

Drawing Maps 19: Sangfielle Characters #5: Duvall - October 2020

Transcriber: robotchangeling

Austin: Welcome to another episode of Drawing Maps. Joining me today— I'm Austin Walker. Joining me today is Art Martinez-Tebbel.

Art: [chuckles] Hey, how are you?

Austin: Hi. Good. So, I guess we should start by saying you're playing the Deep Apiarist.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: Which is probably the most, like...one of the most flavorful classes in *Heart*. I mean, there's a bunch of good ones in here, but I think Deep Apiarist is the one that stands out, I think, most often among people who like flip through the book.

Art: Mm.

Austin: 'Cause of being a cool bee mage, you know?

Art: Yeah.

Austin: And being tied to, you know, this whole...this whole situation. And so I sent you over a collection of questions that would, I think, direct some of our kind of big picture questions about what you are, what your character is, what a Deep Apiarist is or what our version thereof is, et cetera. And kind of those are built off of flavor texts for the class, but also...but also just, like, the way moves work and then stuff around just kind of the general concept as you have it. I would say that, like, the...I have a bunch of big questions here, obviously. And I think the one...the actual biggest one is not the first on the list. It's the second one, which is like: Are you the only version of this thing that you are? Or is this a type of thing that exists generally?

Art: I think it's like, um...I think it's...it's a rare thing. I don't know if it's the only one. I think it's like a...I think it's like a fuck around and find out what happens kind of thing.

Austin: Sure.

Art: Like, people...people go and look for stuff that they shouldn't look for, and most of the time you find nothing, and some of the time, bad stuff happens to you.

Austin: Uh huh.

Art: And sometimes this happens to you, another really bad thing, but...

Austin: And this is the thing that— right, this is the bad thing that happens to you, is...

Art: Right. This— yeah, is you end up being a human beehive.

Austin: Right. Which is, I should say, I'll read from the book just to set up like what the Deep Apiarist is in...in the *Heart's* version of this, anyway. I'm gonna skip the bit about where you become infested by bees, 'cause it's pretty gross. But, [reading] "You are a Deep Apiarist—one of a small sect of occultists who use the power of the Hive to work magic that manipulates order and chaos. The sigil-covered bees crawling through their bodies can unleash deadly attacks on those who would stand in their way." And so, the reason I ask that is because I think sometimes I've seen this class—you know, in different actual plays, but even just in different parts of the book—represented is like, there is a Hive, where there's a bunch of these, and they're all attuned to each other, and it's like, there's the...I mean, you first pitched me this as being sort of like being the Seven of Nine of something like the elemental, you know, embodiment of death or chaos or something like that, right?

Art: Yeah.

Austin: And so—

Art: And I think that like, it makes sense in that way, right? Like, how would you...or I guess I should just disclose right now, I've seen zero episodes of *Star Trek: Voyager*.

Austin: [chuckles] Yes.

Art: So what I think Seven of Nine is might have nothing to do with the character Seven of Nine.

Austin: Sure.

Art: But if you were like a Borg, and you wanted to understand people more...

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Art: You would send like a person—

Austin: Right.

Art: —your most person-like Borg—

Austin: Mm.

Art: —to go check it out. I think it's the same way if you were bugs that infested people and you want to see what—

Austin: So is that the thing? Are we leaning...where are we leaning, in terms of the thing that made you? Is it bugs that...like, how do you under— how does your character understand? And also, are you playing a person who has been infested? Are you playing the new like gestalt consciousness between the bug magic and you, you know what I— and who you were before? It is...is your situation you wandered into a cave you shouldn't have and now this happened? Or is it I cast a spell I shouldn't have? Or is it I sought this out?

Art: I think it is, like, I was looking for something, and I didn't know what it was. You know?

Austin: Yeah.

Art: It's— I think maybe 'cause like a lot of the background of this is I've been reading some like cosmic horror in that way.

Austin: yeah.

Art: But like, that's the thing for me. Like, I was reading a book, and I was like, [overconfident] “Yeah, this— I'm gonna go do this! I'm gonna go call the Great Old One.” And instead of like, getting a lot of sick powers, it's “Oh shit. I'm a bug now.”

Austin: Yeah. I'm covered in them. They're in me. They're all— I am them. Yeah, great.

Art: Right. And I think the like, the question of like, “who is driving?” is *the* question, right?

Austin: That even you don't know, necessarily, the answer to. That it's kind of a murky...

Art: Right, in the sense that no— I mean, how do I know I'm not being controlled by bugs right now?

Austin: Or, I mean, you know, one of the through lines here— [Art laughs briefly] I mean, yes, obviously, yeah, we...welcome to *Friends at the Table*. [Art laughs softly] Toxoplasmosis, let's go. But the...one of the through lines from the moves here, and I think one of the things—I bring it up in a later question here—is the thing of like, this is, in the way *Heart* is written, the thing that the Deep Apiarist is is like an avatar of order. The hive is this orderly thing that brings structure to a world that's unpredictable and dangerous. And in our world, one of the things...you know, the kind of three big themes that are in the final question that I've been asking everybody is like, “How does your class let you address themes of contradiction, uncertainty, certainty, and community?” basically. And the way I've been framing that is like, we now live in a world— both we and also we in the game *Heart*, in our version of the game *Heart*, [both chuckle] live in a world where it's unclear that essence exists, right? Like, not only does existence precede essence, but like, essence has been obliterated. We understand that we live in a world of post-structuralism or postmodernism, where there is no single truth, and in fact, we're living in— awash in truths that often conflict with each other. And that can be scary as much as it can be

liberating. And part of me wonders if the old god that you found was like some god of order, some representation of “Hey, the world used to be a way.”

Art: Sure.

Austin: It used to be that like, you know, the sun set and then the moon rose and then you could count on that every day. That up was up and down was down, right? That like...

Art: Yeah.

