

## Bluff City 26: Extracurricular: Out Of Time Pt. 0

Transcriber: Alexis (@alexiorsays)

[Music track *Extracurricular: Out of Time* begins playing]

AUSTIN (as a kid): Ollie, you are not gonna believe what I found last night. I was riding my bike down near the Wawa when— no. No, the one in Margate, near Lucy? What was I doing at Lucy? Listen to yourself! “What was she doing at the big elephant hotel?” Come on, Ollie, you know what I was doing: I was looking for *cool shit*! No, no, I didn’t find any cool shit at Lucy. But what I did find, when I was riding my bike down near the Wawa in Margate, if you’ll let me finish my story, was really cool! So! There I was! Riding my bike. Down near the Wawa. And what do I see? One of those big blue and red Bluff City Studios vans. No one’s seen those in years! Not since the strike when the studio flooded, and that whole place got shut down. And? Get. This. Its back doors... were wide open! And— no. No, I didn’t see the news. I came home and I calle— what? There wasn’t a shootout near there, I would have heard it! Unless it happened... when I was in Lucy... I... anyway, stop interrupting me! I’m getting to the good part!

So I throw open the doors— I mean, the doors were already wide open. And in the back, there was this black briefcase with chrome etches, and it was unlocked. So, I opened it. And what do I see. Bagged and boarded, issue number one of Extracurricular. What do you mean, what’s Extracurricular? It’s Extracurricular! Okay, well, it’s, like, this comic. Yeah, superheroes. Um, it’s set here, in Jersey, well like, fake Jersey. Fake Atlantic City. And it’s about these teenagers who are like, trying to fill the shoes of these other adult heroes, who sorta disappeared? It’s great. And in issue one, they fight the Eel King. Yeah, it’s like a big, weird eel monster, and it explodes, and everybody gets new powers, and— no, not eel powers. Just, other kinds of— if you read the comic, you would know what I mean, Ollie! Anyway, I haven’t even gotten to the good part yet.

So I get to the end of the issue, you know, I go to turn the page, to the back where there’s like the advertisements and the letters to the editor and all that stuff, and what do I see: issue number two! The comic... keeps... going! No, it isn’t a collection. It’s not a reprint, it’s just, it’s a single floppy issue. I have it here in my hand! It keeps going! The stuff with the shark girl, and the mask guy, that’s all in here! It keeps- issue three is in here! It— I don’t get it either. But something weird is happening here. It’s like, it’s like something out of a comic book. And between that and the van, I just think— what? Yeah, fine, go to dinner, but DM me when you’re back, ‘cause I haven’t even gotten to the good part yet!

[Music ends]

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AUSTIN: Welcome to Friends at the Table, an actual-play podcast focused on critical worldbuilding, smart characterization, and fun interaction between good friends. I'm your host Austin Walker, and, joining me today: Alicia Acampora.

ALI: Um, hi! You can find me over at @Ali\_West on Twitter dot com, and you can find the show @Friends\_Table.

AUSTIN: Janine Hawkins.

JANINE: Hi, you can find me on Twitter @bleatingheart.

AUSTIN: And Art Martinez-Tebbel.

ART: Hey, you can find me on Twitter @atebbel, and since you're listening to a Bluff City game, you might enjoy the very last of our Bluff City shirts, up on friendsatthetable.shop right now!

AUSTIN: [laughs] We still have some left, after the holidays, is what you're saying.

ART: Yeah. It's always hard to know what you've got, when you've stolen shirts from a fictitious zoo. Uh, we got our counts wrong, so we have a few extras. Maybe. I don't know, when is this going up?

JANINE: Technically, I mean, you're framing this like they're Christmas shirts, but it's still winter.

AUSTIN: It is still winter.

ART: It is still winter.

AUSTIN: That's true. It's like they fell off of a second truck.

[Ali laughs]

ART: It's winter until March.

JANINE: And, it's always winter somewhere. So...

AUSTIN: Yeah, true.

ART: Uh...

AUSTIN: That's true.

ART: Is it? No, isn't it...

[pause]

AUSTIN: [incredulous] What?

JANINE: Yes.

AUSTIN: Yes!

ART: No. It's fall and spring!

JANINE: For at least a few more years, yes.

[Austin laughs]

ART: No, 'cause it's still... when we hit spring, the southern hemisphere is in fall!

AUSTIN: No— Yeah, but there's cold places always.

ART: Well, they're not *winter*. Winter has a meaning.

AUSTIN: Fair.

JANINE: There are also places where there are functionally two seasons.

AUSTIN: True.

ART: Mm. That sounds right.

AUSTIN: Yeah. That sounds right. [Janine laughs] I've heard that before. We're playing CAPERS, a super-powered game of game of gangsters in the Roaring Twenties, it's designed by Craig Campbell. Uh, we're just gonna do character creation today. I don't have like a big spiel... I guess I have a little bit of a spiel, which is, as people know, we've done a game before with superheroes in them. We played Masks during Bluff City season one, and two of those players are here today, Janine and Art. And there's a new player, Ali, and we're gonna— Ali, you're gonna make a character.

ALI: Mm-hm.

AUSTIN: Art and Janine, today during our character creation stuff, I think you're gonna transfer your characters over to a new system, and see how that goes. That sounds like a fun... that sounds like a fun process I did a ton of in college, over and over again for some reason. Sometimes just for fun. There's definitely times where when I was like, oh, what would this

character be like in this new system? And, the reason we're playing Capers is because we're gonna tell a story, this... uh, not this session, but this arc, about characters from the Masks game winding up in a new place, at what feels like, at least, a new time. The 1920s of Blough City.

We'll work out the details of why that is, but the real heart of this— you know, obviously there's a meta-plot this season, if you've been listening to stuff, the last few episodes, about the Tunnel Project, and like, stuff going on with the Nevada family, and like, there's shit! There is a, there is like a larger story happening here, but really, the heart of this is, one of my favorite things in comics is when a character gets put out of place, and you have like, a little throw-away filler arc that is just an enjoyable, like, what's going on in this new place and time? You know, main characters are caught, you know, in the wrong timeline, and their friends are back home, trying to figure out how to rescue them. And so, we're gonna do that! Does that sound... I pitched that to everybody, right? That's a thing I've been clear about.

