

## Drawing Maps 16: July 2020 - Sangfielle Characters #2: Marn

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Austin: Hey everyone, welcome to another episode of Drawing Maps for season 7. Uh, I'm Austin Walker and I'm joined today by Ali Acampora. Hi Ali!

Ali: [drawn out] Hi!

Austin: Um, let me do the spiel this time because for the last episode when we started with Dre I did not do the spiel uh and paid for it by needing to pause after (laughs) we'd already started talking and being wait I have to do the spiel!

So! Um, if you haven't heard Drawing Maps before, you should know that what it is is a show in which we talk through or write about or stream some uh prep for the show. Uh there is a breakdown that I always give at the top just to keep everyone on the same page.

What Drawing Maps is is real prep for the seasons of the show. Which is to say this isn't stuff we've already done and now I'm dressing it up which means that it can be a little messy. You know it's- (Ali laughs) it's real prep, it's not- it's actual prep, actual play. Um... I should just make it say to say actual prep rather than real prep that way we're on the same brand with actual play-

Ali: Yeahyeahyeah. Yeah.

Austin: Um it is not uh, focused on a single thing, drawing maps has been about Bluff City, about seasons, uh, y'know 5 and 6 and now 7. Um, uh, so it's all over the place. It's discussion and hopefully insight. It is actual asset creation, which is to say on Drawing Maps we talk about characters and I'll design NPCs and you'll see me write up y'know what a location might be. Uh, it- if you go back to the season 6 stuff, faction creation and all that stuff, so it's actual asset creation it's not just like broad... Here's what an asset creation- here's what it looks like to create a faction, it's actually me needing to create factions.

Um, what this show isn't- what Drawing Maps isn't is unchecked or unannounced spoilers. Um obviously going into season 7 there's nothing to

spoil yet we haven't even done a worldbuilding episode yet, but likewise we won't start dropping past season spoilers without giving you a heads up at least.

Nothing here's permanent or unchangeable, which is to say we might end this call, Ali, with what we think is a really good decision, but that shouldn't make either one of us-

Ali: Oh yeah

Austin: Anything we say, nothing here is permanent, nothing here's unchangeable, nothing's real until it's in the show. This is not an explicit tutorial. Me doing this is not me saying this is how- you should do character creation or worldbuilding. This is not a look at that - I have various strong feelings about what it means to teach something and doing something visibly is not enough to be explicitly a tutorial so I like to draw that line. This is not design by committee. There are times in various Drawing Maps things where I'll say 'hey, doesn't anyone have an idea for blank', but those times are pretty rare and in general it's not really the stuff that we do here is not like up for vote. That's just not the type of prep I feel comfortable doing publicly. So I know some GMs do that stuff, we don't really go there. And finally it's not complete. Both in the sense of the permanent things where we could leave here with an idea and it could continue to change and develop and all that. But also in the sense that um, no prep that we do here needs to feel like we tie a bow in it at the end and it doesn't need to be as cleaned up and presentable in that way. We can leave here with ideas that are unfinished, we can leave here with ideas that feel half-baked, because we know there's time between now and when we get to an episode and we can continue to iterate and think through stuff. It's okay to drop something and move onto something else if it feels like we're hitting a brick wall or it feels ok to move past because you just don't have any good ideas right now. And that way it is real prep because real prep is not linear, it's not (laughs) (Ali laughs) straight forward et cetera.

Um, Ali, today we're here to talk about the Hound, which is the class that you'll be playing in season 7!

Ali: Yes indeed!

Austin: And all of the kind of connected questions about the world that someone playing a Hound brings up, um, as well as any other parts of your kind of character backstory and and the ways that those connect to the wider world.

Um, so! I'm gonna start with the first thing here on the list which is just (Ali laughs) You pitched me this characters as being not just a Hound but a bird person of some sort?-

Ali (talking over): Yeah, I had said that-

Austin: How are you feeling about that still?

Ali: I'm- I'm on the fence

Austin: Yeah

Ali: I've gotta say!

Austin: What puts you on the fence? What appeals and what doesn't?

Ali: I still wanna be like a- a humanoid version of an animal.

Austin: mm-hmm

Ali: But I feel like once- once I came up with the bird person idea I did a lot of bird person on Lives, and I like couldn't stop doing it for some reason even though I was-

Austin: You did do a lot of bird people...

Ali: I kept being like 'why am I wasting my bird person?'

Austin: Mm-hmm

Ali: And then like it's gonna be hard to follow Kalar I think

Austin: Mm. Mm? Mm, I can say that, but it can be a different type of bird person.

Ali: That's true, yeah

Austin: Kalar is a bird person who has human hands, and big wings coming out of his back. Do you know what I mean?

Ali: Right, yeah.

Austin: You could be a bird person who just has wings with like... grippy feathers or something I don't know

Ali: Right... Yeah... Yeah

Austin: I don't know what that vibe is! Or like a more grotesque type of bird person? (Ali laughs) there's all sorts of spaces to play in. But that said, again, we don't need to have a firm way on that one way or another. The thing I do like about the bird is that one of the things that you note here on the, on the - for people who don't know I sent questions around to everybody that were kind of like 'hey what's up with your class here are some moves where i'm kind of curious what your perspective is. Here's some ways in which you have a perspective on a tag or trait that will show up across the setting.' and in one of these I kind of asked if- if the Hounds were tied to whatever culture or civilization you were from or people and like, do you wanna talk about what- what your core influence is and then I'll wrap back around and explain why the bird connection is interesting to me?

Ali: (laughs) sure sure! So back like... this was, this was years ago at this point, no it had to be months ago. Actually it was right after the when we went to... none of this is relevant bu when we were in Canada we did the live show and then I went to Seattle right after that I watched that uh food documentary um, uh, Fat Acid Salt and Heat [sic - Transcriber's note: Salt Fat Acid Heat] and there were these Italian butchers which basically the idea was back then families would raise pigs themselves and then there were butchers that would travel house to house and butcher your pigs for you. And (laughs) going more into this, there's like legends about these butchers

where they've done like cataract surgeries for royalty because they were so skilled with their hands-

Austin: Oh wow that's wild-

Ali: They were able- yeah yeah! They would come and like butcher your pig but they were also certified to do like surgeries on tumors and things like that and this was like a regular part of their role because there was sort of a- a overlap of skill there. So since then I've been like damn that's cool (laughs)

Austin: (laughs) it is cool!

Ali: (continues laughing) I should do something similar for that- do something similar like that for season 7 and as I've been researching it now um the thing that I came across is that the reason these people became so skilled with this thing is because the land that they were living on was terrible for farming

Austin: Right

Ali: So you become very very good at this one specific thing and then as people who lived in other places also need someone who can do that specific thing you can be like ' Oh! I got it.'

Austin: Right:

ali (with continued wonderment): I'll do surgery on your eyes for some reason (laughs)

Austin: God that's so scary. It's so wild. I love that, and I mean part of what's fun about that connection for me is thinking about like what's- if you did go with the bird people thing one of the things we don't do is- we haven't done- I guess we did bird people on Hieron where they were like living up on floating like islands and stuff yeah?

Ali: Oh yeah uh-huh

Austin: But that was like a kind of very urban vibe. But it would be interesting to be like you don't have- you don't have soil to grow things on in the trees. If you're in some sort of like-

Ali: Yeah!

Austin: -deep tree thicket- y'know, society, which for us would be beyond the region of the Heart or whatever we end up calling it outside of the Ringed City it'd be out in the world or something somewhere else. Though the other half of it is that it's interesting to do something like the Hound which kind of has like detective and Monster Hunt-y vibes, where it- are you imagining that you started this clan or group of people whatever they end up being- started doing one thing and it became monster hunter-y the same way that they started as butchers and became doctors?

Ali: I think so yeah

Austin: Ok.

Ali: Um, yeah I think it's kind of like a- like a social... helps people sort of vibe. Um-

Austin: Linking to a bird that I like. Mama Bird by Chaotic-Muffin.

Ali: Yeah

Austin: Thinking about other ways you could do bird people.

Ali: Right. Yeah.

Austin: What I mean with that is that I typed fantasy bird people (ali laughs) into google and I'm just looking at images while we talk

Ali: There's varieties out there!

Austin; There is

Ali: The first thing I had in my mind was like, you know wings... um not like hands-hands but like tactical in that way so just kind of like describing things is easy but also like, imagine a bird neck and then you imagine like the bird neck turning into bird face but instead of that it's just like a flat human face.

Austin: Right okay.

Ali: (laughs)

Austin: I gotcha. I think. I think I've got ya.

Ali: It's like... what's the spirited away monster with the flat face? like imagine that but if it was like- like a bird person with a human face.

Austin: No Face? From No Face?

Ali: Yes No Face yes. Instead of no face there's a-

Austin: I gotcha a human face

Ali: A human face yeah instead of like a beak

Austin: That's distinct. That's not- that's not Kalar or like the Talonites. Tallonites have big bird faces, not human faces.

Ali: Yeah

Austin: That's kind of creepy in a good- in a cool way

Austin: I'm here for that.

Ali: Yeah, and the- you know the 'we're up in the trees and so we had to do this specific thing' is interesting but I, the- the tough thing about this class right now is that I feel like I still don't know what like the thing is?

Austin: Right

Ali: Because reading through the moves there's nothing specif- it- it seems like such a ranger-y class in that way in that it's like hunting you're good at finding people you're good at protecting people

Austin (overlapping): It's like- it's... it's so funny that you and Dre both went to two different classes but wound up with very similar ranger-y interpretations (ali laughs) of both of them. I guess it's worth saying for people listening that as written the Hound, the way the Heart sets up the Hound is that at some point hundreds of years ago question mark question mark question mark years ago a regiment was sent from like the city above which is like this oppressive regime of high elves where they sent a bunch of soldiers down, like nine hundred, a thousand people down, inside the heart which is kind of like this corrupted place that has been lost to monstrous forces, um and only three hundred of them survived, um, and over time those people have lived and died as monster hunters, and cops, basically. They're kind of like pinkertons I guess?

Ali: Yeah

Austin: They have a private eye like a professional private... detective vibe, private security, but also the people who would come to town to uh enforce something or to investigate something, and you join the- the hounds in Heart by finding a badge, and effectively being haunted by the weight of the Hound, the thirty-third, there's only ever three hundred at a time as that's the only badges that remain, and over the course of your character's lifetime you eventually find your way to connect back with the ghosts of the original thirty-third basically, that's what a lot of the zenith moves end up connecting to in some ways. So that's their version of it, and I think from the jump pyou wanted to move away from the cop part of it (Ali laughs) as best as you can - or at least the part of it that's about having some sort of distant authority that you're wielding in order to like, criminalize people?

Ali: Yeah, I didn't want it to be that sort of like... there's, and there's this specific move that's like 'you can arrest people and you have the authority to do that, you have the authority to declare someone a criminal', and I don't know that that's the vibe, I- I really think of it more of a like shared skillset or like a union that people are part of or like



Austin: Yeah

Ali: Or like when you see the first aid symbol

Austin: Right

Ali: and you think 'oh yeah this person- I can expect a certain behavior and skill set from this person when I see them'

Austin: Well the thing that makes an interesting reflection to me of the Cleaver which is the class that Dre is playing is that you both have the Hunt skill to begin with which is about tracking which is about shooting at things from a long distance if that 's the way that you're going it's about tracking things down and finding things that are trying to hide or get away from you, but the difference is that the Cleaver is all about cursed, or starts with the cursed domain I would say, whereas you start with the haven domain, which, which meant that you're all about people and places and settlements where there are people, uh, instead of the kind of wilderness where everything is broken. I think that's the way for me to thing through the- what is the throughline, or how does this ranger type separate itself from the other ranger type in the classbook, inside of the bok, is that you do better at and ar- at places where there are people and around people who need help. Um instead of just being like the self-sufficient ranger out in the woods if that makes sense? It moves you much more into the witcher camp for me, because you're lik, doing jobs for people, you know? If that makes sense. Not that the cleaver isn't also doing that.

