

## Sangfielle 06: The Hymn of the Mother-Beast Pt. 2

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

### [Intro — Episode 5 Recap]

**Austin (as PROCTOR EKASHI WOLFF):** It is a matter of some urgency, if you could gather your lot and meet me by the abbey. We've lost someone.

**AUSTIN:** He lays out the kind of thing that happened, which is: One of the young people who saw the runic writing—the kind of, draconic writing on the walls—he went back in. He seems to have gone missing. People saw him running in this direction, and... based on what Proctor Wolff says, seemed scared, ran in this direction, hasn't been seen since.

[Music begins: [Sangfielle](#) by Jack de Quidt.]

**Jack (as PICKMAN):** All right, what's the bet?

**Sylvia (as VIRTUE MONDEGREEN):** Hm.

**Dre (as CHINE):** What, that like, we're gonna get down there, and we find the kid, and he's like "Oh yeah, I just came here to hang out," and we just like, go home, or...?

**Sylvia (as VIRTUE):** [sarcastic] Oh, you still think he's alive? That's very optimistic.

**AUSTIN:** And then you're met with... I would call it like, gut-wrenching stench. This is like, the smell of rotting flesh. [**Sylvia** laughing.] You know what this is.

**SYLVIA:** [amused] Virtue looks at Pickman.

[**Dre** and **Austin** laughing, **Jack** chuckling.]

**AUSTIN:** And then there's a second smell—and that is... a little sweeter? It's like, citrus-y. As you move in deeper, your light traces up the body of the dead dragon. And finally, you get far enough down this cathedral for your light to catch something... surprising, in the distance. It's a little bit before the altar. In the body of the beast is... a sprouted tree.

I think what you see at first is... confusing, 'cause you're like, "Oh, that's a flower in the tree." Um... And it is. It's that it is moving, and alive. And it's *big*. The head—the flower bit—is the head of a creature, and it's slinking through the trees—the branches of the trees above you.

**AUSTIN:** It has a hole in it, one. [chuckling] Two, that hole is like, spreading. It's like there's a crack... It's as if there's a slow, corrosive element spreading throughout this knife. But it was clearly shot by some sort of... of projectile, uh, perhaps the weird fucking Magistrate gun. And so I think you're able to put together what's happened here: A Pale Magistrate was here, so was Janek. There must have been some sort of fight. They were protected by this ward, now they're gone.

**Sylvia (as VIRTUE):** [reciting hymn]

Her love is vast and nourishing.

Her glory does astound.

Thus in sin we're flourishing,

'Tis sin to which we're bound.

With words we weave her love in ours,

And with our voices breathe:

A halt to death, a halt to stars,

A halt to what will be.

But listen, Mother-Beast, please know:

'Tis love by which we've wrought

A world in which you're split in woe,

instead of merely nought.

Your love is vast and flourishing.

Your glory does astound.

Bless us with tears nourishing.

We'll drink until we're drowned.

**AUSTIN:** As the song—as the hymn comes to a close, the ground itself beneath you... turns into a doorway. And it is an open doorway, and you are standing at one moment here—and at the next moment, at the edge of a vast cathedral, looking out onto a... kind of sand blasted—salt blasted, really—canyon that you are inside of.

[Music ends.]

### [Episode Start]

**AUSTIN:** The camera would zoom out here to reveal that the chapel you are in has been replaced with a vast cathedral like the one we saw the interior of in *The Ground Itself*. Um, and... This chasm that you're in, it's like a pit that is a few square acres around, um, and like, if you found a pathway somehow—it's— The— [short sigh] The walls are pretty... You know. Not *flat*, but they... It's not a... un... surmountable cliff face, but it would take you like half a day [**Sylvia:** Mhm.] to find... To walk the path if you knew the path already, even. It is, um... About... What time did we say that we— that you left... before?

**SYLVIA:** I think we just said it was daytime, like... yeah.

**AUSTIN:** It was daytime—I'd say that it's— It's a little before noon at this point, which is to say, all of the suns—all six suns—are, um... just about at the point at which they would pass over, [**Sylvia:** Ugh.] they should be passing over any minute now. So *miserable* out, sorry.

**SYLVIA:** [quiet] Yeah.

**AUSTIN:** Um... Feels like a summer day, but the wind is actually kind of *brisk* here. Um, and... There is a dusting as the wind kind of hits your faces in the doorway of this place. And that dusting is, again—it's *salt*. It's like, a salt... you know, particulates that are hitting your face here. And they're coming from the... *walls* of this place. This is like, a salt pit. This is like, um... Maybe this used to be part of an ocean bed, or something? But it is— It is... has been drained of water, certainly, and the walls themselves have this dense *salt* kind of, uh, material in them.

Um... Uh, they're multicolored. They look a lot like... this color I'm about to send. Uh... [typing] This is from a... a *Atlantic* story called "The Strange Beauty of Salt Mines," it's the first picture. [reciting the article] "Multicolored walls of a salt mine located 1,380 feet underground," [**Dre:** Whoa.] "near the town of [mispronouncing Soligorsk] Soligorosk, south of Minsk, in Belarus."

**JACK:** [impressed] Whoa!

**AUSTIN:** [continuing to recite] "Parts of this mine have been converted into a speleotherapy clinic for treatment of respiratory illnesses such as asthma and bronchitis." Cool. Um... Anyway, that's the color of the cliff face all around you. This kind of like, uh, striated reds and grays and whites, um, and some browns—it's *very* beautiful. Um... But *again*, you are now outside of a cathedral, [chuckling] in the middle of a salt pit. Um... And it's... it's a kind of bright, miserable day. Um... And, uh... what do you do at this point?

If you look behind you, I'll say immediately: It's a cathedral behind you, with the corpse of the dragon as it appeared in our original thing. There is no... there is no White Blossom, uh, beast here. You seem to have left that place behind.

**SYLVIA:** So are— Wait, are we facing... the cathedral's behind us...?

**AUSTIN:** You're facing— You're in the doorway of a cathedral now.

**SYLVIA:** Okay.

**AUSTIN:** Basically. Yes.

**SYLVIA:** Um, I think the first thing is that like, Virtue just like, [clasping her hands] claps her hands together very excitedly and is like,

**Sylvia (as VIRTUE):** [excited] It worked! [sigh of relief]

**AUSTIN:** [chuckling] Um... And if you step back into the cathedral, you're in this version of the cathedral. You're *not* back in the little chapel underneath Blackwick.

**SYLVIA:** I'm— I'm... I don't wanna... Again, I don't wanna take too much focus, but I am staying under the doorway, just 'cause,

**Sylvia (as VIRTUE):** [weary] Ugh, the sun makes me feel so nauseous.

**AUSTIN:** Yeah...

**DRE:** Um... Austin, I think I would like to use one of my moves.

**AUSTIN:** Sure!

**DRE:** Uh, this is called *Twisting Territory*.

**AUSTIN:** Mm!

**DRE:** Uh, [reading] "Once per situation, I can ask the GM who's in charge of the immediate area. By smell, sight, or some other esoteric sense," [**Austin** exhaling.] "you gain an intuitive understanding of the apex predator or alpha creature—whether that's a person or a beast—in the area. But when I use this power, the target gets the uncanny feeling that they're under threat."

**AUSTIN:** Um... God—in the imm— It's... [exhaling] How far is this away? What's the...

**DRE:** It just says "immediate area around."

**AUSTIN:** Immediate area. Um... You... find your eyes drawn... upward. Um, and... and to the north a little bit. There is a bridge, crossing this chasm. And, uh, it is like, a sturdy, wooden bridge, but *hanging* from it—or *attached* to it—is a much less sturdy [chuckling] collection of, uh, ladders and scaffolds, that connect you up this *huge* amount of distance up. Right? I mean, this is... You know, um... Probably a couple of hours of climbing? Um, with rests and stuff, at various scaffolds.

**DRE:** Mhm.

**AUSTIN:** Um, and that's not counting one of you having on... extremely heavy armor. Um... which will make that difficult— a difficult climb. At the very top of it, climbing out, like, over the edge of it now at this point, you see two figures: One of them has, um... has... horns, like... um—I guess they're not like, uh, Pickman's, because Pickman's— You— I forget the type of goat you are, or sheep, or whatever, but there are these markhor horns—which is again, a type of goat—and they're like, spirally. Um, actually, they look like the Cleavers horns in, [chuckling] in the book. In um... In... *Heart*. I'm gonna upload an image of it here. Markhor, m-a-r-k-h-o-r, this is just the image from Wikipedia, that's loading. Um...

**JACK:** Oh!

**AUSTIN:** These kind of interesting, twisty, corkscrew... you know, uh, antler type things. Horns, I guess, that are just awesome. And that is someone wearing a long, black... black

duster, um, and a second person with them. And, um... the... That person—who is the Magistrate, who... you know, you saw the... stuff of back inside—is certainly the apex predator in your *immediate* vicinity. Um, and as you look up at them, and get the sight of them and sense them, and they feel like they're being watched, you see them get into a little bit of a scuffle on the edge of the bridge. Again, they're so far away, you can't even make out facial features.

Um... But, you can kind of—again, the horns really [chuckling] drive home that this person is this person. And there's a little bit of a scuffle at the top, and then something comes falling off the bridge. It's not a person, but it's... you know, you see something get flung [**Jack** chuckling] and you can see it moving across the skyline, until it's caught up by the edge of the canyon on the other side. And it's—you know, it lands on the ground, underneath the sca— near the scaffolding and ladders and stuff. And then they disappear, you know, onto the bridge, and then... you don't know where they go from there.

**DRE:** Is that thing that landed, is that like, a... an accessible place where it landed, [**Austin:** Totally!] or is that... okay.

**[10 minutes]**

**AUSTIN:** Yeah, you can go over there and grab it, and—or look at it, if you want to.

**DRE:** Yeah.

**AUSTIN:** Um, you see that it is... I mean, I think the thing— Maybe I should draw it more like this: It's as if one person went for a thing—it's as if the— it's as if, uh—obviously this is a Magistrate, and it's, um... uh... Janek—and Janek went for something, and it was knocked off.

**DRE:** Mhm.

**AUSTIN:** And, you see now what it is: It's a compass. Janek was reaching for, uh, for his compass. And again, this is a compass that has that same machete and sextant symbol from the uh, from the Free Seas of Kay'va. This is a Good-quality Delve D6 item.

**DRE:** Oo!

**AUSTIN:** Um, and it has—as you pick it up, the compass spins. Um, the glass is cracked on it, but it still seems to work. And there is a fifth... Like, on top of... I guess there's two lines, right, there's the red line that is like, the direction you're facing with it. But there's also a blue line, and the blue line, um... points back to the point you picked it up. When you picked it up, it like, *marks*—that's the place you picked it up. And now that you've picked it up, it— that blue line will always move and point to that place.

**DRE:** Hm.

**AUSTIN:** If that makes sense. You can orient yourself back to a place with it—unfortunately for Janek, who picked it up back on the other side of the world, uh, and now does not... does not have that mark anymore. [chuckling] You know?

**DRE:** Yeah.

**AUSTIN:** But hey, you could pocket this thing. Again, D6 Delve equipment. And it's *Good*. And Good equipment is *good*—Good equipment is something you can like... try to save up for and buy, and look for, and stuff like that. And it makes it so that when you're using it, your Risky becomes Standard, and I wanna say... I *wanna* say Dangerous becomes Risky. *Very* useful, because difficulty's hard. Um... the rest of you. What's good?

**JACK:** Okay. So it seems like our options are... back into the cathedral behind us, or out... I'm trying to think of, like... if we immediately start climbing after them, that's gonna take a *lot* of time.