ALI: Mm-hm.

ART: Yes, I knew that coming into this.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay. Good.

JANINE: No, I thought this was a summer camp episode!

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: Okay, well, we're in a summer camp and it's 1920s summer camp. That sounds like a...

ART: We didn't do the Christmas pageant episode.

JANINE: Basically, basically the same.

[Austin and Janine laugh]

AUSTIN: God. Um, so, Capers is an interesting system. In some ways, it's dramatically different from most tabletop RPGs of its sort, the sort that are still about like, combat and action and powers, and stuff, because, instead of using dice, you're using cards. It has like a very... You're basically playing a game of War against the GM with every trait action, with every action you take. And you don't know what the number is you're trying to win against. So there's a bit of a

gambling element here, of how many times do you draw your cards, and we'll get into that when we actually hit play.

The other thing, though, is, in some ways, I think this system might be the closest we've ever done to like, a very traditional tabletop role-playing game, because... or, when I say that, what I mean is like, D&D. What I really mean is, this is a book that has like, a whole big section on what "powers" are, and it definitely has like, you know, a chart that says how many bullets that can fit into a gun, you know, before you have to reload. How many shots you can take.

And like, that stuff is in this game, and I'm not saying we're not gonna play with it, because I think like, some of the stuff is definitely going to be more fun, some of the powers especially are more fun, if you're actually engaging with tiles and stuff. I think it's lighter than something like D&D, or something like Lancer, which we've talked about before. But we might... you know, we'll see how it goes. Uh, but I do think that's an interesting thing about this system, given that we've never really leaned into anything in that way. Have folks given the book a read, to the degree that they have a good idea of what they want to be doing? Or are there like, fundamental questions about how the system works?

JANINE: I mean, I looked at it, but I don't have a good idea. [laughs]

AUSTIN: Okay.

ART: You know, you know when you've been playing games a long time, and you feel like you can just skim a book and really get an idea for it?

ALI: [negative] Mm-mm.

[Janine laughs]

AUSTIN: No!

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: Okay! It's gonna be one of those recordings! Ali? How are you doing?

ART: Wait, wait, I had, I have a follow-up—

AUSTIN: Ali, are you the person most prepared? Oh, okay. Uh-huh.

ART: This is a book that like, really makes you bounce off that idea.

AUSTIN: Oh, yes. Yeah.

ART: 'Cause it just keeps going? Like...

AUSTIN: It just keeps going!

ART: Like you give me a new Forged in the Dark, or, Powered by the Apocalypse game—

AUSTIN: Powered by the Apocalypse? Yeah.

ART: And I think I can get like, ready to play, in ten minutes.

[Ali scoffs and laughs]

AUSTIN: Mm-hm! That was always the pitch, with Powered by the Apocalypse, right? Here is a playbook. Everything you need is on this one sheet. That was like the promise of that genre of game.

ART: Whereas this just keeps going!

ALI: Mm-hm.

AUSTIN: Yeah! You get through “perks” and then there’s “powers!” And then there’s “goods and services!” The goods and services chapter is short, it’s only two pages. But there is a goods and services chapter.

ART: Which is to say, I have not read enough of this book.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ART: And this is gonna be a fun recording for everyone.

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: It’s good. What I’m gonna do...

JANINE: It also feels like the most, like, text-dense book that we’ve seen in a while. Like, especially compared to Masks, even, which is like, lots of big illustrations, lots of things are broken down, really...

AUSTIN: Yes.

JANINE: I mean, things are broken down here, but there’s a lot of things broken down all in one place.

AUSTIN: Yes.

ALI: Well, are you telling me that this game doesn't need both a special damage category for energy, falling, suffocation, and explosive? Like, come on!

[Janine laughs]

AUSTIN: There's five different types of special damage!

ALI: I mean, come on!

AUSTIN: Sometimes things have an energy subtype! Certain powers can cause damage, and other powers can prevent or shield you from such damage! You know, sometimes—

ART: What page is the “encumbrance” table on?

AUSTIN: Umm... that's not in this book! You're good!

ART: [laughs] Aw, I'm carrying so much stuff!

AUSTIN: That's not true! That's not true! 'Cause people who can fly can carry a maximum of thirty pounds of gear with you.

ALI: That's so funny...

[Art laughs]

JANINE: That's a lot of gear.

AUSTIN: It is, but...

JANINE: I'm just gonna say, as someone who used to move thirty-pound boxes of cheese around a small town, not a small town pizzeria, but a small chain pizzeria, that's a lot of gear to carry just 'cause you can fly.

AUSTIN: Yeah, but it's not even a—

JANINE: That's a thirty pound box of cheese!

AUSTIN: Yeah, but think about Superman, who carries *people* around!

JANINE: Okay. So it's just— you're not carrying around all the time, it's just like, you *can* carry this, but not like, “this is your kit.”

AUSTIN: No, I'm actually saying the opposite, that to carry a person around in this game, with flight, you need to get a flight boost, called "chaperone," which lets you carry people around.

ART: Um, and I think you'd, it'd be easier to carry thirty pounds of cheese in a backpack, than in your hands.

AUSTIN: Yes. Probably. That's probably what they mean, by "gear."

ART: So your flight backpack is really what you're looking for, here. And it's full of cheese.

AUSTIN: Right. Thank you.

[Janine laughs]

AUSTIN: I am going to try to find... our Masks character sheets, so that y'all can look at those, while doing this.

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: Alright. Um, so let's start with that, actually. Janine and Art, can you remind us what characters you played in our Masks game?

JANINE: Uh, yeah! I played Grouse, whose real name is Chanti Park. She's extremely fashionable, and was the mentee of... I always think of—

AUSTIN: Waxwing.

JANINE: Right, Waxwing.

AUSTIN: Waxwing.

JANINE: I always think of Goldfinch first, and then it's like nope, Goldfinch wasn't there.

AUSTIN: Yeah. She was not, and that's a thing!

JANINE: Yeah. So, Waxwing is her mentor, so she sort of gets access to, to cool toys, and has, they have a hangout, and she does stealthy stuff, but her main power is bird telepathy slash telekinesis.