Austin: Things went...that to get to temperature, or to get to 80 degrees, you had to get to 79 degrees first. And that's no longer the case, because...because who knows why. We don't know what happened here, in what, in the last episode, Sylvi started calling the Heartland, and now I've been calling it that, 'cause that's fun.

Art: No, I love...I love your little...your little write-up of that in the...

Austin: My little shpiel, yeah.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: This like re-frontier.

Art: Save that.

Austin: Yeah, that's—

Art: That's a good behind the scenes content.

Austin: I'll put that in the...yeah, yeah, yeah. I'll put that in my notes, so we don't lose it.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: But I do think, at that point, that like, is there...and like, I guess that's already in line with the Borg, right? The Borg certainly are— I don't know how much how much *Star Trek*, like, Next Generation you've seen, but there is an element of the Borg that's about like assimilation and orderliness and all of that.

Art: Mm-hmm.

Austin: But even—

Art: I've definitely seen the movie *First Contact*.

Austin: Okay, well, then you're good. That's all you need. Right?

Art: [laughs] That's what people say about *Star Trek*. You just need to see the Next Generation movies, and you've got the whole thing.

Austin: You got it, basically. Um, but yeah, that idea of like, whatever that force is, and if that's like a...and this came up talking to Keith a little bit, actually, or in Keith's notes. A thing I kind of like is...so, Keith's class is really built towards some sort of old god shit. A lot of the Junk Mage's power comes from like either old gods or old pantheons, weird...gods that are not the contemporarily worshiped ones. But I do kind of love the idea of there being some sort of force of order that has been thrown asunder or has lost power, has lost its centrality. Like, once, whatever this force was, or whatever we end up calling it, the oldest thing, I think, is what I've thrown around a little bit, or the first thing or whatever it is. Like, that thing was central and was like the sun around which everything orbited, and everything made sense to. You know, or made sense of itself to that thing.

Art: Mm.

Austin: And now that thing isn't central anymore. And like, it's competing with a billion other things, to the degree that no one's even worshiping this god anymore, if it's a god at all. If it's a force, if it's, you know. It's like, what if gravity stopped being the force that was, like, as important as it is in the galaxy? Maybe gravity would get mad about that, you know?

Art: Yeah.

Austin: And so, you're now bees. We think that there might be some other people like you out there, but based on your answer, it doesn't seem like...there's no culture. There's no society that you're part of, right?

Art: No. I think it's like, you know, when you come back and you're full of bees, the oldest person in your town might be like, "Oh yeah, I knew a guy who was bees before."

Austin: Right. Okay. [laughs softly]

Art: When I was a kid, the bee guy came through.

Austin: Right, yeah. Love it. The bee man cometh.

Art: For all I know, you know, on the other end of the...you know, over there, there's a town where it's all bee people. They're like, "Oh yeah, I saw a guy who wasn't bees once."

Austin: But you don't know that place. Whether or not it's...

Art: No.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Gotcha.

Art: And it's like, it's not even a thing...it's not even a thing I necessarily think is interesting. It's just like, I'm trying to lower the view, you know?

[0:10:00]

Austin: Right, right. And so—

Art: Which is, I think, important on a couple levels, because I think a beehive only seems orderly if you're looking at it real close.

Austin: Right. If you're looking at it, if you just like see a beehive and all that motion really quick, it's very scary.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah, I'm not a fan. So, I'll just go back a little bit here. Does your character, then, have that orderliness motivation? Or are they an explorer? Are they just in a kind of like...what's your impulse? I mean, maybe this is jumping ahead actually, to like Calling, but do you have thoughts on, like, what is it that you're...that you want to do?

Art: I don't have an inciting incident yet, which I think is going to be important.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: The like, why did you open the book? Why did you go to the cave? I mean, and...

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Art: It doesn't need to be a book or a cave, but you know.

Austin: But I know what you mean, yeah. Yeah.

Art: Yeah. What's...what started this is important, and I haven't thought about it at all. [both laugh briefly] But now I think it...it must feel very powerful, you know?

Austin: Yeah.

Art: Going from being a more regular person like dabbling in things to being like, "Oh, now I have control over this thing."

Austin: Right.

Art: And this thing is, you know...I mean, I might...

Austin: Determination itself.

Art: Well, it's kind of...

Austin: Right? Like...

Art: Yeah. Well, it's like, would it feel really powerful? And like, of course it would, right? Like, if you could suddenly shoot bees out of yourself, you wouldn't be like, well, it would be—

Austin: Which is one of your starting moves. Your starting move, Release the Swarm: “You send out a swarm of bees eager to defend you. Gain access to the following weapon: Kill, D4, Spread, Ranged.” So.

Art: Yeah. And I'm like, well, that wouldn't...that's not as good as like magic missile or something. [Austin laughs softly] But like, it's sort of is. Like, if you went from nothing to that.

Austin: It's better than “I have a book,” right?

Art: Yeah.

Austin: Like, the old you couldn't do it. But also, there's this—

Art: Yeah, I'm gonna club you with this book I got.

Austin: [laughs softly] There's this double bind there, right? Because at the same time, there's an exchange of power happening to the bees, to the hive, to order, to whatever that thing is. We can't just call it Order because Divine, there's already a Divine named Order. It's an important— [coughs] Excuse me. It's an important one. [coughs] So we can't just do Order.

Art: But yeah, the...

Austin: But whatever that is.

Art: Yeah, the system.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: The way of things, the...yeah, I...

Austin: We'll get there.

Art: We can...yeah.

Austin: Yeah. Keep working on it in that way, right? And we have a lot of space.

Art: None of those, though.

Austin: It probably won't be one of those. But there's a lot of...there's a lot...also, we could just come up with...think about like, you know, when you think about fictional gods, it's not always just a descriptor. We can have some sort of wild fucking name for it. You know what I mean? Like, it can just have like a person's name, the way— not a person's name, but you know, a god's name, the way gods have them. You know? I was playing—

Art: Yeah.