Ali: Right yeahyeahyeah, as much as the dressing in the game has like oh you're a cool supersoldier yada yada yada

Austin: mm-hmm

Ali: a lot of the moves are like you help people better there are a lot of like service type things, where it's like oh you can help people who are in your party evade better or you know or have better supplies, you can prepare for things over night, so yeah, it feels like there's such a wide breadth of what- what the thing of it is. (laughs). Yeah-

Austin: Yeah. You also like- your starting move is about taking and managing fortune fallout which uh in this game fortune is sort of your like... luck? uh like, stress meter if that makes sense? Um, uh, which means that like when things go bad for you, yo- you have the ability to make them go bad in this kind of like- not bumbling (ali chuckles) you know shit just keeps going wrong you know what I mean?

Ali: Yeah

Austin: You get the thing of like hey you've been separated from your party or um, rumors start to spread about you or you thought you were supposed to turn left here but you turn right instead, and, and or whatever. Um you know the weather just breaks bad on you because- because things just go like that for you sometimes. And that's an interesting way of thinking about the class too because that- that kind of means that things gets framed in that sort of direction more like hey you should have been cursed here (Ali laughs) but instead your belt got caught on a branch and got pulled off and now you've lost all your ammo or your food or whatever, y'know?

Ali: Yeah

Austin: And I think that's another way of thinking about how the class will be framed, is that it's about things- you getting lucky and getting unlucky and in that way you know there's also like um I'm reticent to say but it's kind of a Han Solo (Ali laughs) vibe here also right? Because it's about moving through social situations, getting the most out of it, maybe helping people along of the way, and then things breaking bad in that way more than in the as written more than in the ' and then a witch hexes you'- well a witch might hex you because that's actually 100% a Han Solo thing

Ali: Yes! (laughs)

Austin: But a witch isn't gonna hex- you know it's Imuc ess the like you're stalking through the forest

Ali: Yeah

and feeling the wind through your hair

Ali: yeahyeah yeah

Austin: That style of character.

Ali: Yeah

Austin: Um, let's go back to these questions to keep me focused.

Ali: (laughs), sure

Austin: One of the things I'm curious about here is- is um I guess we- I- let's bracket the question about um whether or not they come from your bird people because we're not sure if you're going bird people or not yet

Ali: okay yeah

Austin: And maybe as we help- as we start to better define what the hound is or if we even call them the hounds for us long-term maybe we'll have a better chance of- of figuring that part of it out-

Ali: of adapting that yeah, yeah.

Austin: But! Let's just start with people who do your job professionally, and you've talked about this being a union, so- so people in your group I guess let's say

Ali: mm-hmm

Austin: Is that a rare thing? Is it you know, in the- in the um, Heart book you know there are three hundred Hounds at any given time, is that the case for what our version of this is?

Ali: I like the three hundred cap um, I wrote here that I was like torn whether... um, like, you know, there is a group of people who perform a task and within that group there are three hundred Hounds because Hounds is a special other thing?

Austin: mm-hmm

Ali: or it's just there's three hundred Hounds and then that's it. Um, I thi-

Austin: Oh so in other words what you're saying is that there could be a bigger group, there could be a thousand members in the group, but inside of that group three hundred of them are what we call Hounds?

Ali: Yeah

Austin: I see

Ali: Where they've like, graduated to like top whatever

Austin: Oh, so you're saying that's-

Ali: You know what I mean, yeah.

Austin: Ok. Yeahyeahyeah I got you. So that's like- that's the like- whatever the- the highest ranked of this- this is our jedi knight (Ali laughs) level or whatever, our jedi master level not our padawan level or whatever

Ali: Fair yeahyeahyeah, I think of it as like, um, because part of the question there, is there still a recruitment office?

Austin: Right

Ali: How socially known are they like, I think that is a fair amount because you have to have like the- you have to have the like recognition of what a Hound is

Austin: mm-hmm

Ali: for them to be like, to serve the role that they do? Um so I think- you know common enough so that people have heard of them in that way but uncommon so that it's like oh you're a hound I need you for this specific thing

Austin: Right, 'oh shit a hound rolled into town' I

Ali: Right

Austin: like that's a meaningful thing or 'oh shit we have a hound in town that's like part of what makes our- our you know settlement a bit more like notable or safe or something'

Ali: Yeah

Austin: Um, I like that, I also I also am curious, or not curious but like I think that there's another way we could talk about it too is that if you did come down on the side of like there's a larger organization and three hundred of that organization are hounds you could also do the things that that doesn't put them at the top but it puts them at the side like 'ok well there's three hundred hounds' (ali laughs), and there's three hundred scientists or you know there's two hundred and fifty scientists

Ali: Yeah

Austin: And there's two hundred holy men or whatever, you know, and there's a hundred people who just do messengers, who like send messages or are message-you know, -deliverers or something like that, and that could be really fun too. Because and then you could get the thing of like someone from another part of the organization who does not necessarily report up to you shows up in town and like brings word from 0 from the base that like you're supposed to fucking deal- you're supposed to take care of them for the next week? (ali laughs) Y'know, um-

Ali: Yeah, I was- I was thinking of versions of that in terms of trying to think through like, um, one of the questions you asked was like are there different sergeants and marshalls and stuff

Austin: yeah

Ali: that some of the moves make and is it like, is there a hierarchy that goes up in that way or are there different departments? Um same thing with the like, can some hounds declare people as criminals?

Austin: Right, this is a thing that you don't do but do they do- do they do it more broadly?

Ali: Right. And for me I feel like that's still a little bit of a question mark? I feel like it would make sense if there was like a version of what this person is which is like a detective right?

Austin: mm-hmm

Ali: because sometimes you would want a detective and sometimes you would want somebody who like knows herbs really well

Austin: Right., totally. Totally.

Ali: and that sort of stuff, or can set a bone or something

Austin: Yeah! Yeah.

Ali: Um, so-

Austin: How do you- how do you- I'm like, I'm sorry I'll let you finish your thought first and then we'll jump in.

Ali: (laughing) no that was pretty much the end of it

Austin: Um, how do you feel about... being the like... I'm just lik- I'm really spitballing here but like, one of- one of the big things, and this is the li- the literal last question on the list is what are some ways that the Hound can address themes of contradiction, uncertainty/certainty and community, um, one of the big - I keep coming back to this, this set of examples of what I mean when I - when we talk about the themes of this season and like what types of, what types of interesting conflicts might exist right? And I've said the thing of like, oh, um, I'm trying to find this exact quote here (Ali laughs) uh, here we go um, uh dah dah dah (coughs) excuse me. LOne of the big thematic areas of exploration for me this season is that in a world where essentialism is denied how do you define yourself. When everyone accepts that the surreal is real how do you ground truth and for a while what I was

the very common fantasy idea that you had different groups insisting on different things being the most important a school of wizards who believes like knowledge is the most important or inventors who think technology is the most important thing, um, but maybe a more fun variation is that x - some group believes that y is the real truth behind all the surrealism and unpredictability (ali laughs) there's almost a moral imperative so that you know ash mages who want to enshrine entropy or memories or whatever ash is a metaphor for is like that's the real truth of it all memory is at the heart of everything or entropy things are gonna fall apart for ever and so inside of that set of things there is of course some group that is gonna be the like there's a rational explanation for everything science is at the root of all of this stuff (ali laughs) it might not seem as if a- for that C follows A but that's just because we don't know about B yet and if we can discover B we can show how like A and C are actually directly connecting, it's actually your X-files version of this

Ali: Ohh right sure

Austin; Inside of the Bloodborne you know universe you would have the like everybody else is from one of these churches or whatever but you're from like a school - you're from like a group of people who're like uh, uh, understand= trying to understand this stuff and study this stuff you know more than people who are devour or who- or something like that, and I'm curious if that's a space we want to go into with the larger organization, because we don't have that on screen yet so far, we have a lot of- we have a lot of practitioners (Ali laughs) we got some mages and witches

Ali: Yeah fair, fair!

Austin: bug witches and Dre's thing is like... you haven't heard that yet but it's like Dre's thing is like very much a- a being part of the weirdness of the Heart directly

Ali: Sure sure sure sure

Austin: And to be like channeling that through you. But what we don't have yet on screen and maybe I- I suspect Jack's character might be one place where this comes through but their character also very much overlaps some

of the weirdness, is someone from their perspective who is like we can catalog this, and I'm not sure if that's a direction that we could maybe think about going with whatever your union group is?

Ali: Um yeah! I mean I think that's definitely something worth exploring I've - I've talked about it a little bit on some of the questions here because one of the questions you asked was buhbuhbuh um, 'how does your backstory connect to one of the callings in the book? is it shared by others like you, if such exist, or is it unique?' um, and the thing that I wrote is that I'm um, torn between um, Enlightenment and Heartsong, Enlightenment is like you're um you're going into the Heart to find more knowledge about a specific thing and you're like your small beats are like oh um I find knowledge that someone was concealing or that you know I found a useful book

Austin; Right

Ali: Or something like that, um, and the- the enlightenment spin on that that I Was going to do was that like this is a thing that hounds do and are expected to do

Austin: Right

Ali: they- they wanna find new techniques for whatever it is that they do-

Austin: This is- this is how you make your name as a Hound or like maybe you like-

Ali: Right

Austin: move through the ranks or get tenure (laughs) or whatever it is

Ali: Right

Austin: the equivalent of like I've- here's my- here's my big discovery here's the thing that I figured out how to do or where to go or whatever it is that contributes to the greater cause of whatever the Hounds are doing or what our group is doing



Ali: Right, yeah, exactly, where it's like we've- we've taught you to do this thing and now you are expected to either help opele with it or be able to advance that craft by- by finding new techniques or you know new creatures to (laughs) use them against or whatever else it is whereas the twist on that would be the Heartsong calling which is a- a similar thing but in terms of like the Heart is calling to me and I'm having dreams-

Austin: Right

Ali: Or visions of Heart things and some of the minor beats are you see something from your dream in real life or things like that

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Austin: yeah

Ali: where it'd be like 'oh, you know, Hounds in general have this specific enlightenment calling, but my PC wold have this Heartsong calling which like-

Austin; Which separates you from-

Ali: Yeah yeah yeah (laughs)

Austin: yeah which is like that's- I like either of those things very much, and I think you could go either direction of them, I do think that like given that - give that note the thing about- about- I mean I think I'm 100% on board with generally speaking this group that's the enlightenment calling and are trying to go down there and learn things whether or not we come down one way or the other on you versus enlightenment or heartsong I could go either way but like that to me really does start to paint this image of like a professional organization that is about... that is about like, figuring it out, in a way. Which again, I know connects us back to Hellboy's BPRD, the- the group that Hellboy works with in those comics

Ali: Mm-hmm

Austin: Um which eventually get their own comics that are also very good. Um, uh, and that style of just like is there a- and I know this is one of the

questions here but like- is there a place somewhere down here that is like the Hound HQ, that is like the... um, have you seen- have you seen raiders of the lost ark the first indiana jones movie?

Ali: I think so?

Austin: Uh that movie ends with like a classic thing um, uh, (coughs) of you know they get the Ark and then they ship it off to like the-

Ali: Oh is that the big zoom out of-

Austin: the big zoomout!