AUSTIN: [laughing] Uh-huh. Classic.

ART: [laughing] Ah, "slash telekinesis" I think will make me laugh every time.



[Austin laughs]

[Janine laughs]

AUSTIN: Uh, Art!

ART: My character in Masks was Elena Flores, AKA “The Champ,” AKA “La Flor Letal,” a boxer who had been experimented on by evil gangsters and left with super powers.

AUSTIN: Perfect.

ART: Really nebulously defined super powers, if we’re being completely honest. It really sucks that we’re moving into this much crunchier... superhero game. I’m gonna have to like, figure out what any of that shit meant.

AUSTIN: It’s fine. Don’t worry about it. Ali, do you have a premise for your new character?

ALI: Yeah! So, I, um... was curious to talk to you guys here, but I think basically like high level, my character is Caitlyn Key.

AUSTIN: Caitlyn Key?

ALI: Caitlyn Key.

AUSTIN: Spelled with a C? In Caitlyn? Or a K in Kaitlyn?

ALI: C. C-A-I-T. And I think that she’s like an established, you know, criminal, in Blough City?

AUSTIN: Yeah!

ALI: I... I was so on the fence whether I wanted her to be a Blough City superhero or no, or just like someone who was in, you know, was in this criminal world, and found these teens. ‘Cause I think both of them are kind of neat. But I think of her as someone who, like, you know, puts missions, quote-unquote, together, is sort of a detail-oriented, like, making sure people get out, making sure the scheme is clean, making sure there’s no evidence left behind...

AUSTIN: Is that like, what her card says? [Ali laughs] “Caitlyn Key: Making sure the scheme is clean!”

ALI: [laughs] Yes. Um, yeah. Yeah, what where the... there was like a sentence in my mind that was like, what if the guy from Drive, but like, who got out of the car? [laughs] You know?

AUSTIN: Sure. Sure. Yeah, yeah.

ALI: You know, just to sort of, like, make sure everything's good, and everybody who's...

AUSTIN: He hurts a lot of people in that movie.

ALI: He does. Um... not that much of the guy from Drive!

AUSTIN: Okay. Just making sure, honestly.

ALI: But like, the role that he plays within the groups that he's in, but he also participates in the, in the criminal-ing.

ART: Are you talking about Ryan Gosling? Or are you talking about, uh...

[00:15:00]

ALI: I'm talking about Ryan Gosling.

ART: Okay.

ALI: And I'm talking... you know, vaguely, about someone who just helps people get out of places!

AUSTIN: Right! Uh-huh.

ALI: And not arrested.

AUSTIN: The note here, is, because we're going to be playing in Blough City, I definitely think that this is, you can think of this in that like, X-Men, or "Spider-Man: On the Run", style story of, the superheroes are not, the superheroes that we would traditionally think of are vilified, and are criminalized. We've seen Blough City before, in "Messy Business," we kind of felt how oppressive that culture was, and this really should emphasize that, in a sense. And I think that, like, "the criminals" here, maybe they're doing some shit that we would still say is criminal, but, is explicitly doing it under the nose of a corrupt and, and oppressive police force. So, it also—

JANINE: So, the twenties.

AUSTIN: Yeah. "The twenties." Is what we're talking about. The 1920s. I don't know if this actually the 1920s, or if is just vibing like the 1920s, I'll have to think about whether or not this takes place... where this takes place in the meta-timeline? Or, I might just hand-wave it because part of the whole meta-plot for this season is that that meta-timeline is being fucked with because of the Tunnel Project. Right? So... eh! It's the twenties, for our... for the sake of the

camera, and the sake of this game, it has all of that shit happening. And Blough City already has most of that shit, so... we're kinda good, you know?

So! Creating a character. I guess... we should just start there. Is there anything else? Let me think... no, let's just jump into it there. So, in Capers, there are three types of characters. There are "regulars," that are regular people. There are "exceptionals," these are people who have kind of special perks, but not necessarily super powers, and then there are "capers," which is... I get the joke. I get the joke. 'Cause a caper is like, you know, like a heist, like a... a criminal enterprise, and that's a very 1920s word, but "capers" are super-powered people. People who are super powerful.

ART: Did Brad Bird write this book? What's the...

AUSTIN: Did who?

ART: Did Brad Bird write this book? What's—

AUSTIN: Yes. A hundred percent. Uh... [reading from the book] "You can either play as a caper or as an exceptional. The character creation rules account for both options. Exceptionals typically have a broader base of good general capabilities along with some special perks. Capers have a narrower base of general capabilities, augmented by fantastic powers." How are you all feeling about those? I'm guessing, I guess, my guess is that Art and Janine, you're gonna be capers for sure, because of super powers?

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Ali?

ALI: I have now made the decision that I am also gonna have super powers.

AUSTIN: Okay!

ALI: I kind of like the idea of like...

AUSTIN: That's fine!

ALI: Yeah, yeah, well I kind of like the idea of the criminal enterprise in Blough City sort of mostly being superheroes, because of like, the way the game sets it up, where it can either be like, yeah, you're being actively...

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Being kept track of, the places that you can go are being restricted, the doctors you can see are being restricted, because the people will think that you're this sort of like, other... thing.

AUSTIN: Yes. Totally. Totally. Okay! Cool. So, the first thing you do is come up with a character concept, I think you've got that already... Uh... the second thing you come up with is a name, which we all have, and you should have your sheets in the sidebar. You should just be able to go in and hit "edit" and go in and start to fill these things out. I did not put your character names in there, but, you know. Deal with it. Um... [laughs] The third thing, so, name, general description, which is just, hey, this is a general description!

The third thing on the sheet are the three "anchors," which are "identity, virtue, and vice." The three kind of core personality characteristics, which serve as a guideline for role-playing, and also provide you with an opportunity to earn an important in-game resource called "moxie." Which is something that you can spend to get bonuses on your kind of trait checks. You will need to make a choice for each of those three role-playing guides eventually; if you have a strong idea of who they are now, of who your character is now, you can fill that in now, but if you want to come back around to it, you totally can.