Austin: Or I was watching, I've been watching *Bloodborne* in preparation for this. You take a look at the *Bloodborne* boss list, and, you know, they're not only called, you know, Cleric Beast. Some of them are named wild shit like, let's see...great ones, here we go. Ebrietas, Daughter of the Cosmos, you know?

Art: Yeah, great.

Austin: Rom, the Vacuous Spider. You know, we just need one of those. That's all. So.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: [laughs softly] Light work, to come up with a...

Art: A Cthulhu of our very own.

Austin: A Cthulhu of our very own, exactly. [laughs softly] So, one of the biggest things for me has been—and we've gone back and forth on this a lot—is like, is it just bees? Is there a way we can get away from bees? And...I'm curious if there's— and if you've had any thought on, like, other types of social animals like bees that are interesting to you. Or if you're like dead set on your— on bees or wasps or something like that.

Art: I gotta say, I'm really into the bees.

Austin: You're really into the bees. Okay.

Art: I'm like more interested in finding a way to just file the *Heart* off of bees than I am in, like, putting a new animal into those moves.

Austin: Right.

Art: But I mean, I did some work on it. I think termites is interesting.

Austin: Termites is interesting.

Art: It's tricky, because I think...I think of bees as an...as an insect that makes something.

Austin: Right.

Art: And—

Austin: Which is not what you think of termites as.

Art: Right. Termites like, the myth—

Art: Termites are destroying things.

Austin: They are specifically about breaking things down, right. Right.

Art: I mean, I don't know what a termite's life is like. I mean, I don't want to...

Austin: They're very destructive creatures. They're very evil, I think.

Art: But [laughs softly] do they go home at night and like, "Ah, I really messed up someone's house today."

Austin: No, they probably...what do they do with the stuff they take? 'Cause they're taking—

Art: I think they just eat it.

Austin: Are they just eating it?

Art: I think they're just eating it.

Austin: Hmm.

Art: I don't know. Hold on. [typing]

Austin: Do— yeah, what do...what do termites do with the wood?

Art: This is the worst of the...the worst animal googling we've ever done.

Austin: It's pretty gross. Why do termites eat wood? What do they do to wood? This is just a bunch of advertisements for Terminix and shit. This is the problem. Facts about termites.

Art: They feed the wood to other termites.

Austin: Oh, huh. Sure. Do they eat anything other than wood? They must, right?

Art: Um, it looks like they're trying to get a specific, like, thing out of the wood?

Austin: It's like an enzyme? Mm. They eat cellulose, the hard inner material located within large trees and plants.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: Even wood that's been treated still contains cellulose, which is why they eat homes. 'Cause like, it doesn't even matter if you treated that shit. There's still good juice in there.

Art: It seems inefficient, but I don't know.

Austin: I'm not a termite, right?

Art: Yeah. Wouldn't you rather be in the woods?

Austin: Yeah. What if we had...what if we had, like...I say this, but like, we can invent a bug.

Art: Yeah, it's hard to invent a bug.

Austin: [amused] I've never done it before, certainly.

Art: And I think that, like, the problem is you end up just building a bee with the serial number filed off, because—

Austin: You get a reverse— right, yeah. It's like, well, instead of making wax and whatever, you know, whatever, a hive, they make something else.

Art: Yeah, I mean, I guess that's...we could...we could. We could just call it anything. We can just call it "the bug," right? The honey isn't important to me. It's just like a flying thing that makes a hive, is all that...

Austin: It's a flying thing that builds a thing, right? Out of wax, or out of something, out of something it has.

Art: Out of something.

Austin: Right?

Art: And I want the— I want the buzzing noise. So if we just call them like hissing termites, we're there. And, gross.

Austin: Oh, right, the hissing termites.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: And they pick up wood in their little mouths, little wood bits, and then they rebuild really beautiful wooden structures. Like, what if they—

Art: Yeah, but— but they can't live in a wooden structure, because we still need the like...

Austin: Why?

Art: I still want a little bit of the body horror of...

Austin: I see, right, right. You want it to not look like a church, you want it to look like a hive. You want it to look like a gross thing.

Art: Well, 'cause... 'cause it eventually turns the person into that, right?

Austin: It can, certainly, right? That's one of the zenith moves, for sure, right?

Art: And you don't want to be like, "And now I'm fine mahogany, finished and..." Oh, maybe not, actually. That sounds kind of cool.

Austin: No, see, that sounds kind of dope, actually! [both laugh] That sounds sort of great. The idea that, like, your body is increasingly smooth and wooden. Eugh.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: That's a Junji Ito story, for sure. [Art laughs softly] You bought a nice chair, and every time you sit in it, you become more like the polished wood of the chair. [laughs softly] "Are you using a new moisturizer, honey?" "No, just the chair." Terrifying.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: Uh, we'll keep— we can keep thinking about this. But I think that's... I like coming up with a new thing. I think if I had to rank it, it would be: new thing that's like, creates something interesting. We should ping Janine. Janine'll have some fucking— she's sitting on three different interesting bug types, for sure, that we haven't heard of yet. [Art laughs softly] Two is bees or wasps or something. Bees, 'cause I think you're right, the construction element is— not that wasps don't construct hives. Obviously they do. But bees have sort of a... I don't know, a cultural association?

Art: Yeah, and I don't know why, but I, like, ants doesn't do it for me at all.

Austin: Ants isn't as fun. Ants don't buzz.

Art: Ants don't buzz. And I think, in a weird way, *Ant Man* the movie has ruined ants.

Austin: I haven't seen it, so they haven't been ruined for me. What happened?

Art: Well, there you go.

Austin: Is he just not...it's just not...they're not interesting?