Ali: The big... warehouse

Austin: yeah, and it's just like filled with crates and shit! (ali laughs) and you know like, p;resuambly all that stuff is like wild supernatural phenomena

Ali: Yeah

Austin: Put in wooden crates in a warehouse somewhere um, um, but that- that style of like, you know, yeah we got some wild shit down in the basement (ali laughs) could be a fun- a fun direction for this, and also the thing I like about going this direction, if this ia direction you're interested in, is that- it helps me situation what authority you do have, along sort of ideological versus- versus prof- versus like governmental or sovereignty based things, where lie, if you represent an organization that is studying X generally, then that means you're an expert in such a way that you could help unravel the mystery of X, and then also uh, you know, apply your skill set in ways Y and Z, then it's easier to understand why someone would be like, oh yes you're here thank god (ali laughs) come in right away, versus someone who is like... versus- versus a version of that where like, it's just about like oh yes you have- you're part of this organization which means you're allowed to do X, Y, Z because again some old treaty or whatever, once it's like oh no you have a reputation of being someone who does X, Y, Z, that kind of opens certain doors you know what I mean?

Ali: Right, yeah, exactly. Well like, the way that I've been trying to like think about it is like, you know what does it mean in a society if only 300 people can have a CPR certification, you know what I mean?

Austin; Right, yeah, totally

Ali (laughing): It's like, what value would they- does- does that change if it's like oh they- kyou know I know that that person can help me because they have that badge or whatever-

Austin: Right, well, and also, the other people who can ehlp d- the other people who can do CPR-liek things do it by revealing their secret tentacles (Ali laughs) that comes out of their back or by praying to the moon goddess who is a god that- who is not your moon goddess it's some other moon goddess you've never fucking heard of

Ali: Right

Austin: Um, and so you- and you're like um let me open this satchel and see what bandages I have or whatever (Ali laughs) you know like, there is, there could be a really fun degree here to like ground a lot of your stuff in a way that you know means that because you're working in the realm of mundanity with most of your solutions, or maybe that's not the case maybe we do go the route of you having a bunch of pouches with weird chemicals and stuff, but ev- even the way that like if you- if your group frames it as science, and frames it as you know, um, institutional knowledge, versus framing it as like via cult or whatever, um, that means that like I think a lot, you step on less toes, um, you know we- we I haven't finished this religious document yet that Jack and I have been working on but you know there's a lot of different religions down here people believe a bunch of differen tshit

Ali: Yeah

Austin: including some flat conflicting shit (ali laughs), and so like, ,there's something value about like 'no, I do medicine. I'm not going to pray to a god you don't believe in, I'm not going to summon the power of... (Ali laughs) Some demon that you need to worry about, I'm going to pour this rubbing

alcohol on your skin. It's gonna sting but it's gonna clean the wound and then I'm gonna dress it.

Ali: Yeah, I like that also because there's- there's the- the part of the hound that is, I feel like a little harder to adapt but that I don't wanna get rid of is the idea of- that there is a legacy here

Austin: Mm-hmm

Ali: that there was this organization that's for this specific purpose at one time, and lived on you know, continuing

Austin: Right

Ali: To teach those skills but serving a different social purpose, so if it's like oh there's the bird people who were in the trees who you know only had access to these sorts of berries

Austin: mm-hmm

Ali: made this really good medicine out of them, and yadda yadda yadda

Austin: right

Ali: And that continued for years, and then no we're in the future and like oh y'know, people are still doing those things but they're traveling to the Heart to learn to- to stretch that knowledge in that way or-

Austin: Totally. There's um, there's a really great thing I love in the witcher 3, where you know the witcher and i'm curious maybe on what side of this you end up falling on, um, uh, but the witchers are like a dying breed in a real way because the world is changing right, you know the- it used to be that what happened was that if people started going missing in your town you would p[ut out word that you needed a witcher and a witcher would show up and you would negotiate with the Witcher and the witcher would go off and do his shit, and then you know, you'd turn out like oh yup, my weird uncle is some sort of tree demon actually

Ali: Uh-huh

Austin: Shit, um, and then you pay the witcher and the witcher goes on. But then in the witcher there there is this new, there's this new competing group which are professional witch-hunters right, which um, obviously in that they're connecting to like an inquisition and are like very harsh and all of that but for me the think that's interesting about them is that they've cleaned up the look and have professionalized (ali laughs) where like, I've just sent you this image where like they have scrolls attached to their you know suspenders or whatever, and they have the special hats on and, have like moved towards society and away from the sort of outsider perspective that witchers are from, and so the witch-hunters have social accessd that the witchers do not, because of the way that they've kind of adapted, in some cases witcher techniques directly into like more acceptable or more socially normative like behaviors and like you know kind of discourse if that makes sense?

Ali: Mm-hmm

Austin; But I'm curious if for you the Hounds are on that side of it or more on the Witchers' side of it, where there are like more lone wolves who don't- you know what I mean? Or how people think of them if that- if that binary exists, uh, in our spaces, are they the like more professionalized group or are they lie, do they still have the like oh yeah the bird people who live in the trees know- know berries really well (ali laughs) you know what I mean?

Ali: Yeah. I- I- the way that I've been thinking about this class is that it's more of the professional thing

Austin: mm-hmm

Ali: Because again I think a lot of what is weighing on sort of like uh, what the trick is is a social understanding that if you see this person they're gonna help you in a specific way, right?

Austin: Totally, yeah.

Ali: Where it's like, oh I want access to this person, um, and whether it's like I have to pay them for this thing or I have to house them while they're helping me or whatever else like, a way that I was thinking of it is that like, you know, when you become a Hound you go through this like specific training to do whatever else, but then after that you're expected to either go to a Haven and hang out there

Austin: Right

Ali: and help people with what they need, or to go into the Heart or do this other thing.

Austin: Right

Ali: But that's like an expectation for like- cause you wouldn't (laughs) you wouldn't like go be a- well I guess you could, but you wouldn't like go to the Jedi temple and go through all that go be a Jedi and then just be like

Austin: Yeah

Ali: I'm gonna go chill at the diner for a little bit right? (laughs)

Austin: (laughs) Totally right! Like I uh- yeah

Ali: You know you have to go like, go talk to the senators and deal with those trade issues you were taught this skill for a reason

Austin: mm-hmm

Ali: and there's the- there's as much the expectancy that you're going to be able to- to properly represent the order and take care of people because you have that skill, as you have the like quote unquote customer side of it that like oh I know if I'm going to go to this person for this thing, I have an expectation of what that service is gonna be

Austin: Right. Yeah! That makes sense to me. [36:42]

Ali: and there's the- there's as much the expectancy that you're gonna be able to- to properly represent the order and take care of people because you have that skill, as there is the like quote unquote customer side of it that like oh I know if I'm going to go to this person for this thing, I have an expectation of what that service is gonna be

Austin: Right. Yeah! That makes sense to me. Um... Let's look at some moves and talk about some of these things to-

L: Suuuuure (laughs)

U: We already talked about the quartermaster sergeant thing and the kind of hierarchy thing. I definitely lean the idea that you have of like... there's a big group and Hounds are a subset of that group or big is a weird word because like-

L: I know cause 300 only seems like so many so is it like- are there like 25 healers or-

U: Yeah but like what if I said there were like... It's one of those things where it's like what if I said there were 300 police in New Jersey?

L: Right, and then that's like-

Au: That's not that many police in New Jersey right? Or 300 y'know, it's obviously different when you're liek plumbers but 300 nurses in all of New Jersey like no that's not enough nurses

Al: Yeah

Au: Clearly that's not enough nurses right?

Al: yeahyeahyeah

Au: Um so like I- I think that that works. The Heart, or whatever we end up calling our version of the Heart is big, um, it's big enough that like any haven could be- some havens will be like y'know 40 people, some havens will be like 4000 people, y'know?

Al: Ok, ok.

Au: Ok it ranges, like, um, and I think our haven will probably end up being... in that midsize where like it's a city, but it's not a- it's a fantasy city it's not London, y'know? I don't- I don't think, y'know?

Ali: Ok sure yeah. The 300 sounds right for like... this specific- where it's like oh, within the organization there's like 100 tactics and then 300 of this thing and like-

Au: Right, right

Al: Yeah, I think that- yeah

Au: I'm checking this thing that we- we check this probably I swear like once every two years (Ali laughs) it's like how many people were in big cities during the early- during the 1600s (Ali laughs) you know what I mean? Um, and the answer is... like a lot but also not that many you know what I mean, um London... London was very big in 1650, alright 1600 London had 200,000 people, 1650- 50 years later - it had 400,000 people - that's such a big spike right!

Al: Yeah...

Au: Um, so I can imagine there being a city of 100,000 or 200,000 people down here but I think that'd have to be the one city that's like that-

Al: Right, sure sure

Au: You know? Um and like certainly the city around the ring- around the edge of our area is- is like that, but like- well probably way bigger than that- but those people are barely like, aren't going out into the Heart proper

Ali: Yeah, yeahyeaheyah

Au: So like, um yeah I'd imagine like... you go back a little bit to like Renaissance, the late 1500s, and yeah you're mostly looking at like you



know like cities you've heard of being in that 100,000 or even 50,000 range - Cologne 35,000 people in the 1550s of whatever so- so yeah those are like the biggest cities versus like... you think about the frontier towns of the west, or whatever

Al: Right!

Au: And that's like 100 people at the most, you know like it's maybe 13 people on some days. So- so I think given that 300 is probably still right

Ali: Yeah

Au: If we want to we can adjust that - I don't mind there being 100- 100 is a good- is a good number, you know what I mean?

Ali: Right yeah

Au: Um, uh, 99 is a good number (Ali laughs), we just find a number that we like for the sound of or that like, has that poetic meaning that hits you know? Likewise you could go up to 500 and I wouldn't think-

Ali: Sure

Au: -that's too bad. Um but somewhere in that- somewhere in that 99-500 range makes the most sense to me

Ali; Ok, fair fair.

Au: Anyway so yeah I think- I think I like that like the subgroup thing that arose. We talked about authority already and condemn move which is the one that lets you declare someone a wanted criminal, uh, so that you're not taking, or if you take it we have to change it completely that part of it completely

Ali: Yeah! Yeah, yeah, I um, I- it's not a move that I feel that I'm ever gonna take so I don't know that we have to like put a bunch of work into like rewriting it if it's never gonna come up but it just feels like, um, it just feels like it would be a different... if people were doing that (laughs) we'd have to

start with like- cause if there's a town of like 14 people who- what happens if someone's declared

Au: right

Al: A criminal there, you know? You know.

Au: Is there a world where you think these people could show up- cause the thing is I'm not imagining this as religious so they're not gonna show up and call someone a heretic or something so like that's not gonna happen either

Al: No:

Au: Is there a world in which you think there's a- um- value in having a move that's about like declaring someone a... traitor or a monster or- does even that get too close to like policing and condemnation and that criminalisation way?

Ali: Yeah, I just like think like, it's not-

Au: It's not what you do

Ali: It's like- right yeah especially if i'm leaning like a medicinal way or like a... a trades way

Au: UYeah

Ali: It just doesn't feel like- like even if there was a place for that in this story which there you know probably will be-

Au: Who knows

Ali: I just don't know that it'd be like my character or the hounds that'd come up with that unless it's like there was a specific investigatory part of the Hounds. The-

Au: Right

Ali: Well not even the hounds but like this wider Hound thing that like, my player isn't gonna be like, the detective hound could do that if they really wanted to

Au: Right- I think that's an important thing to figure out is whether or not that's a thing that Hounds more generally can do or would do or not Hounds but the organization? I think uh- I like the idea that they can't or that they- the sort of- do you know anything about Pathologic have you read about that game Pathologic or Pathologic 2?

Ali: Not really I've only heard like word of mouth basically?

