright, listen. We've all had a few drinks. You've had your breakfast Bloody Marys.

**Keith:** Right. We've gotten— I think we've gotten around this, at least in the US at weddings, by making the dance caller the person who sings the song. They're just...

**Austin:** Well, so...

**Art:** Yeah, uh huh.

**Austin:** Yeah, so...

**Art:** Like the...yeah, the electric slide or whatever?

**Austin:** There is— the thing is, there is a performance element to being the caller.

**Keith:** Sure.

**Austin:** Where you're slipping in, like, non-instructional terms and words and like, you're doing sort of a...

**Keith:** Right, if I went somewhere and they told me to do-si-do, I wouldn't know what that meant.

**Austin:** I mean, a do-si-do a specific thing, right?

**Keith:** Sure, but it's also...

**Art:** You sort of circle the other person.

**Austin:** Right.

**Art:** Without touching them.

**Austin:** The thing is that like, there's almost a auctioneer vibe to a...

**Jack:** Oh, yeah.

**Austin:** To the sort of patter of a line dance caller. I'm trying to find a good example, but all these videos are terrible.

**Janine:** It's like a slow auction to music.

**Austin:** Yeah. Uh huh. [laughs slightly] Sorry, I'm desperately looking for...oh, this guy's great. Okay. People at home can look up, uh, square dance by Joe Casey.

**Jack:** Oh my god, with his bolo tie.

**Austin:** Yep. He said, [imitating video] "I'm gonna get get home with a pretty little thing." See, that's patter. That's not an instruction on how to dance. When he said promenade, that's an instruction how to dance. But anyway, that's what's happening here. Big Ojantani lady, great voice, deep voice. Going very slow at first. Who's dancing with who? What are our dance matchups here?

**Ali:** Yeah, I, before...sorry. [laughs]

**Austin:** The force with which you were like, "Uh, yeah." Uh, mm.

**Ali:** I just, I waited for day seven. And I'm here on day seven.

**Austin:** Here we are.

**Ali:** And before this whole downtime, I was gonna have a Bucho scene, which was like, "Hey, Bucho, I want to make sure you make it out of this falling city." And we handwave that!

**Austin:** Mm.

**Ali:** And now I would like to invite Bucho to dance lessons.

**Jack:** Aw!

**Austin:** This is incredible. How...okay. [Ali laughs] I think he's like:

**Austin (as Bucho):** Uh...Marn, you know I don't need dance lessons.

**Ali (as Marn):** No, but I do.

**Austin (as Bucho):** Oh, I see. I will be a very...

**Ali (as Marn):** Yeah.

**Austin (as Bucho):** ...generous and patient leader, then.

**Ali (as Marn):** Oh, thank you!

**Austin (as Bucho):** Take my hand.

**Ali (as Marn):** Oh. Yeah, I figured, you know, they're teaching the basics, but you know the like seasoning.

**Austin:** [laughs softly] I think he grins, and he says, like:

**Austin (as Bucho):** [a little flirty] Seasoning and spice.

**Ali (as Marn):** [surprised] Oh.

**Dre:** Oh. [Ali laughs]

**Austin:** And, you know, the calls begin. He is, you know, he is doing the thing where he's like making sure to not...he's not trying to show off, you know what I mean?

**Ali:** [laughs] Yeah.

**Austin:** He's not trying— he's going out of his way to ensure that you're able to keep up and that you are having a good time. You probably make a couple mistakes, and he is like:

**Austin (as Bucho):** We all make mistakes. It's how we recover.

**Austin:** You know, that type of thing. You know, I think someone tries to start something.

**Ali:** Oh.

**Austin:** With Bucho, and he just ignores them. Like, he's like, that's not why I'm here. [Ali laughs] You know? I'm here to dance with Marn. That's what this is.

**Ali:** Wow.

**Austin:** Great. And, you know, there is a...again, coming off of last night where he recovered from— or coming off of recovering from this bad feeling, this foreboding feeling he's had, it's very nice to see Bucho, Big Bucho, Two Step Bucho back to his own self, you know? Do you have any you have any other notes on Marn's dancing?

**Ali:** [laughs] Probably a little awkward, getting into it though. Earnest.

**Keith:** Can I get a height diff?

**Austin:** There's a height diff. There's a height difference for sure.

**Ali:** Sure, but.

**Austin:** You know.

**Ali:** It happens.

**Austin:** This is a world of bigger height differences.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** So I'm sure that dance has evolved around that. Any other dancing? Who's dancing?

**Janine:** Es is definitely dancing.

**Art:** Be a fool not to go dancing, I mean... [Ali laughs]

**Janine:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm. What's— who's dancing?

**Keith:** Hmm.

**Austin:** What do you— talk to me about your dances and your dancing. What's it like to dance as you?

**Art:** Oh, it's weird to see Duvall dance, I think. [Ali laughs] I think that's a...

**Austin:** No, no, how's it feel for Duvall?

**Art:** That's a weird happening.

**Austin:** Forget about what other people think when they look at you.

**Art:** Oh, thank you. That's fairly...that's the right attitude to have when dancing.

**Austin:** [laughs] This is what Bucho— sees you're struggling, and Bucho's like:

**Austin (as Bucho):** You need to forget that other people— dance like no one is watching. [Keith laughs]

**Austin:** Two Step Bucho, time.is. [Ali and Art laugh]

**Keith:** It's time to dance like no one's watching. [several people laugh]

**Austin:** [laughing] It's time to dance like nobody's watching! Ahh. But no, what— seriously, what's it like for someone like Duvall to dance?

**Art:** I mean, I think—

**Austin:** This is in...

**Art:** I think Duvall dances to two different rhythms, you know?

**Austin:** Mm.

**Art:** 'Cause like, Duvall can hear the music, and Duvall can also hear the like constant hum.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm. Yeah, I love this.

**Art:** And like, the like catching himself dancing to the wrong beat.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Art:** Like happens, you know, a couple times a song.

**Austin:** Do you, um...are you— who— are you just dancing with whatever partners are available here? Is there—

**Art:** Yeah, I didn't have like a dance plan.

**Austin:** You don't have a dance plan? You don't have a dance card? I guess the actual dance is tonight. This is very much dance lessons, you know? But still.

**Keith:** Is the dance the band? Or...

**Austin:** The dance will be, yes, this band is playing tonight.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** So for this, I think you're listening to...the actual music is like an old record being played that's just looping like very simple...like, much simpler versions of the songs that will be played tonight, that are fully focused on the rhythm and like a core melody, you know? How's Es's dance going?

**Janine:** Um, I...if someone specifically wants to participate in this and wants a partner, then Es is game. Otherwise, I was gonna suggest some sort of just like a random...I think Es is feeling very social, because she spent the first few days just like working with Marn mostly.

**Austin:** Right, right. [Ali laughs softly]

**Janine:** So now she's got a lot of like, a lot of like, "let's meet some people" energy going on.

**Austin:** Making some like cruise friends.

**Janine:** Yeah.

**Austin:** You know, you're making some like, "Oh, wow. Yeah, you guys are from here? That's cool. I've been there," type of stuff.

**Janine:** Yeah, also Dyer's not here, so.

**Austin:** Right.

**Janine:** Card's open.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Ali:** Oh. [Janine laughs softly]

**Austin:** Yes, Dyer...we didn't see Dyer leave last time. Oh, Dyer mentioned that they'd be going west, right?

**Janine:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Yeah, so there you go. Anyway, not on this ship. So yeah, I think that that makes sense. Any other shots from this, these dance lessons? All right. Then the rest of the day, you know, kind of continues. If someone has a thing they want to do, they can. Tonight is a big dance and a big performance, and I think it's a mix of people sitting and watching the music and people dancing to it. Jack, I would love for you to talk to me about the Broken Quartet.

**Jack:** Um, the Broken Quartet are at least the band that have sort of been...insofar as any music in any season is diegetic, the Broken Quartet have been responsible for the "Sangfielle" soundtrack. It's four people. It's a cello player, a viola player, a violin player, and a clarinet player. So it's like a string quartet plus a clarinet and minus one of the violins.

**Austin:** Mm.

**Jack:** And they're just— they're fairly ordinary people who are kind of shabbily dressed in formal sort of concert wear. It's not quite clear whether they were, in some way, present in the Heartland when the Panic happened, which would have had to have been— they'd have to be very, very old.

**Austin:** Very old. Hundreds of years old now, yeah.

**Jack:** Or something bizarre going on there. But the vibe that you get from them is that they are musicians who once played in, you know, rarefied or...they were like the finest string quartet in this region, and then something happened that sort of tore them apart.

**[1:40:03]**

**Keith:** And—

**Jack:** Whether that was the— hmm?

**Keith:** And now they just do music for a podcast.

**Jack:** And now they do music for— [Austin and Jack laugh] Now they do music for a podcast paid for by Patreon. [Austin laughs] No, it's like, you know, they forgot how to play their instruments after this happened, and it was like very intensely traumatic for them. And maybe some of their instruments were destroyed, but they pieced together their cello, the violin, the viola, and the clarinet from, you know, an instrument they found in the basement of a church, or something that they stole from somewhere else.

**Austin:** Mm.

**Jack:** And now they've become this sort of like band that has leaned into the ruin of...the ruin of something that happened long ago. But the vibe that they bring is not like, "Oh no, here's a cursed band," and more like, "Oh, this is one way music sounds in this place." [Austin laughs] And then this is the kind of music that they're able to make.

**Austin:** Love it. So, yeah. This is, mechanically speaking, this is a Mind Stress Haunt. You can get rid of Mind Stress here. It is a D8, which means it can get rid of Major. And it is a...it is, like, just again, a scene of relief for a lot of people. Um, I think that, you know, everybody who's on this boat is...we've talked about people being on trains, doing kind of mundane trips, where like, "Oh, I have to go across the Heartland to see my family. And it's risky to take a train, but it would be riskier to walk, so I'll take the train." No one on this boat is like without a story. You know what I mean? And I feel like everybody on this boat has some sort of stress built up. And you can feel that like the top button is coming unbuttoned tonight for a lot of people. Hazard, upstairs in the gambling hall, that means things have gotten a little rowdier. People are making bigger bets and almost getting into fights tonight. There's the sense of like strange energy in the air, as the music kind of pervades the entire ship. Like, there are places on the ship where you can't hear the music, but you can still feel the bass. You can still feel that that music is happening. And so that is like the energy in the air. And then in the actual dancing, the dance hall, there is just like, you could feel that sense of like release and...the applause is deeply felt. It's that sort of like clapping to get the energy out of your arms. You know, like I just got to like use everything I have on this right now. I'm guessing everyone who did the dance lessons is here to dance for real tonight. I don't know if there's a roll here. I was thinking maybe you could do a roll. You could do some sort of dance roll to just do Mind healing instead of paying for it, if you wanted to. But that's risky, 'cause, you know, you could fuck up and get more Stress. But you know what, I've danced. It can be stressful to dance.