Art: It's just...I mean, I think those movies are fun.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: But I think that they're...I don't— they don't make me respect the ants.

Austin: Oh, interesting. That feels like they missed their mark, then. You would think you—

Art: I'm not like disrespecting the ants.

Austin: Mm, sounds a little bit like you're disrespecting the ants. [Art laughs] But the honey is not important, you've said, so that does give us some wiggle. You're not trying to be like, "And also my...we make delicious honey."

Art: Right, the honey doesn't matter. That's, I guess that's why wasps. Wasps don't make honey, right? Um...

Austin: Probably not.

Art: No, I'm really just into a buzzing animal with a geometric house.

Austin: [typing] Do wasps make honey? Bugs with houses. [laughs softly] I'm not gonna search that one. Okay, yes. Adult wasps just drink nectar from flowers but don't turn it into honey. Wild. What about like cicadas? They make those like buzzes and clicking noises.

Art: Oh, a horrible noise. Do they...are they, uh...

[0:20:00]

Austin: You don't like that? You don't like the—

Art: Are they a hive animal?

Austin: I don't know if they're a hive animal. [typing]

Art: They're...they hibernate for so long.

Austin: They do, which is kind of fun. That's you can play with that. Are they a...? What do they...? Do they live in hives? What do they live in? They must live by themselves, right?

Art: Um...

Austin: I mean, they wake...they wake as big groups, right?

Art: No, that—

Austin: God, they're so gross looking.

Art: They...a male cicadas spends his whole life in one place. [both laugh softly] And that's what that call is, is like—

Austin: "I'm here!"

Art: —trying to get women to come.

Austin: "Please come here!"

Art: Yeah.

Austin: "I'm at home." [both laugh] "What Are Cicadas, and Why Are They So Strange?" *Smithsonian Magazine*. Love it. God, they're so gross looking.

Art: It's a real, like—

Austin: They're incredible.

Art: It's a real, like, what is...what evolutionary function is this? Like...

Austin: Yeah. God damn. I'm reading about cicadas. 13 to 17 years underground, and then millions of them surface together. Millions!

Art: Yeah. I mean, we could certainly take that. We just have to...we just have to make 'em...and maybe that's like a thing that like, "Oh yeah, most years you're safe from being..."

Austin: Called by the...right, yeah. That's fun.

Art: And that's a thing the book tells you, what the next year is. It's a...

Austin: The next— yeah. Uh huh.

Art: The last third of the book is just a set of numbers, right?

Austin: Yeah. God. All right, I'm gonna close this cicada thing. That's a potential direction, though. And then locusts buzz, right? You're can hear like locusts falling on something.

Art: Uh, I certainly think that's true. But they're the...I think the Bible has really skewed locusts in my head, right? Like, what is— what do I know about locusts, and what do I know from pop culture depictions of the biblical plagues?

Austin: And the answer is...bad. They're comin'.

Art: Mm-hmm. Locusts are the swarming phase of certain types of grasshoppers.

Austin: This fucking sound. I mean, that makes sense, 'cause this is a grasshopper chirp. Oh, wow, yeah, that's a grasshopper. God, that's a big bug. Those are— that's so...ugh, I don't like bugs.

Art: [laughs] We can still pull the plug on this whole thing, Austin.

Austin: This video— [both laugh] This video, 45 seconds into this video, it pops text up on the screen that says, "Don't miss the last 15 seconds!" As if like, don't click away, you better get there, 'cause...nothing happens in the last 15 seconds.

Art: I don't know what I did, but now I can't hear YouTube.

Austin: Okay. Don't worry about it. It goes like...it just makes like a grasshopper sound. You know, like a...you know how they sound. Anyway.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: These are ideas. These are things we can keep thinking on.

Art: Yeah, what...but what's happening with my computer? Why can I hear you and now nothing else?

Austin: I don't know. I don't know. It's scary. I don't want to...don't touch it. Don't touch anything until we're done. [Art laughs] So, um, one of the big questions for me—and like, this has come up with a couple of different classes—is how we want to handle some of the body horror stuff here. You know, this is a class that is very much about bees living inside of your body, other

creatures cohabitating in you, nesting in you. And that being good. [laughs softly] You know, or like, you're good with it.

Art: Mm-hmm.

Austin: You're living with it. It's not a, um...it's not an infestation in the way we think of that as a pejorative. But I'm curious, like—

Art: Very much *Flintstones* vibes, the “It's a living.”

Austin: Yeah, yeah, it is that kind of, huh? So, this is partially me just being like, let's...I would say, let's be careful with it, and like, stay in the realm of...like, there's something about some of the moves where, if we are going bees, like the kind of wax paper stuff does not feel as gross to me because it's so clean somehow? You know?

Art: Yeah.

Austin: But like, I would like to stay away from like, viscera, you know?

Art: I would also like to stay away from viscera. I think that's why I designed a character that eventually has no viscera, right? Eventually, it's all just...it's all just honeycomb in there.

Austin: Right. And then you're almost like a— yeah, you're almost like a, like a beeswax statue person, because you're...

Art: Yeah, like a piñata of bees.

Austin: [amused breath] Of bees. Great.

Art: Sorry, person who clicked on this with...who doesn't like bees. [laughs]

Austin: [sighs] I will have a content warning in the description, a hundred percent, because that's what this class is, you know?

Art: But like, the person, like, we might have smoothed this all out for the show, and then this comes out, it's like, ah shit.

Austin: Ah, fuck. Yeah, true. True. The...we've already answered this one, the thing of like, were you a person before this? And the answer was yes, and you're some sort of...some sort of mage or truth seeker or someone looking for something. We don't know if you're explicitly looking for power or structure or what, but...

Art: Yeah, just a...

Austin: So we got that one already.

Art: Some sort of hobbyist.