Au: Yeah, I think it's basically like another great touchstone for us because it has- so the thing that happens in pathologic- I haven't played pathologic 2 because I'm a fucking fake fan (ali laughs) but Pathologic 1 um, is that like, there's this city in the... uh, Eurasian Steppe I believe, kiind of like the Russian steppe I guess actually, um, where, um, a disease- a plague is hitting really hard and you have 3 characters to pick from, who come to try to like cure this plague. Um, the three- the three um, character types um are the... um, bachelor who is a like, a doctor from The City, and who like shows up and is like 'I'm going to conquer death itself! (Ali laughs) I've read books, I know real medicine' etc., and uh there is uh, the Haruspex, who is like- who is literally a butcher, um, but also is the town's actual physician, like he's the guy who lives in town. He's- he's the character that you kind of set up to some degree?

Ali: Oh sure right yeahyeahyeah

Au: who is like I'm the town's butcher and also I can give you something to cut the pain

Ali (overlapping): I know about bones and meat!

Au: and about bones and meat exactly, 100% that (ali laughs), and then there is... um... god what was the third character's name i forget what her thing was i think it's like the devo- the devoted or something like that? And she is like a witch from the woods, right, she is like 'i can do miracles. I have a connection to god- to a god or something. I can just like touch people and

heal them' and they have such completely different perspectives on the way healing works or whatever right, and- but in- in all cases including in my mind it sounds like the group that the hounds are from are most like the- they're like a blend of the butcher and the bachelor? Right where it's like- our knowledge comes from being butchers for centuries but now we're in that state where we're like we can show you not a badge but like our official papers that show you we're like a expert please show us the body to investigate it or like

Ali: Right yeah-

Au: Or like apply the salves of whatever. But in- I can't imagine that game working if any of those characters could show up and... could from the jump be like 'alright arrest this man!' (Ali laughs) y'know? Instead you're kind of like all them are at the whims of whatever local - the local politics are and I mean that kind of like with a lowercase p politics- who knows who who's in charge, family rivalries all of that stuff, and I kind of like your group more if they also have to like when they roll int own be like go to the bar and try to talk to find out right like hwo'se in charge here what's going on here, they don't have that authority themselves, and I think I'd rather just like cement that that's not just a your character thing that's like a wider thing that like... yeah maybe someone listens to them but it's not because they... but they by and large aren't-

Ali: Yeah

Au: going around being like 'that person is a criminal!' they might let a town decide that and then get to investigate the body afterwards to see if they have any werewolf blood in them or whatever

Ali: Right yeah

Au: But they're not- they're not even interested in being authority in that way.

Ali: Yeah. It just seems like such a misfit for... the way that I'm adapting this class

Au: Yeah

al: that like the thought of like 'oh you know, you're a doctor you're here to help the town you're like this community agent but also like if you tell that guy to fuck off everybody else says like-' It feels like you said that there has to be a neutrality there

Au: Yes

Al: Cause Like in terms of treating people-

Au: Right

Ali: - you would be- you would have to do that you know, to as many people as you can without um, what's the word I'm thinking of (laughs)

Au: Without like alienating them-

Ali: Right yeah exactly

Au: Or without being like- yeah

Ali: Yeah.

Au: Totally, totally. That makes sense. Yeah you don't want to get caught up in that bullshit, you're here to help people generally speaking, not to — and the second that you decide like that I can be the source of justice, even if you mean that well, and are not part of an institution of oppression uh and discrimination, you suddenly, that relationship changes.

Ali: Yeah. Discrimination was the word that I was looking at there where it's like

Aus: Gotcha

Ali: You don't wanna be the- Doctors are in this actual position too where it's like you don't want to be in the position where it's like I don't wanna help this person because I believe this thing about them. Um if you're a doctor

you should just be helping them, I don't think that all doctors do that but like- (laughs)

Au: No! Unfortunately no

Ali: Good fantasy's anyway, you try to get there. Yeah, the reason why I was torn on it is that like, in terms of being like a- um, like a quote unquote service class in that way like, I can imagine the situation where someone is like 'oh, someone has been stealing from me can you help me because you have a good evade skill or you have a good hunt skill or whatever right'.

Au: Yeahyeahyeah

Ali: So it seems that there's skill sets within that class that if I wanted to do that that I could but I would rather just say- you're right

Au: Bring it to the sheriff

Ali: It just feels like there's- yeah

Au (overlapping): Well, it's not -- it's not what a -- Yeah

Ali: There should be a different... organization-

Au: Or- or there's already (ali laughs) there's a thing to me that then becomes interesting is that if that person says I went to the sheriff the sheriff doesn't believe me I need someone to help me then you're stepping into the situation as someone who does not have legal authority to do the thing they want you to do then that becomes interesting but it doesn't work if you're the person with legal authority if you know what I mean?

Ali: Yeah. Nonononono, yeah. Yeah. And then just-

Au (overlapping): But also there's- We're talking about a situation just really briefly where - legal authority is such a fucking mess down ehre anyway

Ali: Yeah

Aus: So I'd rather that- in the world in which the Hound is the legal voice at any point, you become the authority because of just how messy it is, anybody who could go into any town and deploy that sort of authority is a sort of authority figure at that point, because of the universality to declare someone a criminal that no one else has, you know. So that's, that's a lot. Anyway, Um, you said something else.

Ali: Um... no, I think it's about the same, I just think it's like. If there... if that role needs to be filled within a haven or within the Heart with raw t- you know, in general, I don't think that like the hounds are gonna be the people who are gonna be in that position

Au: Yeah

Ali: Yeah

Au: Um, building off there's another move called staredown that says that your gaze functions as a weapon (Ali laughs) but not for everyone or everything. Criminals are fair game but heartsblood predators aren't. And I'm curious if that's a direction or a move and who knows what you take right, you start with like 3 minor abilities and 1 major or maybe it's one or the other I always forget this- this came up with Dre also- and it's like

Ali: Oh sure

Aus: In a weird place in the book in terms of where you- where you pick that to begin with. Um. It's one major and three minor so who knows what you're gonna take

Ali: Ok yeah

Aus: But! Uh-

Ali: This is one of the major ones so I feel like it's a big maybe but I do really like this move so it's not completely off the table...

Aus: So yeah what are you thinking about that (ali laughs) the idea of being like my gaze is a weapon and where would you wanna draw that line between who gets - and we're not talking about criminals for you

Ali: Yeah right, yeah exactly, what I ended up writing is that like, is there a version of this move where it's like, you know, if a firefighter looks at you really disapprovingly does that invoke a shame response that would make someone act in a certain way? Um, and again that'd be so much more of a social thing that it'd be like oh this monster feels that you're- don't think that you're um, you know responsible enough and that this monster's really sad about it I feel that that's kind of a stretch

Aus: Yeah the monster thing feels tough, right?

Ali: yeah

Austin: And again is a good line to draw between you and Dre's version of like the Witcher stuff right, of like... |Dre's character does connect to monsters in that way because there's an intimate connection between what he does and what- who they are

Ali: Mm-hmm

Aus: whereas for you you're about people and like, again a firefighter or a doctor or a teacher looking at you-

Ali: Alright yeah

Au: with that look it's liek 'alright fuck...' (ali laughs) hmmm, like yeah that makes sense to me

Ali: right

Austin: Ummm.... Um, a lot of your moves you're especially your major and zenith moves um are- are do touch on the stuff around like the Hounds are from years ago and they're ghosts of old hounds and blah blah blah, uym so I'm curious if you have a direction on that part of the class as it's written orif



you wanna like leave it as like space for now until you take one of those moves or um-

Ali; UYeah it's one of those things in which it's like- yeah like you said I don't want to lose the legacy part of this class right, the idea that, you know, hundreds to thousands of years ago there were hounds that existed in this region that existed for this reason who started doing the things that they're doing for this reason and you know, the- the organization that uses the Hounds still caps it to that number and so there's a ritual in such a way that... honors that-

Austin: Mm-hmm

Ali: Reality. Um, also I think tis' cool as sshit that like (laughs) some of the moves are like oh you're haunted by all these people who did this action and therefore the Haven is either completely destroyed or completely protected because-

Austin: Right

Ali: These ghosts of your organization feel a certain way. Um, so you know... I feel like the class is marching towards that either way you know just because of those zenith abilities right, really focus on that

aus: yeah

Ali: um, so...

Aus: We can probably play with it- are there any things in terms of- I know I keep coming back to this idea of it being like a school or research (ali laughs) group or academy or like a... um, where- where's the line between plumber and philosophy professor? do you know what I mean like, what's the version of those two things being the same- and the answer is just that's a part of- academia used to be that do you know what I mean

Ali: Right yeah yeahs

Aust: To be an philosopher used to be an salchemist or a scientist and you might ask one cday what is the nature of Justice and the next day be like 'to understand the nature of justice I first have to figtur re out gravity' (ali laughs)- those two things might be connected in some way so I better fucking study both of those things right?

Ali (laughing): Fair

Aus: Um, or like how- how do we trace wealth through the world well first let me see if I can change this lead in to gold and like, so that sort of connection is really fun and that idea of the thing that I'm - the thing that I'm just so desperate to do now is to have someone show up who is just a huge dweeb from the same society that you're (ali laughs) - from the same group that you're from? Um, uh, who's just like you know glasses constantly pushing up on his face and like messy hair and like is here to do studies and be a little less practical than you are, but still have the same general mission, um from the organization or whatever.. but in that case i do really love the idea of um like, is there a version of this where it's not a badge that's haunted but instead it's like... not a classroom but like a uh, how do we get the like version of this where it's like to be tenured is to be... is to permanently be part of whoever joins your- whoever picks up your badge quote unquote or whoever picks up your version of the gadge- is next, whoever signs- whoever's union card y'know- whoever has your union card, you end up like, connected to every member who had that union card before, whether that was person who leaned the butcher or someone who learned the like giving lectures out on the stairs way (ali laughs) there's something fun about that, and like the breadth of that that is like different in flavor than like, you were all part of the 33rd regiment-

Ali: Right. Yeah.

Aust: You know what I mean?

Ali: Yeah there were like organizational ideas that I was starting to have for this where it was like I was thinking like if there is some sort of recruiting academy there's probably a lot of apprenticeship in that way

Aus: mm-mnmm

Ali: And what people probably to do probably sort of keep it at that 300 number is that there will be like a yearly retirement slash graduation like ceremony

aus: right. Right

Ali: right where it's like, you know (Austin coughs), i think it's consistent if in one year you have the three hounds that die and four that retired you would wait until the ceremony to have 7 new Hounds come into the next class

Aust: Right or even it out or whatever yeah

Ali: Yeah. Um... so definitely the version of like 'here's this plunky NPC and he's still a Hound apprentice and he really wants to get his Hound badge this year' is definitely like on the table for me- is really fun

Austin: Yeah, yeah

Ali: Um, yeah... I-

Aus: I wonder if it's like- what if it's like a... I think it's'- it's I obviously love the union thing like but what if we went back to just a step before to being like the Guild of Guilds right? where like there is some sort of organization... that... is... or I guess like if we're thinking about trade unions here that like roll up into even bigger trade unions you know what I mean?

Ali; In terms of.../

Aus: In terms of being like ok, if you're part of... uh an electrician's union right, that electrician's union might also then be part of a larger trade union that is like-

Ali: Ohhhhhh, sure sure sure yeah yeah yeah-

Aus: Electricians, plumbers... three or four different things or something like that, you know what I mean? I'm just trying to like find what this group

more largely is. Um because it'll be very useful to zero in (Ali laughs) on it you know?