**Ali:** Yeah. Yeah.



**Austin:** So. Does anyone want to do— does anyone want to conceptualize their dancing mechanically? [Ali and Dre laugh]

**Janine:** I don't need the Mind healing, but I would roll to see how cool I look.

**Ali:** Oh, same.

**Austin:** At risk of a negative? Or just to roll some dice? Like, do you want something from it? I'm trying to figure out if there's like a...

**Janine:** No, I don't really want anything.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Janine:** I just kind of want to roll some dice. It's been a while.

**Austin:** Just want to roll some dice. [Ali laughs] Yeah, I getcha.

**Janine:** It's just a thing of like, do you fade into the background or do you have like a...

**Austin:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Janine:** Like a cool 80s movie night, kinda?

**Austin:** Yeah, give me a...what are you rolling? 'Cause I think what you would roll here, like playing cards, is really telling, you know?

**Janine:** Um...I think...

**Austin:** I mean, I think the domain is Haven, no matter what. The skill is what I'm curious about.

**Janine:** Yes. So, I think for the— [laughs] I think for the thing I want specifically, it's Compel.

**Austin:** Mm.

**Janine:** I think it's like, how compelling is this dance? Or is it forgettable?

**Austin:** Right.

**Janine:** Like, do people even remember if Es was there? Or is it a thing of like, "Wow, who was that lady with the hat?"

**Austin:** Which speaks back to Es as like someone who fundamentally wants to be seen in that way, right?

**Janine:** Yes, and— yeah, yeah, very perception focused.

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah.

**Janine:** Very much like, I'm in a body because I want to be perceived as, you know, this.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm. Yeah. Then yeah, give me— you can give me Compel Haven.

**Janine:** All right.

**Austin:** Marn, what do you— how do you conceive of it? Oh, boy. Oh, yikes.

**Ali:** Aww. [Janine laughs]

**Austin:** Oh, Es.

**Janine:** Well.

**Austin:** Double threes.

**Janine:** Yeah. Not a memorable one, then. Not a...

**Austin:** Is double threes a thing? It's not snake eyes, obviously.

**Janine:** Kissy face eyes.

**Austin:** That's what they say. They call it that. Yeah. [Ali laughs] Yeah, so I think you just kind of blend into the background, right? You just...you just can't...maybe it's just like the other personalities in this room are just so big. Maybe it's where you're at, Es. I don't know, why— you tell me. Is there a reason?

**Janine:** I...

**Austin:** What goes wrong here? Or doesn't— what doesn't work here?

**Janine:** [sighs] I think— so, I think this goes back to like the Fallout that I have right now.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Janine:** Which is...

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Janine:** You can't get your head right.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Janine:** Basically. So I think it is just that, like, Es is tired and still really kind of burnt. Like, the Citadel shit was extremely upsetting. Like, I haven't gone into detail about it, but I think like, I think Es saw some things there that she didn't realize were possible.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Janine:** Like, I don't think she understood that those were things that could happen to heritrixes and stuff. Like, I think that was a very jarring, like, you know, you accept that there's a certain degree of risk in being in a body, but you...the risks of being out of the body are not something that are commonplace for them to deal with.

**Austin:** Right.

**Janine:** So I think that was very jarring. And I think like, part of...I wanted to make that like, that was why I wanted to wrap up her cataloguing her exploits, 'cause I felt like that felt like a really strong conclusion for like this sort of chapter of what she would want to like tell a story about. But I think she probably thought of it as like, "This is a big purge! I'll get it out of my system, and then I feel fine."

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Janine:** And it's like, no, you do not feel fine.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Janine:** It's still...

**Austin:** You're still sitting with...

**Janine:** Yeah. You're still thinking about that shit.

**Austin:** Yeah. Like, we didn't pause and talk through it during that arc, but like, I very much conceptualized that arc as being, that part of that that stuff as being about seeing exactly what you said, this like vulnerability, not just vulnerability, in a form that you normally associate with safety. But explicitly that there are people in the world who want to instrumentalize you and people like you in that way. And it's like—

**Janine:** Yeah.

**Austin:** They're terrible people. Like, they are...

**Janine:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** To me, that is like a high tier level of like gruesome villainy, like really deeply dehumanizing shit. And I generally like to let the work speak for itself there, but I can imagine that it's very easy to be like, "Oh, yeah, they were using ghosts to make dungeon traps," and like, that's true.

**Janine:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** But also, it's much more...like, when you actually zero in on what is happening there and the times at which heritrixes feel safe and feel, versus when they're willing to take risks, and then the ways in which their mobility specifically is being controlled and the ways in which they're being deployed for other uses than what they consent to and et cetera. Like, it's bad. So yeah, I can imagine that sitting on Es in a way that maybe she doesn't intuit that it would, you know?

**Janine:** Yeah.

**Austin:** That I could see them being...

**Janine:** She went into this being like—

**Austin:** yes.

**Janine:** "I'm gonna have fun tonight," but as a sort of mandate, and not an actual...

**Austin:** [laughs] Yes. Marn, hopefully things go a little bit better.

**Ali:** Yeah. Compel Haven?

**Austin:** Are you doing Compel? You could do...

**Ali:** I was looking at the other stuff, and I don't— like, Delve isn't it. Discern isn't it.

**Austin:** No. Discern could be it, if you're like, "Alright, I got to really listen for these calls. [Ali and Dre laugh] I really got to like pay attention out here."

**Ali:** Sure.

**Austin:** I think it Endure could be it, 'cause it's just like you're out there.

**Ali:** Uh huh.

**Austin:** You're just putting your whole body into it. [Ali laughs] You know, I think Mend. You could do Mend if it's about like, this is the dance for yourself type of thing, you know? [Ali laughs] I'm trying to mend myself.

**Ali:** Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Austin:** I'm trying to just get out there and like get my head like...maybe Es— you don't have Mend. Es doesn't have Mend, right?

**Janine:** No, no. I haven't taken the skill that would even give it to me.

**Austin:** Right. Es needs to do a Mend, a Mend dance more than a...

**Ali:** Can I Mend dance with Es?

**Janine:** Es is mostly about killing, so.

**Austin:** Yeah, I know, yeah.

**Ali:** Okay, but if I—

**Austin:** Wait, what'd you say?

**Ali:** Wait, wait, wait.

**Austin:** Mm.

**Ali:** If I roll a Mend dance, and I'm dancing with Es, where does that get us?

**Austin:** [laughs] I don't think it heals this particular Fallout.

**Ali:** [laughs] Sure. Okay, sure.

**Janine:** Yeah.

**Ali:** Can it get Es like a Mind Protection?

**[1:50:02]**

**Austin:** Like a plus—

**Ali:** Ok, sure.

**Janine:** I have Mind. I have—

**Ali:** Okay, sure. [laughs]

**Janine:** I have two Mind Protection right now and only two Blood Stress. I'm like, I'm not that bad off. This is more just like I've got a Fallout that is gonna get dealt with.

**Ali:** Okay. Okay, okay.

**Janine:** A little bit later.

**Austin:** Listen, I'll give you both Mastery on your next roll if you succeed at a dance roll together, [Ali laughs] but like, at that point you're rolling— that's a risky— that's a— not a literally Risky roll.

**Ali:** Sure, sure, sure.

**Austin:** But there could be— there could be consequences for failing that roll, you know?

**Ali:** Okay.

**Austin:** 'Cause then you've done the work of stepping out into someone else's life, you know?

**Janine:** I'm just saying I don't know if it's worth it when I'm in a good spot to add...

**Ali:** Mm.

**Janine:** To... [sighs] Yeah.

**Austin:** Does anybody else want Mastery on their next roll via a dance? [Janine laughs] Okay.

**Ali:** Dang.

**Austin:** Marn.

**Janine:** Whatever. I'll do it. I'll do it. I'll do it.

**Keith:** Well, I don't not want it. [Ali laughs]

**Austin:** No, no, no. It's not...

**Janine:** No, I'll do— I realized the opposite side of my argument is like, you've only got one Fallout and two Stress, like, why not?

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Janine:** Why not, when your friend walks up and says, “Hey, are you okay? Do you want to dance?” you say like, “Sure.”

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Janine:** You know?

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Ali:** All right, I'm rolling it. [laughs]

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Ali:** Ten!

**Austin:** Look at that. See?

**Janine:** Wow.

**Dre:** Power of friendship, right there. [Ali laughs]

**Austin:** This is what I'm saying. This is why you...that's right. Heart of the dice right there.

**Janine:** Damn.

**Austin:** What happens here?

**Ali:** We have a good dance.

**Austin:** Yeah, what's the...you just put all those skills that Bucho taught you to work immediately. [Ali and Janine laugh]

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Janine:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Then yeah, I would say take Mastery. You got a crit. Take Mastery on—write this down—on your next two rolls.

**Ali:** Ooh.

**Austin:** From this fun night of dancing. [Ali laughs] Neither of you have Mind Stress, so I can't like give you Mind Stress and— or Mind Stress reduction and that Mastery, 'cause otherwise I would have done that. But yes. I really like this emerging—

**Janine:** I think the lesson is that like dancing with a friend is a little more restorative than dancing with some rando you met.

**Ali:** [laughs] Yeah.

**Austin:** Yes, uh huh. I like this emerging thing of Marn as person who recognizes friend is down and like, [Ali laughs] goes over to be like, “Hey, are you good? Are you okay? Do you need anything? You want to dance? Do you want to talk about your recent trauma? No? Okay.”

**Ali:** Mm-hmm. Bucho, let's go talk about this moon.

**Austin:** Let's go talk about this moon situation. [Ali laughs] Yes. So I imagine you also dance more with Bucho, Marn, and I'll let that ten roll forward.

**Ali:** Yeah.

**Austin:** You do a good job. I think Bucho's much more eager to show off, now that we're out of lessons.

**Ali:** Oh, sure, sure, sure.

**Austin:** And after seeing you like hold your own with Es, you know? [Ali and Janine laugh] Bucho's now like, you know, “I'll show you why they call me Two Step Bucho.”