**AUSTIN:** [expectant] Mhm.

**DRE:** Yeah.

**JACK:** Can we mo— [chuckling] Is it possible to move faster by moving through the Residium?

**AUSTIN:** [exhale] *Phoo*... It's hard to say.

**SYLVIA:** Yeah.

**AUSTIN:** You have to investigate this.

**SYLVIA:** We could *try* it. It is Risky to bring other people, um... but there's like, a chance that there could be some sort of like, structure or something there that wouldn't be there in like... current times, or some other thing along those lines. Um...

**JACK:** They're so far ahead of us!

**SYLVIA:** Myeah.

**AUSTIN:** I will add, there are also— there *are* also holes in parts of the walls that look like... places people have—people or creatures—have dug into. There's like a... potentially a tunnel system in the side of these walls, also.

**JACK:** That might get us up faster, yeah.

**AUSTIN:** Maybe.

**DRE:** [expectant] Mhmm.

**AUSTIN:** We'll see what rolls do, you know? [pausing] Again, to just kind of lay it out: There are... There's the scaffolding and ladders, there's the big cathedral you came in from—which, again, I guess like, is a big cathedral, if you wanted to go back in there and fuck around—there is, um... uh, the kind of tunnel system that seems to be drilled into the—not drilled, but, you know—dug into these... these canyon walls. Um, and there's like, a few acres of land, otherwise there's kind of these— this kind of flat salt plain. Um... and that's... that's the gist of the area. And again, a bridge way above that scaffolding. That's about... that's about what you got. Any thoughts... on where to start?

**SYLVIA:** We— We were looking at this... tunnel thing, right? Like...

**DRE:** [expectant] Mhmm.

**AUSTIN:** I think that was potentially a direction.

**SYLVIA:** Yeah...

**AUSTIN:** I know that you're very sun, uh...

[Sylvia chuckling.]

**AUSTIN (overlapping):** Sun... uh, not a fan of it.

**SYLVIA (overlapping):** Honestly, like... I guess both like, out of character, and I can voice this in character too, I— just— the idea, uh... Like, one of the other options was checking in the Residium for a way up, [Austin: Mm. Mhm.] and I'm like... a little worried about risking that here. Um...

**JACK:** Yeah, fair enough.

**SYLVIA:** Yeah. 'Cause, as a group, it's— it is, a... more difficult thing. [mumbling]  
Challenging...

**AUSTIN:** [interjecting] Also, where is here?

[Ali chuckling.]

**SYLVIA:** Exactly! Um...

**DRE:** Good question.

**SYLVIA:** Actually, also... I'm gonna... I'm assuming they're still the same, but I just wanna ask 'cause we changed location: Are the Domains still, [Austin: Yeah.] um, Cursed and Religion?

**AUSTIN:** [decisive] No! No, they are *not* anymore, we are in fact now in a Tier 2 location, and this location is *Desolate*.

[Ali chuckling.]

**SYLVIA:** *Hell* yeah!

**AUSTIN:** [expectant] Mhm!

**DRE:** You love it.

**SYLVIA:** I got that.

**AUSTIN:** Mhm! And that's *it*. Right now, this place, just Desolate.

**SYLVIA:** Okay.

**AUSTIN:** Um... Presumably, if you go in those tunnels, that's gonna be Desolate and *Warren*.

**SYLVIA:** [quiet] I got that one too. So. Yeah.

**AUSTIN:** Wow. Damn.

**SYLVIA:** *Look*, you get buried underground for a few hundred years, you end up learning how to dig!

[Ali and someone chuckling.]

**Jack (as PICKMAN):** Okay. Seems like that that Magistrate's got our man. And I got no love for the Magistrates, so... Either I'm going up the ladders, or I'm going in the tunnels, and I don't trust those ladders. For... my armor. You can go up the ladders, but I... you know. That's not for me.

**JACK:** And I think Pickman just sort of says, like—like... casts a glance towards one of the nearby tunnels, one that seems to be sort of arching upwards—presumably there are several, and I want to pick one [**Austin:** Yeah.] that looks like it's going in a... in a friendly-ish direction.

**AUSTIN:** Mhm. [pausing] Yeah, um... All right, we are about to start our first delve. Delves are, uh, the kind of... gameplay mechanism associated with travel. We've played a lot of games where you travel from point to point, and *normally* we kinda like, eyeball it, you know? We go like, [ambivalent, slurring] "Ehh, give me a roll. 2D6 plus whatever, and there you go, you made it."

Delves are like— are the blood of this game, in a real way, um, because this is a game about... going through things, and going on, and traversing things. They're also really flexible in a fun way, to where you could do... you know, um... I— In one of the pre-made uh, kind of... quick-start games, they use a delve—the delve mechanics—almost more like a clock in... Forged in the Dark games, to handle like, completing an occult ritual, for instance. Um, but in this case, we're using it pretty straight forward, right?



This is gonna be the delve that's going to take you from the place you are now—this abbey in the salt pit— or this cathedral in the salt pit—to your inevitable location, which is going to be... You know, you're trying to track down, uh, Janek, and... and the Magistrate, who seems to have him. Um, and so, to do that, you kind of think about the delve itself as an adversary that you do damage to.

Uh, it's kind of situated to be like... there are, um... When a player character says "I wanna go do this thing," they roll to do it, and if they succeed, they do damage to the delve—they put stress on the delve, they go through the delve's resistance—and, as they do, maybe they come to different events, maybe they come to different obstacles, maybe there's side opportunities to do something that *don't* necessarily, um, push you further into the delve but give you some sort of material benefit, like a Resource, uh, maybe there's a fight that doesn't itself advance you, but because you— if you kind of go out of your way to do it, you get a little bit of a bonus, um...

If you kind of, stop to lick your wounds, maybe by doing that, the delve gets a little harder, because you're kind of moving too slow through it and things adjust. Um, uh... so there's all these other rules for it, but the heart of it is, just think about the delve itself as almost like, an adversary with hit points, or with, in this case, a Resistance score that you need to whittle away. So to start, it sounds like Pickman is gonna go towards one of these tunnels. What are you doing? How are you— What do you— Uh, what are you doing as you do this? You're just kind of, marching in there?

**JACK:** Um, I am going to... [inhale] I'm gonna do this the old fashioned tunnel maze way.

**AUSTIN:** Mm.

**JACK:** I'm gonna see if I have like, a ball of twine, in my...

**AUSTIN:** [chuckling] Okay.

**JACK:** Although, actually, this might be made obsolete by, um... um... Chine's compass.

**AUSTIN:** Sure.

**JACK:** So I guess—no, yeah, I'm gonna... I'm gonna stand in the entrance to this, and wait for other people to catch up.

**AUSTIN:** Other folks?

**SYLVIA (overlapping):** Yeah, I'm gonna go along, uh...

**ALI (overlapping):** Yeah. I could even assist.

**DRE:** Yeah, sure.

**AUSTIN:** Look at that. Okay. Um... give me a roll, then. This is a Delve, and then it's either Desolate or Warren, as you move into these tunnels.

**SYLVIA:** I'm also down to assist here, by the way.

**JACK:** Okay. So...

**AUSTIN:** God, these— [Ali laughing] this aiding is gonna go so good until it breaks bad.

**SYLVIA:** [expectant] Mhm.

**DRE:** [expectant] Mhm.

**AUSTIN:** Actually— I actually don't know, I think only— I'm gonna say, actually, and this is a case where like, I think only one person can aid here.

**SYLVIA:** Okay.

**AUSTIN:** Because... this is just an initial delve into this place, you're not trying to overcome... it's not like, "I'm trying to move these boulders out of the way." This is just, "I'm walking down a— I'm trying to make sense of this tunnel space," and I wanna say the first two people can like, see enough of it to do that. Everyone else is just kind of like, following... behind. You know?

**SYLVIA:** Okay.

**JACK:** Would it make more sense, then, for Virtue to take the action? And for me to [uncertain] assist her? Or does that actually end up with the same amount of dice?

[Short pause.]

**AUSTIN:** It— It—I mean, whoever has [Sylvia: 'Cause I have... Yeah.] the move— the things can definitely decide to lead if they want to, yeah.

**SYLVIA:** What— Uh, what are you rolling here? 'Cause I have both Delve and Warren. So I can roll... [mumbling]

**JACK (overlapping):** I would just be rolling Delve.

**SYLVIA:** I'm okay to take the lead on this, then.

**AUSTIN:** Okay.

**JACK (overlapping):** I will help.

**AUSTIN:** Um, there is also that... that, uh... I will note again, that compass, which is a D6, which is a Good-quality compass—which in this case doesn't— the Good quality doesn't help, because it's not a Danger— it's not a Risky or Dangerous thing, but if you're using that to do

this, I think that it... it does definitely give you more damage to the delve, effectively, so... I don't know if Chine wants to hand that over, or what?

**[20 minutes]**

**DRE:** Uh, yeah. I think like, if Pickman is like, kinda leading the way...

**JACK:** Oh no, I think Virtue...

**AUSTIN (overlapping):** Uh, I think Virtue is— Virtue is now.

**SYLVIA (overlapping):** I think I am, yeah.

**DRE:** Virtue's leading the way, okay. I think Chine just kinda like, underhand tosses it over to Virtue and goes,

**(as CHINE):** Here you go, chief.

**[Austin and someone chuckling.]**

**Sylvia (as VIRTUE):** [sarcastic, disinterested] Mmmhm, m-yeah.

**SYLVIA:** Just like, polite smile.

**[Austin laughing.]**

**AUSTIN:** All right, so that's Delve, Desolate, and a helping die. So that's gonna be five die again.

**SYLVIA:** Okay.

**AUSTIN:** Mm!

**SYLVIA:** Wait...

**AUSTIN (overlapping):** Or Warren, I'd say it's Warren, but still, that still works.

**SYLVIA:** Delve, Warren, and then I'm getting two assists here...? Is how I'm adding the...

**AUSTIN (overlapping):** One assist.

**SYLVIA (overlapping):** One assist, okay.

**AUSTIN:** One assist. Yeah yeah yeah. And uh... And... not Risky, so yeah, Standard.

**SYLVIA:** [quiet] Okay.

**AUSTIN:** Yup. [pausing] 8, 8, 2, 9! Another good success here. So now, we get our first damage... roll to the delve. Give me a D6.

**SYLVIA:** Okay!

**AUSTIN:** Use that... that, um... that compass. [pausing] *Tsk*. That's only a 1.

**SYLVIA:** [chuckling] [amused] Yeah, that's fine. First it—

**JACK (overlapping):** Tunnels!

**SYLVIA:** [amused] I— You gotta roll 'em eventually, might as well do it when I can't take stress.

**AUSTIN:** Yeah. So, I think the thing that happens here is—you, uh... you start to move through this tunnel, and you have a good sense of like, "Okay, I'm moving... I'm moving in the right direction, I— We're going *up*, I can f— we can sense that," um, but I think two things kind of slow your progress maybe a little bit here.

The first is, you definitely hear... some other movement in here that's not you. You definitely have some like, "Hey, was that you?" "No, it was not me" moments. Um... there's other stuff in these tunnels. These tunnels are also pretty tight, and Pickman, again, with the big armor, it's just like—there are times when you're like, "This is the right route, we can't go down it 'cause Pickman's in her giant armor." Um, and that's just the way it is. Right? Like, that's just... We can't do that.