The lists of these kind of anchors, 'cause there are specific things here, because they are all tied to gameplay mechanics, are on 15 and 16, I believe... And this is just a kind of quick, you know, example, "identity" can be something like "crusader: you have a long-term goal, gain moxie when you complete a step on your way to that goal," or "planner: you have a plan for any situation, gain moxie when your plan comes off without a hitch." Gain moxie when you love it when a plan comes together... Or, "ruffian: you prefer solving problems through physical violence and intimidation, gain moxie when you deal with a situation through violence."

And then like, virtues are things like "generous: you like to share your wealth and good fortune." Which is, hey, nice, awesome. Or, "pacifist: you won't knowingly take a human life." And vices range from things like "arrogant: you simply do not back down when you think you are right," to having a phobia that could cause you trouble in play, to being self-pitiful, or to having a high temper, stuff like that. And you gain moxie if your character is hindered by your vice, you gain moxie if you stay true to the virtue even if it would be easier to ignore it to accomplish something. And you gain moxie if you stay consistent with your identity, also.

So, yeah. Does anyone have quick thoughts on those? I know there's a bunch of them to look through, and there should be no rush here—I'm thinking about this session as being like, and I hope people listening can identify with this, when I used to play, when we used to play a lot of tabletop RPGs in college, you would just lose a Sunday to making characters, sometimes. You'd be like, oh, let's just hang out, and like have some snacks, and look at a book, and make some fun choice, and it's okay to like, we're not gonna play today, that's not, there's no rush, everyone take their time. So...

ART: And sometimes you never play those games.

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: Sometimes, you have really great ideas, and everyone makes characters, and then those games get derailed. Weird.

ART: I have my three and I...

AUSTIN: It would have been *really cool* to... to be a travelling circus, in a fantasy world. Is all I'm saying.

ALI: Aw...

ART: It would have been very cool. I wish that we had an outlet... for fantasy role-playing. In our lives.

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: Unfortunately... Anyway. What's up? You got your three already?

ART: I think I have my three anchors.

AUSTIN: Okay, what are your anchors?

ART: Identity: ruffian.

AUSTIN: [laughing] That's the one I read about hurting people, or about, sorry, not about hurting people.

ART: Not hurting people.

AUSTIN: About solving problems through physical violence and intimidation.

ART: Yeah. Um, I mean, I might, I might tweak it. My super power is punching things.

AUSTIN: That's true. Seems useful.

ART: Seems like the way to solve a problem, when that's...

AUSTIN: Mm-hm.

ART: Virtue: loyal. I think that's consistent.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: Eh, it's a little... I'm nudging it a little. But, I'm trying to take that, like... what was the mechanic called in Masks? The... the love-rival mechanic?

AUSTIN: It was a love-rival thing.

ART: And that's like...

AUSTIN: It was about your... yeah.

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: It was "heart," is what it was.

ART: Yeah. And like I think that that fits, "once you've given your word, you never break it" is like, gestures towards that? It doesn't have the... it doesn't have the heart and the soul of that, but, it's one thing in one part of the early character creation. I'm trying to get there, is what I'm trying... I'm trying real hard to be the shepherd.

AUSTIN: Yeah. It's also a thing that I think is probably worth doing, is like, thinking as you play, about the ways in which the Champ is missing directly and indirectly Paternoster and Mister Good, in the sense that, like the Champ was... is a reaction... is a character of reaction, right? Because it's like, here's a character who I have a great fondness for, in Paternoster, here's a character in which I have a rival, in Mister Good; neither of those, neither of those things are there, so it's like your compass is broken, in a little bit of a way. And that's—

ART: Sure. Although, Masks would tell us to just change them. Masks was like, "change your love and rival all the time."

AUSTIN: Right. You're right. That's true! It does say that. Which is interesting. Which maybe—yeah.

ART: With only two people, it feels hard, it feels like welp, just gonna...

[Ali and Austin laugh]

ALI: You just keep swapping!

ART: It feels a little narrow, but we'll figure it out.

AUSTIN: Yeah, we'll work on it. I would say, play with that. So what is your vice?

ART: Reckless.

AUSTIN: Okay. Yeah. Sure. You take risks, huge risks, without thinking. I love the Champ, because she's just like, boom, here it is! This is it! Here she is! I'm the fuckin' Champ! Deal with it. Uh, Janine or Ali, do you have your identity? Or your anchors, your three anchors?

JANINE: I do.

AUSTIN: Tell me about Chanti's?

JANINE: So, I think her identity is "stickler."

AUSTIN: Yeah! Uh-huh!

[Janine laughs]

AUSTIN: What's that say?

JANINE: I actually, I waffled a lot between "stickler" and "autocrat" [Art laughs], but I think stickler is a little bit truer to...

AUSTIN: The autocrat would not have wavered between the two. The autocrat would have just picked it. It would have been very clear.

JANINE: Yes. Yeah. I mean, that's the thing with her, is that she... So sidekick, or, sorry, "stickler" is, "you try to be perfect in everything you do; gain moxie when you make your way through a significant encounter and you do everything right. [Austin laughs] You know, her big thing is, she like, has a lot of pressure from authority figures in her life, both super and mundane. And like, does not want to let anyone down. But also doesn't really know what she wants out of that. So, trying to be perfect even in situations where you don't know what perfect is, yet, seems the truest, to...

AUSTIN: Yeah, that's fun.

JANINE: To that. For her virtue, I went with "compassion: you won't unnecessarily harm another in word or deed." This was a hard choice.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: Because a lot of these, I just kind of didn't feel like they fit her at all, because she is kind of, like... well... I mean, there are some that could, "moderate" could work, but it just seems kind of boring, like, you never over-indulge in anything, like, ehh... It's... "Pacifist" is also not too...

AUSTIN: I think moderate, I think moderate doesn't really work here in the sense of like, "you gain moxie if your character stays true to their virtue, when it would be easier to ignore to accomplish something," is like, that's, moderate almost feels not like a great one of these, period? Because it means setting up situations where the solution is to over-indulge, but over-indulge is already a pejorative phrase. It would almost be better if it was not "moderate"

and it was just straight-up, like, “temperance movement: you never indulge in anything.” You won’t go into the bar.

JANINE: Yeah. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Do you know what I mean? But, over-indulgence is already, we call it “over” indulgence already! So.

ALI: Mm-hm.