**Ali:** Ooh. Okay.

**Austin:** And Bucho is doing the same thing Duvall was doing, except well.

**Ali:** Aw.

**Austin:** Bucho— RIP to— sorry to Duvall, but Bucho's different. [Ali laughs] Bucho is also dancing to a second rhythm the way that Duvall is, except this is a rhythm that actually exists in the song and that you didn't notice until you see Bucho like hitting poses to it. And you're like “Oh, shit, yeah, there's a— there's a line in this song that no one else is dancing to but Bucho.” It's like when you get good headphones for the first time, you're like, “Oh, shit, this song has a baseline in it? I didn't realize that this other part of the song exists.” And that is how good of a dancer he is. Bucho reveals something about a song that's being played through his dance that you wouldn't have noticed unless you saw him dancing. And that's why he's called—

**Keith:** Shoutout to good headphones.



**Austin:** Shoutouts to good headphones.

**Ali:** Mm.

**Austin:** That's why he's called Two Step Bucho.

**Art:** Whereas the thing I'd like to paint about Duvall dancing is that, much like his performance in the card tournament, people start coming up being like, "Are you signaling something? [Austin, Keith, and Sylvia laugh] Are you sure you're not kidnapped right now? If you need help, someone can help you."

**Austin:** [laughs] Ahh.

**Art:** It's just Duvall trying his best.

**Austin:** He's trying his best!

**Art:** Yeah.

**Austin:** I love Duvall. Um, any other dance nights, dance night things, or should we move on to day eight?

**Jack:** Um, could I remove some Stress here?

**Austin:** You absolutely could.

**Ali:** Oh, yeah.

**Austin:** What type— well, what type of Stress are you looking to remove? 'Cause it depends on—

**Jack:** Uh...this is Mind Stress, right?

**Austin:** Yeah, this is Mind Stress.

**Jack:** Yeah, absolutely. Um...

**Austin:** Yeah. Do you want to— do you want to like— are you requesting a song by paying for it and that reducing your Mind Stress? Or are you dancing to reduce that Mind Stress?

**Jack:** Ah, that's a great question. Um... [pause] Yeah, I think I'll request a song.

**Austin:** What type of song does Pickman request?

**Jack:** I think Pickman requests a song from...um...

**Austin:** Mm, sure.

**Jack:** White City which is the place in Pale Magistratum that they grew up, were born.

**Austin:** Right, right.

**Jack:** And I think it's just like a...it's like a folk tune, like a dance tune from the north, up from, you know, into the Pale Magistratum.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm. Uh, they're very much like:

**Austin (as Broken Quartet):** Yeah, we think we know that one.

**Austin:** You know? It's a little outside their normal wheelhouse, but it's a classic.

**Jack:** And like the song is very, uh, I think this is music that is very unlike Pickman. It's, uh...

**Austin:** Mm, mm-hmm.

**Jack:** And Pickman isn't really dancing to this. You know, I think she's just sort of like leaning against the bar and drinking a beer and keeping an eye on the...ah. Is he a marquis? What's his rank?

**Austin:** He's a Margrave.

**Jack:** A Margrave. Yeah, keeping her eye on the Margrave but also just like, you know, tapping a foot and watching this very light dance. And I think I'm gonna...I'm gonna break the gem out of Blick's signet ring.

**Austin:** Ooh, that's fun.

**Jack:** I know that a signet ring doesn't generally have a gem in, but this is William Blick's signet ring. It has a—

**Austin:** [laughs] That motherfucker— yeah.

**Jack:** It has a big stylized B with a ruby in one of the circles of the B.

**Austin:** [laughs] Ah, god. Incredible. Then, yes, that's— what tier is that? Or what, uh...

**Jack:** Uh, Blick's ring is a D8.

**Austin:** That's a big buy. Damn. Oh, but you're breaking the gem out.

**Jack:** I don't want to spend all of it. Yeah, I'm...

**Austin:** I see. That's fun. Um, how much was that? What do you think the gem is worth? It's the D...it's D6? The ring is— the remaining ring is a D4?

**Jack:** Yeah, that makes sense. It's the—

**Austin:** I think so. Especially like, it's like it's missing the gem in a very visible way, you know?

**Jack:** [laughing slightly] Blick's signet ring minus gem.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Uh, that is now a D4, but I'm gonna roll a one D6.

**Austin:** Right. Correct.

**Jack:** Just trying to relax. And mostly succeeding, hopefully.

**Austin:** We'll see. We'll see what this roll looks like.

**Jack:** Six!

**Austin:** Pure six, all the way relaxed here. I was gonna have—

**Jack:** Pickman's just like mouthing along to the words. [Sylvia laughs]

**Austin:** I think actually, maybe seeing you looking increasingly relaxed, the Margrave comes over, Alekest.

**Jack:** Oh, come on!

**Austin:** [laughs] I was gonna be like, "Oh, on a six, that means he's not gonna come bother you." But it's the opposite. He sees an opening. And his— he is no longer wearing his, um, his kind of porcelain armor. He is now wearing a...what I— I don't— [sighs] do we live in a world where there's seersucker suits? In Sangfielle?

**Dre:** I hope so.

**Jack:** I imagine they wear them in Aldomina, right? Or like—

**Janine:** Aren't we on a riverboat?

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Austin:** So yes, necessarily, is what you're saying?

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Yes.

**Janine:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Then yeah, he's moved into an off-white seersucker suit. And, uh, which, again, it feels out of— it does feel out of time to the rest of the world. This riverboat is early, so to speak, you know? But yeah, he approaches and says:

**Austin (as Alekest):** You didn't take me for— or I— I didn't take you for someone who would enjoy a dance.

**Jack (as Pickman):** Well, then you'd have been wrong. What are you doing here?

**Austin (as Alekest):** Enjoying a dance.

**Jack (as Pickman):** I think I made it clear that I wasn't interested in talking to you.

**Austin (as Alekest):** Mm, at the time, but now I'm wondering if we could try again.

**Jack (as Pickman):** Where'd your—

**Austin (as Alekest):** I could lay out my intentions and I could buy your next beer. And I could try to ease any concerns you might have and make a clearer ask. Because it's not a lot that I want.

**Jack (as Pickman):** Where's your fancy armor?

**Austin (as Alekest):** [sighs] I'll have it when I need it, and I don't think I need it in this moment.

**Jack (as Pickman):** Okay. I'll hear you out. I do not take well to oblique language.

**Austin (as Alekest):** [amused breath] I'll be straight with you. When I was a little boy, I began to dream of...not a place, just a material. A wall of white. I thought it was marble. I thought perhaps it was a stone dug up from the deep sea. But it was...it was the stuff I've made my armor out of. You saw it earlier. And I believe it's from Zevunzolia. Bits of it

make its way into this world. And I spent many years collecting it, hoping that if I got closer to it, it would leave my mind. [quiet sigh] It hasn't helped. [frustrated exhale] I went and joined the Shape Knights. I thought perhaps giving myself duty would let me focus on something else. I inherited my mother's title and saw to our lands. Nothing. I now think that until I have a vivid image in my mind of this place, something clearer, I will be lost to it till the end of my days. And so I'm hoping that you can just help me describe it. Give me information about what you saw, and let me write it down. I won't need more than a couple of afternoons. I'll ask questions, I will not use oblique language, and I'll pay you for your time. And from here until the end, you will be a welcome guest in Tescano.

**[2:01:06]**

**Jack (as Pickman):** Huh. Do you understand why I'm not inclined to trust you?

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

**Jack (as Pickman):** Why is that?

**Austin (as Alekest):** I'm asking you to talk to me about a place that, ah, seems like the desire of every greedy being in Sangfielle.

**Jack (as Pickman):** Mm. And you just offered me a good time at your estate in Tescano.

**Austin (as Alekest):** It's what I have to offer. If you'd prefer something else, you can ask.

**Jack (as Pickman):** Strange how the people looking for Zevunzolia always seem to have something to offer.

**Austin (as Alekest):** It turns out, in this world, that there are places you only get to learn about, things you only get to know, if you can pay for the privilege of education.

**Jack (as Pickman):** Yes?

**Austin (as Alekest):** I happened to be born into that.

**Jack (as Pickman):** Oh.

**Austin (as Alekest):** It was not my choice, and I've done my best to live well. [sighs] I spent two decades as a Shape Knight. I left my post and my inheritance behind so I could do what you do.

**Jack (as Pickman):** [unimpressed] And yet it waits for you across the mountains.

**Austin (as Alekest):** I returned to it after my duty was done and after my mother had died.

**Jack (as Pickman):** Zevunzolia is a city that seeks to be built.

**Austin (as Alekest):** Tomorrow, we can— the details don't need to come tonight. I don't want to step on your toes while you're having a beer more than I have to. We can talk tomorrow about the specifics. Let me buy you that beer and get out of your hair. Barkeep!

**Jack (as Pickman):** That's quite enough of that, thank you.

**Jack:** [laughs] Just turns and walks away down the bar.

**Austin:** [laughs softly] I think he nevertheless puts a coin on the bar and like points at you to be like, “next beer’s on me,” et cetera.

**Jack:** Sure.

**Austin:** If you're not gonna buy another beer tonight, you will tomorrow, so.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Austin:** You know, or the next day. You got another week on this boat, so. All right.

**Dre:** Austin, really quick. Is this a place that can just do Mind Stress or can this do Mind Fallout as well?

**Austin:** It can do Major Mind Fallout. It'd D8.

**Dre:** Oh, okay. I need to...

**Austin:** Yeah. You do.

**Dre:** Um...

**Austin:** Talk to me about Chine on the dance floor.

**Dre:** [sighs] I don't think—

**Austin:** And also the song that Chine requests.

**Art:** Ha!

**Dre:** Right. So, I think the song that Chine requests is...it is a song that is kind of like "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star," not in terms of like, that's what it sounds like, but...

**Austin:** Mm.

**Dre:** There's like a bunch of different nursery rhymes that are to the tune of "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star."

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Dre:** Like the ABC song and "Baa Baa Black Sheep" and probably more that I'm not thinking of. So it's a song that when people hear it, they're like, "Oh, I know that. It's ba-ba-ba."

**Austin:** Right, right, right.

**Dre:** But like, every three people will answer that in a different way.

**Austin:** Right. I love that. And do you— are you asking for a particular version of it or are you just asking for the melody?