Um, uh... And the third thing is... That salt is like, kind of hard to deal with, because it's in the rocks all around you. And it's like—you have to be careful of your eyes, and it's... it's a little overwhelming in terms of its... taste, and you can't prevent it from doing... getting there. And so there's a degree to which like, you're *making progress*, it's just *slow* progress. Um... Anyone have any other like, ways of moving through here before you kind of hit like, a thing?

**SYLVIA:** [exhale] [uncertain] I don't know if this is relevant yet, but I do have a Skill that, um... It's what gave me the Warren Domain, and I can dig through like, earth and mud [Austin exhaling] with my bare hands as if I had a shovel. Um...

**AUSTIN (overlapping):** Yeah. Hm... I think you could—

**SYLVIA:** Which, I don't know if that's come up yet, but I think is worth mentioning for this.

**AUSTIN:** Yeah, yeah. We've not hit *soil* yet, um, but—I— I would let you use that if you wanted to like, chip away at the walls [Sylvia: Okay.] to try to like... make a spot a little bigger—you know what I mean?

**SYLVIA:** Yeah.

**AUSTIN:** Keep it in your back pocket, you know. Or—or to get some of the stone, [**Sylvia:** Mhm.] or whatever, you know. Um... Any other thoughts here, before I introduce some... a situation, as the book calls them? [pausing] Um, all right, so I think... the— You know, you're coming down one of these hallways, and you a— a... a pair of figures, at the end of the hall. Um, maybe you, uh—Chine, you know, uses that lantern to kind of, uh... kind of direct light that way, and there is, um... there is a skeleton, a humanoid skeleton, in this cramped little tunnel.

And gnawing on it is a bat that is like, walking around, that's like—I'd say it's about three feet tall. It's— It's like a little guy, [Someone chuckling] but it's like, a little littler than, I think, Marn? Um... But is like, gnawing on these bones. And it walks around on the ground, it's not a... like, it looks like it's built to do this. Do you know what I mean? So... Uh, and it's— It looks at you and it has big eyes, and it stops with like, a femur in its mouth. What do you do?

**SYLVIA:** [very quiet, muffled] Oh my god...!

**JACK:** [gravely] Sylvi, I'm sorry about this.

[**Ali** chuckling.]

**SYLVIA:** [enamored] It's okay! It's so cute!

**JACK:** I feel like this is gonna break bad.

[**Austin** chuckling.]

**JACK:** I'm not making an action, I just wanted to apologize beforehand to Sylvi.

**SYLVIA (overlapping):** Yeah, yeah, sure.

**AUSTIN (overlapping):** In advance. Yeah.

**SYLVIA:** [quiet] Oh, gosh... [less quiet] I don't know what to do. I'm just overwhelmed by this right now.

**DRE:** Um... I think Chine just kinda like, I guess—god, am I just like, popping my head up over [breaking into laughter] Pickman's back or whatever?

**AUSTIN:** [breaking into laughter] I think so, yeah...!

[**Jack** and others laughing, overlapping.]

**AUSTIN (overlapping):** *Hop! Hop!* Pulling yourself over.

**DRE:** Like, I think I can't see what's happening and like, everybody just stops, and so I'm just kinda poking— [**Austin:** Yeah.] and I think I just say,

**Dre (as CHINE):** Oh! Hello!

**Austin (as CAVE BAT):** [high pitched bat noise, defensive/surprised] *Nghwaaah!*

**Jack (as PICKMAN):** [deadpan] It doesn't talk, Chine.

**Dre (as CHINE):** Okay, that was... Yeah, that was optimistic.

[**Austin** and others chuckling.]

**Dre (as CHINE):** Um... We're... We're just passing through, is that... is that okay?

**AUSTIN:** [chuckling] Are you trying to do— Is this a roll? Is this a Compel? Are you trying to Compel this thing?

**DRE:** I mean, maybe.

**AUSTIN (overlapping):** Roll those dice!

**DRE (overlapping):** Hey, just 'cause it doesn't speak doesn't mean it doesn't understand, you know?

**AUSTIN:** Yeah. Uh-huh! You're right, give me a Compel Warren.

[**Dre** chuckling.]

**SYLVIA:** Giving Chine the *weirdest* look right now.

**AUSTIN:** [expectant] Uh-huh!

**DRE:** Uh... Okay. Compel, Warren, and then... I don't get—

**AUSTIN:** I don't think... no.

**DRE:** I don't get any bonus dice, okay, yeah.

**AUSTIN:** No...

**DRE:** Let's *go!*

[**Ali** chuckling.]

**AUSTIN:** 2— Is— [exhale] *Unbelievable.*

[**Jack** laughing.]

**AUSTIN:** These rolls are *unbelievable.*

[Dre laughing.]

**JACK:** A crit!

**AUSTIN:** 10, 2, 2. It's a crit. All right, um... You're gonna do your damage to the... to the fucking thing. Give me a D4. You don't have any other delve things, and also, you don't have a delve thing for *talking to bats*, so like, so like...

**DRE (overlapping):** No, I don't think so...

**AUSTIN (overlapping):** Just give me your D4.

**SYLVIA (overlapping):** That should really be a Skill, in the game...

[Jack chuckling.]

**SYLVIA:** [quiet] Yeah.

**AUSTIN:** It could be a knack, I think—if you had Compel “Animal Talk” or something...

**SYLVIA (overlapping):** Okay. Gonna... keep that in the back of my mind.

**AUSTIN:** “Bat Talk”?

[Dre laughing.]

**AUSTIN:** Oh my god, your 1s are *killing me*.

**DRE:** There you go, that's a 1. [laughing]

**AUSTIN (overlapping):** On damage.

**SYLVIA (overlapping):** It's—*look!* We are either rolling to good, or we're rolling—like, what do you want here? [chuckling]

**AUSTIN:** Yeah. Uh-huh? Um... It, uh... So I think that the thing that happens here is like, it hears your tone, and then it, like... it licks the femur again, and then like, tosses you the femur bone, and then runs down one of the tunnels, um, letting your pass without incident. But *again*, it is just like, taking a little while to get through this place.

**DRE:** Mhm.

**AUSTIN:** Um... for sure. [chuckling] You, uh... But— But, yeah, you know. Also, I guess—do you check out the bones of the person who's here?

**DRE:** S... sure.

**AUSTIN:** [breathing] [apologetic] It's rough. I mean, there's no—it's just bones at this point. But like, there's also some tattered papers, and like a little... a little pat— a pack that has, again, been kind of torn into, almost, like, for material, like—almost like something was trying to build a nest, was like “Ah, I could use some of this... this canvas,” you know? Um... This person had... now faded papers, that— you can't read any of it, but you recognize again, that hymn has been written out here.

**DRE:** Mm.

**AUSTIN:** So this is someone else who figured out how to get here, at some point. Um...

**DRE:** Okay. This doesn't look like... Janek's stuff, or anything?

**AUSTIN:** This is— This is so old, [Dre: Yeah.] this is like, you know, *for sure* for sure old. Uh, it's dried out bones, um, uh... [somber] leg was broken. Um, you can just see that like, the leg is broken. And that they probably couldn't move anymore, and got stuck here, you know? Um, but you move— *you* move on, not a big deal, until you find a place where again, it is in fact, uh... it is— The way forward is just too tight to get through for... for Pickman, and their big armor. Um, and you have to figure a way, either to— [exhaling] work your way back and find another pathway forward, or to figure out a way to get... get her through all this. Um, but that is your next little... difficulty here on your journey up through these tunnels. Any ideas?

**JACK:** I mean, I can take it off. But it, um... I'd lose all my abilities. [chuckling]

[Ali and Austin chuckling.]

**ALI:** How like, long would it take to just, [chuckling] you know...

**AUSTIN (overlapping):** Start chipping away at this stuff?

**ALI (overlapping):** Just make some room?

**DRE:** Yeah...

**AUSTIN:** You know, uh... Give me a... Uh, you know, I'm gonna give— This is the shit you do, right? You could *do it*, you find the one that's like, “Oh, this one has like a— the lip is big,” but the interior of this tunnel is not as big as— is not as tight as the lip is, where you could just take some time to like, crack the lip of the kind of narrowest part of this tunnel, and... and then will be able to like, get through... more, you know? Um... and that... *that* could work. You know? Um... Do you wanna try to make that happen?

**ALI:** Sure.

**AUSTIN:** Um... What's that look like? That's a Delve, probably. Um... [pausing] For sure. And then... again, Desolate or Wild, which, I don't *think* you have those, you're more of a people person, Marn.

**ALI:** Yeah, I only have Haven so far. Um...



**AUSTIN:** Yeah.

**ALI:** But yeah, I feel like—it's like, a combination of like, a chisel and like, a liquid, some sort of situation.

**AUSTIN:** Mhm.

**ALI:** You like, rub it against the salt and it sort of smokes a little bit, and then, um... you know. *Tap-tap-tap*. [laughing]

**AUSTIN:** Yeah! Tap-tap-tap. Um... I think that could be Delve or Mend now that I think about it, right? Mend is about repairing things, but you could also use it to... un-repair something, you know?

**ALI (overlapping):** Right. To break it down. Yeah.

**AUSTIN:** It's work tools in some ways, yeah. So... so yeah.

**JACK:** I... I'm prepared to assist. Um...

**AUSTIN:** Um—yeah, okay. Totally. You have the— You— Yeah. Definitely. Again, it's too tight for, I think, a bunch of people to help here, but you can get one extra die here.

**ALI (overlapping):** And then +1.

**AUSTIN (overlapping):** So that would be Mend, and... +1, yeah, exactly.

**ALI (overlapping):** And this is Standard still?

**AUSTIN:** Standard still. There's not— This is not dangerous quite yet.

**ALI:** That's a 9.

**AUSTIN:** Hey, there's a 9! 8, 2, 9. Um, you make the hole big enough, and you're able to... to slip forward, bringing you to a place where finally, you're starting to get the sight—oh, actually, um... Hmm. Uh—you're able to... When you do this, uh, Marn, you like, get some of this material in your hand. Um, and... it feels... denser than... what, like, a chunk of salt is supposed to feel like.

[Ali chuckling.]

[30 minutes]

**AUSTIN:** Um, do you know what I mean?

**ALI:** Yeah. Like it— It's— Denser like it, it's like, weightier than I thought it would be, or that it's like... harder?

**AUSTIN:** [decisive] Weightier. [uncertain] Um? [decisive] Weightier. Weightier. Um, and... and maybe... it's not like, harder like you could break something with it. But it's... uh—you could give me a Discern check to try to make... make sense of it.

[Ali chuckling quietly.]

**AUSTIN:** This is not a safe place to do a Discern check, which is why it would be a Discern check.

**ALI:** [laughing] Fair. [chuckling] Um... I... Yeah, why not? I'm here. [chuckling]

**AUSTIN:** Uh—again, Discern and... and Desolate or Warren.

**ALI:** Um...

**AUSTIN:** Which, I don't think you got, so it's 2D6.

**ALI:** I mean, it's not that I *don't* think that I would be like, "Yeah, let me just pocket this and I'll check it out later," but like, just the like, act of like, having something in your hands and like, trying to squeeze it or like, tilt it, is just so... **[Austin:** Yeah. Uh-huh] natural that it's [chuckling] hard to not just be like, "Well, I do that."

**AUSTIN:** Mhm. Uh-huh.

**ALI:** Um, and that's also a success.

**AUSTIN:** Oh, look at that! An 8—8 and a 2. Um, all right, so you're gonna get— Take this as a D6 Resource, uh, D6 *Warren*, um, uh... that is "Savory Salt". [pausing] It is... Something is—*this salt—one*, um... It takes you a second, but you— Uh, you feel it a little bit, you sniff it, it smells like salt, and you do a quick taste. You just do a little lick.