Ali: Yeah, um yeah

Austin: I'm just blabbering. In any case. In any case I think you're right in that we should keep that haunted aspect of it and just find... the version of it that's like fun for us and that separates it from... the sort of war story version of this which is like a cool thing like I do like the idea of like the version of this character who is like holding their badge and hearing the old war in the distance that they start to think it's their thing and you know they weren't there but they're so familiar with the haunted feeling of it- that's a fun-

Ali: yeah

Austin: what's a good flavor in the book but it's just not, it's- I wanna make sure we make it ours

Ali: right yeahyeah yeah yeah yeah. Yeah. There a lot of this that Iw anna sidestep because there's some bits (laughs) to this class like, the cop thing, the- their in one of the location things one of the like story prompts specifically is like well this person paid you too early you drank all the booze and now there's all these sober ghosts that are after you and i was like thi si... I hate this game. (laughs)

Aus: Yeah. yeah, that stuff is like- well speaking of that stuff there are two moves liquid courage and our glorious lady that are explicitly about boooze

Ali: yeah

aust: and i'm curious if- how you wanna handle that stuff or if you wanna swap it out or- or what?

Ali: Um, yeah, I uh, I- those came up in his document so I wrote a little bit about it. One of the, I think the starting thing is that I think that my starting um, object or whatever's like, (affected) "a bottle of beer", and I think that would- [ali starts clipping, voice goes weird?]

Austin: Right, sure

Ali: definitely be like... yeah that would definitely be like... a nice cake or like some cool tea or something, cause I- I like y'know the thought of... you know the thought of having someone

Austin; Your voice just got... so weird

Ali [weird]: Oh...

Austin: One sec, I'm gonna make sure it's not- lemme just- lemme make sure it's not me-

Ali [weird]: ok

Austin: First of all. Let me just pull up a youtube and see if... youtube also sounds like this

Ali [weird]: ok. Q I'm gonna stop my

Ali [back to normal]: Audacity to see if it's happening on my-

Austin: Oh it's back! Now you're good

Ali: Oh!

Austin: Did you hit something?

Ali: no.

Austin: huh. well you're fine now.

Ali: I-

Austin: (coughs)

Ali: That's not good. Um-

Austin: Mm-mm, but don't stop anything as this point because you know-

Ali: Okay no no no. um -yeah when I turned my mixer on it was doing that weird slowed down effect again

Austin: Hmmm...

Ali: Um- and then I... unplugged it again and turned it back on and it was fine (laughs) so who knows? Um

Austin: weird... um-

Ali: As I was saying, I think that there's benefit to having a class like this which is so much about being in service to people or having like responsibility or like being really good at a thing in ways that people aren't that make you see bad things or face troubles that are violent-

Austin: yeah

Ali: or yadda yadda. And having like a um... you know like a point of comfort

Austin: Yes

Ali: (laughs) but I don't know that that... should always be-

Austin (overlapping): But rotgut liquor is not-

Ali: Yeah, yeah yeah.

Austin: necessarily the starting place for you? Yeah

Ali: No, no yeah. Um-

Austin: Um, so do you think you'll keep your- or well obviously we'll have to change the liquor the starting resource liquor, but the- that that do we just wanna make it a specific- two questions one: the way that it's written in the books is that

Austin (affected fancyish? voice): booze is important to the 33rd - the Hounds all cross the heart drinking their booze.

Austin: Do we want to kind of, generally just completely change that and if so is it that each person has one of their things uh has a thing that is like their vice in the forged in the dark sense, or do we want it to be that the... that no, a thing that makes it clear that your organization is around is that you've written tea as an example (ali laughs), a really nice tea

Ali: yeah

Austin: um, and do we still want that sort of association that if you smell that tea then it means that a hound is around

Ali: ohhhhh sure sure sure, yeah maybe? Um, that would be a fun way to adapt it that might be interesting, um, I, I definitely feel that adapting it as like a nice treat for my own character but I don't know if it would be brought it down in that same way but I guess you know, there's just as much inspiration to give-

Austin: what if it's um, what if it's like a thing that we can generalize but kee- but also allow specific generation maybe what if it's like rose flavored stuff, some people have rose candy (ali laughs) and some people have like rose-flavored teas, and other people wear like rose flavored perfume and go out dancing

Ali: right

Austin: Do you know what I mean? but like there is- it doesn' thave to be rose, but you know what i mean like what if we find a flavor profile that's- that's broad enough in that way um, to be- to be like... for whatever reason this became the thing- this became

Ali: yeah!

Austin: this became- you find your version of it-



Ali: I like that in that it goes back to the like, the locational routes of whatever the hounds are in terms of- oh because I go back the academy and I know that there's all this jasmine that grows nearby-

Austin: Right, yes!

Ali: um, I go back and I get my - you know when I'm clocking in or whatever I can get my favorite jasmine treat and that's, you know-

Austin: or you get it shipped to you

Ali: right

Austin: from- from home because you've been so far away for so long, yeah-

Ali: right, it's part of the rations that the like Hound HQ

Austin: Yes!

Ali: sends out to each of the Hounds and it's like-

Austin: totally!

Ali: special flavored whatever from (laughs)

Austin: yeah, some people get the lake jasmine chews and it's like turkish delight but with a jasmine flavor or whatever-

Ali: yeah

Austin: and someone else gets jasmine cigarettes you know-

Ali: yeah

Austin: it's a thing- it's a- it's a broad, I like that a lot actually. Um, I like that a lot and also we should just like, should just write 'Jasmine??' (ali laughs) here, so that I remember that, because that's also a useful way to start thinking about like a name for this group or you like

Ali: oh totally yeah yeah yeah

Austin: um, cause once we're, once you start doing jasmine you can talk about white flowers, you know the way that jasmine hangs and you could build off of that for a name you know?

Ali: yeah, one hundred percent, yeah,

Austin: we get somewhere with that, um... uh... duh duh duh, one of the others our Glorious lady has that line that's like "you found god at the

bottom"- (ali laughs) you found the goddess at the bottom of a- of a uh, bottle, and she turned your life around,

Ali: yeah

Austin: which gives you the religion domain, it's basically like, the part of this that matters to me is like, gain the religion domain, once per session clear d4 blood stress from an ally as you beseech the goddess for their protection, so my question ends up being who is your goddess if you take that move or if you're interested in that move, is that- is that god tied to the hounds or this organization more broadly, ujm, uh, or is this a personal belief thing for your character?

Ali: um, yeha, I - I- when I was thinking of this I was thinking of this more like fable-y or if it's not attached directly to the Hounds it's like sort of like a craftsperson folk hero

Austin: mm-hmm

Ali: sort of minor god diet- deity situation?

Austin: mm-hmm

Ali: the- the thing I was thinking of is like, sort of the great fairies from Zelda

Austin: mmm!

Ali: which is like, you know I will teach you this skill or give your htis protection if you perform this minor task

Austin; right

Ali: or... um-

Austin: the thing is- the thing about this move is it works, which is like-

ali (laughing): right!

Austin: which is the thing that makes it important that we figure it out because, once per session, you can just pray and someone will be healed d4 stress

Ali: yeah

Austin: which is not nothing

Ali: yeah

Austin: and that- and blood stress, (ali laughs), not mind stress, this isn't like we can't do the thing of like well just being in your presence makes you feel better-

Ali: oh yeah yeah yeah

Austin: cause clearing blood stress in this game literally means wounds or - you know scratches will heal up or-

Ali: yeah

Austin: or the blood will stop, so that's like an important distinction

Ali: yeah but I think that there's like the version of appealing to that goddess in the first place right

Austin: yes

Ali: there like the like, the like oh you, the other touchstone here i have is the sewer fairy from silent Hill 3 which I don't know if you're...

Austin: Right, yes, yes.

ali (laughing): which is- basically the fable is that you know somebody drops a- an old steel pipe in a river, a goddess shows up and is like, oh did you drop this, this gold pipe? and you say no, and then did you drop this beautiful steel pipe? and you say no, and then it's like did you drop this disgusting dirty pipe, and you say yes, and she says oh my god I've finally found an honest man and she grants you with like powers in that way and i

think just like tricky deities in that way and just like, because the way that this move is written is just like coming upon this very powerful person.

Austin: yeah

Ali: the idea of just it being this very minor exchange of like pleasantries or like, a very like small task of either honesty or helpfulness,

Austin: mm-hmm

Ali: to be like ok now I've got you (laughs)

Austin: right yeah yeah yeah

Ali: Now that one of your people needs... {??? - 1:06:00}

Austin: we've made this connection and like- yeah

Ali: yeah

Austin: Given that then, is this a personal thing more than a... organizational relationship?

Ali: I- I think that it is a deity that is like known amongst the hounds,-

Austin: mm-hmm

Ali: or like known amongst people who like use tools in that specific way, um, but it ends up being a personal connection because, I mean the way that this deity would work is that it would, you know, call on a specific voice in that way-

Austin: right

Ali:and not everybody who's a cool craftsman is gonna be able to heal d4 blood or whatever (laughs) just cause-

Austin: right, yeah totally totally

Ali:just cause they pray to her-

Austin:yeah right

Ali:yeah

Austin: in fact only in that- in that in whatever the kind of big group is, only the hounds can even take that move right?-

Ali: right, yeah exactly

Austin: so- yeah.

Ali: yeah yeah yeah

Austin: yeah, I wonder if it's almost like a um, you know there's saints that have that sort of professional relationship where like, um, you know, a lot of people in bank all wear a uh medal of St. Anthony or whatever

Ali: riiight, yeah yeah yeah, I was wondering if-

Austin: Cause it's for... finding people- what's, I forget what St. Anthony does, I forget St. Anthony's thing.

Ali: St. Anthony is... um...

Austin: I'm a bad lapsed catholic

Ali: St. Anthony St. Anthony please be my guide yadda yadda yadda, I've lost something I cannot find-

Austin: I've lost something right, yes, (ali laughs) yes.

Ali: um...



Austin: yeah, but you know what I'm saying

Ali: yeah yeah yeah, definitely, yeah without having you know the-

Austin: sea-farers! that's who - that's the statue- seafarers in europe historically would have a statue of st. anthony on board because they didn't wanna get lost at sea- yeah, that's like a-

ali: ohhhhhh, right, yeah that makes sense

Austin: so something in that vibe is kind of interesting

Ali: oh yeah one hundred percent. Um, I wasn't sure how much we wanted to go into the idea of saints or minor gods in that way-

Austin: So let me tell you (Ali laughs), yeah right now I have , we have three major faiths, kind of sketched out, um, and then one - the fourth major faith is like... it's like a catch-all? Do you know Pascal's- Pascal's Wager? um, as like a classic argument for why you should believe in god, and the answer is, it's better to fucking believe in god cause what if there's a god (ali laughs) um, if you believe in god and there is not a god then who cares nothing happens!

Ali: yeah

Austin: If you don't believe in god and there's a god, well then you're going to hell, buddy!

Ali: yeah

Austin: um, so you may as well believe in god, and so they're sort of like that but for a pantheist like, who knows which of these gods are real! there's so many of them!