JANINE: Also, I think I changed my mind. I think I want to go with “reliable.”

AUSTIN: Oh! Okay. What’s reliable?

JANINE: “You’re always there when the chips are down.”

AUSTIN: Okay!

JANINE: My rationale for compassion was like, oh, you know, she can talk to birds, so she probably like, understands a lot of different perspectives, because, like, some birds are assholes, or seem to be assholes, some birds are super nice... So maybe that gives her some sort of insight! But reliable’s a little more straightforward, like she’s been mentored by a real hero, and like...

[Austin laughs and sighs]

ART: Janine, I have such bad news about people!

JANINE: And also wants to be perfect, so like...

[Austin laughs]

AUSTIN: Wait, what’s the bad news?

ART: Some of them are assholes!

AUSTIN: [laughing] Yeah!

JANINE: Yeah, but like, you know, a goose is an asshole because it thinks it’s defending its territory and whatever.

AUSTIN: True.



JANINE: I could totally justify in my head her being like, well, I'm sure in their own mind they feel this way, and I think they're an asshole but I understand why they're an asshole, or something like that. Reliable makes a little more sense, especially when coupled with stickler.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: And, for her vice... I went with "arrogant: you simply do not back down when you think you're right."

AUSTIN: That sounds right to me.

JANINE: Which, again, feels like it works really well with stickler.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Definitely.

JANINE: If you think you're on the mark, why risk fucking up—

AUSTIN: Why— yeah.

JANINE: Because someone who doesn't have an idea what they're talking about is saying some shit, or whatever.

AUSTIN: Perfect. Caitlyn! How about— or, Ali! How about Caitlyn?

ALI: Yeah, I'm gonna start from the bottom up, because I'm torn between two identities.

AUSTIN: Sounds good.

ALI: So, for my vice, I'm gonna go with "vengeful: you constantly have a score to settle." I think that would be fun to play and do. [laughs]

AUSTIN: Yeah:

ALI: My virtue is gonna be "dignity: you take pride in your reputation and never sully it."

AUSTIN: Okay.

ALI: This is a whole... yeah?

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah, yeah! It's your rep! Your rep is your rep! Your name is your name!

ALI: Yeah, that's my rep. And the identities I was torn between were either... bum bum bum... where'd it go... Yeah, okay. The three that I'm torn between are, "bravo: you don't tolerate

weakness of body, mind, or character, especially in yourself. You gain moxie when you make someone back down.” “Crackerjack,” which is “you’re great at the things you do, and you enjoy proving it. Gain moxie when you succeed at something difficult without any complications.” Or, the other one was “examiner: you believe everything can be explained, and you seek the solutions to prove this. Gain moxie when you work out a significant problem to a satisfying solution.”

AUSTIN: That’s a very... descriptive of a type of person, too. Or like, what you would be doing, right? That’s...

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: Interesting.

ALI: Yeah. Um... I think that I’m gonna go with crackerjack.

AUSTIN: Okay. Can you read that one more time?

ALI: Yeah! “Crackerjack: you’re great at the things that you do, and enjoy proving it. Gain moxie when you succeed at something difficult without any complications.”

AUSTIN: Yeah! Yeah. That sounds good.

ALI: Yeah.

[00:30:00]

AUSTIN: Alright, cool, so. Those are your anchors. The next thing, are, your traits. So. There are six traits in this game. Charisma— do you want me to just read what they are, also? While we go over these? Yeah, I’ll, I’ll define them, even though most of them are pretty straightforward, I’ll still define them, for clarity. Charisma, which governs social interactions, it covers how your characters will convey information diplomatically, convince people to follow a plan, and lead others; it’s how you inspire people. It also comes into play when you lie, craft an alibi, or trick someone. Finally, it also represents your personal force of will.

Agility, which covers your character’s motor skills, bodily dexterity, hand-eye coordination, you’ll use it to perform acrobatic stunts, sneak, balance, react quickly. It comes into play when determining initiative in action sequences— this is a game with traditional initiative scores. It’s also what you use to perform sleight of hand and to drive vehicles.

Perception is how your character perceives everything around them. It covers sight, hearing, et cetera, as well as how you discern others’ motivations, strengths, and weaknesses.

Expertise, which covers your intelligence, memory, and logic. You use it to recall something from your studies or experiences, to solve riddles, to build, disable, and fix things. It’s important for knowing the ins and outs of business, law, and politics.

Resilience, which is your character's ability to withstand pain and injury. It helps you resist disease, toxins, and poisons. It's important for resisting torture, and keeping your wits about you when under stress or when you haven't had enough sleep.

And, strength. Which is raw physical force. It comes into play when your character makes unarmed, melee, or thrown weapon attacks. You use it to climb, to swim, to jump, and to bash things.

The thing to understand about these, that's maybe a little distinct from... I guess it's closest, in terms of things we've played regularly, it's closest to something like Dungeon World, where like, this number is pretty important. The way this game's core system works is that you'll be flipping over cards in order to see if you can draw a card that is higher or lower than, I mean, you want it to be higher, than whatever difficulty I've set. For a given challenge. So. Let's say I've said, oh, you're trying to climb the side of this building, quickly, that's pretty challenging, that's a ten. I'll have said that to myself. Maybe I'll say "it seems pretty challenging," to you. At that point, you'll need to draw a ten or higher, and you get to draw as many cards as you have in your trait, in the relevant trait that you're using, plus, plus if you have an additional skill that helps, that'll give you a bonus. But like, we'll deal with that when we get to skills in a little bit.

So traits are important, because they basically give you... it's almost as if they give you that many dice rolls, or they give you that many card pulls in order to let you succeed. So, they're fairly important here, if that makes sense. So, going back to the actual text here, sorry, "you use those traits to have your character attempt things. Traits are rated between one and three. The maximum for a non-caper is three. Capers can then gain a trait rating of four or five, but only via a power," which we'll get to when we get there. So you'll have one trait with one, four traits with two, and one with three. There's one thing you're really good at, one thing you're not very good at, and then four things you're average at.

JANINE: Okay, so these should be, like, without bird assistance traits.

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: This is just your shit. Correct.

JANINE: Okay.