**Dre:** Um, Chine requests it not by name—

**Austin:** Mm.

**Dre:** —but by tearing a page out of their fairytale book and the melody's written in it.

**Austin:** [laughs softly] Mm-hmm. Yeah, and I think that they, you know, the bandleader is like:

**Austin (as bandleader):** Oh, yeah, we know this one. Of course, of course.

**Austin:** And like pushes the page back. Like, I don't need the mu— we know this.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** "We've heard versions of this that existed before you were even born," type, you know? type of stuff. Since that is in fact true, it seems. So what do you— what are you paying with? Is that— or is that what you're...or I guess, yeah, what— yeah, what do you have left to pay with? God.

**Dre:** I have the thread of the Mother-Beast.

**Austin:** Oh. There you go.

**Dre:** yep.

**Austin:** They, uh... [amused sound] They take that from you. What are the intr— uh, Jack, who is gonna use the thread of the Mother-Beast to replace a broken string on their instrument?

**Jack:** It's gonna be one of the viola players. Those are nasty bastards. [Austin, Dre, and Art laugh]

**Keith:** The players or the instrument?

**Jack:** [laughs softly] The players. [Austin laughs] It's a violin that can sound like a cello? No thanks.

**Austin:** [laughs softly] Then yeah, your current thing, which was what, Shaken?

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Was a Major, reduce—

**Dre:** Oh, no, it was Shattered.

**Austin:** Oh, it was Shattered.

**Dre:** And I assume it goes down to Shaken.

**Austin:** Ye...is that true? Let's see.

**Dre:** Well, 'cause Shattered was like...

**Austin:** Is Shattered the upgraded version? What was Shattered?

**Dre:** Yeah. Uh, here, I'll find it.

**Austin:** I'm looking at the wrong list.

**Dre:** Da-da— oh, I'm sorry, Scarred.

**Austin:** It was Scarred.

**Dre:** [reading] “Your mind cracks and reforms in primal instinctive patterns. This functions as Shaken. In addition, every time you encounter the source of the Fallout—”

**Austin:** Right.

**Dre:** “—the GM can ask you to make an Endure check.”



**Austin:** Right, right, right, right, right. Then, yeah, let's see. Is that where we want to go, though? Or does it— it can change to anything, do you know what I mean? It can reduce itself down to something else.

**Dre:** Sure, yeah.

**Austin:** I feel like...I don't think that...no, because Shaken is an immediate thing that is about going to kind of fight, flight, or freeze, and I don't think it's that. I think, instead, it is...I think as that song plays— when did you first hear that song? When did Chine first hear that song?

**Dre:** Um, as a child—

**Austin:** Mm.

**Dre:** —at a community holiday celebration.

**Austin:** Okay, sure.

**Dre:** So probably another very large like public dance like this one.

**Austin:** Right. Right, right, right. You should take Vulnerable: “You feel small, shaken and scared. You cannot use Mind Protection. Ongoing.” There is...you know, the experience of having that hit kind of moves you emotionally to that sense of vulnerability of being a child. I mean, both the joy of it being this kind of big festival moment, but also that sense of...that's such a different person than who you are now, do you know what I mean? And those emotions are tied to a version of yourself that did not have a big poleaxe and the ability to transform into a wereshrew. [Dre laughs] And there's a sort of misfire emotionally happening here. Or maybe it's not a misfire. Maybe this is emotions working the way they should. Is that in touching that— in hearing that song again, you're moved to a place where you're able to really feel not like the invincible Cleaver, but like, you know, young Chine of Blackwick during a harvest festival or whatever. And yeah, so, Vulnerable. All right. Day comes to a close, Broken Quartet breaks. The next day, we only have one thing scheduled. It's the false war tournament. I don't remember who's left in. I think, Duvall, did you lose?

**Art:** Sure did.

**Austin:** Who else— it was Lyke. It was...

**Art:** It was Pickman, right?

**Austin:** Ch— Pickman? Lyke and Pickman?

**Jack:** Did I lose?

**Keith:** Uh, I think I was the only one of the three of us that won.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Austin:** I believe— I would believe that. You want to just do this roll? What was your roll, again? What did you decide to roll for that, Keith? Do you remember?

**Keith:** Um, I rolled...

**Austin:** God, this was so long ago.

**Keith:** Discern, I think.

**Austin:** I think that that's correct.

**Keith:** And I still have my plus one forward, because I had a full success, I believe is what happened?

**Austin:** Was that a plus...what did we—?

**Keith:** It was just a plus one...

**Austin:** Oh.

**Art:** I thought you had a plus one from the lesson.

**Austin:** That was from the lesson. That was from the lesson.

**Keith:** So— no, so I did get the plus one from— no, I'm wrong. Art.

**Austin:** Okay.

**Keith:** Art, I think you lost, and then, Jack, I think that you had a mixed success. You lost your plus one from the lesson.

**Jack:** Oh, yes, but I was still in, but you...

**Austin:** Ah.

**Keith:** But I retained my plus one, because I had a full success.

**Austin:** Ah, but you...but you were still in it, because you got a full ten. You got a full...

**Ali:** This is correct, yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah. Okay. Thank you, Ali. All right. So, what are y'all rolling for this? Haven is the domain, and then we talked a lot about the ways in which different skills, like, could shape your rolls. Also, I'm shocked no one has tried to make a deal with Hazard to throw this their way.  
[Sylvia and Jack laugh]

**Keith:** I don't need to make a deal.

**Austin:** I guess it's not the finals, so, you know.

**Keith:** I think I'm...I think I'm just gonna do Discern Haven again, just nose to the grindstone, play some cards.

**Austin:** Just play the damn game. Yeah. Uh huh. Pickman?

**Jack:** I don't have Haven. Um...

**Austin:** No, you don't. But you have Compel and you have Discern, right?

**Jack:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. You know, I'm prepared to do Discern here, just to try and play.

**Austin:** All right.

**Jack:** Kill.

**Austin:** Well, you know, let's be clear. Compel is also just playing. It's about bluffing and stuff like that, but.

**[2:10:00]**

**Jack:** Oh! Wait, hang on. Can I just broker an allegiance with Lyke?

**Austin:** [laughs softly] What's that mean in this context? In this—

**Keith:** And more than that, what do I get out of this?

**Jack:** You get 60/40 of our winnings.

**Austin:** Oh my god.

**Keith:** I get 60/4. But what about getting 100 of the winnings by winning?

**Jack:** The...there's less competition? Uh, I'm sounding this out here. I'm just— I'm trying to figure out how I can do better out of this. [laughs softly]

**Keith:** Right. And it seems like your plan is by making me do worse.

**Jack:** [pause] Okay, well, I'll just roll. [Keith, Jack, and Art laugh] I'll just roll Discern.

**Austin:** Let's— let me get your Discern Havens, folks.

**Jack:** I'm rolling one D6.

**Austin:** No, you're not. You're rolling two D6.

**Jack:** Because we start with one by default.

**Austin:** You start with one. Yeah. Uh huh. Also, it's not a D6. It's a D10.

**Jack:** I'm rolling—

**Austin:** You're rolling two D10. [Jack, Keith, and Austin laugh]

**Keith:** We know this game. We know what *Heart* is.

**Jack:** Remember the Bluff City episode where we demonstrated to Art that we know nothing at all about horse racing? This is us...

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Jack:** ...but for our own game.

**Keith:** That's not how I remember it.

**Austin:** For our jobs.

**Keith:** I remember that we knew a lot about horses and horse racing. [Austin chuckles]

**Jack:** Okay. I rolled a six and a seven.

**Austin:** You got a seven.

**Jack:** Yep.

**Austin:** Seven's a success.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Keith:** All right.

**Austin:** With Stress.

**Keith:** So, I've got four D10, I think, which is nice.

**Jack:** Jesus christ.

**Austin:** Wait, how do you have four? Oh yeah, 'cause you have plus one, still.

**Keith:** I start with one. I have Discern Haven.

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Keith:** And I got plus one.

**Jack:** Keith, you could have really benefited from an allegiance with Pickman.

**Keith:** Ten! Again!

**Austin:** Oh my god. I don't think— I don't think Lyke could have benefited from anything, here.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** What's a...a mixed success...you just got a regular success last time. We haven't done a mixed success. Oh, I guess no—

**Keith:** Uh—

**Austin:** Here's a question. I guess, Art, did I make you take Stress when you failed the first roll of this?

**Art:** Who remembers.

**Austin:** Hrm. Ali?

**Ali:** I don't think so, no.

**Austin:** Okay. So then, you're just...you're just...we're in a weird situation. I guess you continue forward, Pickman. You just aren't well seated or something, right? You're like, you're a real long shot in this final phase. Lyke, on the other hand, is coming up a favorite. Bets, the odds are on Lye Lychen as we, you know, move into the final week of play here.

**Keith:** Used to it.

**Austin:** Anything else anyone wants to do before Remain Inside, now is the time to do it. Any other scenes people want to have?

**Art:** Oh, I guess I need to— I either need to meet Hazard and get Blood Stress healed or I need to go to the doctor.

**Austin:** Right.

**Art:** Because I think it's during Remain Inside that I'm gonna do something.

**Keith:** Yeah, me too.

**Art:** That might be stressful.

**Austin:** I see. So, uh, so where you going?

**Art:** Well, I guess it's like...I don't...this, it's— mm. I'm struggling with the awkwardness of the, uh...

**Austin:** Of asking Hazard, “Can you heal me?”

**Art:** Someone I haven't met, you know?

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Art:** ‘Cause it's like...

**Austin:** Wait, have you not met, still?

**Art:** Well, I guess like, perhaps incidentally during the tournament, but not...

**Austin:** Yeah, I guess not.

**Keith:** Train fight.

**Art:** Not dialogue on screen.

**Austin:** They missed each other during train fight, right?

**Sylvia:** I think so, yeah.

**Keith:** Ah, I thought there was a little overlap.

**Sylvia:** I thought—

**Keith:** No, yeah, it'd be...

**Sylvia:** I thought we had met when I was doing the like card lesson, but I think that was Pickman there instead, Pickman and, um...