Austin: Right. And then, and then, and then again, I feel like we've hit this next one, which is like, what do people believe you are? And the answer is like: if they fucking know, then they know what I am. I'm this avatar for this thing that's been...that has been, you know. I've been touched by the god whatever, right?

Art: Yeah.

Austin: But there is...at the same time, I'm curious if just like...is it clear, to look at you, that you got some bug shit going on? The answer has to be yes, right?

Art: I think it depends how close you are.

Austin: If I live in town with you and see you around, do I know you got some bug shit going on?

Art: Um...I think if you're like in line at the bank—

Austin: Yeah.

Art: —with me, yeah.

Austin: Okay.

Art: But if you're just like, you see me from across the square, probably not.

Austin: Yeah. Okay. What is that response generally? In terms of like, hey, here's an Apiarist. Here is...here you are. What are the range, maybe I'd say, of responses? Is there a degree to which you're accepted because everything down here is so weird already? Or are you...like, are people generally kind of scared of you once they recognize what's going on with you? Is it...do you have any thoughts on what that kind of range of experiences is?

Art: I think on like one end it's just like discomfort.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Art: Um, and then, like, the myriad ways that people can be shitty about things—

Austin: Right.

Art: —that they're uncomfortable with.

Austin: Oh, so the discomfort was—

Art: All the way to like...

Austin: Okay, okay. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Art: All the way to, like, this isn't a...this isn't a person anymore. This is...this is a weird joke. You're Vincent D'Onofrio in *Men in Black*. I'm not fooled by you.

Austin: Right, right. Right. Have you considered being—

Art: They probably haven't seen *Men in Black*. [both chuckle]

Austin: Have you considered being the bug— being Edgar from *Men in Black*? [laughs softly] Not a very orderly bug person, actually. Very, very disorderly.

Art: Very disorganized, yeah.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: But...but I think cockroaches *are* a hive animal.

Austin: I believe it. They...you can't find *one* of them. You know?

Art: Yeah.

Austin: Ugh. You can't be a cockroach person.

Art: Yeah, we're not doing cockroaches.

Austin: I hate them too much.

Art: Nope. Yeah, it's really...it's already like, well, I have to...I have to mute my own character so no one tweets me their cockroach artwork.

Austin: [laughs] Yeah, exactly. God. Um, one of the big things, I think, in the...because the Apiarist is built around this idea of order and orderliness and bringing order to the world, it's often positioned as being like in relation in some way to, you know, "madness," quote, unquote. Partially, that's through moves where like, you... [sighs] It's almost like the...you don't get affected by the things that would drive others mad, because you have this connection to, quote unquote, the Hive, right? But there is also— there are also parts where it talks about just like, because you are...you are the unHeart, you are the...you are order in a world of chaos, that you just don't— you're not as susceptible as a mind to the things that overwhelm other people. And

that is meant to be this kind of very powerful part of who you are. You know, the sort of like, other people see the round peg fit into the square hole, and it upsets them, and for you, you're immune to that sort of moment. You can look at Cthulhu and not take, quote, unquote "sanity damage," right?

Art: Right.

Austin: And I'm curious how you feel about that stuff, if you've had any time to think about depictions of that stuff, or like, how you think your character relates to those sorts of things. Not that I'm going to be teeing those up that often, but you know, if there's some variation thereof that you *are* interested in, then I can start thinking about that stuff.

Art: I think it's like, what— you know, I have so many entities to talk, to consult with.

Austin: Mm.

Art: You know, like, if you see something, you're like, "You seeing this?"

Austin: Oh, so are each of your—

Art: And what if you had like...

Austin: Are each of your bugs...one, can you talk to them all, in that way?

[0:30:04]

Art: Oh, absolutely not. That sounds exhausting.

Austin: Oh. Okay. Then—

Art: But I think it's like, it's like they're— it's like a passive reassurance.

Austin: I see.

Art: Like, it's like, "Oh yeah, we're seeing that too. Yeah, yeah. It's 30 feet tall and has, you know, arms for legs and..."

Austin: Right, right. Yeah. We know what monsters look like, Art. You don't need to...

Art: Yeah, 30 feet tall, arms for legs.

Austin: Arms for legs.

Art: That's a monster.

Austin: That's a monster.

Art: [laughs softly] I think an interesting thing that, like, just popped into my head is that if we're going with Heartland...

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Art: Then like, this character wants to pull toward urbane.

Austin: Right. Right.

Art: And that's not a thing I'd thought of for this.

Austin: But that's fun.

Art: That's super fun. I love it.

Austin: A bug person with a great great suit on, you know what I mean?

Art: Yeah, the very put together person who is also a beehive?

Austin: Yeah.

Art: Love it.

Austin: Yeah, that's kind of fun.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: I said bug person. You're...you're not a bug person. You don't have like a big...you're not a walking grasshopper person who also happens to have been turned into a beehive.

Art: [laughs] Right, right.

Austin: That's funny, but it's probably a little too messy, conceptually.

Art: Yeah, it's a nightmare.

Austin: [laughs] Um, the...looking at some of your moves, at this point. You know, we already kind of talked about the idea that there could be a big hive somewhere. I mean, there are a bunch of moves that gesture towards that. Hiveborn says: "You were reborn in one of the Great Hives. Your body, though still mortal, is waxen and papery," which lets you, like...this incredible move, which is, "You can fit yourself through any gap small enough for a bee by having your

swarm chew up and reform your body on the other side. This process takes upwards of six hours.” Incredible.

Art: Yeah, six hours.

Austin: Great. Love it.

Art: It's a real like—

Austin: You could rush it to an hour, but like...

Art: Yeah.

Austin: It's great.

Art: Or even just like, oh yeah, just like, oh yeah, then we're gonna focus somewhere else for six hours.