**ALI:** Mhm. Yeah. Just a little one. [laughing]

**DRE (overlapping):** Mm!

**AUSTIN:** Just a little lick—"Mm, salt!" And like—Mmm! You know what, it feels like you didn't skip lunch today. There is something about this salt [chuckling] that is like... fulfilling. Which is *weird*, 'cause *that's not how salt works*.

**Jack (as PICKMAN):** I do not trust the salt.

**AUSTIN:** Like, not just...

[Ali laughing.]

**AUSTIN:** Not just in taste, but in... in, like, satiability, you know?

**ALI:** Yeah.

**AUSTIN:** That's all! So that's a thing. You keep— keep that... that resource. Um... [chuckling]

**ALI:** [chuckling quietly] This is great, 'cause like, I— we left at like 11:30 [amused] and I was gonna take my lunch break at like 12:30, so I could really use this— **[Dre: Mhm.] [Austin: Yeah.]** [breaking into laughter] this salt right now...

**AUSTIN:** Mhm!

**JACK:** Quick and easy job.

**AUSTIN:** Mhm!

[Ali laughing.]

**JACK:** I'm full— Bad news: we're trapped in a canyon.

**AUSTIN (overlapping):** Yeah. I do—

**JACK:** *Great* news: Tasty, tasty canyon. [chuckling]

**ALI:** Mhm...

**AUSTIN:** [expectant] Uh-huh! Yeah. Um...

**DRE (overlapping):** You won't *feel* like you're starving to death [chuckling] without food...

[Jack chuckling.]

[Short pause.]

**AUSTIN:** It's—I'm serious, it makes— It— You *feel* like you've eaten food. Like, it *really* does feel like that to you. And yeah, maybe Chine's right—maybe six hours from now, you'll be suffering because you didn't actually eat food, instead just licked some salt, **[Ali laughing]** but [coy] I dunno! Um... [amused] And yeah, as Chine notes in the chat: I guess Chine isn't the only one who eats weird things [chuckling] now!

**DRE:** Uh-huh! [laughing]

**AUSTIN:** Good. Um... All right. You... you get to a point where you're starting to see light come through, and that is when you hear a rumbling sound, as something begins to move through these holes, that is bigger than a little bat. It is some sort of burrowing creature, [serious tone] *you do not know what*. I suspect it is time to get the fuck out of this— these holes, as quickly as possible, um... but I don't know, uh... what the response is. Is this a thing where you're like, "All right, we have to take our time still, let's be careful, and not get twisted into— into a back, you know, the wrong way, because we're scared," is this a thing where you're just like, "*No*, we just gotta fucking *go* for it," um, what's the play here?

[Short pause.]

**ALI:** Um, yeah, would it be like, um... Would it be another Discern to be like, "This is the... the right path... beyond..."

**AUSTIN:** I think that works.

**ALI:** [quiet] Yeah.

**AUSTIN:** Yeah, Discern totally works with this, yeah. And again, you can totally use that um... the, uh... pocket– the compass, that y'all recovered from... from the ground outside, to do a bit more damage, if you succeed at this. So... give me a Discern and, uh, again, Warren or Desolate.

**ALI:** Sure. Does anyone wanna assist here since it's like, escaping this... [laughing] this...

**SYLVIA:** Uh...

**AUSTIN:** Yeah, I think this can be... You can get an assist here, for sure.

**SYLVIA:** I'd be down to help.

**AUSTIN:** What's that look like? What's help?

**SYLVIA (overlapping):** Um...

**ALI (overlapping):** Oh wait, should we do the– I don't have the Domain, so do you wanna... Discern, and I'll just do... yeah.

**AUSTIN (overlapping):** Yeah, maybe we should do that again. You should do that again.

**SYLVIA:** Wait, so I'm rolling, or...?

**ALI:** Yeah.

**SYLVIA:** Okay. [chuckling]

**AUSTIN:** Yeah, you should game it so you get an extra die, for sure.

[Ali laughing.]

**SYLVIA:** Yeah, I think– The way it, like– Just to answer the, "What does it look like?" I think it is like... um... she's digging with her hands now, which...

**AUSTIN:** Mhm.

**SYLVIA:** Not... like... super excited about that, but also not super excited about getting, like, eaten by whatever is in here.

**AUSTIN (overlapping):** By whatever this is? Yeah.

**SYLVIA (overlapping):** Yeah.

**AUSTIN:** And I— A thing I love about that move, *Dirt Under the Fingernails*, is: Not only does it give you the Warren domain, not only does it say that you can dig through earth and mud with your bare hands, as though you had a shovel, it says [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] [reading] “Your fingernails are always stained with a little soil, and you cannot clean it off.”

**SYLVIA:** So that’s why she wears gloves all the time!

**AUSTIN:** Wise.

**DRE:** [understanding] Mmm!

**SYLVIA:** Um... yeah. They way I—I think, like, just to get into that a little—the way I picture it is, it’s not just like her fingernails. It’s like, her like, half of her hand looks like it’s got dirt on it still.

**AUSTIN:** Yeah... Yeah.

**SYLVIA:** Um... Yeah. Anyway...

**AUSTIN (overlapping):** All right, give me a...

**SYLVIA (overlapping):** Uhh, should I roll?

**AUSTIN:** Yeah.

**SYLVIA:** That’s... one assist?

**AUSTIN:** Yep.

**SYLVIA:** Only?

**AUSTIN:** Yeah.

**SYLVIA:** Okay, cool. And Standard or Risky?

**AUSTIN:** [sucking air] I’m gonna say this is Risky now, because you have the attention of something down here.

**SYLVIA:** Okay.

[**Austin** sucking air.]

**SYLVIA:** And that's our first bad roll!

[Ali chuckling.]

**AUSTIN:** That is our *bad* roll, that is a 4 here.

**SYLVIA (overlapping):** Hey... I'm honored.

**AUSTIN:** That's a— That's a real failure too, that's not a [Sylvia: Yes.] mixed success, that's— [Sylvia: Nope!] that's nothing here. Um... Uh, I'm trying to make sure that—oh! Wait! Wait wait wait! Wait wait wait wait wait. It's a mixed success, because it's Risky but you have the *Good* compass.

**JACK:** [relieved] Oh!

[Sylvia sighing in relief.]

**AUSTIN:** *Good* makes the difficulty not Risky but Standard, so it's a—you still *get* the success, you get the 6 success, [Sylvia: Yeah.] it's just a m— it's just a partial success, you're gonna take some stress here. Give me, um, give me your D6 roll to the... for the damage on the delve.

**SYLVIA:** O-kay.

**AUSTIN:** Hey! 5! That's good delve damage imo. All right!

**SYLVIA:** That balanced it out with the... the result die.

**AUSTIN:** Yeah! Definitely. So, let's see here. Um... I think this is a situation where the, um... there is like, some sort of worm-like creature down here, that is vast and... maybe there's more than one—it's one of those things where you hear it moving in front of you and behind you, and you have to decide what's scarier: That it is long enough to be both in front of you and behind you, or that there's more than one—and that's not a thing you want to feel for... for a long time. I think that this is, um... God, what type of stress is this? You don't have anything that moves your stress around, right? Um...

**SYLVIA:** Uh... No, the only thing I have is 1 Echo protection, related to stress.

**AUSTIN:** Okay. And this isn't Echo. I think this is... M... I wanna say this is Mind stress, which is just like—it's *terrifying* to do this, um—maybe especially for *you*, where you know what it's like to be buried underground. You know?

**SYLVIA:** Yeah.

**AUSTIN:** Um... You got out of that situation, you're glad you're not there anymore.

**SYLVIA:** [quiet] Mhm.

**AUSTIN:** Um, so you take, uh... D6 Mind stress. Marn does too—Marn was helping? Who was helping? No.

**ALI:** I was helping.

**AUSTIN:** You were?

**ALI:** Yeah, that was me. Um...

**AUSTIN:** Okay, so then both of you, roll D6. Yep, go ahead and mark—

**SYLVIA:** Okay, I also have something that's gonna happen after this, too.

**AUSTIN:** Okay. And Marn, you're also gonna—you also have a thing here, right?

**ALI:** Um, I was gonna try to mark it to... Fortune, but do I have to do the roll first?

**AUSTIN:** Um... Yeah, but you can mark it to Fortune if you want to, yes. The answer is yes, that move does work like that.

**ALI:** Okay. But just roll D... 1D6, yes?

**AUSTIN:** Roll D6, yup.

[Short pause.]

**ALI:** [very quiet] That's a 2.

**AUSTIN:** So you both got 2. So that raises your... Fortune stress, Marn, to 2. It raises your Mind stress to 2, Virtue, but you have a thing you wanna do?

**SYLVIA:** Yeah, so, I have a Skill [**Austin:** Mhm.] called *Death Follows Close*.

**AUSTIN:** Mhm.

**SYLVIA:** This is one of the core things of the Deadwalker class, um... [reading] "You are followed around by a manifestation of your death that is invisible and intangible to everyone but you. Although, when you are on the verge of dying, or in places that resonate heavily with death and sorrow, it might be visible to others. The exact appearance is up to you. The first time each session you suffer—" Oh, I guess it's not Major, huh? [reading] "Major Blood..."

**AUSTIN (overlapping):** It's not— It's not Fortune at—

**SYLVIA (overlapping):** [reading] "Mind..."

**AUSTIN (overlapping):** It's not fallout at all.

**SYLVIA (overlapping):** [reading] “or Fortune fallout...”

**AUSTIN (overlapping):** It's *just* stress.

**SYLVIA (overlapping):** Ohh, it's just stress?

**AUSTIN (overlapping):** Yeah, so you— You take the stress.

**SYLVIA (overlapping):** Oh, damn, I misread this.

**AUSTIN (overlapping):** No, it's— I mean, you'd rather—

**SYLVIA (overlapping):** [disappointed] Mmmh... I wanted to do something cool.

**AUSTIN (overlapping):** Oh, you'll get your chance, I'm sure.

**SYLVIA (overlapping):** No, I'm... totally fine!

**AUSTIN:** Yeah. *But*, I *do* need you both to hit the “fallout test” button in the... spreadsheet—or in the, uh, the... thing.

**SYLVIA (overlapping):** [softly] Ohh, no...

**AUSTIN:** Anytime you get stress in this game, you have to see if you get fallout. Stress, again, is abstract. It's being, uh, it's being scared, it's being— it's your luck starting to turn bad, [Sylvia: Okay.] it's the... the bullets getting closer.

[Sylvia chuckling quietly.]

**AUSTIN:** But when it— When you fail that test—and the way you fail that test is, you roll a D12, and if it's under your total amount of stress across all of your different things, then it becomes fallout. Um...

**SYLVIA:** Yeah.

**AUSTIN:** We'll get there when we get there, because neither of you failed that roll. So no fallout happened, but stress has begun to accumulate.

**SYLVIA (overlapping):** Just know something really cool would happen.

[Ali chuckling.]

**AUSTIN:** Yes. [chuckling] It's true. Um... But you make it out of this tunnel system. And you make it up, out of... uh, you literally like, crawl your way out—or like, climb your way out of one of these holes in the ground, this kind of pockmarked kind of plateau. Um, and you can see down into the pit, where the cathedral was. You can see the... the bridge. And you can see all around you—as the land, the salt planes go, for miles in every direction. Um, you can see that there are other canyons off in the distance in some directions. You can see that



there is, you know, uh... a kind of just, a haze in the distance. Like it— it's just kind of flat in the— in some other directions, um, and your marks are not within visual sight at this point.