Ali: mm-hmm

Austin: we may as well be like a big group that like, is like a conclave that represents hundreds of different faiths, and it sort of like if you're a part of it you can go to any of them to get religious services-

Ali: yeah

Austin: and you can go to any of them to be like... um, to- to get what you, uh, to you know, you come into town you you'd go in and check in with that priest because you've been traveling and you need to go somewhere to say your prayers here's a place you can safely go do that even if you're not from that particular sect-

Ali: you still have like a like a designated sacred place that you have access to

Austin: that you have!-

Ali: yeah

Austin:right, exactly, exactly, and maybe you still feel more strongly about one place or another and ifn fact I bet you know I think one of the things it hat like, there are definitely parts of this conclave that are like, you know fuck the conclave (ali laughs) like, we just believe in... the goddess of, of the blue moon or whatever-

Ali: right

Austin:But, it's valuable to be part of this big group! -

Ali: yeah

Austin:it's valuable to be like listed in the travel guides, or it's valuable to know that pilgrims from other faiths can come, we can't do it on our own there's only twelve of us, but if we're part of this group of hundreds of other believers, then there's a degree to which, you know maybe we'll actually attract new- new people to- to- the goddess of the blue moon!-

Ali: right, right

Austin:And that'll be good long term, who knows? Um, but that group is where I can imagine this goddess clearly being easily part of-

Ali: oh sure sure sure sure, yeah yeah yeah yeah

Austin:you know what I mean, it's like that's our collection of saints and like minor gods and all that stuff um, and you know there are obviously many gods that don't fit into that either, who are like, there are probably churches that are like I absolutely do not want to be part of the conclave, we believe in what we believe in!-

Ali: yeah

Austin:not the blue moon whoever!-

Ali: the- the organizational support is not that important-

Austin:is not that important to them right, they want the truth and the truth is that... the world is on fire or whatever-

Ali: mm-hmm

Austin:(laughs) you know? um, um, that- that the human soulis- is currency that we need to spend or whatever the fuck they believe and that'sn the truth and that's it, so yeah, bu tI imagine that the- that the kine of like patron saint of tradespeople-

Ali: right

Austin:would fit into that conclave-

Ali: yeah

Austin:like very easily right?-

Ali: yeah

Austin:uh, cause there's tradespeople everywhere!- uh-

Ali: yeah yeah yeah! It also fits that kind of like what janine was saying of like mundane and practical magic of like, -

Austin: yeah

Ali:oh of course you really want a goddess who's like good at baking muffins. Right? (laughs)

Austin: Right because muffins are good! yeah! yeah. Well thinking about that, and if you decide to take that move we should like really hammer out who it is or what-

Ali: oh sure sure sure, yeah i mean like it feels like - it feels like when I take that move it'll end up being a thing that's on screen so like, the moment to flesh it out will be that moment? but like, the- the-

Austin: yeah

Ali:I've got the vibe down at least I think

Austin: Yeah I think so, I think so. Um, the next one here is just, you know, you're the class that has haven as a domain, and so I wanted to like see that as an opportunity to talk through what it is to be a haven and what it is to live in our version of the heart, inside of havens and settlements and stuff like that, because like, that's- it almost gives you the authority there? and like, it's also just useful for me to just like break those conversations up via like domain expertise if that makes sense?

Ali: oh yeah yeah yeah, absolutely, and this is also like something that I was really curious about, and I know when I was asking you about um, like what is our city above equivalent, and we sort of don't have one right?

Austin: yeah, it's just the world be- I mean like, you know if you read the book the city above clearly exists, and is important because it's- it's the heart is written in contrast with it in a real way-

Ali: right

Austin:But also if you go and look at like what the book says about gnolls right, or humans, it's- we're going that direction. The gnolls just don't exist in spi- in the city above at all, they are forbidden from going in the city above, and so um, there are - they are- they live beyond the city below somewhere else-

Ali: ok yeah yeah yeah

Austin:humans exist, I wanna say, they like come from the the east, there's islands to the east (ali laughs) and that's where the humans come from, and so I think that's the part of it that we're leaning into, there is no city above there is no, like, uh, uh, hegemonic, high elf city that-[ that literally-

Ali: yeah, yeah yeah yeah

Austin:stands above us all, um, and uh instead it's just beyond the ringed city, our version of derelictus, there are you know, six different nations that all connect to there, five different nations that all connect to that city, uh, as like a uh central point, uh, in my mind it's almost as if, what if a giant asteroid struck and it's not what happens here (ali laughs), I don't think our heart is a giant asteroid, but what if a giant asteroid struck um, the middle of central europe, right? and on one side it was bordered by Germany and then Austria, and then France and then- you know what I mean like-

Ali: yeah, yeah yeah yeah- um-

Austin:and then it's like, well there's a border here and it's all in the middle of it like-

Ali: yeah, part of the reason why I bring that up is that like, cause some, like tonally in the book, the way that it is written it seems that like, oh there's the city above that's where people live, and um try to have normal lives, and then there's everything else where people explore aor hunt or do this thing, and so it's hard to imagine like, is there a haven within this heart where like people are raising families, or things of that nature, and like obviously that

would happen if like we - if it's just geographical in that way or if there's havens of a thousand people, some of them are gonna be mothers-

Austin: right, yeah

Ali:some are gonna be parents, some of them are gonna be families, um-

Austin: there are- and so there are in ven in the book right, if you go down, if you look at the landmarks section and just like do a search for haven you will find there are lots of places that are already written about and are like 'hey, here is a giant whale god's corpse, and there's a city built around that, and like'-

Ali: yeah

Austin:right, hey here's there's a lot of things that are like here's one of the old train stations that's abandoned now but has become a town, where people do just straight up live, and uh, any of the big temples end up being, well not any of, but you know§ many of the big temples are like- we don't have our like moon goddess, the moon beneath stuff yet, but like one of the tier one havens is like the temple to that, to the to the temple of the moon, or the moon below, and so like (coughs), whatever our equivalent of like the religions that I just talked about, each of those (coughs) excuse me, each of those will have a haven, which is to say, and like this is how the book defines it, is that, a haven is, um, a location uh, safe enough basically to settle and form communities. And uh the quote is "settlements where people live, work, and form communities", uh so I think basically any time that we talk about it, uh, we should assume that there are people, maybe it's - it's not the bulk of them! Do you know what I mean?-



Ali: right, yeah, no no no

Austin: but- but there are probably a dozen, two dozen places down here on the map so to speak that are some variation of towns, um, temples with towns build taround them um, cities, ranches, whatever it is that um, just safe enough to live in, you know-

Ali: mm-hmm, yeah

Austin: um, and I think that they even go, i think that there may even be one, one or two tier three havens, but I think the bulk of them are tier one and tier two,

Ali: right yeah, and I mean I guess that's- that's the usefulness of having a haven in this, in this system right, you know in that it's you know a lot of it is about traveling from place to place, a lot of it is about, you know when you're in a specific place what sort of things do you expect to run into, whether those are you know, dangerous or whatever else, -

Austin: yeah, totally

Ali: um but like the- the idea of like, havens exist because people have... a) decided that they are safe b) um, no only just decided that but have to protect them, and c)-

Austin: Right, put in the work to keep them safe right?

Ali: yeah right, and then c) (Austin coughs) in putting in that work, you know, have value in the actual space and you know have an affection for it (laughs), right? -

Austin: right, yeah

Ali:um, the idea of like this is my haven is probably like a significant one of the people within it because like, you know, you don't wanna get kicked out of your haven I bet (laughs)

Austin: right, yeah, there's always going to be distance- there's always going to be some distance, even a haven that's connected to another haven that means it's easier to travel between the two, even that travels' gonna have some danger, especially for a regular person who isn't a player character class who has those abilities right?-

Ali: right, yeah

Austin:um, so yeah, getting exiled or getting, even being asked to go to another place unguarded would be very scary for most people-

Ali: right

Austin:For sure. The- the one of the things that we first talked about this season one of the early touchstones for us was like the bits of Red Dead Redemption 2 that we liked (Ali laughs) and I wanna keep - I think part of that was like, that great contrast between being out and at your camp, and then like rolling into town, and that then feeling of like, alright I'm here now, I

can come into dtown do some work, you know, get a mission play some cards, um you know, go to the doctor go buy a new- a new pair of pants, you know whatever it is-

Ali: mm-hmm

Austin:that vibe I really love, um, and um, I think that really can be part of how the haven should feel, um, it should feel *good* to get back home, you know-

Ali: yeah, yeah yeah yeah

Austin:um, after being out, and I think that *that*, um, but also there can be that like range of feeling of like, you know, um, (coughs), the difference between rolling into that one little town that's before you go to Saint Denis and it's like the little racist shithead town (ali laughs) near the two rival... manors the two rival families-

Ali: ohhh right yeah yeah yeah

Austin:And that's just like a dusty little nothin' town, even compared to some of the towns you've been to previously that are like , alright there's like a pig!-

Ali: yeah even strawberry like, seems to have a better camaraderie and like better... uh...

Austin: I have to google which one that is

Ali: Strawberry is like the very very beginning one right?

Austin: I believe you. I- I- I just forget (ali laughs), it's been forever-

Ali: if that's not the title of it that's the one that I mean (laughs)

Austin: okay, yeah yeah yeah

Ali: the one where like, there's like the bank, you know (Austin coughs), and the- the inn is right there-

Austin: is that also the, is that the one that has like the pig cellars place? Or is that a second one

Ali: I think so yeah

Austin: You know what I'm talking about? Like the like, um... oh no, Strawberry is, ok, Strawberry- Strawberry is not the- Strawberry is - I think Strawberry is the one out in the woods to the west even further

Ali: ohhhh

Austin: right? uh, fuck (ali laughs) what's the first one called?

Ali: oh, is strawberry the one with the little. it has the river near it

Austin: Yes it has the river near it, and like the little water wheel and all that stuff it's nice!

Ali: oh right yeah

Austin: I've only been there a couple times, I haven't played this- I never beat this game

Ali: (gasps) really?

Austin: I never- yeah, I never did

Ali: oh...

Austin: um, I can't even remember the way of the like... it's fine-

Ali: Valentine!

Austin: Valentine! yes! that's correct

Ali: Valentine.

Austin: That's the- that's the one I was talking about- that's like - that's the first one, and yeah, even that one, which is not a big town, still feels like it has more going on than that little fuckign nothing town near the two rivals...

Ali: right!

Austin: uh, uh, families, you know?

Ali: Yeah like the-the- the- the-

Austin: LeMoyne? Is that right, is LeMoyne the name of the- no LeMoyne is the name of the hwole place is called LeMoyne oh fuck-

Ali: is it Rhodes?

Austin: Rhodes sounds right!

Ali: Cause it's right by Brathpoint Minor, uh, Braithepoint Manor over here

Austin: yes, oh you're looking at a map-

Ali: yes (laughs)

Austin: That's wise, I was not doing that. Yeah Rhodes I think is right,

Ali: um, but yeah like even it is like, it's a weird thing with Rhdoes because it feels a lot more polished, the buildings are taller-

Austin: yeah

Ali:but there isn't a sense of like, camaraderie because everybody there sucks-

Austin: yes!

Ali: um, also because-

Austin: and hates each other!

Ali: yeah there's liek the train station that runs through it so it's like so clearly-

Austin: right!

Ali: like a commuter town-

Austin: (coughs) right

Ali: and then also like it there would be a sense of community there a lot of the town's like wealth is probably being pulled out of it by the Braithewhites anyway so there isn't... the same-

Austin: it's not like it's getting better

Ali: right

Austin: over time or whatever

Ali: right, yeah yeah yeah, whereas you know in (Austin coughs) Valentine, it's the one block and the pigs -

Austin: mm-hmm

Ali: and the movie theater, didn't Valentine have the movie theater? No

Austin: yeah! doesn' it? I think it does? does it not? Usually there's a- usually there's a movie theater pretty early

Ali: I think sometimes there's like a circus there? maybe you're right

Austin: there is a movie house, there is a movie house for sure

Ali: okay. Um-

Austin: circus? (ali laughs) hot damn

Ali (laughing): What am I talking about?



Austin: I don't know there was a... yeah

Ali: ah there should be clowns in-

Austin: There's sometimes a circus with that traveling, that traveling merchant faith? does have the like circus came to town vibe,

Ali: ohhh

Austin: where they'll slum up at the edge of the town, and like, you know, maybe they have like a- a bunch of they open up a sort of bazaar role to the town? but also maybe there are some people there that do like wild magic tricks and you know

Ali: yeah why not?