Austin: Yeah. [laughs softly] Right, exactly. The other one, obviously, is your core ability which you have to take, which is just called The Hive, which notes that the curious buzzing inside of you aligns your mind with the Hive. And so, are we just using the word the Hive to be a stand in for whatever our order god is? Or is there...you haven't been there, but do we want to say firmly, hey, there is some great bug haven where other beings like you are or where the bugs that live in you come from or that you have some sort of connection to? And if so, is that a place that exists physically among the other places here in the Heartland? Or is it like another realm? Like a, you know, I was just talking to Sylvi, and her class has a place called the Grey that it's associated with. Is it a similar sort of like, not afterlife, but like...the thing I jumped to is like, did you play Oblivion back in the day? Did you play any of those games? Are you a Skyrim, Oblivion person?

Art: No.

Austin: No? Okay.

Art: I don't understand how those games work.

Austin: That's great. [Art laughs] Well, you know, it's like the deities all have some realm that they can shape that's like sort of like their heaven, right?

Art: Okay.

Austin: So is like the Hive or whatever we talk about as that, is that one of those things? Or is it somewhere down here in the Heartland, you know what I mean?

Art: I'm really becoming enamored with the like 13 to 17 year cycle.

Austin: Yeah? Okay.

Art: And I actually— I really like the number 13 for all the reasons to like number 13. I really like the number 17 for all the reasons to like number 17. I have no interest in 14, 15, or 16.

Austin: Get out of here, 14, 15, 16.

Art: Well, 14 and 15 are just closed off to us anyway.

Austin: Why? Oh, right.

Art: Because of Twilight Mirage.

Austin: Yeah, Fourteen Fifteen. Yeah.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: And then 16 is not it, yeah.

Art: Yeah, 16's not it. [laughs]

Austin: But what if there's like a city that only comes alive every 13 or 17 years?

Art: Yeah, yeah. Right. And that that's the place that...that I got this from. And it has to be recently, 'cause it can't be 13 years ago. So it's gotta be like, it was last year, [laughs] and it's 12 years from now.

Austin: Right, right, right, yeah.

Art: Yeah, and like this, there's this, this big city, the, you know. We can call it the Hive. We can call it anything. We can call it...

Austin: Yeah, yeah.

Art: We can call it Dim Carcosa.

Austin: That's what it is. We got it.

Art: [laughs briefly] And like, and that like, that's a place, and then the year, the season ends, and it's not a place. And I think even as simple as like, the...it's not that it's gone and it's not there, right? It's that over here, you have mile marker 14.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: Over here, you have mile marker 15. Sorry, again, for going to Fourteen Fifteen.

Austin: Fourteen Fifteen. Uh huh.

Art: And that most of the time, those are a mile apart. And every 13 years, there's a giant city in between these two mile markers.

Austin: And there's just like jazz music playing, and everyone's having a great time. Everyone wakes up and is mating and partying.

Art: Uh huh.

Austin: And they've woken up from like a hibernation where they've been like dreaming of like cool art to make.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: And things to build. And the factories all kick up into action.

Art: Yeah, yeah.

Austin: What if we— what if you—

Art: And then—

Austin: Okay, wait, wait. What if you went...I want that place to be a potential thing that could happen on screen. So like, what if you got this...what if you haven't been there, because you became what you are between, like, between the sort of...

Art: Between the cycles?

Austin: The cycles, right? Because you're this special thing.

Art: Sure, we can also decide— sure.

Austin: Do you know what I mean?

Art: That that's what the book does. The book tells you how to get there in between cycles.

Austin: Yeah, the book tells you how to get there in between cycles, when everything is kind of quiet and sleepy. And then you were kind of con— not contracted, but like, the thing that you

were told was like, you don't...you're here at the wrong time. Go out and be my eyes. Show me the world as it is, in between...you know what I mean? In between...

Art: Yeah.

Austin: I'm sick of only seeing the things here every 13 years, you know?

Art: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Or 17 years, whichever we end up with.

Art: Yeah, and that's like the punishment for breaking in and...probably trying to rob the place, right? Everyone's asleep.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: I'm gonna go take the...

Austin: The honey. And...

Art: Yeah, I'm gonna take the honey.

Austin: And whatever else, right? Like, you've heard that there is a place...you've heard that there is a place where the world works the way it used to, and there are ancient treasures there, things that, you know, are from a different age, a different time. Things that could only be created in a world of cooperation and order instead of the kind of terrible, you know, frontier state that everything lives in here, where everyone is sort of like competing over scraps. You break—you're...are you like a tomb robber? Or are you a...like, how much are you Indiana Jones versus how much are you the cosmic horror, you know, hero who has the satchel filled with books they shouldn't have fucking read?

Art: I mean, I think I'm the cosmic horror villain.

Austin: Oh, right, yes. Sorry. Yes.

Art: Yeah, the... [Austin chuckles] I'm...I think Indiana Jones is too cool.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: So I think it's like 10% Indiana Jones, you know? [laughs]

Austin: Uh huh.

Art: Like...

Austin: You haven't punched even one Nazi, so.

Art: Zero Nazis punched? A nice...lost the hat in the city.

Austin: Yeah. Mm-hmm.

Art: It's the city's hat now.

Austin: Yeah. [both laugh softly]

Art: But, you know, can outrun a boulder, I guess, or could.

Austin: Probably could.

Art: Could outrun a boulder.

Austin: Yeah, yeah. We'll find out, I'm sure, at some point. I like that a lot. I like— this is a good direction. This is fun. This is—

Art: I love a sleeping city.

Austin: Yeah, the— oh, yeah, just write that one down real quick. Uh, where's...where's that question at? Here. [typing] I'm just gonna write, in bold, The Sleeping City. Boom, done. Love it. Uh, da-da-da-da-da... Uncanny Biology says, "Aside from the Queen nestled inside of your heart, every part of your body is replaceable by the swarm." That's a move you'd have to take. It's a...I think it's a minor move, not a major move. Your moves are all very good. Maybe I'm wrong, though. Maybe that is a...maybe that is— yeah, that's a minor move.