**[40 minutes]**

**AUSTIN:** It's been a few hours, that you've gone through this place. And then, there's another thing you notice—first, remembering that it's been a few hours as you've climbed through these tunnels—the suns are in the same position. Still before noon, as if noon is approaching, you know, in twenty minutes or something. Time does not seem to have passed while you were in the warren.

**Sylvia (as VIRTUE):** Oh, god...

**AUSTIN:** Mhm. Sorry. Sorry Virtue, it's gonna be one of those days.

**[Ali chuckling.]**

**Sylvia (as VIRTUE):** [sighing]

**DRE:** [expectant] Mhm.

**AUSTIN:** What do you all do?

**Ali (as MARN ANCURA):** Virtue, you think of just gettin' like, a big hat?

**Sylvia (as VIRTUE):** [defensive] Yeah, well I— [Someone chuckling] I *have* big hats, and I assumed we would be underground this whole time, so I gave that nice... that nice fellow my parasol.

**Ali (as MARN):** Sure...

**[Austin chuckling.]**

**Sylvia (as VIRTUE):** Myeah... [sighing] [quiet] Big hats. Those are the best.

**[Ali laughing.]**

**AUSTIN:** Yeah.

**ALI:** Um...

**AUSTIN:** So yeah, you're just up top now. What's your first step for like, trying to figure out where to go at this point? For trying to find... Janek?

**ALI:** Are the—we're like... we're not at the bridge?

**AUSTIN:** Yeah, you're at the bridge. You're near enough to— You could be at the bridge if you want to.

**ALI:** Are there tracks or anything, from...

**AUSTIN:** That sounds like a Hunt to me.

**ALI:** Aah! [chuckling] Okay.

**AUSTIN:** A-ha! A-ha!

**ALI:** Um... Indeed. Um...

**AUSTIN:** In— Oh, indeed...

**ALI:** Yeah sure, I would love to Hunt Janek here...

**AUSTIN:** I think this is just a Standard roll, there's no risk right now—or there's— there's risk going the wrong direction, certainly, but there's no— [Dre chuckling] it's not risky in the Risky sense.

**ALI:** Sure, sure sure.

**AUSTIN:** Um, and then it's Hunt, and then again we're back to just Desolate up here.

**ALI:** Oh, I guess I didn't get— I didn't get a Fortune fallout there, so I don't...

**AUSTIN:** Correct.

**ALI:** Okay, fair enough. Um...

**AUSTIN:** Yeah.

**ALI:** The thing worth mentioning—

**AUSTIN:** Also, we're not in... Yeah, go ahead, you say this.

**ALI:** Yeah, 'cause we—I don't even think that I've like, said what my class is, [chuckling] which is...

**AUSTIN:** Mm!

**ALI:** Marn is a Hound. Um, if you're reading along with *Heart*, you might be thinking to yourself, "I thought that this was like, a super soldier," don't worry about it, we'll talk about it later—um... [chuckling]

**AUSTIN:** [expectant] Uh-huh.

[Dre laughing.]

**ALI:** The, um, ability that I sort of, um, had activate there while I was, um, suffering stress with, uh... Virtue, was, um, *In the Thick of It*, which is... [reading] "You have a knack for getting yourself into just enough trouble to find out the truth," and then once per situation, if I would suffer a stress otherwise, I just mark it towards Fortune.

**AUSTIN:** Right.

**ALI:** Um... So that's what happened.

**AUSTIN:** Yeah.

**ALI:** And now I'm runting— I'm— [stumbling over words] [enunciating] I'm *rolling* Hunt.

**AUSTIN:** Hunt. Hunt. You don't have Desolate, is anyone helping with this? Who else is a... is a tracker? Who else feels like it's a thing...

**DRE:** Oh, yeah, I can help you with that.

**AUSTIN:** You have Hunt?

**DRE:** For sure.

**AUSTIN:** Yeah.

**ALI:** [very quiet] Yeah.

**DRE:** I do have Hunt.

**AUSTIN:** Perfect, yeah. Then let's do that. Give me— Give me a— Yeah. Give me a... an extra die.

**ALI:** Rolling. Rolling it.

**AUSTIN:** 7! Another... another success at a cost. Um... you do find the footprints, right?

**ALI:** Mhm.

**AUSTIN:** You manage to find the, like, the... base—oh, give me your damage to the delve. D4. It'll help flavor this—2. Okay. So it takes you... it takes you a moment, um, but you do manage to... um, see the— find footprints in the sand... um, they're being covered up as the wind... blows this kind of loose salt dust everywhere, and it's hard to kind of keep track of them, but you do manage to stay more or less on point, and... everytime you feel like you're about to lose them, you manage to find one more pair of footprints—um, or I guess two more sets of footprints—uh, and ensure yourself that you're getting the right direction.

You eventually find yourself coming to, um, a, uh... a canyon... a kind of pass, a canyon pass, on this kind of low plateau. It's like, it's like a... it's almost like you're walking through a river basin, perhaps, is what you're moving through. Um, and the... the river is

like, not that deep, so to speak, but it's— I mean, it's completely dried now. But it means you kind of have these two high canyon walls on your left and right—and I say “high”, but I don't mean high for canyon, I just mean high for person. It's like walking between... you know, two two-or-three storey, you know, lines of buildings, basically. Um, except they're these kind of salt walls.

Um, and, uh... I'm gonna say that... are you gonna do the Fortune thing, again? I guess I'll say what it is, which is just—it's just a *lot* to keep up in this environment, at this rate, and you're kind of rushing to do it, to keep, um... to keep on... uh, track without losing their... footing, so both of you are gonna take, um, a D6 Blood stress. Which is a physical stress, basically. Um...

**ALI:** Um...

**AUSTIN:** Are you gonna move that to Fortune?

**ALI:** Just a... just like, a... a... definition question here, um...

**AUSTIN:** Totally.

**ALI:** The— *In the Thick of It* says “once per situation.”

**AUSTIN:** Correct.

**ALI:** Is this a separate situation?

**AUSTIN:** This is a new situation, a hundred percent.

**ALI (overlapping):** Oh, okay. Sure. Might as well.

**AUSTIN:** So, a situation is... a sit— We're not even *in* a situation at this point... um... I guess it's not—hmm. That's a good question.

[Ali chuckling.]

**AUSTIN:** Is this a situation? So this— The way that— [exhale] So I've done a lot of listening and reading. I read *all* of the, um, the *Rowan, Rook & Decard* Discord's, uh, *Heart* rules page yester— uh, today and yesterday, over the— *Heart*'s rules questions, which was like eighteen months worth of [chuckling] conversation.

[Ali laughing.]

**DRE:** Whoof.

**AUSTIN:** I was like, “I need to just know. I just need to know *every* weird thing here.”

**ALI:** Mhm.

**AUSTIN:** Um, and so... I should have an answer to this. [amused] *And yet...*

**ALI:** And yet. [laughing]

**AUSTIN:** I— The thing that I will say is— When they— When we— When the game and the culture around the game talks about situations, the way they kind of talk about it is like: You're in a delve, and then inside of a delve, you could be in a situation. There are events, and events are things like, you found those bones. A situation would be... you come to a bridge and you decide to rebuild the bridge, or you get into a fight, that would be a situation. I'm gonna say that I think *the delve* is also a situation in— for the sake of *In the Thick of it*.

**ALI:** Mhm.

**AUSTIN:** You've done that move once. Um... That said, the "When you suffer Fortune fallout, roll with mastery" part still a— still keeps happening. You know what I mean?

**ALI:** Sure.

**AUSTIN:** So I don't think you can use that ability again in this delve. If we get into a *sub-situation* [**Ali** chuckling] I would let you use it, do you know what I mean?

**ALI:** Sure, no no no, yeah yeah yeah. I, yeah.

**AUSTIN:** Um... But that's a— that's a rule call, you know? Um, I think that's... just...

**ALI:** Yeah. It's different from one—

**AUSTIN (overlapping):** That's just gonna be it.

**ALI:** One... Once per session, right? But it's also not...

**AUSTIN:** It's—yeah, correct. It's almost like saying "once per scene," but we're understanding the mon— the delve itself as a montage scene. It's like... it's like a montage, right? And then sometimes, we zoom in to another scene, and I think that would be... you'd be allowed to do another one there. But, anyway, um... uh...

**DRE:** Gotcha.

**ALI:** How m—

**AUSTIN:** I know a lot of people have delve situation moves, [**Ali** chuckling] or situation moves like that, so I hope that that's... useful. Um... Anyway... um... do you wanna... I guess no, so that would go to your Blood, then, no matter what, right?

**ALI (overlapping):** Yeah, how much Blood are we taking?

**AUSTIN:** Roll 1D6.

**ALI:** Oh, boy howdy.

**AUSTIN:** We're in a Tier 2 place. Oh actually wait, Tier 2 is... Yeah, Tier 2 is 6. [chuckling] Yes.

**DRE:** Okay. How does, um... protection work with this, Austin?

**AUSTIN:** Uh, you reduce it— I mean, this is not bad for you, right? You have a special thing that gives you protection, right?

**DRE:** Mhm.

**AUSTIN:** What's your special thing say?

**DRE:** Yeah. Uh... the minimum value for all my resistances is equal to the tier of the Heart we are currently on.

**AUSTIN:** You're Tier 2— You're in a Fracture, but it's a Tier 2 Fracture.

**DRE:** Okay.

**AUSTIN:** Um, so that means you just... minus 2, on whatever this roll is. [chuckling]

**DRE:** Okay.

**ALI:** I got a 2.

**DRE:** Ooo, I got 5.

**AUSTIN:** Yikes. Uh, what are you gonna say, Jack?

**JACK (overlapping):** Uh, I was gonna say—

**AUSTIN (overlapping):** I know what you're gonna say, but say it.

**JACK:** Is... So I can reduce... Blood—or I can Blood stress, or I can give Blood protection in certain circumstances.

**AUSTIN:** Mhm.

**JACK:** I don't think Marn is within arm's reach of me. I've sort of been picturing Marn and Chine off up ahead, [Austin: Mhm.] like, looking at footprints and things, right?

**AUSTIN:** Yeah.

**ALI:** Yeah.

**AUSTIN:** Um, I mean, what's the move? Read me the move. Tell me what the move is.

**JACK:** So I have this move called *Get Behind Me*, which is part of what I was setting up earlier, which is [reading] “Any ally within arm’s reach of you gains +1 Blood— Blood protection thanks to your interventions,” um, and then that move continues, [reading] “Once per situation, you can bellow an order and remove D4 Blood or Mind stress from a nearby al— al— ally.”

**AUSTIN (overlapping):** “Nearby Ali.” Yeah, uh-huh.

**JACK:** W— [chuckling] I nearly said Ali, because I was thinking of Ali.

[Ali chuckling.]

**AUSTIN:** Uh-huh.

**JACK:** Um...

**AUSTIN:** Um... Can you paint me a picture in which these things happen? Because—again, we’re in montage mode, right, so imagine the camera is panning across a desolate wasteland, and we see Marn and Chine kind of struggling for a moment, you know what I mean? Like, if you give me the— I’m a fan of the players—it doesn’t say that I have to be that, above, but—I mean, it *does* sort of say that, you know? Um, and... I would rather you be able to use that ability in this situation and paint me a fun picture of how Pickman *does* this, than say “No, you’re not allowed to do it.”

**JACK:** This is like a moment of... of weakness in the desert, right? This is like, uh... the stress of the sun, and the...