**Art:** Yeah. Duvall didn't take the lesson, because Duvall wasn't gonna use strategy.

**Austin:** Right, right.

**Keith:** [laughing hard] Right, I forgot that's what you did.

**Austin:** Right. Forgot about that, yeah.

**Art:** Duvall wasn't gonna use the rules anyway—

**Sylvia:** I respect that.

**Art:** —so knowing them seemed like a real waste of time.

**Austin:** Do you see...

**Art:** I guess there might have been overlap in the fight, right?

**Keith:** No, because you showed up— you showed up, and Chine had to explain to Duvall where we were.

**Austin:** [laughs softly] Yes.

**Art:** Okay.

**Keith:** And you were like, "You didn't go with them?" [laughs softly]

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Art:** I remember that now. Should have gone with them. [Austin laughs] Well, I mean, then maybe the in is, uh, I assure you I'm not kidnapped. Please, uh, help me, though. [Austin and Sylvia laugh]

**Austin:** But I am bloody.

**Art:** I am bloody, but I assure you it's from regular stuff. You were— you were sort of there. We weren't there at the same time, though. Not kidnapped.

**Sylvia:** [laughs softly] So— so you're starting the conversation with, “I assure you I'm not kidnapped?”

**Art:** Yes.

**Art (as Duvall):** Hello, I've, uh...my name's Duvall. We have some mutual friends at this point. We were actually on the same train recently, but not at the same time. I assure you I'm not kidnapped, but I'm very hurt. Could you help?

**Sylvia:** Just like brief like ten second silence. [Austin laughs] Like, long enough to be felt.

**Austin:** Ahh.

**Sylvia:** Before like:

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** Yeah, sure, all right. What's the problem? [Sylvia laughs]

**Art (as Duvall):** [Art laughing] I got quite hurt on that train.

**Sylvia:** Um, and this would— this is just— you're just looking for Stress to get resolved here, right?

**Art:** Yeah, I have six Blood Stress.

**Sylvia:** Okay.

**Art:** And I would like less than six Blood Stress.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, I can do a Mend plus Haven for that, and hopefully it'll work out. [laughs softly]

**Austin:** Yeah, is this a move that you have?

**Sylvia:** Yeah, it's part of— so, Broker is sort of the basis for the transferral stuff I did last session.

**Austin:** Mm, mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** And that skill just reads, “You beseech Ribbadon for aid. Roll Mend plus Haven to cast this spell. On a success, remove D6 Stress from any resistance other than Supplies for one nearby character other than yourself.”



**Austin:** What's this look like? I mean, I guess roll the dice first, right?

**Sylvia:** Yeah, that's what I was gonna say.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** As like, I'm not entirely sure. Let's go.

**Austin:** Let's roll. Let's roll Mend Haven.

**Sylvia:** So, success at a cost.

**Austin:** Okay. Which is— the cost is gonna be Stress for you, which is very funny.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. I think like...I think part of...I just was like thinking of like, what would like Ribbadon's teachings involve?

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** Sort of, you know?

**Austin:** Um, you know, there's a—

**Sylvia:** And—

**Austin:** There's a— go ahead. What were you gonna say?

**Sylvia:** Well, I was gonna say like, I think that like basic medic— like, in this case, I think basic like medical knowledge is like a thing. Like, they know how to like stitch a wound or like make sure something's not infected.

**Austin:** Right.

**Sylvia:** Just because they're like a traveling people, like it's a traveling caravan sort of based religion.

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah.

**Sylvia:** I think that like having that— it's the same sort of skills that come with like being able to mend your own clothes and stuff like that.

**Austin:** Right.

**Sylvia:** Like, very...like, just basic survival stuff but enough to take care of like scrapes and bruises and stuff that Duvall might have.

**Austin:** Right. Give me a D6 to see how much gets removed from Duvall.

**Sylvia:** A six!

**Austin:** Six from Duvall.

**Art:** Hey!

**Austin:** That's all of your Stress cleared.

**Art:** This is gonna go great, then.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Hazard, you're gonna take five Echo, though, as you're doing this.

**Sylvia:** [pained sound]

**Art:** Aw.

**Sylvia:** Okay! Yeah, sure.

**Austin:** That's what that other D6 roll was that I did. That's from...

**Sylvia:** I forgot, yeah, it takes Stress. Yeah.

**Austin:** Success at a cost. Yeah, uh huh.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** That's the cost.

**Sylvia:** I mean, I imagine all the weird bug stuff is sort of a little jarring.

**Austin:** Yeah. What's your...yeah, what is your response to that?

**Art:** Also, the body is made of wax. Important to remember.

**Austin:** [laughs softly] You really gotta give people a heads up on this stuff.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, I...

**Art:** Well, I thought it was important to stress “not kidnapped.” [Sylvia laughs] And then who has time?

**Sylvia:** Just a regular—

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Sylvia:** —completely free, wax man.

**Austin:** Oh, this is gonna go a way. This is gonna go...

**Art:** How many disclaimers can you really give someone?

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** Um, I think that like, the way this goes is that there's part of— like, this whole thing is them just trying to like— is Hazard trying to have like polite conversation about like what happened on the train and like, being like:

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** Oh, yeah, Lye and I— Lye did this thing with a door, and we ended up over here.

**Sylvia:** And like, trying to—

**Art (as Duvall):** Yeah, I know all about that door.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, yeah, that sort of thing. But at the same time is just like...I don't want to get too like gross and buggy with it.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** [laughs softly] But I feel like occasionally is just like dealing with like, oh, there's like webbing on my hands now from your weird bugs I have to deal with.

**Austin:** Ahh.

**Sylvia:** And it's just like— it is a very literal definition of stress. It's like, just something— 'cause like, they haven't dealt with anything from the like, what was it called? The waking city?

**Austin:** The Sleeping City.

**Sylvia:** Sleeping City. Opposites.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Wrong adjective.

**Austin:** Other way, other way, yeah.

**Art:** Well, it goes both ways, though, you know?

**Sylvia:** Or verb, I guess. Yeah. Well, um, yeah, I think it's kinda... [laughs softly] I think it's like towards the very end where they're just like:

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** So what's with all the bugs?

**Art (as Duvall):** Oh, um, you ever just have a colony of bugs living inside you? And then they decide to sort of like remake your body so that you're a little more...well, sturdy's not the right word. But, you know, just a little more?

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** Can I be honest with you? No, I don't. I've never— [laughs softly] that's never happened to me.

**Art (as Duvall):** Oh, well, it's...it's sort of like that.

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** Okay. [unnerved but friendly] Well, it was very nice meeting you. Um, I'm gonna go make sure none of your buddies are crawling in my clothing. Thanks.

**Art (as Duvall):** Okay. I don't think they will, but, uh, yeah, it's good to check.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, but you know that, like— this is not in character. This is out of character, what I'm saying now. You know that like thing where it's like, you think—

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Like, you think about bugs, and then like you can kind of like just mentally feel like bugs on—

**Austin:** 2:19 itchy.

**Art:** Oh, yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, like that's going on with Hazard right now.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** It's just like—

**Art:** You're gonna have to get over that instinct if you're gonna be a [Austin laughs] long-term Blackwick Group member.

**Sylvia:** I don't know, might be fun to have someone in the group who's scared of bugs. This could be a thing. [Art and Dre laugh]

**Austin:** Uh, I do need you to do a Fallout test, Hazard. And it's—

**Sylvia:** Right.

**Austin:** It doesn't look good. You gotta get an eleven or twelve to avoid Fallout here.

**Jack:** Hmm.

**Sylvia:** Oh, wow. I have so much Stress. [laughs softly]

**Austin:** You have a lot of Stress. Hey!

**Jack:** Oh.

**[2:20:00]**

**Sylvia:** Take Major Fallout!

**Austin:** Major Fallout, everybody!

**Sylvia:** [laughs] I'm really scared of bugs.

**Ali:** I was wondering.

**Art:** Is— yeah, is “thinks bugs are on you” a one of those?

**Austin:** Oh my god. No, 'cause this is Echo, and that's even weirder shit. What were you gonna say, Ali? You were think— you were wondering what?

**Ali:** Today I was like, I wonder what Hazard's first Fallout is gonna be?

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** [touched] Aw.

**Ali:** Now, here we are. [laughs]

**Sylvia:** I mean, it's technically the first that they rolled. I did take that one from Lye last session, but this is...

**Ali:** Oh, sure. [laughs]

**Sylvia:** This is the first that counts for me, so this is a very special moment.

**Ali:** Congrats.

**Sylvia:** Thank you.

**Austin:** Hmm. Huh.

**Sylvia:** [laughs] Always the best when you can hear Austin just audibly deliberating over which Fallout. [Dre and Ali laugh]

**Austin:** Uh huh. Um...phhh. I do have a...Echo Majors are fucking wild.

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** [pause] Okay. I know what it is. Don't worry about it.

**Sylvia:** [worrying about it] What?! [Keith chuckles] That's the worst thing you could've said!

**Keith:** No, he said don't worry, so you're good.

**Austin:** I said to not worry about it.

**Ali:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** [laughs] Goddamnit.

**Art:** If you're worrying about it, you're doing it wrong.

**Austin:** Uh huh. [Ali laughs]

**Sylvia:** Okay. I'm writing on my page, "Fallout: Echo, Major, don't worry about it."

**Austin:** Yeah, go ahead and write that down. You go ahead and write down "don't worry about it." That's what you should write. Huh. Huh. So. [Art laughs softly]

**Keith:** I think I know. I think I know what it is. I'm not— I won't say.

**Ali:** [intrigued] Mm.

**Austin:** Okay.

**Sylvia:** It's fine, is what it is. It's reg— let's just go about our days like usual.

**Austin:** Everybody goes about their day. You finished the false war tournament round two. Anything— anyone else want to do anything here, before we get to the next thing?

**Keith:** I was gonna remind Hazard that they know that my— what my door heals, because they've been there, but...

**Austin:** Uh, they have no Stress anymore at this point now, so.

**Keith:** They have no Stress anymore, so problem solved.

**Austin:** Yeah, uh huh.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. [Ali laughs]

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** It's all good. And it's, you know what the best thing is? Nothing to worry about, either.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** So, smooth sailing, quite literally, from here on out.

**Keith:** You don't have to worry about it, and you don't even have to worry about it.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Don't even need to. Okay. Anything else—

**Keith:** Have I won anything from—

**Austin:** No.

**Keith:** Am I like in the— being in the semi finals or whatever of this tournament?

**Austin:** No.

**Keith:** No? Just winner takes all?

**Austin:** No, you gotta— you gotta—

**Keith:** Oh, it says it right there. Winner takes all.

**Austin:** You gotta get at least a— yeah, winner takes all. There it is. Winner takes all.

**Keith:** Winner takes all. Baked in.

**Austin:** Boom, winner takes all.

**Keith:** I kind of want—

**Austin:** Which is not a great tournament format, frankly.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** I guess unless you're the winner.