AUSTIN: If you were locked in a room where there were no birds, which is hard to conceive of.

ART: Wait, what kind of room is that?

[Ali continues laughing]

AUSTIN: A bad one. You know, I think... Oh, you gotta remember it's the 1920s, Prohibition, you know.

JANINE: So like a rum runner's cave.

AUSTIN: Mm-hm. Mm-hm. I meant that the cops had prohibited birds. Indoor birds.

JANINE: Ahh.

ART: Not that birds are made of alcohol.

AUSTIN: Not that. [laughs] But!

ALI: So it's one "three," one "one," and four...?

AUSTIN: Four "twos." Everything else is a two.

ALI: Oh, right.

AUSTIN: One bad, one good, four "eh." Four "eh. Yeah. I could do it. Uh-huh."

[Ali laughs]

ART: I hate these like, things. Because it's like—

AUSTIN: Role-playing games?

ART: You know how everyone you know who's good at driving is also very fast?

[Austin laughs]

AUSTIN: God. Well, the skills are next, Art.

ALI: Mm...

ART: But "agility"...

AUSTIN: Is different.

ART: Is your, yeah.

AUSTIN: Right, well, you could have agility plus drive, or you could have, here's the thing.

JANINE: Are these not your pre-car scores? What if you're in a room, locked in a room without a car?

ALI: No— Somebody who drives very fast would have a high perception skill.

AUSTIN: This is the thing. Is, it does not break down exactly. You can often use a different trait, if you have the related skill, and make that case. So if you have drive— yeah, it's exactly what Ali just said. Which is like, if you have the driving skill, and a high perception, you can tell me, like, oh, actually, I'm gonna use perception for this, and I'm like, yeah, okay, that makes sense.

ART: Is a boxer strong, tough, or agile?

AUSTIN: Yes.

[Ali laughs]

JANINE: All.

AUSTIN: And you know that, *you* know, that boxers fall into those three types. Pretty regularly.

JANINE: Aren't those basically the weight classes?

ART: No, they—

AUSTIN: You can do that, but even, even inside of a weight class, you can have someone who is like, exceptionally good at taking hits, or exceptionally good at giving them, or quick. You know? Like, Muhammad Ali was a heavyweight fighter. But was also, would probably be agility here, right? Whereas Foreman would be...

ART: Strength.

AUSTIN: Strength? Yeah.

ALI: Oh, okay.

ART: I think, heavyweight have the most variety in this.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: One, there's a million, eh, I don't know. There's a million weight classes, now, and they get boring.

AUSTIN: Mm-hm!

ART: If everyone's within five pounds of each other, there's nothing. It's...

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah. God...

ALI: I have my numbers, I think.

AUSTIN: Okay, what are your numbers?

ALI: Okay. I have a two in charisma.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: I have a two in agility.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: I have a three in perception. I have a two in expertise. I have a one in resilience.

AUSTIN: Ooh.

ALI: And I have a two in strength. Yes. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ALI: Very angry... [laughing] very impressive person, who cannot get hurt or captured.

AUSTIN: Mm-hm! [Ali laughs] Okay! Speaking of that being angry thing, do you, do you know what that "vengeful" is? Do you know what your score is to settle? Or is that just kind of how you are, everything is like a personal beef to you?

ALI: I think it's a little bit how I am.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ALI: I, I picked it in sort of wanting to have someone who felt established in the, the sort of situation that's gonna come up in the game.

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah, I'll make some sort of shitty cop, like, superhero cop, who you can hate.

ALI: [laughs] Right.

AUSTIN: Don't worry about it.

ALI: But also someone who's like, oh, I hate the mayor, I hate the cop, I hate the guy who's checking tickets at the movie theater, whatever. Like, I'll sort of... yeah.

AUSTIN: Right. Right. Good. Great. [Ali laughs] Alright, Janine, what are your numbers?

JANINE: Ah, for charisma I have two, for agility I have two, for perception I have two, for expertise I have two, for resilience I have three! And for strength I have one.

AUSTIN: Okay! And, Art?

ART: I took charisma of one, agility two, perception two, expertise two, resilience three, strength two.

AUSTIN: Okay! Interesting.

ART: And... yeah.

AUSTIN: I'm good with that. Each trait has an associated trait defense score— I think this is automatically calculated for y'all, or was it not? Maybe it was not.

JANINE: ...No.

AUSTIN: Okay, then it's the next step. I was looking at Janine's sheet, and you already have it filled in, because, you looked ahead. Um... "Each trait has an associated defense score. This number indicates how difficult it is for others to overcome your character's raw ability at a trait. For example, if your character has a strength of two, their defense trait is nine. Another character trying to overcome your character's raw power will need to flip a nine or better to do so. As with traits, higher is always better," so this is just like, write down the thing. So, if you have a one in something, it's eight, if you have a two in something, its trait defense is nine, if you have a three in something, it's a ten. So you all can just do that, at your leisure. Should be pretty quick.

JANINE: Traits would also be, like, without access to Waxwing's shit, right?

AUSTIN: Yes, this is just, like, you're in a room, by yourself, with nothing.

JANINE: Okay. I was having second thoughts about expertise, but then I realized that's mostly, like, looking at Waxwing's computer situation, and stuff.

AUSTIN: Yeah... and you can, again, once you pick powers and perks...

JANINE: Yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: ...And gear or whatever, there's a chance that some of that stuff will go up, or go up in certain circumstances, you know? So, the next thing, which is a big thing, this will touch on this a little bit, too, Janine, is skills. "Skills define things your character is particularly adept at. They

might be things your character has studied in-depth, they might be things your character has a natural affinity for.

JANINE: [laughs] Like guns. Or the humanities.

AUSTIN: Like— yeah. Like guns or the... / would give myself... A skill in the humanities! [Janine laughs] So, not guns, though. I don't think that I have that one. "Select for your character a number of skills equal to two plus your expertise score. Following is a list of skills available." So this is, this is an argument for maybe if you did want that expertise to be three, you could make that case, here. Because it's like, are you... have you already done that work, so that you get an extra skill. You know?

JANINE: Yeah, that's a good point.

AUSTIN: Like "business." Or "conveyances."

[Art laughs]

JANINE: Like having access to information in the past effects how much information you know in the future.