**AUSTIN:** Mhm.

**JACK:** I mean, part of me likes Pickman as a shadow—Pickman producing this— you know, this well of shadow [Austin: (chuckling) Yeah. Yeah...] from the size of their body and the size of the armor. So I wonder if it is... um... Providing a place for people to rest, in the shadow of the Shape armor. Um... whether that... whether we go for the... [quoting] “bellow an order and remove [chuckling] D4 Blood or Mind stress,” or whether we just go for the +1 Blood protection—where it’s like, Pickman sees that they are struggling, and like, comes up at a jog, [Austin: Yeah.] and sort of takes a position to allow *them* sort of a, a pool of shade to recover in.

**AUSTIN:** Well, let’s resolve this first, and then we can decide if you want to do the— remove the Blood stress. So: Uh, Marn, you should again do a fallout test. Uh, actually, reduce— um... you’re good. You rolled an 8, so you’re good, but reduce your Blood by 1 because of the protection from Pickman.

**ALI:** Oh, sure.

[50 minutes]

**AUSTIN:** Uh, so you should only have 1. And then, likewise—Chine, you should also reduce it by 1 from whatever—it was a 5— Oh, you should reduce it by 3 now, right?

**DRE:** Right.

**AUSTIN:** Um, so it's still 2. That's still not nothing, right?

**DRE:** Yeah.

**AUSTIN:** And then roll— And then hit the fallout test. And to explain to the... to the listener, a fallout test, again, is I'm rolling a D—I'm not, but— the... *computer* is rolling a D12. [chuckling]

[Ali chuckling.]

**AUSTIN:** And if it's *underneath* their total, uh, stress number, then they get a fallout, which is like... it can be everything from... You're temporarily blinded as sand moves into your eyes, to... You feel the voice of the Heart in your head, to... You are, uh... You know, suddenly you get someone who starts following you 'cause they think that you are the prophesized leader of their cult who's gonna come and save them... to, uh, a monster shows up—you know, all sorts of stuff—is fallout. And uh, neither of you got it, so that's good, but your stress is *continuing* to to build, and that's part of... the mechanism here, and at a certain point, it's gonna be *more* likely than not that you get a fallout, because you're gonna be over 6 or 7 or 8, basically.

**DRE:** Mhm.

**AUSTIN:** Um... and then... I'll just say this now, but the way it determines what type of fallout you get, is based on what the die is when it comes in under your total. If it's... *under* your total, and under 7, so it's 1–6 and under that total, then that's a minor fallout. If it's under your total and *above* 6, then that's a major fallout. So only have to worry about major fallout until you're over 6 stress, basically, 'cause you can't get that.

**ALI:** Oh, sure.

**AUSTIN:** Um... In any case, you're good! You've... you've gotten this—I like this moment of Pickman giving you shade, you make your way through this canyon, um, and you've continued to, uh... to march towards your destination, which—now you see, in the distance, as you come through the canyon.

Um, in the distance is... a— a series of buildings, one of which has a belltower much like the abbey that you saw... in, or—the abbey that was in... in Blackwick. Um, but this is— This is, instead of being an abbey, this is a priory. This is the Priory of the Mother-Beast, and... you can see some motion... off there. Again, it's pretty far away still, um... but, you are able to make out a number of figures moving.

First... *very* far away, you kind of see someone ringing the bell, and you can hear, at a delay, the sound of the bell being rung. Um... So that's one thing that you see. And as you get closer, then you see someone in the... in the—not the *road*, but you're on kind of a path



in this river basin—um, who [chuckling] is standing in the basin, um, in nun's garb, um... which, I'm kind of imagining as—for these folks—it's like... white and gray, and little, um, bands of the same sort of maroon, that are in the salt walls. Very similar coloring.

And I think they have... [sighing] god... Um, they have the sort of like... I don't know what you call that kind of broad hat that nuns wear—a *cornette*, is what they're called. These kind of like, wide, crowned habit-type things—I'm gonna paste an image, um... c-o-r-n-e-t-t-e. Uh... [reading] "It is essentially a type of wimple, consisting of a large, starched piece of white cloth" [Sylvia: Oh, of course.] [Dre: Oh, yeah yeah yeah.] "that is folded upwards in such a way as to create the resemblance of horns... on the wearer's head."

**JACK (overlapping):** [sarcastic] You didn't need to say!

**AUSTIN:** Sorry, yeah, I know we're all up on our wimple... our wimple game. Um... [chuckling]

[Sylvia laughing.]

**JACK:** Wimple Monthly—I'm a [chuckling] subscriber.

**AUSTIN:** [laughing] So yeah, they have that. And... um... She seems to— She's holding a torch in her hand—like a— like a... old-fashioned, you know, torch covered in... in... you know, oil, wrapped in cloth, you know? And lights it, um... and then lowers it to the ground in front of you by, you know—she's probably half a mile off—and the ground lights... on flame. Um, and now there's a row of fire—it's not like, enough fire to like—you know, you— maybe you have to like, walk through it a little bit and that'll suck, but you're not... it's not a burning, you know, forest that you need to move through, so you're not sure what's going on there. But it's strange! Um... A moment of reflection here, maybe? What's— How do people feel about all of this stuff? Nice to have a destination, I guess!

**DRE:** Mhm... Uh, Chine finds this more annoying and frustrating than... anything else. Like, the creature stuff? Fine.

**AUSTIN:** Mhmm...

**DRE:** But... a person just doing something... that's getting in the way is way more frustrating and irritating.

[Ali chuckling.]

**AUSTIN:** [chuckling] Than a big... orange monster. Sure.

**DRE:** [muffled] Mhm.

**AUSTIN:** Um... All right.

**DRE:** That bat just let us right through!

**SYLVIA (overlapping):** [very quiet, partly drowned out] ...you know.

**AUSTIN (overlapping):** That bat was great! That bat listened to you.

**ALI:** How— [yawning] How far off is she at this point?

**AUSTIN:** Again, I'd say that she is probably... half a mile off. Um... Which is pretty far, you know? Walking—walking after you've walked all this time, um... Uh, but— and—

**ALI (overlapping):** Yeah, that's more than a "Hey!" can get you... [laughing]

**AUSTIN:** Yeah, exactly—and she's also just gone! Like, she turns around to walk back, walk away from here. She's like, done her job, basically. Um... And I think as you get closer, you see another sight: On the ridge of the canyon, as you approach, you see someone... You see first one person with like, um... Just kind of, marching slow but rhythmically down the... down the edge of the... of the canyon.

And then you see there's another person behind them. And another person behind them. And up on their shoulders is a sack. One *extremely* long sack—it just goes, and goes, and goes... and... *you* remember this, Pickman. Where'd you see this? Oh right, you saw it in a dream.

**JACK:** *Hm.*

**AUSTIN:** Just this... *long* line of people, all of them—in this case, these nuns—and now you're close enough to them, and... and, uh... also, the fire is now kind of in front of you—to kind of see like, this pit of fire has been set for *them*, to toss whatever this sack is... *onto* it. Um, and you're also close enough to see their faces. And this is the first of these nuns you've seen. Um, and... it's as if *all* of their moisture has left their body. Their faces are like... dust, or ceramic about to shatter, um... and their eyes are like, completely white, and again, dry. And they make no... they look at you not at all. But Pickman, *this is it*, this is—you've seen this moment in a dream, for *sure*. Um... How do you respond?

**JACK:** Just, like... like... shakes her head, as if trying to dispel the image... um...

**AUSTIN:** Mhm.

**JACK:** And... You know when you see a picture of a place on like, Google Street View, or you are remembering a place that you've been, and then you are there in person, and... [Austin exhaling.] the... sort of the sensory experience of being in proximity to that place is kind of overwhelming, [Austin: Mhm...] if you're very familiar with the picture, and then you see, um... see the thing itself. And I think that there is a real *dawning* horror in Pickman, sort of watching these elements.

**AUSTIN:** Yeah...

**JACK:** You know, Pickman going,

**Jack (as PICKMAN, internally):** Oh, look, she's setting the... ground alight.

**AUSTIN:** Uh-huh!

**Jack (as PICKMAN, internally):** Oh, look, there are people on the... Oh, look, it's a parade...

**JACK:** Um... and I think Pickman is seized with a kind of... with a kind of horror—a horror of something in the sack that they are carrying, a horror that it's gonna be tossed into the flame, um... [breathing] Sort of, keeps walking—like, the camera tracking their head, turning to follow the parade.

**AUSTIN:** Yeah. And it *does*, like, they do get there, and in— just like, *all* the effort in the world they can muster, like, tumble this thing down the river bank, into the fire. And the burlap of the sack *slowly* catch—I— actually, I think that when it hits, there's this huge like, explosion of fire, this huge blast of it, upwards. Um, and then it kind of settles back down, but the fire is raging, and the sack is *kicking*.

Again, it's *long*. It's like... Thirty-forty feet long? Um... A single, long sack... um, and it's moving, as you approach it. And now you're *at* the fire pit, and it's moving. And the... the line of people, the slow parade, has turned back, in less... less strict a rhythm now, 'cause they're not all carrying the same thing—and are sort of gliding, seemingly, back towards the edge of the canyon, the far end of the canyon where... where the priory is. Um... What do you do?

[Jack exhaling heavily.]

**AUSTIN:** I will say, the priory is in spitting distance at this point, right, you could ignore this burlap sack and just go there. Um... and also, I'm not saying this burlap sack is a good thing, I'm not— I don't wanna put... you know...

**JACK (overlapping):** No. Oh, *no*.

[Dre laughing.]

**JACK (overlapping):** No, I mean...

**AUSTIN (overlapping):** Maybe let it burn.

**JACK:** They put it into the fire for a reason, but I think Pickman is insensible to that.

**AUSTIN:** Mhm.

**JACK:** I think Pickman just sort of says... like... [chuckling] I don't know if they say, you know,

**Jack (as PICKMAN):** We're going to get you out!

**JACK:** or something.

**AUSTIN:** Mhm.

**JACK:** But they just break into a run towards the... the sack, and start tugging at the burlap at the edge of the fire. The— You know, where it is probably safe to— Like, when you're putting a log on the fire, and you can get your hand in there without burning it terribly.

**AUSTIN:** Mhm. Um... Other people, what's— What are you— How are you responding to Pickman doing this?

**Sylvia (as VIRTUE):** Ah, yes, wonderful. There goes the one source of shade.

[Ali, Jack, Austin, and Dre laughing.]

**ALI:** Uh...

**AUSTIN (overlapping):** Um... Go ahead, Marn.

**ALI:** Probably not, like... There's at least like a,

**Ali (as MARN):** Hey, what's up?

**ALI:** Like— [laughing]

**SYLVIA (overlapping):** Yeah, right...

**ALI:** [chuckling] "You wanna share with the group" situation, being like...

**AUSTIN:** Yeah, let's— Well, play it out, please say it.

**DRE:** Um... [quiet] Yeah.

**ALI:** Yeah, I mean...

**Jack (as PICKMAN):** [frantic] *There's someone—*

**JACK:** Oh, no, go— you go, Ali.

[1 hour]

**ALI:** [laughing] No, you... I mean, establishing that like, Marn, I guess, is running after you as well and being like,

**Ali (as MARN):** [confused] Uhhh...

**Jack (as PICKMAN):** [frantic] There's someone in the fire! They threw someone. They threw someone into the fire, they're in the sack. I dreamt about this!