**Keith:** Right, and I will be.

**Ali:** Mm.

**Austin:** Mm. What were you gonna say? You kind of what?

**Keith:** Well, tomorrow is remain inside the next three days, and so I...

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** I have been dying to figure out the thing with the captain and also the “boiler and engine???” this whole time, so.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Art:** I'm very interested in the captain and not interested in the boiler and engine at all. But if it's one trip, I guess I want to go.

**Keith:** Okay. Well, we have three days.



**Dre:** Uh, Chine is also very interested in boiler and engine question mark.

**Keith:** Okay. What about captain?

**Ali:** Here we go again.

**Dre:** About to say, nothing bad has ever happened when Chine and Lye go hang out together.

**Jack:** [laughs softly] Oh, god. [Ali laughs]

**Austin:** So where are you going first?

**Keith:** I just...

**Jack:** What's this rising tone I hear in my ears? [Austin laughs]

**Keith:** Engine?

**Sylvia:** Listen, as long as— as long as nobody's like, "Hey, let me do my 'this is a mythical beast' skill," I think we'll be fine. [Keith and Ali laugh]

**Austin:** Uh, mythical captain, please. Mythical boat pilot. Where you going first?

**Keith:** Remind me the thing about the pilot.

**Austin:** I want to say we said the...

**Keith:** Don't ask about the pilot. Was that the thing?

**Austin:** Yeah, don't ask about the pilot.

**Keith:** Don't ask about the pilot.

**Austin:** Don't ask about the captain.

**Keith:** The captain.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** It says pilot house, so I had pilot in my head.

**Austin:** The name of that part of a boat is a pilot house.

**Keith:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah.

**Austin:** So.

**Keith:** It's where you keep the light that keeps the...

**Austin:** Right, yeah, yeah, you need the...mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Okay. I'm willing to go check out this captain.

**Austin:** Okay. What do you...three of y'all just roll up past the crew quarters. You get a lot more of those people who have the fabric on their heads. [mumbles] remember this, like Teak and the first mate and the second mate and...

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** All of the, you know.

**Keith:** They have like the spandex masks?

**Austin:** I don't think I said it was spandex, but yes.

**Keith:** You said it was stretchy. You said it was form-fitting. It was like a form-fitting hood.

**Austin:** Yeah. I don't think it was spandex, though. I don't know that— if—

**Ali:** It was silk or something.

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. It was— it was— yes. It was taut. It wasn't form-fitting. Do you know what I mean?

**Keith:** Gotcha.

**Austin:** It was...yeah. It doesn't snap back into place, you know?

**Keith:** Sure.

**Ali:** Is it like when you see one of those marble statues that have fabric?

**Austin:** Yes. It's like that, Ali.

**Ali:** In them?

**Austin:** Yeah, it's kind of creepy?

**Ali:** On them.

**Austin:** And it's like, [unnerved sound] what's going on here? Yeah.

**Keith:** Ah.

**Ali:** But you can like see the folds very distinctly.

**Austin:** Yes.

**Ali:** As opposed to the skin and et cetera.

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. Sure. Yes. So yeah, you move up past the crew quarters. No one stops you. And you come to the pilot house, which is this kind of top, you know, it's an outdoor door. I guess there's probably...there's probably a stairwell into it from the crew quarters, but not from a door that's like, not from an unlocked door.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** But you can also just climb a ladder up to that top— to like above the crew quarters, the roof of the crew quarters. And there's, you know, a couple of outdoor doors to the pilot house also. And that's also— those are also locked. The windows are— I think we said they were blacked out or papered over or something? I think blacked out.

**Keith:** Windows are blacked out, huh? I'm gonna— I'm just gonna knock.

**Austin:** No response.

**Keith:** All right.

**Art:** [claps] All right. We have some options here.

**Keith:** Open the door.

**Art:** I can— if the door won't open, I can go through the door.

**Keith:** Oh. Can you have— can you put out a little scouter bug?

**Art:** Uh, maybe?

**Austin:** That seems like your realm, doesn't it?

**Keith:** Yeah, yeah.

**Art:** Yeah, if I close my eyes, I can see through the eyes of any of my bugs, allowing you to spy around corners or look into closed spaces.

**Austin:** Yeah. Mm-hmm.

**Art:** But if something's keeping them out, they wouldn't be in.

**Austin:** I mean, wait, could you...but if you could make your body, if you could do the thing that gets you in there—

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** —that means your bugs have to be able to get in there. Right?

**Art:** Sure.

**Austin:** So, there has to be a hole somewhere big enough for some of your bugs to get through.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** Otherwise that move wouldn't work, and I think that move would work.

**Keith:** Unless someone is actively keeping bugs out.

**Austin:** Right, right.

**Art:** Alright, so, uh, what's it look like in there?

**Austin:** Bugs.

**Art:** Different bugs.

**Austin:** You lose your bug instantly, among a billion others. It's like a roiling mess of insects.

**Keith:** Can I hear it?

**Austin:** No.

**Keith:** Can I smell it?

**Austin:** No. Whatever— these doors are keeping it enclosed.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** In a way that does feel intentional.

**Keith:** If Duvall had gone in there, would Duvall have lost himself?

**Austin:** I don't know.

**Art:** It's—

**Dre:** Yeah, I've heard about these bugs before.

**Austin:** We should talk about— wait, wait, wait. One second. Duvall, what's this experience like for you? Since, like, before we ask questions about the scenario, just like...you did lose—

**Art:** I've lost bugs before.

**Austin:** Okay.

**Art:** It's...it's not like...especially 'cause like, I was looking through the eyes at the moment, but like, it's not...

**Austin:** Yeah, to have that cut off.

**Art:** I don't think it's like particularly traumatic, yeah.

**Austin:** Okay. Okay.

**Art:** Um, okay.

**Austin:** But just countless.

**Art:** But it does make me worried about the idea of disassembling my entire body with the hopes of being reassembled on the other side—

**Keith:** Mm-hmm.

**Art:** —if something cuts it off on the other side.

**Austin:** I think, at this point, one of the people who works for the ship with the fabric mask comes over and says:

**Austin (as boat worker):** Can I help you?

**Art (as Duvall):** We're interested in meeting the captain.

**Austin (as boat worker):** I'm sorry, the captain isn't seeing anyone now. I unders—

**Dre (as Chine):** Are the captains bugs?

**Austin (as boat worker):** [brief pause] Our captain is...excellent [Keith laughs] at the task assigned.

**Dre (as Chine):** Oh, I didn't say anything about that. I just said there are a lot of bugs.

**Austin (as boat worker):** We know.

**Keith (as Lyke):** Are you a lot of bugs? Duvall's a lot of bugs.

**Art (as Duvall):** That's true.

**Dre (as Chine):** Yeah, we're friends with someone who's a lot of bugs, so it's not an issue for us. We were just curious.

**Austin (as boat worker):** If you have questions about the journey, and I'd be more than happy to answer them.

**Art (as Duvall):** I'm looking for more of a philosophical conversation. [Keith laughs] But with a very particular person.

**Austin (as boat worker):** [sighs] If I can help you in any way, I would be pleased to.

**Keith (as Lyke):** Do you know what it's like to be a lot of bugs?

**Austin:** He's ignoring you, Lyke.

**Keith:** Is it just the bugs questions or just me? Everything I say?

**Austin:** ["I don't know" sound] I don't know.

**Art (as Duvall):** I would really love to speak to the captain, if I can get on the schedule in some way.

**Austin (as boat worker):** Give me a moment.

**Austin:** And walks to the, like the front of the pilot house, where the kind of main windows are that are blacked out. And like puts both hands on— in my mind, there's two big windows, right? There's like a left window and a right window and like a little, you know, crossbeam in between.

And just reaches out his hands and puts a hand— two gloved hands, one on each thing. And just holds still for a moment. It's nighttime by now. Moon is out. Comes over and says:

**[2:30:06]**

**Austin (as boat worker):** The captain can see you overnight. Wait here.

**Art:** Um, here? Or was he about to— was there about to be a location?

**Austin (as boat worker):** Wait here.

**Art (as Duvall):** Wait here. Great. Okay.

**Austin:** And overnight sounds like it'll be a few hours, but, you know.

**Art:** Sure. I think Duvall is pretty good at waiting.

**Austin:** Yeah, true.

**Art:** A rich internal life.

**Austin:** Ha.

**Keith:** [laughs] I'm gonna...I'm gonna practice war while I'm here.

**Austin:** Oh, yeah. After a few hours...just nothing, that's it? The three of you just gonna hang out on on the deck?

**Keith:** Yep.

**Austin:** I guess I'll note, you're here, so the land outside, you know, the kind of that high riverbank has given way to lower and lower ground, and now you can kind of see off in every direction that you're among some kind of grasslands. And to the north, by quite some distance, but you can see some smoke on the horizon. Not like any— not like “Oh my god, something big's on fire,” but like the sort of smoke that tends to mean like, oh, there's a town up there or something like that. But for now, you know, those hours pass. You're playing war or false war. You're waiting for time to meet the captain, I guess. And finally, I'd say something like 2, 3 a.m., the door just opens, and it's the thing you saw before. It is a mass, a churning mass of insects.

**Art:** Is it like the face at the end of the third *Matrix* movie? Is that where, uh...

**Austin:** I think it's...no, it's more bugs than this.

**Art:** Okay.

**Austin:** By a lot. Like, these are big. These are like— this is a lot of big shapes. Whereas I think that the one that I'm thinking of here is like...

**Janine:** It's more like the one from *The Mummy*?

**Austin:** I don't remember. But yes, I think that the language of *The Mummy* is probably closer to where— the visual language of *The Mummy*. Yeah.

**Art (as Duvall):** Um...hello.

**Austin:** There's— this is— no response.

**Art (as Duvall):** Are you...are you like me? Or are you...are you looking for someone?

**Austin:** No response to this.

**Art:** Um...is it possible I'm missing something? Could I like be Discerning for...?

**Austin:** Um, you know—

**Art:** ...communication, or is there nothing?

**Austin:** Uh...the door is just open, and then I think like, it's as if like, "Well, if you're not gonna come in," and the door slowly begins to close.