AUSTIN: It does. That's true. That is true.

JANINE: That's... Okay, I think I just... yeah.

AUSTIN: You talked yourself into, into a three expertise.

JANINE: Yeah. You don't forget everything you learned because you...

AUSTIN: You're in a room!

JANINE: You don't have the computer in front of you anymore.

AUSTIN: Yeah, correct. Uh, those skills are, "acrobatics, athletics, business, conveyances, deception, diplomacy"... Okay. Here's the thing, is that driving isn't a skill, but "conveyances" is. Uh, and so, that, I think, adds to Art's argument about how games are bad. 'Cause, this is like, you know that person who you know who's really fast? They're a great driver. Of everything. [Art and Janine laugh] They're good at boats. They're good at cars. Motorcycles, they got it.

ART: Yeah. You know how I have a driver's license, and therefore you would trust me to drive your plane?

AUSTIN: [laughs] Conveyances! Um, diplomacy, fisticuffs...



JANINE: Isn't that, I'm sorry, but that's the entire premise of the Fast and Furious movies.

AUSTIN: Done. True. Finally.

[Janine laughs]

ALI: How many skills are we allowed to have?

ART: Two plus expertise.

AUSTIN: Two plus expertise.

ALI: Oh.

ART: Hey, what's "business?"

JANINE: Are these...

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: Art. That's the thing you do for the company that we own.

[Ali and Janine laugh]

ART: No, but what does the skill do in play?

ALI: "Covers all manners of business from large operations down to [breaking off laughing] mom and pop shops!"

ART: "Covers all manners of business!" It's like, you know how I do QuickBooks for us? I could also run a grocery store! Is that what you're telling me?

[Janine laughs]

ALI: Yeah!

AUSTIN: Yes!

JANINE: I mean, honestly? Maybe.

AUSTIN: Yes!

ALI: You could probably run a grocery store!

ART: [skeptical] Mm...

[Ali laughs]

JANINE: You would be better at that than any of us, almost certainly!

AUSTIN: Yes!

ART: I dunno, tell me something about inventory. I don't know anything.

ALI: Well.

AUSTIN: That's not true! We *do* inventory! [crosstalk, inaudible]

[Ali laughs]

ART: We have too many shirts right now!

AUSTIN: 'Cause you're learning your business skill!

ART: If these were oranges, they'd be spoiling!

AUSTIN: [laughs] You can still fail, even with the skill!

ALI: That's, 'cause you have the business sense not to get into the orange business!

JANINE: Yeah, no one would, you knew, we had that meeting, and you said, "no, no one's gonna buy Bluff City branded produce." And we were all like, "I don't know, Art..."

AUSTIN: [laughing] That's not—"I don't know, Art!" But you were right. Um...

JANINE: So wait, are these, are these also to, again, to put this in context...

AUSTIN: Yes.

JANINE: For me, is this pre-bird or post-bird?

AUSTIN: This is all pre-bird.

JANINE: Okay.

ART: All the birds are gonna come in later, right?

AUSTIN: This is just you— all the birds are later.

JANINE: I just need to know when the birds factor in, that's all.

AUSTIN: The birds will factor in later. I believe! If we get to later, and we're like, "I can't figure out how the birds will factor in," and we can't figure it out to hack it in... we can adjust.

JANINE: Then we can double back and be like, well, birds are good at the humanities.

AUSTIN: Yes. And they are.

JANINE: Birds are ranged weapons. Birds are science.

AUSTIN: Birds are science. Exactly.

JANINE: Birds are willpower.

AUSTIN: Right, like, there is a way to use, but, the thing there is that if you do end up being in a situation where you don't have any birds around, you will just be terrible at everything.

JANINE: I mean, that's... I mean that's the thing with Chanti. She's... you know. But, yes.

AUSTIN: But she's a, she's a, she is still a human being.

JANINE: She's actually probably pretty good at the humanities.

AUSTIN: Right!

JANINE: That was a joke, but like, she did okay in school.

AUSTIN: "Covers the human sciences of art, literature, geography, linguistics, politics, philosophy, and religion." That's good stuff she knows!

JANINE: She also probably good at sciences— I'm kind of imagining her, do we know how long this is, since the Masks game?

AUSTIN: I think it's, I'm thinking it's post that. So, like, you know who Mr. E. Mask is, mister-E-mask, you know...

JANINE: But like, how... like a year? Like, a day?

AUSTIN: Yeah. Let's say, it's probably closer to a year, than a day.

ART: It's continuous.

JANINE: Okay. So she's probably like, in her first year of undergrad.

AUSTIN: Sure. Yes.

JANINE: Okay.

AUSTIN: Maybe still a teen. But, an adult teen. You know what I mean?

JANINE: Well, yeah. But she was like, right on the precipice of like, I'm graduating, I don't know what I'm applying for...

AUSTIN: Yes. Yeah.

JANINE: So having her in her first year, being like, well I'm doing it, is this the thing, do I want to switch majors...

AUSTIN: Mm-hm. [laughing] Into, into business?

JANINE: Also, in the twenties?

AUSTIN: Or fisticuffs?

JANINE: Or bootlegging.

AUSTIN: "Conveyances covers large moving apparatuses, such as motorcycles, cars, trucks, boats, and planes." I'm gonna finish reading these. Uh, "guns, fisticuffs," gun— mm. You know what, let me go to the top.

"Acrobatics: full-body nimbleness, tumbling, balance. Athletics: physical feats of strength, such as lifting, swimming, jumping, climbing. Business: all manners of business, from large corporations down to mom-and-pop shops. Conveyances," like I said. "Deception: selling a story, making up alibis, getting others to do what you want through lies. Diplomacy: the ability to speak eloquently, rally others, and convey thoughts clearly, all while being honest and forthright. Fisticuffs includes all manner of unarmed fighting, boxing, wrestling, and the like. Guns covers all manner of firearms, from pistols to tommy guns." That's the range, that's the spectrum of guns.

ALI: Mm-hm.