**AUSTIN:** [amused] Forty-foot long sack, "They threw someone [chuckling] in the fire."

**ALI:** [laughing]

**(as MARN):** Th— There's... [searching for words] There's more than one guy, I bet!

**DRE:** I think, upon hearing, um... Pickman say that she saw this in a dream, that actually spurs Chine into action.

**JACK (overlapping):** Yeah, Chine and I are...

**DRE (overlapping):** As someone who also has a lot of weird dreams.

**AUSTIN:** Aaah. True. True, true. Um... So you two both try to haul this thing out of the fire?

**JACK:** Yeah, I'm gonna roll Remove Burlap From Flame, please.

**AUSTIN:** [flatly, going along] Remove Burlap From Flame, totally, yeah.

[Dre laughing.]

**AUSTIN:** Um... I think that this is...

**DRE (overlapping):** Oh wow, you've got mastery in that, wow!

**JACK (overlapping):** [amused] I've got mastery in that!

[Dre and Jack laughing.]

**AUSTIN:** [chuckling] Uh... God, what would this be? Um... It's *Endure*, right? Because it's like, you're *pulling* this thing from the pit of fi— from the fire, both in strength and withstanding the heat. You know?

**JACK:** Yeah, I think that there's, like, there's an image here that I really like, which is that combination of like—goats go places that people shouldn't go—you see those images of goats like, standing on an incline or something.

**AUSTIN:** Yeah. Yeah, yeah...

**JACK:** Um... and also Pickman is *very* heavily armored, so I wonder if part of the Endure is that, in order to get leverage on the sack, we see them just sort of like, *wade* into the fire and the... [Austin: Yeah...] cape starts to burn, the metal underneath isn't really... Well, let's see! Um...

**AUSTIN:** Let's see what that roll is.

[Dre chuckling.]

**AUSTIN:** This is... this is, uh, Desolate and Cursed.

**JACK:** Okay, so I have—

**AUSTIN:** Because of what this thing is.

**JACK:** I have nothing for my, uh, skill.

**AUSTIN:** [chuckling] Uh-huh.

**JACK:** But Cursed is the domain.

**AUSTIN:** Yeah.

**JACK:** Aaand...

**AUSTIN:** And it sounds like Chine is helping, which... [Dre: Mhm.] um, they can do, because they have Hunt. [pausing] Not Hunt, sorry—Endure, they have Endure. Right?

**DRE:** Yeah. Mhm.

**AUSTIN:** Yeah. Dunno why I said Hunt.

**JACK:** So I get one extra die?

**AUSTIN:** Mmhm! You sure do.

**JACK:** I'm gonna be rolling three die, let me see... Is this— This is Standard?

**AUSTIN:** This is... [exhaling] Phh... This is Sta— [uncertain] Mmm? Mmm. Mmm... [decisive] This is Risky.

[Jack chuckling.]

**AUSTIN:** You're standing in fire and pulling a cursed thing out of it. *This is Risky.* [chuckling]

**JACK:** Um...

**AUSTIN:** And it will be— And it will *probably* be—and this is a thing that I'm gonna go back and forth on probably, as we play—sometimes I'll say what the... the stress will be—I think this'll be Blood or Mind or Echo stress, probably. [chuckling] I know that's not particularly limited, but...

[Jack chuckling.]

**AUSTIN:** Uh, it's either gonna hurt you physically, or scar you... magically, mentally, emotionally, spiritually. You know?

**JACK:** Yeah. All right. Okay.

[**Austin** chuckling.]

**JACK:** No skill...

**AUSTIN:** What was that? Were you— When you were like, [uncertain] “Ehhh...” was that you being like, “Maybe I won’t do this...”

**JACK:** Well, I was thinking about, um... using the armor in some way.

**AUSTIN (overlapping):** [intrigued] Hmm!

**JACK:** I think it might actually be better to—there’s a interesting sort of risk/reward game here, which is: Pickman’s Shape armor lets her do a bunch of different things.

**AUSTIN:** Yeah.

**JACK:** Uh, like for example, I could consume a resource and gain access to a skill or domain for the rest of the session.

**AUSTIN:** Yeah...

**JACK:** Um... *But...* [chuckling] I could also, if it goes bad, just start wiping stress out, as well.

**AUSTIN:** True. True.

**DRE:** Mm!

**JACK:** Um... so I think I’m gonna wait and see if I’m gonna need to clear stress.

**AUSTIN:** Yeah.

**JACK:** So let’s go...

**AUSTIN:** Makes sense. [pausing] That’s success at a cost.

**JACK:** Ooo! [pausing] Okay.

**AUSTIN:** Sadly that Risky— that Risky takes away that 9, huh?

**JACK:** Yeah. Damn.

**AUSTIN (overlapping):** There we go, that’s the— that’s... that’s risk for you.

**JACK (overlapping):** That's the game!

**AUSTIN:** That's the game. All right. Um... [exhaling] The thing that happens here—okay, so you pull this thing out, um, of the fire—and it is... it is like, kicking as it's doing it, but once you get free of the fire, it, um... it... stops. But then you—do you open the sack? Do you like, cut it open?

**JACK:** Yeah.

**AUSTIN:** What do you do? How do you... okay. Um, inside... I mean... Yeah, I'm just gonna say it. *Inside* is the furred and scaled, and... slowly dying eighth leg of... the dragon, that was in there. Um, which...

**JACK:** The leg?

**AUSTIN:** Yeah! Remember, there was only seven legs? Here is the eighth.

**JACK:** I— Yeah. I guess that's what was kicking!

[Ali chuckling.]

**AUSTIN:** Uh-huh! Yeah. Forty feet, um, covered, again, in scales and death, um... and stitched together, at close... [chuckling] at close proximity. You're looking at, like... I mean, you're gonna take Echo harm from this— Echo stress from this, is what's gonna happen to both of you, I think. Um, so give me a D6 Echo stress here. So you just roll D6, both of you.

**JACK:** Oo! [chuckling]

**AUSTIN:** Not too bad, with a 2 from Jack.

**JACK:** And a 2 from Dre!

**DRE:** Uh, 2 from me as well.

**AUSTIN (overlapping):** Oh, and a 2 from Dre! Damn. Damn!

**DRE (overlapping):** So, 0 for me.

**AUSTIN:** Damn, 0 for you, too. Yeah, I guess it does cancel—that means, Dre, you don't need— you didn't suffer stress, so you don't need to make a fallout check.

**DRE:** Okay, cool!

**AUSTIN:** Uh, Pickman though, does. Give me a— Mark 2 in Echo, um, as the sense of this thing gets on you and in you. Um... You— For one moment... [searching for words] You have digitigrade legs, right?



**JACK:** Yeah.

**AUSTIN:** You have the like, back—*instead*, you imagine yourself having two legs quite like this. Um... and you can't shake it.

**DRE:** Oof.

**AUSTIN:** You're just like, "Oh yeah, I have these legs. This is my leg. This my— *This is my leg*. It's just zoomed in, it's just bigger than it's supposed to be." And you just like, *can't* shake that feeling. Um... Uh...

[**Jack** exhaling hard.]

**AUSTIN:** Anyway... Here's the leg, that you can, you know... cut into pieces if you wanna take some dragon bones off of it—uh, or dragon scale. And, again, it's just like, a patchwork being, is what it is. I think, upon closer inspection, it becomes kind of clear that this is like... this is something the nuns made. You know, you see needlework, here in the light of day. You see that this is, like... um, that *this* leg, at least, is something that... they built.

**DRE:** [quiet] Hm...

**AUSTIN:** And then threw on a fire, because... I don't know why! You'll have to ask them at some point, huh?

**Jack (as PICKMAN):** Awful. Just awful.

**AUSTIN:** Uh-huh?

**JACK:** Um... I think Pickman just says that.

[**Austin** chuckling quietly.]

**JACK:** Just like, just standing in the— in the fire with their... with their... their cape smoldering. Um... but I don't take any fallout, which is good.

**AUSTIN:** No! Just stress. It's slowly building, but... you know. Um... All right. Does anyone wanna... pick through this thing? And take anything from it?

**DRE:** Yeah.

**AUSTIN:** Yeah?

**DRE:** Yeah.

**AUSTIN:** What do you... What do you... What's that look like? Tell me what y'all are doing to get stuff off of this big dragon leg.

**DRE:** Um...

**AUSTIN:** We don't have to go into, I guess, visual detail, but like... you know. Is this like, a *Monster Hunter* carving up situation?

[**Ali** laughing.]

**AUSTIN:** Is this— Are you trying to find something special here?

**DRE:** [chuckling] I think what Chine goes for is—because like, I think when they see that like, okay, this is something that was *created*... like, the meat itself is just kinda like, okay, whatever.

**AUSTIN:** Yeah.

**DRE:** They probably just like, took this off of cows and whatever and stitched it all together. Um... I think what Chime [sic] is trying to do is recover... like, a big length of that thread that they used to sew it together.

**AUSTIN:** Ooo, I love that! That's fun. That's good. Uh, Marn, are you also on this— on this game?

**ALI (overlapping):** Sure, yeah. Unfurling a big, like— [laughing]

**AUSTIN (overlapping):** Are you also trying to take some stuff out here? Yeah...

**ALI:** [chuckling] This tool roll-ups, but it's just like, full of different... [**Austin:** Yeahhh!] pliers, and... blades and stuff.

**AUSTIN:** Totally. Um... I'm gonna say that this again, is either Discern, or Mend, or... I guess Hunt would work for this, right?

**DRE:** [going along] Okay!

**AUSTIN:** I feel like Hunt— I mean, Hunt is about tracking, but like, it's the word *Hunt*. I feel like if you have a skill called Hunt, and you don't know how to like... [**Ali** chuckling] butcher a thing you've hunted, then maybe you shouldn't have a skill called Hunt.

**ALI:** [quiet] Yeah.

**AUSTIN:** And again, maybe I'm wrong about that, but... that's my read.

**DRE:** [laughing] Yeah, sure.

**AUSTIN:** Uh, so give me one of those, and then it's Desolate or Cursed for domains. Um, you could do it as a... as a group action, again, because both of you are working on this together, and that'll just... make it easier.

**DRE:** Okay.

**AUSTIN:** You tell me who's... who the main is, but it— you know, you're both gonna get stress from it if you fail, so...

**DRE:** Yeah. Um... I do have Hunt and Cursed.

**AUSTIN:** So then let's let you lead, and then have Marn help.

**ALI:** [quiet] Mhm.

**AUSTIN:** So go ahead and, uh... give me those rolls then, Dre.

**DRE:** [quiet] Okay.

**AUSTIN:** Yikes!

**DRE (overlapping):** Oo! 6.

**AUSTIN (overlapping):** Damn, 6.

[Ali chuckling.]

**AUSTIN:** Yeah, 1, 2, 5, 6.

**ALI (overlapping):** Yeah, [drowned out]

**JACK (overlapping):** I fucking—

(as **PICKMAN**): I fucking *knew* trying to cut this thing up would be bad news.

[Ali laughing.]

**AUSTIN:** [chuckling] Uh-huh?

[Dre laughing.]

**AUSTIN:** Um... Uh, so—I think that this is going to be... Supplies stress. Um... both of you give me a D6, and that'll be your... that'll be your stress roll here.

[Short pause.]

**ALI:** [quiet] God... [snorting, turning into laughter] Oh no...

**AUSTIN:** Oof.

**DRE:** Oof.

[Austin groaning quietly.]

**DRE (simultaneously with Austin):** *Aaayyy!*

**AUSTIN (simultaneously with Dre):** *Aaayyy!*

[Dre laughing.]

**AUSTIN:** Chine takes no stress! I was telling— Uh, Dre, I was telling Janine yesterday, last night, while I was like, prepping for this, I was like, “I think Dre may have made a fucking *beast*.”