**Art:** All right, all right. I'm gonna go. You guys gonna come? Y'all coming with me?

**Dre:** Yeah, sure.

**Keith:** Is there space in there?

**Austin:** There's no space in there.

**Keith:** It is packed?

**Austin:** It is as if you filled a swimming pool to the brim with bugs.

**Art:** Oh my god. Whatever our normal bug warning is isn't gonna be enough for this.

**Austin:** Yeah, I'm gonna give it a big one. But y'all wanted to go meet the captain, and this is what the captain.

**Keith:** Yeah, I'm gonna— I will *Fear Factor* my way into this thing. [laughs softly]



**Jack:** Jesus christ.

**Austin:** If you are not Duvall, you are going to take damage doing this.

**Dre:** Oh.

**Austin:** I'm just gonna say that outright.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** There's not a— you can't roll to not take damage from interacting with this. You can do it, and it will— you can do it, and I think there will be long term... [chuckles]

**Keith:** Long term...?

**Austin:** Oh yeah, you're— changes to who you are. I really want you to think about— you've opened a door to a magical boat, and the captain is—

**Keith:** Bugs.

**Austin:** 600,000 bugs? I don't know how to count bugs.

**Keith:** Maybe 60 million?

**Austin:** Maybe a million? Maybe 6 million— yeah, see, I don't know. More bugs than you could ever guess at.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Art:** You count a small number of bugs, then you do—

**Austin:** I see. Then you big—

**Art:** You multiply.

**Austin:** Right.

**Art:** You try to get a base.

**Austin:** Do it by— do the volume calculation, right.

**Art:** Yeah.

**Keith:** I...

**Austin:** Which is fine. Like, I'm not saying don't do it.

**Keith:** No, no, I'm not...

**Austin:** Because, you know, you could take D6 Stress and it's not the end of the world.

**Keith:** I'm willing to go in and...I'm willing to go in and hang out with the thing, but I'm not willing to go in and be slowly damaged by a thing, let alone turned into a bug...a bug man.

**Austin:** This is the world we're talking about.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** We're talking about—

**Keith:** No.

**Austin:** —the most raw collection of what Duvall is that we've ever seen, right? So.

**Art:** And I'm curious if this is someone who was me—

**Austin:** Right.

**Art:** —and went past it, or if this is just...

**Austin:** Or, like you said before, something who could be a you if there was a host or something, a body, right?

**Art:** Right.

**Austin:** Or a different body. Chine, are you also stepping back at this point? I would say—

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** My guess is you have a different relationship with throwing your body into weird shit than Lyke, not that either of you— you've both thrown yourself into some weird shit. But Chine is...

**Keith:** No, this isn't even a question for me. I'm not going in.

**Austin:** Right.

**Dre:** Um, unless...unless Chine gets like the intuition that this is somehow Course-related, then Chine steps back too.

**Austin:** What's not Course-related?

**Dre:** That's a good question. Um...

**Austin:** Like... [sighs]

**Dre:** Well, 'cause we...we haven't really been able to do much of this on screen, because we haven't had Chine and Duvall together.

**Austin:** Right.

**Dre:** But originally, we had talked about how Chine and Duvall are kind of like, philosophical, like, other sides of the coin.

**Austin:** Yeah, totally.

**Art:** Mm-hmm.

**Dre:** Or like, the Course is...I'm forgetting what Duvall's thing is.

**Austin:** The Structure.

**Dre:** Yeah. The Course and the Structure are like similar but different.

**Austin:** Yeah, in ways that are about...the thing that— yes. Let's zero in on this a little bit here, right? The Structure is rhythmic and is kind of architectural. There's the touch of intention and duration and shape. We know that the Structure and the Shape have some sort of intersection. We talked about that a little bit last time. We know that the Course is wild and is raw and unfiltered. It is the Real, in the sense that, you know, it is reality before our minds and society and the intersection of our minds and society and our bodies make sense of it. It is the pre-sensible reality. And you would think that a, you know, a collection of seemingly endless ravenous bugs would be a Course thing. And yet, there is this...there is this reflection of Duvall here. And so there is some sort of...I think that that resonance you're identifying here, Dre, or that whatever this, the kind of contrast of this moment, is worth identifying. And I think you're right that like, we haven't had a lot of Duvall versus— not versus but Duvall and Chine as—

**Keith:** Deathmatch opponents.

**Austin:** Deathmatch opponents.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** [laughs softly] So much. So yeah, I think the thing that— in other words of saying that is, this looks to you more like the Course than what you imagine the Structure would look like. The Structure—insofar as you've ever even heard the term—is straight lines, not this, [laughs] you know? But yeah, Duvall, I think you walk in. And you're lo— you're just in it. You just— as soon as you step in, Duvall, you're just gone from their sight.

**Art:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** And I think the door remains open for a moment or two, to see if Chine or Lyke comes in, and otherwise it will close. [pause] All right. You get the sense that you're being...the thing of you being built and— er, being, you said before, you could get in here by basically letting the bugs move your body in here one piece at a time, right?

**Art:** Mm.

**Austin:** As you enter, your pieces get completely— you just get completely reduced to pieces instantly.

**Art:** Okay.

**Austin:** And they're everywhere. They're like being passed around this place.

**Art:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** All of the different bugs are like holding onto little bits of you at a second. And we're talking bits at a level that is like not identifiable. Do you know what I mean? I'm not saying that like, here is a finger. [laughs softly] Do you know what I mean? We're talking about, at a microscopic level, you have blended with this in a way.

**Art:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** I think that this...are you— you're just looking for a conversation. You're not looking for...

**Art:** Yeah, I don't—

**Austin:** ...a secret, you know? So yeah, so I think you sense—

**Art:** Well, I mean, I'm always looking for a secret.

**Keith:** Oh yeah, take a secret if you can get it.

**Austin:** Yeah. [laughs softly] You don't have a— you don't have a like “find a secret,” you know, Beat for instance. And you're not rolling, you know, Compel and something.

**Art:** No.

**Austin:** Okay. So, I think then, what you get then, is the voice of the captain, all of these bugs speaking as a being. So there is— they are— it is a person, right? They are...and unlike the heritrixes, they are speaking as a single voice and a single— with a single direction. Not that heritrixes use multiple voices. But we talk about heritrixes as being both a host and a heritrix, right? This is a collection of organs, almost, right? But it's still one body, if that makes sense.

**[2:40:30]**

**Art:** Sure.

**Austin:** And the captain says to you, um...god, what is the voice for a billion bugs? But also a sea captain, or a river captain. [Art laughs] And also, what is the experience of being talked to when you are being passed around inside of this other being?

**Art:** I mean, I imagine it's not much like talking, right?

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Art:** I imagine it's like...

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Art:** It's sort of like that way that like...you know when you hear something you can't hear? Like, you ever use those like headphones that aren't really headphones that are like touching your like...

**Keith:** 'Cause they're bone conductive?

**Austin:** Oh.

**Art:** They're bone conductive?

**Austin:** I've never used those, but sure. That's weird. Yeah. And this should also speak a little bit to— or should— we should think about when Janine talks about heritrixes talking and feeling and sensing, that is not...it is not always that they talk with words, right? They talk in this other way. So yeah, I think it's similar in that sense. So yeah, there is something ha— okay, here is the language of this moment. The language of this moment is that you have...you feel questions and are reconstituted into answers. I don't know what that means. But that's what's happening. Right?

**Art:** Okay.

**Austin:** So your initial question was “Are you like me?” right?

**Art:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** And the answer is that the captain has been like you before and might be again.

**Art (as Duvall):** So are you the people that you've been? Or are you...

**Austin:** [sighs] Um, they're only the captain. The dis— they're— the line between the people they've been and the people, the person they are, has dissolved in their own appreciation of themselves. It's like asking if the fruit is the tree or if the tree is the fruit.

**Art:** So am I a tree or a fruit?

**Austin:** Good question. You're a seed? You're a seed.

**Art:** Mm.

**Austin:** Which means you could become a tree.

**Keith:** But are you a seed in a fruit or are you a seed in the ground?

**Austin:** You've been...I mean, that's— you didn't ask this. You're not here.

**Keith:** True.

**Austin:** But you've been...it seems to me like you've been planted.

**Art:** Um... [Keith laughs] Uh huh. Great. [Art and Sylvia laugh]

**Art (as Duvall):** Is this...is this fun? Do you like doing this? [Keith and Dre laugh]

**Austin:** Absolutely.

**Dre:** Is this chill? [“I don't know” sound]

**Austin:** This is like— there's a buzz, right? Like, I would...um, I think... [chuckles] I think what they actually tell you is:

**Austin (as captain):** This is the— this is my favorite thing to do in the world, and it's why I'm sad that this is our final trip on this boat, that this is the...at the end of this trip, we'll be scuttling the ship.

**Art (as Duvall):** Does the captain go down with the ship?

**Austin:** I think the...there's a little joke moment here, where the captain is like:

**Austin (as captain):** [grimly] Yes, of course.

**Austin:** And then there's a chattering laugh. It's like:

**Austin (as captain):** [somewhat mocking] No.

**Austin:** You know, we're not...we're not a warship, and we're not at war. [Art laughs] You know?

**Art:** Yeah. Um...

**Austin:** But again—

**Art (as Duvall):** Do you know when the city's gonna return?

**Austin (as captain):** The city never left.

**Art (as Duvall):** Well, the city slumbers.

**Austin (as captain):** The city slumbers for you. The captain was in the pilot house. The door wasn't open.

**Art (as Duvall):** Fascinating. Thank you for meeting with me. I really appreciate it. I know you're busy.

**Austin (as captain):** Do you want to come home with us?

**Art (as Duvall):** No, I have I have work to do still.

**Austin (as captain):** The city is very happy with what you did in Sapodilla.

**Art (as Duvall):** Good, good. Um, I was...I was happy to help. I hope Virtue can be a strong ally. [Sylvia chuckles]

**Art:** You know, 'cause I'm...'cause I'm a fool. [Austin, Sylvia, and Keith laugh]

**Austin:** Yeah. There is the thought that...you have the thought, which again, is— where's the line where you are and the captain is at this point? That even if Virtue isn't, her reign may lead more people to the Sleeping City now that the Oratorio and she have been, you know, connected to the city in this way. There's an opportunity that the city could grow from this. And it's like you had the idea yourself. It's not like someone said it to you, you know?