Art: Incredible array of moves.

Austin: Yeah. But, but I'm curious if that would end up being...you know, we can cross that bridge if you ever take the move, because that's one that's like, I don't know, do you have a— I guess, I guess maybe part of it's true. Regardless, that's like, do you have a queen bee inside of you? Or whatever like a special super bug is that the rest are tied to? Or is it more of a...is there some other organizing principle here, you know?

Art: I definitely like the idea of a super bug, of a central bug.

Austin: Somewhere in there.

Art: Bug politics, yeah.

Austin: All right. Well, if you end up taking Uncanny Biology, we'll have that one to go. Uh, I kind of— we don't even need to go over Blessed Toxin. That's kind of just me earmarking it for like, hey, let's be careful around narcotics and...

Art: Yeah. And I a hundred percent agree.

Austin: ...you being a vector for it, you know?

Art: I don't think it's necessary. I think it's very easy to just write over.

Austin: Yeah, yeah.

Art: I think it's...like, I get it. They don't want you to just be, like, generating unlimited healing potions, but like...

Austin: Yes.

Art: That's not...

Austin: Yeah, the move, for people listening—

Art: Sure.

Austin: —is basically a move that's like, you can— your body lets you use...basically lets you mend Mind damage, Mind Stress. And, and you can be— it can be even better if you...if you, like, give yourself some blood stress to do it. And that part of it I think is totally fine. The part that's like, eh, is that it frames it as being a narcotic, like an 'addictive narcotic.' And I just like don't know that we— I know that we don't want to go there, because someone's already X carded addiction in that way.

[0:40:27]

Art: Mm-hmm.

Austin: So we just can't do that part of that move. I'm fine with the rest of that move as is, you know?

Art: Yeah.

Austin: But, yeah.

Art: And...but I just think that we are not the group that's gonna be like, "Oh yeah, just pumping out the healing potions. There's no downside. Pew, pew, pew!"

Austin: Totally.

Art: Like, that just isn't— that's not us.

Austin: We will figure out if there is another element. Yeah, yeah, yeah, totally. The last thing in this kind of ability—

Art: Puts you to sleep.

Austin: Puts you to sleep. Right, that's it. And that's...and that's kind of it. The last thing here in this ability section is that I've noticed that you start with...you know, every class starts with a skill and a domain. You start with Mend and Occult. And you're not the only Occult class that we have here. You know, I think both Janine's Witch and Keith's Junk Mage might start with Occult too. But I'm curious what aspects of Occult you're interested in seeing on screen. "Hidden knowledge and black magic" is how the book describes the Occult domain, which is kind of to say like the Occult, like, sphere of ideas and everything like that. And so, yeah, I'm curious like...and we've already, I think, talking about things like the Sleeping City, talking about things like cosmic horror, old gods, et cetera, is a good direction already. But I don't know if there's anything else that you wanted to raise as being like, "I really want to see *blank*," or "When I think of Occult stuff with my class, I want to do XYZ."

Art: No, I think that these are the...I think we've gotten to the things that I'm interested in in this area. I think if we need to, like, poke a little bit at those edges, it'll become clearer as we ramp up.

Austin: Mm-hmm. Yeah, I think that's probably the case.

Art: I think after episode zero, we'll know if I need to do a little more pushing in those directions, but right now, like, yeah, this thing at the heart of this class is what I'm super interested in.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Art: And like, especially with two other people in this domain, I don't want to push at the edges too much, you know?

Austin: That makes sense. Yeah, yeah. Totally.

Art: In the same way that I don't want them to start being like, "Oh yeah, my shit's in that city, too."

Austin: Right. Yeah. I don't think that'll come up, I don't suspect, you know?

Art: No, I don't. Just, yeah.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: They've already gone. They're already... [Austin chuckles] As you said at the top of this, anything you discuss in this is locked in forever, so.

Austin: It's locked in forever, and that's that. Yeah. A hundred percent. We already talked about your Calling. I guess, well...I guess we didn't talk about what your Calling is now, right?

Art: Yeah.

Austin: Are you leaning one direction or the other here?

Art: I like Enlightenment, and I like Forced.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: And sort of trying to, like, figure out which end of those things it falls on is like...

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Art: ...really the whole thing. So I have to just pick one. [laughs softly]

Austin: Totally, totally.

Art: 'Cause like...cause it's...it's the same, right? I mean—

Austin: It is.

Art: I don't want to be too nihilistic about this whole character, but like, [Austin laughs softly] how do you pick one of these when you can't decide if you have free will or not? [laughs softly]

Austin: I mean, the answer ends up being which Beats are interesting to you, because the way Callings work is that, besides the starting ability, there are also just like a list of things that this is how you're gonna get XP.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: And so like, if what you want is a character who, you know, is going to, you know, gain authority within a faction that you can use to learn more about your goal, or attract a protege who's read your work and is determined to learn more, then that's Enlightenment. And if you want, instead, you know, perform a truly reprehensible act on behalf of your masters, [laughs softly] or learn or possess something that lessens the control your masters have over you, then you're gonna want Forced. And that...like, when I say those two things back to back, Forced is a little more interesting here.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: For me, I think.

Art: And especially 'cause I want to push away from stuff I've done.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: And I feel like I've done Enlightened like three times now.

Austin: Yeah, that's probably true, right? Grand is definitely Enlightened. Hadrian's probably Enlightened.

Art: And there's...you could make the— you could make a case that Sovereign Immunity is Enlightened.

Austin: Yeah. It's like Enlightened by way of Forced, but like, Enlightened without...

Art: Yeah.

Austin: Or Enlightened despite of Forced, you know? Like...

Art: Yeah. So, so I think...I think it's gonna be Forced at this point, but I'm gonna need to reread the...

Austin: Yeah, just reread the Beats.