Austin: you know most of the time you'll wind up with enough rope to set up- to set up a uh, to set up like a high- you know high wire rope thing to do, so I think there's almost like a traveling circus or carnival vibe to that group too which is fun

Ali: yeah

Austin: anyway, (ali laughs) so anyway, um, so yeah havens I think have that feeling of like, or maybe not all of them, maybe some of them do have that feeling of Rhodes where you step into town and you're like 'ooh, this is bad vibes'-

ali (overlapping): yeah!

Austin: right? um, but- but that- that range of feeling fs of like, here is, here is the wilderness between points and you get to the points and it's people just trying to make it, people trying to get by, um, stuff like that, is kind of the space I'm interested in, even if it's, you figure out what they're trying to get by to do and it's like, I don't' wanna be here actually! (ali laughs) this is a haven but it's not a haven for me

Ali: right, yeah yeah yeah

Austin: I still think that those people should be motivated mostly by, like, a clear objectives and not just like, and this is the evil town!

Ali: no, no no no, no no no no, yeah. And also there is something valuable about being like, okay, I'm walking in this big field and I haven't seen anything for miles and then when I see a collection of buildings I know that there's probably gonna be a restaurant there,

Austin: right

Ali: I know there's gonna be a bank, I d=know there's probably gonna be a general store, and like

Austin: right

Ali: that's good, I'm really glad about that-

Austin: or some variation thereof!

Ali: yeah!

Austin: or maybe that general store requires me... to like pay in moon rocks or whatever

Ali: right, yeah yeah yeah

Austin; and that's strange (Ali laughs) and it's not called a general store, you know what I mean?

Ali: yeah

Austin: but whatever it is I can do the- I can *do* the things I need

Ali: right

Austin: to get done here

Ali: yeah

Austin: um, somehow right? and so, and so, yeah, like building it around that idea of like, a haven is a place you can do the things you need to live

Ali: yeah

Austin: um, is the- is maybe the way to think about it, I think that's good, I think you're right that that's like the way to like center it is like I can go do the- the three things I need to get done

ali (laughing): yes

Austin: at this place (coughs), which is also just like mechanically true because like havens are the places where like, you can go to heal and remove stress, um, on top of there being like buildings- sorry, moves, abilities that you can do, um, you can also... access what are called the haunts of any landmark, and uh, haunts tend to be like special things at a haunt that lik, e hye while I'm here I can remove, you know maybe you find iandit 's like landmarks not just havens but maybe you find a grove out in the wilderness and it's just calming

Ali: yeah

Austin: And that's a place you can get your mind stress right, but for me a haven tends to be a place where, like, you can see... a doctor!

ali (laughing): right

Austin: so you can recover your blood whatever-

Ali: yes exactly

Austin: and stuff like that right, um, so, yeah, um, I like that I like that a lot, um, couple of other things before we go. Ujm, we've already kind of talked about (clears throat) like the group being this larger thing and then like people wanna make it to be a Hound or whatever, but I'mn curious who you

think the locations that are hound related in the book relate to the way you think the organization tied to your organization should be- or sorry the locations tied to your organization um should be depicted, excuse me, in the game itself, if that makes sense?

Ali: um, yeah! I- the- the- the locations as written have a lot of sort of interesting flavor, um

Austin: mm-hmm

Ali: and, you know, diluting some of that but like keeping them as like what their essence are I think makes sense? Like the first one with there being like, a recruitment office in Derelictus which is like the big city we're planning makes sense that can be a one to one, um, there's the bunker which is sort of thlike in the depths of this kind of fucked up place (laughs)

Austin: uh-huh!

Ali: is there, this is the original, I guess in the book it's like the- the original hounds were this big like attack that went down there and so... the... bunker is where the sort of the torgiinal meeting place of the generals were, when that assault happened

Austin: right

Ali: um, and I... we're not going to go for the like, oh you're walking through the hallways and you can hear the war happening outside

Austin: right

Ali: because that's just so not what we're doing ? but i do like the like, if we are going with the Hounds of being this like you know class of people that learned a skill because the place that they were in was um, um, (Austin coughs) like-

Austin: Like, in a deep, weird, scary place? where-

Ali: in a deep weird scary place like barren, barren is the word

Austin (overlapping): yeah, yeah

Ali: that I was looking for in some way! that like oh, you do have to travel to a specific place to get to the leadership of this community, and where that specific place is is not a place that everybody wants to be is something that i want to keep with the like bunker aspect of it

Austin: So do you think that there is a place that is still active? Cause the thing about the bunker is that it's written as being like, like you said barren right, it's like, it used to be the command center-

Ali: Oh! I mean barren as in land as in like, you know-

Austin: I got you

Ali: away from a haven,

Austin: yeah yea yeah

Ali: in a place that is hard to travel to, in a place that does not, like supply food regularly, in a way that you would expect a place where a haven to set up would be, um,

Austin: But you think there are still people there?

Ali: yes, yeaah yeah yeah

Austin: right, versus- ok- cause the way that like, the thing, the way the bunker is written is like, this used to be the HQ, and like, it fell apart, because, people still go there to meet, but they're not necessarily like living there you know

Ali: oh right sure sure sure

Austin: because living there would make it a haven, right?

Ali: right...

Austin: um, if they could do that, if they could just live there straight up-

Ali: It would just become a haven yeah

Austin: It would become a haven right? Well- so- sorry, the reason I bring this up is like, I wonder if there's something- there's something juicy about the like... we used to have a guildhall, or we used to have a school, or we used to have a whatever, um, the classic one for me, I mean, this is probably L5R ripping off Game of Thrones probably right? (Ali laughs) because it already definitely does that, but L5R had like (affected) "a big wall"! I mean lots of fantasy fiction has the like, the big wall.

Ali: mm-hmm

Austin: And the monsters on the other side of the wall, right?.

Ali: mm-hmm

Austin: um, but there was the- there's a clan in L5R called the crab clan, that like, their whole thing- everybody else is dealing with like war and politicking and every other fucking poetry and all that bullshit, we're on the fucking wall, and onn the other side of the wall are monsters, bcause that's where the god of death landed, and corrupted all these creatures an dturned them into big fucking oni, and we all we do is take.care of the wall, and please send us your tax money so we can keep feeding our fucking soldiers, and one of the big things in that game is that, you know, in the ages past there was like the- the head of the crab clan, uh, headquatrtrs was, you know at point A, and they lost. They lost it, right? Yeah, like the oni overran it, and they can see it from the wall, they can look out from the wall and see the old castle that they used to work out of, and it's a point of great shame that they've never been able to take it back, right? So like you know, every

few generations someone's like, I'm gonna be the Daimyo that takes it back (Ali laughs), I'm the crab clan champion, I'm gettin us our old base back goddammit

ali (overlapping, robot voice): right, mm-hmm

Austin: um, and I kind of love that idea of the like, somewhere out there is the original big base from when we formed whatever this guild or this union is, and it was really hopeful and optimistic because it was bringing together people from different trades, it was bringing together high-minded scholars and really practically minded, you know, physicians and practitioners and, and it was this kind of vision of like, what- how were we gonna reshape the area down here, we're gonna do it from here, and then we lose it, and like (ali laughs), it over- gets overrun, or ritual goes bad, or whatever, and maybe our numbers just get cut down you know, who- whatever it is over time, and it's like we keep- we still go back there to keep the dream alive, but we don't necessarily... it's not, there's just not enough of us any more or whatever right?

Ali; oh, sure sure sure yeah.

Austin: Um, I also think there's the version of it that's like, there's the version of it that's like, reminds me of like, you know that bit in Bloodborne- did you beat Bloodborne?

Ali: Uh, I didn't beat Bloodborne, no

Austin; Oh ok

Ali: I got... up to when you can beat it though

Austin: Ok, so, there's like two times this happens, I guess there's like three times this happens, where you're like, the first time it happens is like, you know that fucking snake woods area that sucks?

Ali: Uh-huh

Austin: And you pass through it and you get to like the shoreline and there's this school in the shoreline and you're like "yo, what's up with this place?" (ali laughs) um, and you go in and you learn a bunch of shit about eyes and how there's- you need to have more of them apparently

Ali: yeah, mm-hmm

Austin: um, and like that feeling is cool, and then the same thing happens when you go to the like, I think it's the Byrgenwerth school, or maybe that's Byrgenwerth but- you eventually go to another school that's like, all these lecture halls and stuff

Ali: well that- that's like my favorite... place in Bloodborne like, all time-

Austin: It rules, and so like my mind is like, is that the version of your- the bunker for us, is like, the- whatever the old school was, where all of the like knowledge from all these different you know, um, backgrounds came together to be shared and taught and theorized about and developed, um, and and now that school which was like this like, landmark because it like, represented the hope of the organization in this way, has been overrun or- or you know, has been left barren and empty, you know?

Ali: right-

Austin: but I- again it's like, interesting cause like, I feel like I'm pulling towards unsurprisingly I'm pulling towards even more prof- not



professionalism but towards like, um, theory and act- and academy (ali laughs), um, but I think there's a fun blend there that we could like find something with-

Ali: yeah, absolutely like, the- the way that I'd written here was like, sort of a special school slash where the leadership is set up slash like a jedi temple

Austin: right

Ali: so it's not like, too off from the like- the academic thing

Austin: yeah

Ali: but, um, yeah the- the idea that the like, you know- (spooky voice) 'lost to the monsters of the Heart' because we had to like abandon or whatever-

Austin: yeah

Ali: is also sort of interesting, um, the- the only thing that feels like a conflict on there for me is like part of the founding of the Hounds would be adapting to that area to begin with?

Austin: right

Ali: so like having it-

Austin: Right, totally!

Ali: yeah, um, so being like there's not as many people there but they were able to hold that

Austin: right

Ali: is interesting to me in- just in terms of being like yeah the area that it's in is *fucked up*, like that's why- that's why a lot of Hounds haven't even seen it-

Austin (overlapping): right, it can't be a haven because you can't, farm

Ali: yeah, yeah

Austin: any more or whatever but it's not cause we- we didn't lose,

ali (laughing): right

Austin: whatever it is we didn't fucken lose, it's just like the ground was salted- the earth was salted in such a way that like, it makes more sense for us to go out in the world, and- live among other havens

Ali: right

Austin: and stuff, but... um, I keep coming to this idea that's like, what if the part of the thing that happened here was... and like this is the stuff that is like 100% up to you because this is your faction right, in a way, but like, I- if the whole group didn't come out of the like, bird butchers, right, the bird berry people

Ali: mm-hmm

Austin: who knew how to do medicine because you lived in the trees and you ended up needing to learn how like berries worked and whatever else right (ali laughs), um, whatever our version of the butcher story is

Ali: yeah

Austin: um, what if you were part of- what if that group was part of a bigger group that was the like, the more academic side of it, and there was almost like a looking down their nose at you, and this is generations and generations and generations ago, and like whatever happened to this place, whatever curse hit it, whatever like terrible thing happened, happened, and it's only through the practical knowledge that your group was able to bring to bear? that like, put the whole thing through it, everybody got through it because y'all understood how to make, you know, how to cleanse whatever putrefaction you know came through the water, and because you knew how to treat the wounds and you knew how to do blah blah blah

Ali: oh right right

Austin: and that like, ends up grounding, like fixing this battle- this organization that's like deeply elitist ends up blending theory and practice from that point forward to where it's like, yeah we still break apart into different departments and stuff (ali laughs), and we have our religious studies and we have our you know, we have our like- bu- fi- you know school of natural sciences and then we have our school of you know, of physics or whatever, but like, at this point we understand that like knowledge is the thing that we need whether that knowledge is about setting broken bones or whether that knowledge is about like how to capture the essence of like a vengeful spirit and lock it into one place- whatever it is, we gotta learn that shit, um, is a fun- and um I'm really interested in like finding what the- what the um foundational myth of your group is if that makes sense

Ali: oh sure sure yeah, yeah?