[Dre laughing.]

**AUSTIN:** Dre’s like... Chine is... hardy as *fuck*, [Dre: Mhm!] because of the minimum protection value, um, being so strong—it’s just like, yeah, you just didn’t take that stress. Uh, unfortunately, Marn did. Marn, um... I will— I would say that this is a different, um, situation, ‘cause it’s been multiple rolls on this dragon leg, so if you want to move it into Fortune instead, you can, but... but it’s up to you, wherever you want it. And this is a situation that’s like, where you put it is... almost like, setting up where your inevitable fallout will end up.

**ALI:** Sure, yeah yeah yeah.

**AUSTIN:** Will it be a Fortune fallout or a Supplies—you know what I mean? Um... Supplies is like, an abstract mechanism of like, “How much stuff do you have with you?”

**ALI:** Sure...

**AUSTIN:** Um, and I think the reason that this does this is just like—breaking this thing apart, breaking it down is *hard*—you know? Um... It’s well made. Tracking that thread, Dre, is *hard*.

**DRE:** Mhm.

**AUSTIN:** Uh, Ali, what were you trying to get out of this thing? What was Marn... kind of digging for?

**ALI:** [uncertain] Ju... Pieces? To like, understand the like, [Austin: Pieces.] construction of it, I guess, um...

[1 hour 10 minutes]

**AUSTIN:** That’s a good idea, yeah. Totally. Um... Both of you—or I guess just... just Marn, give me a fallout test.

**ALI:** Sure...

**AUSTIN:** Hope for the best. We’re getting there now! We’re in fallout territory for sure.

**ALI:** I’m taking a minor fallout...

**AUSTIN:** Okay, we got our first fallout. This is definitely gonna be Fortune fallout.

**ALI:** Uh-huh...

**AUSTIN:** For a hundred percent sure. Um... Let's see here.

[Ali chuckling.]

**AUSTIN:** Um... [considering] Hmm... Uhh, I'm gonna say... This is a light one, but I'm gonna say it anyway, let's see. Um... Yeah. [reading] "Foreboding: Something bad is about to happen. GM, hint at an ominous future event—smoke in the distance, the tremors before a pulse, the frantic music of the Carnival. This fallout can be upgraded to Crisis (see below)." You're working on this thing, and it's just taking you longer than you want to, and it's like... It's just like, you're getting frustrated, you know what I mean? You know the thing, where like, you're working on a thing and it's like, "This should be easy, it's not easy, [gritting teeth] *why*—Just—

**DRE:** Uh-huh! [chuckling]

**ALI:** Uh-huh.

**AUSTIN:** "I need— We need to keep moving."

**ALI:** Uh-huh!

**AUSTIN:** Um, and... and like, "Ohh, my— people are getting mad at me, 'cause I'm not getting this done quick enough, *aaah!*" Um, and a bell starts ringing.

**DRE:** [amused] Austin, why are you targeting me like this? [laughing]

**AUSTIN:** [laughing] Um... A bell starts ringing, in the distance—um, the bell at the priory. And, let's call that half... let's call that [chuckling] half of the bad omen. Uh, [searching for words] I'm gonna sit on the rest, I wanna deal with loot and stuff, but we're almost done today, and I wanna end on the... the *full* picture of this bad omen, so let's just... let's go over what you got from this first, and then, as you step a little bit closer, I can give you a little bit more.

Um... Ba-ba-ba-ba-ba... [pausing] All right, *take*... Um... Uh, that thread, Dre... [**Dre:** Mhm...] I mean— Both of you take, uh—these are *Good*—this is, again, dragon shit is for real. Take D10, uh, a D10 Cursed... Actually, this would be *Religion*. D10 Religion, um... what would you call the thread you weave a dragon leg with? Dragon leg thread? Dragon... I don't...

[Ali laughing.]

**AUSTIN:** Whatever you wanna call that.

**DRE:** Like, “Nun’s Thread”?

**ALI (overlapping):** Yeah, it should have something fancy like that...

**AUSTIN:** It’s— It’s— It’s not... Yeah, it *should*, but it’s less that it’s like... You would not take this to another nun, and be like, “Oh, this is a thread you use, right?”

**DRE:** [laughing] Yeah.

**AUSTIN:** This is special, weird... This like...

**DRE:** “You wanna borrow this?”

**AUSTIN:** This is the Thread of the Mother-Beast, is what this is. Um...

**DRE:** Yeah. Okay.

**AUSTIN:** So... That’s an item you pick up in fucking *Bloodborne*, for *sure*.

**ALI:** This is resources, by the way?

**AUSTIN:** This is resources—so that was Dre’s, and then yours is going to be... Marn, you’re not getting the thread, Dre’s getting the thread. You’re getting... ‘cause you’re going for like, the... parts of the dragon, right? Or the Mother-Beast, actually, is what it is, I’ll just say that. Um... Yeah, this is like... You tell me, what did you get from it that’s cool for Marn?

**ALI:** Um...

**AUSTIN:** Is it some sort of like... fake bone? Is it some sort of... Is it how they’ve made the leathery... fur—you know, like, what is it? What’s the thing that would’ve— would be a D10?

**ALI:** Yeah, I don’t know, I think that like— I—The... thing that I wanted was like, a haunk [sic] of it, so I could like... [**Austin:** Yeah.] understand what they were doing, right? Like, understand the construction of it, or like... [**Austin:** Yeah...] figure out if this was like... If the... the thread work was...

**AUSTIN:** It should be like, a knee, or something.

[**Ali** chuckling.]

**AUSTIN:** It should be like, a joint, you know?

**ALI:** [chuckling] Okay.

**AUSTIN:** And this is Cursed—yours is Cursed—you got a piece of this fucking thing.

**ALI:** Okay.

**AUSTIN:** Um, and I'm also gonna say that this is... [considering] Mmmm...

[**Ali** chuckling.]

**AUSTIN:** I'm trying to decide if there's a... If there's a tag for this... Um, but I think you're just good. I'm not gonna give it one of one of these negative tags.

**ALI:** [quiet] Okay.

**AUSTIN:** You've already— It's already been a rough one to get it, you know?

[**Ali** laughing.]

**AUSTIN:** So I'm not gonna give it "Deteriorating," or whatever.

**ALI:** Oh, *well*, I mean...

**AUSTIN:** Uh, you know what—I'm gonna give it "Taboo," which is like, [reading] "This resource isn't accepted for barter in most haunts."

[**Jack** chuckling.]

**AUSTIN:** "Organs from heartblooded people," [**Ali:** Oh, sure sure sure.] "gold teeth, or certain narcotics." This is like—you know, "You got a fucking dragon knee? *Okay?* Don't bring that to my house!"

[**Dre** and **Ali** laughing.]

**AUSTIN:** "Get it out of here!" It's very valuable, but you're gonna need to find a buyer, you know?

**ALI:** Yeah. This is like, a specimen, this is not like, a... [**Austin:** Exactly.] [meek] "Can I— Can I get a meal and some... nice bread?"

[**Jack** chuckling.]

**AUSTIN (overlapping):** [laughing] Yes, exactly! Yes. Yes.

**ALI (overlapping):** [laughing] Um...

**JACK:** "You got it from *where?* The nuns were trying to do *what* to it? *Oh...*"

**ALI:** [quiet] Yeah...

**AUSTIN:** [laughing] "And you *took it?* Okay..." Um... And so—

**ALI:** I've written "Slice of Mother-Beast Leg"... Does that—

**AUSTIN (overlapping):** Love it. Fantastic.

**ALI (overlapping):** [quiet] Yeah, mhm.

**JACK:** Ohhh, man, what a season we have gotten ourselves into.

[Ali chuckling.]

**AUSTIN:** Mmmmm-hm! Hell yeah.

[Dre laughing.]

**AUSTIN:** Um... So, here's the other— Here's the plus side: Um, [reading] "Aside from putting one foot in front of the other, characters might perform actions that make the journey easier or harder for themselves whilst on a delve. For example, if a clutch of pitchkin have built a tarry, flammable nest in the only sensible path, the player characters might decide to take them on in a fight to clear the route. If— The above fight isn't considered to be part of the delve itself. Instead, if the pitchkin are defeated, it functions as a boon. If the players earn a boon, subtract D4 to D12 points from the delve's Resistance... duh-duh-duh-duh-duh..."

I'm gonna say that like, figuring out how to get this thing out of there has like, let you build a little path through this fire... pit, in a way that's like, not... It's given you a path through it, without being... particularly difficult. Um, when you get a boon on a delve, you just get to roll D4 to do damage to the delve. It's sort of like—if you have a situation on a delve that is, like... a thing you didn't need to do but you did, you can roll a D4 to kind of turn it into damage to the delve. So, someone roll a D4, really quick.

**ALI:** I got it. 3.

**AUSTIN:** Hey, 3! Uh... All right, you pass through this fire, the bells are still ringing. Uh, and because of that boon, that means that you now have, uh... you've completed the delve—um, which is the first— [chuckling] it's our first completed delve in this game about doing delves, congratulations.

**ALI:** Woo!

[Sylvia chuckling.]

**JACK (overlapping):** Hell yeah!

**DRE (overlapping):** Woo. [chuckling]

**AUSTIN (overlapping):** Uh, I was there when *Friends at the Table* got the first... got the first delve.

**JACK:** Do we get a treat?



**AUSTIN:** Uh... You get a... you get a... A thing happens, is that a treat? I guess you— tell you the thing, and then... you'll tell me if it's a treat.

[Someone chuckling.]

**AUSTIN:** Um... as you've made it now past this fire, and you've dealt with the canvas sack and what was in it, and... you can kind of now see, um, I would say, you know, probably another... twenty-thirty minutes walking away, so it's... it's—maybe it's closer than that, let's say it's fifteen minutes. You've already finished the delve, it doesn't need to be that far away. Um... you see this abbey, or this priory in front of you, um, that has like, uh, a bunch of smaller buildings connected to each other, and some distance between them. It's still *basically* the desert out here, um, but there's a little more greenery near them, near the—near the priory.

And, as you get closer, it is time for me to pay off that bad omen. Um... As you're walking, and the kind of wind is howling, you get that thing where you see something happen, and then the sound takes a moment to echo out towards you. First, what you see happening is one of the big stained glass windows—on the very front of the kind of main entrance to this priory, that's facing this long canyon you're walking down—it shatters, and the glass goes flying everywhere.

Um, and you're too far away to see what broke it, but what you see in the sky—and what you hear afterwards—is startling nonetheless. There is a sort of... almost as if it's— as if it's lined up with the priory in the sky somehow, a sort of vein of red lightning strikes across the blue sky—um, the pale blue sky here. Um, and it's like, that deep, dark red, almost corrosive color, um, that showed up when you found the bullet, um... Virtue, in the Residium. It's that same style of like... reaching out, as if it's trying to like, spread. Um... like, again, like an upside down... like, a lightning— like, a forked lightning bolt, going upwards into the sky here.

And then a moment later, you hear, you know, the crack of... of a gunshot echo, and then the sound of thunder hits you, from where the lightning... is. And I say "is," because *it remains* in the sky here, this kind of snaked tongue of... of red lightning that holds here and pulses. And as it does, this kind of day that seems to be, you know, holding still at around, you know, 11:45 AM—for the first time, there's *some* change.

[Music begins: [Sangfielle](#) by Jack de Quidt.]

**AUSTIN:** The suns don't move... but clouds begin to gather, towards where this lightning is. And... you can hear someone yelling in the distance, and then... everything goes silent, except for the wind.

[Music plays out.]