Art: I'm gonna need to reread both pages.

Austin: Yeah, you'll be...it's not much, right? [laughs softly]

Art: Yeah. I don't know if it's literally one page, but it certainly doesn't feel like a lot.

Austin: Yeah, yeah. Um, one of the big things I've been asking everyone, just to like make sure that player characters are on book, you know, on page, on the same page—

Art: Yeah.

Austin: —is, what is it that would make you committed to helping the Haven as part of the party? And why would the Haven be more or less happy to have you? Again, obviously, maybe there's some people in the Haven who are like grossed out by you or who disagree with having you here or something. But, by and large, you're in a stable position in whatever our Haven ends up being, which we haven't even made the Haven yet. We're gonna do some sort of

worldbuilding game, probably, to build it. But assuming that it turns out to be a place that's like, where we want to set the game, at least partially, how do you think your character negotiates that sort of like...in many ways, you're an outsider, you're alone. You're the only figure like yourself here. And so, how do you balance that with the sort of like, the table goal of having buy-in from the jump?

Art: I think there's two...there's two big ways to do it that I'm interested in doing, is, one, the character's from here.

Austin: Oh, sure. Yeah.

Art: And has that sort of like municipal pride, in the sense that like, I'm really not thrilled with the United States of America right now, but...

Austin: Yeah, sure.

Art: I'd like it to do well, 'cause that's where me and my family and my stuff is.

Austin: You are, yeah. Sure, sure.

Art: And also that it is an orderly place, in a—

Austin: Comparatively, right.

Art: In a world of disorder, and so like...

Austin: We know, at the very least, it will have the Haven tag, which means it is a place that people can live their lives.

Art: Yeah. So I'm psyched. I'm...I'm really committed to strengthening that. And I mean, part of strengthening it, at least for my character, is gonna be like, and it should be the way I think it should be.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Art: But like, I certainly don't want it to get worse.

Austin: No, totally. I also think that that's an interesting...you know, thinking about the, like, "It's orderly here, and that's nice," is interesting, because it helps situate that like, part of the free will question with your character is that like...we think about free will versus determinism or whatever in very—maybe we don't, but people often do—in very binary ways.

Art: Mm.

Austin: But like, I bet your character didn't like order as much before as they do now. And to what degree is free will or the lack thereof about the way affinities shape you. And like, I bet you have a better, a bigger affinity, a higher...you like it when things are orderly now, in a way, maybe, that you didn't even...maybe even if you liked orderly things before, you didn't like it *like this*.

Art: Sure, yeah.

Austin: [laughs softly] You know what I mean? And so like, in that way, there is a pressure on the way you see the world. And like, maybe you didn't even like this town that much before, but now that you see that it's one of the rare places where things, where people wake up at 6 a.m. or whatever, go to work, and they do their jobs, and then they go home. And like, there's a repetitiveness to that that's safe and good and connects to something that's now in you that you like, and it's like, okay, well, like, is that...does that mean that you do like it? Does that mean that you only like it because you've been shaped to like things like this? What's that mean for taste, generally speaking? And I think that's a fun place to be, because that's a much more complex question than "Did you decide to do X or Y?" you know?

Art: Sure.

Austin: "Or did something else decide for you?" you know?

Art: Yeah.

Austin: So that's fun. And then the last thing, we already kind of hit here, this like themes of contradiction, uncertainty, certainty, community. I feel like we've kind of hit those. But if there's anything else you want to add to those now, I would obviously be interested.

Art: No, no, I think...I think, yeah, I think we hit this, and I think we...I think it sounds...I'm as psyched as ever for this.

Austin: Awesome.

Art: I mean, I've...I've been ready— I've been ready for Season Seven for a bit now.

Austin: Right.

Art: I really like dove into the media that I wanted to like consume to get ready.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: And then it was like, "Great, I finished these books. Oh shit, we have to do like six more weeks of PARTIZAN." [laughs]

Austin: We have to finish PARTIZAN. Yeah, uh huh. Yeah. (??? 49:24)

Art: But I mean, I think I always...I think I'm a high wanderlust person.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: I think I'm ready for the next thing faster than most people. [laughs softly]

Austin: Most. Yeah, I think that's...I'm pretty similar, honestly. It's just like, the job is getting the show done, you know?

Art: Yeah.

Austin: Is there anything else that you want to bring up or questions about the playbook or about the world or anything else that you're like interested in defining at this point?

Art: No. I think all of my remaining stuff like that, like, I'm ready for episode zero.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: I'm not ready to start pushing on things on my own.

Austin: Yeah, that makes sense.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: Cool. Well, this has been good.

Art: Ah, yeah, great time.

Austin: We managed to do it in an hour, so that's easy. Knocked that the fuck out.

Art: How long have these been?

Austin: They ranged, I would say...I don't have the shortest one on deck. I'd say the longest is probably like an hour and a half, hour 45. Something like that.

Art: Alright.

Austin: And then I think the shortest was like 40, maybe? Something like that? I don't have them all, like I said, in front of me, because I don't—

Art: Am I the last person to go?

Austin: No, we still have...Keith, because Keith got pushed till tomorrow. And we still have Jack.

Art: Great.

Austin: Jack, first one to give me notes, last one to record, I think is gonna be the case. So that's...

Art: Oh, it's uh...

Austin: How it works sometimes.

Art: Can be rough living in such a far-flung time zone.

Austin: Yes. [laughs] Yes. All right. Let's do another clap.

Art: All right.

Austin: Thanks for joining us, everybody. And we'll be back with a couple more of these.

Art: Keith and Jack, apparently.

Austin: Keith and Jack.

Art: Although, who knows what order they actually go.

Austin: I think it'll go the release order, because there's like things that build in some ways, you know?

Art: Oh, sure, yeah.

Austin: Um, you wanna do, uh, 28 seconds?

Art: Sure.

[they clap]