Austin: So let's dig on that.

Ali: that's- that's a little still up in the air cause like, I- I think that I'm still like, oh do I wanna be like a cool nurse or do I wanna do like cool like sigils like the Witcher does which like (laughs)

Austin: uh-huh, yeah what I'm saying is that there's probably room for both of those things right, yeah

Ali: yeah

Austin: and like, if we- if we go wide with that then- and we- it's about- it's about presentation versus about

Ali: yeah yeah yeah yeah absolutely, the- the- the interesting- I think the idea that you had which was like 'we almost lost a library but because it wasn't just a library

Austin: right

Ali: we were able to defend it, we were able to get through it' but liike, it feels like a weird twist on what the class feels it should be which is like, the basis for this was a skillset, which was

Austin: right

Ali: we had to get out of this situation by learning these things and not learning in like an academic way but being able to perform these things

Austin: right

Ali: to eat, and to live, and to, you know exist in this area, and then over time it ends up leaning more academic because you speak to other havens, it's like oh well I would have to study this other thing

Austin: right

Ali: to learn how to do the thing the way that I do it to help you to do it

Austin: yeah

Ali: and then it becomes more academic in that way, as it- as the- the organization spreads?

Austin: right

Ali: instead of it being like-

Austin: yeah that's- that's starting there, yeah so that makes sense too, then- then it almost goes the other thing right, or there's almost a sort of looping version of this where it's like- does it start as loose organization of... of tradespeople, craftsmen etc., that then realizes they're gaining all this knowledge, build a sort of library somewhere, and then- and then increasingly go that direction, yeah that's interesting

Ali: yeah that feels more natural to my way of like

Austin; yeah that makes sense

Ali: you know we- we're a family who've been able to do this thing and now we've suddenly come to this thing where other people want to do it and we have to start writing this thing down and adapting it

Austin: right right

Ali: and then-

Austin: and making it grow-

Ali: yeah yeah yeah

Austin: from not just being like, yeah my mom taught me how to do this like

ali (laughing): yeah yeah yeah exactly

Austin: and also specifically because like you're far from wherever the bird home is, and you're getting people who aren't birds to join this group presumably, right?

Ali: yeah, yeah

Austin: so... I don't know what the language situation in this game is yet

Ali (laughing): yeah!

Austin: you know

ali (singsong): cross that bridge when we come to it!

Austin: exactly um- alright

Ali: and then I think the final of this trio of things here is the- the Temple of Fury,

Austin: right

Ali: um, which is basically- it's funny because it's- it's very close to the sewer fairy thing which is-

Austin: yeah

Ali: an i- (laughs) an idea I came up with before I read that, but um, it... the basics of it in the book are basically like oh there's this place where this Hound did this amazing thing and if you go down there you can still honor him and people go there to try to get good weapons because he was soooo cool, um, and I d- I do really like that version of it right, like here's this place in the world where a Hound performed a miracle.

Austin: mm-hmm

Ali: and because of that people are drawn to it in a specific way, um, I don't-

Austin: Is that the patron saint goddess?

Ali: Yeah! It feels like there's like a little bit of overlap there that I might as well just-

Austin: Yeah

Ali: Let it be an overlap because it's easy to be like, oh sure!

Austin: Yeah

Ali: Yeah

Austin: Oh and then- and then it's fun because then the part of the- it's part of the thing that we get is not that liek you find the goddess in the bottom of a bottle it's that you did something finally to catch her notice

Ali: Yeah

Austin: And like, impress, or whatever that connection is, there's some sort of like- yeah, she was watching (ali laughs) you know like she scouted you, y'know?

Ali: yeah! For me I guess the difference there is that like well it's a god so it doesn't matter, but is it like- is there a difference foundationally between like, you know, earning god's eye in that way while you're traveling versus coming to the temple and what different boons do they get you know

Austin: right, depending right?

Ali: yeah

Austin: right. Yeah, and that to me is a space that we can fill in

Ali: yeah for sure

Austin: as required I think , but yeah making this style of place, some sort of like, you know, um, a- a- a- place to go and... where something incredible happened and like, the spirit of that person is still there, or the person is still there and they've become what we think of as a god as this point because

Ali: yeah yeah yeah

Austin: of x y z reason, you know, whatever it is, um, is fun, we can help== we can kind of sketch what that is

Ali: yeah

Austin: um, a couple more things here and then we're done, um, we already talked about the calling stuff

Ali: mm-hmm

Austin: We already talked- I think we've already done a lot on like, why would- why would you- you wanted to be in a haven - havens want hounds, obviously right?

Ali: yeah, mm-hmm



Austin: um, for m- for you, is it common that- is it common that Hounds get like assigned to havens in this way and like, alright, I'm at this haven, or is this a personal choice for you to be at this place?

Ali: um yeah, I- I think it- I think it depends Hound to Hound right, because I feel like- you know there- there's the expectancy that like a Hound would either go find a haven and settle there or they would like be a person who's traveling into the Heart to do a specific like research project or-

Austin: right, right

Ali: or, y'know, gain a skill in a specific way or get a certain resource

Austin: mm-hmm

Ali: um, so I think- I- I think it ends up being sorta up to the individual or like up to the- there's something in the way that the badges works here- I don't know that it'd be like, oh if the hound that was in this have retired, the Hounds would, in that graduation proces be able to replace them with someone else, that just feels functionally like that would make sense, because you would want that sort of security organisationally (laughs), being like, oh well our haven's Hound retired I guess we're just gonna have to wait until somebody wanders here, rather than it being a structured thing like no we know that there should be a Hound there because we're an organization

Austin (overlapping): right... yeah

Ali: and we should put a Hound there? I feel like that second version of it makes more sense. Um-

Austin; It does, I think so too.

Ali: so yeah I think it's probably assignments in that way or you know you get the Hound research grant that lets you just ravel instead of being like

Austin: right, instead of just being attached to a specific place

Ali: right

Austin: and getting- getting a monthly budget tied to that (ali laughs) it's like, almost more of the like that HQ, whatever it is you know

Ali: yeah! And I bet some of those decisions are like tied into what your apprenticeship is or what you would like to do or like I bet that there are Hounds that are moved from place to place depending on an injury or like what they prefer

Austin: is- is being a Hound like tier member of this group, is that almost- could that actually be a sort of like, you're under your own recognizance, you do whatever you want at this point because you've made it to that tier, versus someone who is like all I do is sit in this town and run a little- a little hospital or a little- you know that's all I do I don't go anywhere, I'm not here to solve anyone's problems more broadly than that because I don't have the- not the authority but like the expertise level to do that

Ali: sure

Austin: or like all I do is run a little- a little shop, yo know whatever it is, because I'm not a Hound yet, I'm a pup (ali laughs) or whatever it is

ali (laughing): just a pup!

Austin: so-

Ali: Yeah, there's a version of that that makes sense to me, right here it's like, via the graduation you sort of get the- the leash sort of extends in that way

Austin: yeah

Ali: yeah, um, the only thing that seems weird sort of like for me is that like, I mean that the thing that you would wanna do is have your most skilled people... yeah I dunno, um

Austin: or maybe- maybe there's a situation where it's not like.... maybe your most skilled people don't become Hounds they become like

Ali: oh sure sure sure

Austin: do you know what I mean they become uh, another word for Dog but like bigger (ali laughs) or like different do you know what I mean

Ali: yeah yeah yeah

Austin: like, like a Hound is on the hunt, that's the thing about a Hound, so what's the version of that that's like settled a little bit you know what I mean, lap dogs (laughs) that become-

Ali: right yeah yeah

Austin: or whatever, whatever that equivalent, you know I need fucking dog synonyms

Ali: sheep dogs...

Austin: yeah, you know that style of like, you know hanging out around the town and

Ali: sure

Austin: and running- maybe the person who runs the hospital is actually the same tier as a Hound but they don't have that expectation to go out and like, solve problems or whatever because what they're doing is like staying here and solving problems

Ali: yeah...

Austin: I don't know I can go at it either way on that

Ali: yeah it um, it- it seems weird because it feels like, like the idea of= the idea of that would be to have a flexibility between hound to hound right

Austin: mm-hmm

Ali: like professionally, you would be able to make that choice yourself based on... you know, the certifications and qualifications you've done-

Austin: need and like, right

Ali: yeah yeah

Austin :right right right right, and like what your like goals are, I'm sure some people get to that one place and they're like, all I wanna do is stay in this one place forever and like-

Ali: right, yeah yeah yeah

Austin: and other people are like I wanna go everywhere I wanna see the whole world and now that I'm a Hound I can go do blah blah blahblahblah

Ali: yeah

Austin: yeah... anyway, I think that's- I think that's probably a good thing to sleep on

ali (laughing): ok, yeah!

Austin: um... the last one I think we've also just hit as this point which is like, how do we fit themes of contradiction, uncertainty and community and I think that like if we go that route of like, the Hounds, or the group you're part of more broadly, which i do wanna get a- I do wanna nail down a name for, um, uh, are about knowledge and gaining knowledge and making sense of the world, then they can become that voice of like, you know, the- the people who come and go into town and say like 'you need to stop being afraid of the vampire, we know how vampires work', you know?

Ali: right, yeah yeah yeah

Austin: we've studied vampires here's what they're weak to (ali laughs), here's like, whatever, um-

Ali: yeah

Austin : It lives and dies like everything else, you know

Ali: mm-hmm

Austin: or whatever that version of that thing is, that like, ok like listen, I know it seems like we're fucked because you don't have any protein, but — for this next season, but uh, if you scoop the weird goo from this cave (ali laughs), we know that that actually, and I know it's scary in the cave because every time you go in the cave you see your worst memory

Ali: yeah...

Austin: but, (laughs), that memory coalesces into a protein sludge and you can eat that protein sludge to live. uh, um, so like that version of- I think that that speaks to that sort of like what we're talking about when I wanna hit certainty, uncertainty and contradiction and stuff like that

Ali: yeah, 100%

Austin: and then obviously you've hit the community thing over and over

ali (laughing): yes

Austin: Throughout all of the answers... um, cool, do you have any other thoughts or questions or things you haven't, we haven't hit or whatever

Ali: not at the... at the moment, I feel like this little worksheet was very (laughing), very helpful, and um, you know covered a range of topics that I feel like from this I think I can sort of hone down to something that's like a player character versus like, what is this,

Austin: mm-hmm

Ali: You know what is the umbrella is... um... yeah...

Austin: Alright, Keith says, the new Star Wars book has a planet with two habitable moons, which they only refer to as the Rooted Moon and the Fruited Moon.

ali (laughing): I gotta get to that fruited moon!

Austin: gotta get to that fruited moon

Ali: Is that the same thing as the old republic thing hwere you can only get gay married on the one planet?

Austin: you can only get gay married on the Fruited Moon

Ali: yeah!

Austin: we gotta get to that fruited moon... (ali laughs) then you're married and so you've gotta go back to the rooted moon-

Ali: right yeah because you've made-

Austin: cause you put down your roots

Ali: yeah

Austin: yeah

Ali: dang...

Austin: that's very fun... very weird

Ali (laughing): uh-huh!

Austin: anyway

ali (suddenly serious): anyway.

Austin: I wonder if it's like, are there fruits, are there more fruit on the fruited moon I don't get it? anyway-

Ali: yeah fruit, fruit and roots are not exclusive, like usually

Austin: no! you don't-

Ali: you have roots and then fruit comes you know you need the roots to have the fruit...

Austin: yes! That's weird.

Ali: yeah

Austin: alright, uh, that should do it for us (ali laughs) we should time.is and wrap this up, um thank you for joining us

Ali: bye everybody!

Austin: everyone listening, and thank you Ali for joining me and talking through all this stuff

Ali: yeah!