**Art:** Sure.

**Austin:** And I do think that there is the...I think the captain asks you, it comes to you, to think of the painting more. And there's a sort of— you start wondering, what do I think of the painting?

**Art:** Mm.

**Austin:** And you don't have to— you don't give an answer, necessarily, but you can if you have one. But there is this reminder that like, the painting was about finding something that could frame a question about who you were. And this is, in some ways, the captain asking you to do that work. In some ways, you get the sense that the captain is disappointed that you're not gonna come back to the Sleeping City now. But also, is that just the captain actually being disappointed in you and you can...like, you can sense that? Or is that parts of you feeling like that's what you think the captain feels? Or is that parts of the captain that feel that but that they're not primary parts, they're not a thing the captain would have ever voiced, but now you're blending with the captain so much that you can't separate your own impulses out from theirs? And then, also, there is that sense of like, if you could figure out who you were, you wouldn't need a— you wouldn't need to go through this process again necessarily. Or you could choose to exist like the captain. You could commit one way or the other a little bit. But there's also a sort of like, but there's no pressure on that. You know, who you are now is also perfectly fine. You know? We have a lot of people like you. You know, there are a lot of people like you in the Sleeping City. When it...you know, when you don't visit when you visited. I think maybe that's the thing that actually becomes clearer as you blend. You under— you do understand what they meant by the city doesn't sleep, which is that the city sleeps when it's available for people in Sangfielle to get there. That's what it's asleep. But otherwise, it's— and you see it, right? You like, you get some of the captain's memories here.

**Art:** Sure.

**Austin:** You didn't see Zevunzolia. This is not Zevunzolia, but there is something...the sort of language that we're talking about this with, without even go into cinematic language. Like, I don't think that this memory is shot the way we talked about Zevunzolia as a model, because it's in many ways an opposite thing. The Zevunzolia model we looked down at from a bird's eye view, and I described it in these very like geometric terms. And I talked about the ways the boulevards, you know, you know, broke down through the city and how there was a really great balance of this and that. None of that is apparent here, because what you're seeing is the Sleeping City abuzz from the ground level. Looking up, you know, into, you know, fire escapes and hearing people drive by and music coming out of their automobiles. And people, you know,



on the corners, you know, talking together or singing or playing music. Buskers, you know, people just playing music out in the street. You have that sense of being in the middle of it all.

**Art:** Mm.

**Austin:** In many ways, again, the opposite of our Zevunzolia scene. You know, someone passes by you and then turns and grabs your arm and is like,

**Austin (as person):** Oh, I haven't seen you in a while.

**Austin:** And this is someone who the captain was once. The captain was the person whose arm is being squeezed, and they catch up on small things. How is your sister? How is your, you know, how's your husband? Are you still keeping up with your guitar practice? There is a sense, then, of a different memory where you're moving through the air between these big buildings. Again, the Sleeping City is cavernous from the ground level, because the buildings are so tall. You know, it is a metropolis compared to all the places we've been, even Sapodilla. And suddenly, like, you're lifted up into the air as a swarm, right? And you're flying around as this swarm and moving between, you know, streets and seeing the sun set down the distance. You can see that thing that you can see in cities that have grid, you know, kind of grid layouts, where it's like, wow, you can see the sun hit all of these intersections all at once, you know, for a mile or two, as you lift higher and higher. And you see the riverboat captain getting the commission and getting on board this ship from the Sleeping City, from a port in the Sleeping City, and, you know, begin to leave. And all of the the fabric that's on the outside of this ship, the kind of green and gold that I talked about, is clean and shiny. It's a different— it's, you know, it's perfect. And then the door opens, and you're back on the deck. And you feel good. It feels like you just got like a deep scrub, you know? [laughs softly]

[2:50:37]

**Art:** Sure.

**Austin:** It feels you just got like—

**Art:** It's real exfoliating.

**Austin:** Yeah, a hundred percent. Yeah, they put you back real good. You know, maybe they left, uh...you have like a dance card in the wrong pocket or something, you know? [laughs]

**Art:** Sure, yeah.

**Austin:** But you're all there, as far as you can tell. You're left lingering with a thought, though, which is that...and this, again, it's not your thought, it's...or maybe it is— it can't be. But it's this sense of sadness that other people can't...that other people don't have the ability to be reconstituted like this, the way you just were. And that they can try, but there is often danger to

it. And that that is what being made of bugs allows you to be. The trade you're making about being made with bugs is that you can get put back together. You can do what you just did, and there is a...maybe a paternalistic, [laughs softly] in some ways, sort of judgment happening from the captain as this happens. And—

**Keith:** Are we still waiting outside?

**Austin:** I don't know. Did you wait while Duvall went in there?

**Keith:** I think so, yeah.

**Austin:** Then yeah. It took a little while.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Keith (as Lyke):** Do you die when that happens?

**Art (as Duvall):** I— how would I know?

**Keith (as Lyke):** I don't know. I, you know. I guess if you knew, then it would not be as easy of a thing.

**Art (as Duvall):** Do you die when you go through a portal?

**Keith (as Lyke):** [brief pause] No.

**Art (as Duvall):** Mm. Then I guess I don't think so.

**Austin:** It's taken all night for this to happen, and the sun rises as you're heading back down to your quarters. Try to sneak in some sleep before it's time to get up and, I don't know, be stuck inside all night or all day for the next three days?

**Art:** And just so, uh, just so I don't miss a chance to paint this, 'cause I'm worried I'll forget, but for the rest of the voyage, Duvall has like a real nautical slant to his clothing. [Austin laughs] Like, you know, white and navy stripes.

**Austin:** Ahh.

**Keith:** You're extra captainy?

**Art:** Yeah, extra captainy. Wears like a heavier jacket, you know.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Some, uh, wool sweaters.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Art:** Yeah. There's some good stuff if you google image search nautical apparel, but there's also some really bad stuff. If you're looking, use use a critical eye.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** When you say bad, do you mean like tasteless? Like, this is just not a...

**Art:** Well, just like, shirts with anchors on them, and that's not what I mean, you know? [Art and Dre laugh]

**Keith:** You mean fun hats and...

**Art:** Yeah. Yeah, sweater, turtlenecks.

**Keith:** Like wool, stitched wool.

**Art:** Yeah. Stripes and blues and khakis and stuff, you know?

**Austin:** As I was saying, the...as the Sun begins to rise and you start to make your way down, you can see that smoke I mentioned before a little bit more clearly. And there is a...there is a town coming into view, and you can see the crew— or one of the crew members comes up past you the same way, like in a rush, and puts their hands on the windows the same way that the first mate did earlier, as if to talk to the captain inside. And there seems to be like a hurry about the ship, among people who are...who work for it. Hazard, I think someone wakes you up, as part of the ship crew. And even though you're supposed to be a dealer, they're like, all right, we need you to start dealing immediately, because...I mean, I think you're just told straight up. Teak comes to get you. How early does Hazard wake up normally?

**Sylvia:** I think since they've been working on the ship, it's like a pretty regular like getting up at like 8 a.m. type shit.

**Austin:** Yeah, so this is earlier than that, unfortunately. This is like 5 a.m. or something, right? The sun has just breached the horizon. And Teak knocks on the door, and, you know, when you open, he's like:

**Austin (as Teak):** Something is wrong.

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** What— can you be more specific?

**Austin (as Teak):** Overnight, the river changed. [uncertain noise] We are no longer on the Ojan. If people notice this, they will get frightened. We need you to begin dealing as soon as possible so there is distraction.

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** Okay...

**Sylvia:** Very confused. You got a very confused devil here, but they're gonna do it anyway. [laughs softly] They're just like:

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** Yeah, sure, all right. What do you mean it's a different river?

**Austin:** And we see the boat pull up to a stop at a small dusty town. We've seen this town before, sort of? We've heard about this town before. Lyke, I asked you a couple of months ago now that a train let you off at a small deserted town.

**Keith:** Mm.

**Austin:** Ali, I think I said the same thing to you at a certain point, Marn. A town where there were people in the square, and there was a person up on a stage, and...

**Ali:** Right, right, right.

**Austin:** I think Virtue actually had a similar question about a little boy with an overturned boat, a toy boat in a fountain.

**Sylvia:** Ohhh.

**Austin:** We're at that town, that hypothetical town. It exists, and we're there. We're here in Marrowcreek. M-A-R-R-O-W-C-R-E-A-K. Which is well to the west of where you're supposed to be. I would say that it's about...about here.

**Jack:** Oh no!

**Austin:** About two tiles north of Erlin the wet god.

**Dre:** Hmm.

**Keith:** Show me one more time?

**Austin:** Bop. Like here.

**Jack:** We've crossed the mountains.

**Keith:** Oh, okay.

**Austin:** Yeah, you shouldn't—

**Keith:** There's no river over there.

**Austin:** Well, that's because I haven't drawn...

**Keith:** Oh, okay.

**Austin:** But Marrowcreek is there. It's a much smaller river. You could tell, 'cause— I mean, the name of the town is Marrowcreek, because that's also the name of the river. And the— everybody, you know, the boat pulls up to port, and it doesn't seem abandoned, but it's not particularly well populated. It's also very early, so maybe people are still asleep in this kind of tired western town. And I think that there is a sense of panic among the crew, for those of you who happen to be awake as this happens. And I guess I would leave it on this, which is maybe you're on that...you know, you're doing your morning walk outside, drink some coffee, Hazard, to kind of get your head straight before you have to go do your job early.

**Sylvia:** I don't think they have coffee.

**Austin:** Oh, right.

**Sylvia:** I haven't mentioned this, but Hazard doesn't like take their mask off like around people.

**Austin:** Ever.

**Sylvia:** So, they're not drinking. Like, they can't drink or eat through it.

**Austin:** Right. That dinner must have been weird. [Ali laughs]

**Sylvia:** Yeah, no, it was very much just like, they were sitting there—

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Sylvia:** And then for a— there was a moment where everybody lost sight of— [laughs softly] like, just took their eyes off them for a second, and then the food was gone. [laughs softly]

**Austin:** Mm. Food was gone. Where'd it go? I don't know. Well.

**Sylvia:** Great meal.

**Austin:** You go get some morning sun before sitting down, or maybe you're just walking on the outside of the ship instead of the inside.

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** And there is a figure out there in Marrowcreek, walking alone, towards a fountain much like the one that was in our hypothetical city. And he's got one horn.

**Sylvia:** Fuck! I'm about to jump off this goddamn boat!

[Music plays: “Sangfielle”]