AUSTIN: Pistols, tommy guns. "Humanities," we said. "Insight involves perceiving others' intentions as well as their insights and," sorry, "as well as their strengths and weaknesses. Mechanicals covers simple machines and small mechanical devices, like padlocks, traffic lights, bicycles, among others. Melee weapons involves the use of clubs, knives, swords, and the like. Ranged weapons is for archaic weapons used at a distance, like bows and crossbows, as well as thrown weapons."

[00:45:00]

AUSTIN: "Sciences covers the hard sciences of mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, and the like. Sense involves sight, hearing, smell, and so forth; covering how your character perceives and reacts to everything around them. Sleight of hand pertains to feats of manual dexterity and trickery, like performing magic tricks or quickly concealing a pistol. Stealth covers the ability to remain unseen and unheard. And willpower involves staying focused while under duress, in pain, or lacking sleep.

"Skills are fairly broad umbrellas of related capabilities. There is no 'physics' skill; that's covered by sciences. There is no 'wrestling' skill; that falls under fisticuffs. There's no 'gambling' skill. While being a good gambler is certainly an art into itself, it's more a matter of how one gambles." Gambles. Not "gamols." That's not a thing. [laughs] A gamol is a gambling camel.

"Examples follow. For instance, you could gamble with agility or sleight of hand, for instance, dealing from the bottom of the deck, palming cards, deck manipulation, and so forth. You could gamble with charisma and deception, which would be manipulating an opponent's expectation, and playing the bluff game." Which is what we do every month, or so.

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: And then, you could play, "you could gamble with expertise and sciences, which is simply playing the odds smartly at a game like craps, where you can't really affect the dice outcome. And likewise, each skill can apply to a number of different traits, for example a skill with guns aids a character with the following: charisma and guns could be, you're doing stage tricks with guns during a performance. Agility and guns could be firing the gun accurately. Strength and guns could be hitting someone with the butt of a gun, without damaging it. Expertise and guns could be knowing how to take a gun apart and put it back together." So, again, lots of flexibility there. Does anyone have their skills?

JANINE: I do.

AUSTIN: What are your skills?

JANINE: I went with diplomacy, insight, humanities, sciences, and stealth.

AUSTIN: Okay. That sounds right! Anybody else?

ART: I have my skills. I have fisticuffs, insight, athletics, and stealth. We're gonna do some sneakin'.

[Ali and Janine laugh]

AUSTIN: Doin' that sneakin'. And, Ali?

ALI: Umm, yeah. I... right now I have written down sense, ranged weapons, acrobatics, um, and I was thinking about the fourth one. Um...

AUSTIN: Hmm...

ART: I hear all the cool kids have stealth.

[Ali and Janine laugh]

AUSTIN: Oh! This is actually an important thing. This is actually an important thing. Because, you can help each other. I just realized this, because this is another way that skills work. Skills are how you help each other, I believe? [Ali: Uh-huh.] I'm double-checking.

Buh-buh-buh-buh-buh... trait checks... train boons... complications... trait checks, skills, advantages, disadvantages... getting help! Here we go.

"Other characters can help you with performing a task. How many characters can reasonable help is up to the GM; the maximum is three. Some trait checks must be performed by you alone. Each character helping must have the appropriate skill for you to gain a bonus from them. For example, your character, for each character helping, rather, increase the pip value of your card flips by one." So that means, like, let's say you have a ten, and Art is helping you, that ten becomes an eleven. Or becomes a jack.

ALI: Mm-hm.

AUSTIN: 'Cause cards. "Cause it's cards.

ALI: Mm-hm. Um, yeah, I'm gonna go with stealth...

AUSTIN: Okay!

ALI: Just 'cause, that seems like a character thing anyway.

AUSTIN: Yeah! Totally. Absolutely.

ALI: I was torn between that and insight. And... I...

AUSTIN: And, as always, you can try these things, I believe, without the skill. The skill is just, like, it helps you. You know? It's like you've spent real time studying it, versus having a surface-level understanding.

ALI: Um, I'm gonna switch... I'm gonna switch ranged weapons for willpower?

AUSTIN: Okay. So what's that leave you with, total, again?

ALI: That's four. Sense, willpower, acrobatics, and stealth.

AUSTIN: Um... "If you are playing a caper," this is now seven. "Perks, powers, and trem-gear." Trem gear? Trem gear? I don't know. "If you're playing a caper, your character has access to powers, special capabilities that define the laws of science and reason. You might get some trem-gear eventually, but you start with just powers. If you're playing an exceptional, your character has access to perks instead of powers. Perks make your character a little bit better than the average person, but don't bend the laws of reality like powers do. Additionally, your character can take trem-gear, which mimics the abilities of powers, but your character doesn't have any inherent abilities.

"If you are a caper, you have three options for starting powers. Those options are: to choose a minor power at rank two, to choose two minor powers each at rank one, or to choose a major power at rank one. Refer to chapter five for a full list of powers including how boosts are used. When your character gains rank in any power, choose three boosts," sorry, "when your character gains *rank one* in any power," much different, "choose three boosts your character knows for that power. Each time your rank in a power increases by one, select one additional boost that your character knows for that power." And I'll get into this in a second.

"Some powers require a power check in order to target their effects. A power check works like a trait check, in that the rank of the power determines how many cards you flip to use that power. Keep that in mind when choosing these types of powers— if you only take one rank, you only have one card to flip." It's worth noting here that, like, or, the game does note, the book does note, that we kind of have some flexibility here, in terms of like, what these look like, visibly. And we can talk through that as we pick these. So powers are in chapter five, they start on page 43. And we'll have to do a little bit of hacking, because, believe it or not, bird telepathy isn't one of these by default!

ALI: Mm!

ART: What!

JANINE: What!

AUSTIN: I know! It's such a popular power! I know. But, we can read...

ART: Are they trying to like, get DLC money out of us? This is...

[Austin and Ali laugh]

AUSTIN: We could hack in bird telepathy. And telekineses.

JANINE: Oh, but they have “acid stream.” I see how it is.

AUSTIN: [laughs] “There are two broad categories of powers in capers. Minor powers and major powers. Minor powers are focused. They provide your character with very specific capabilities that are only useful in a few circumstances. They also tend to be flashier. Many minor powers require a power check to use successfully. Major powers provide capabilities that are broadly useful across a variety of tasks, or by giving your character bonuses that are always in effect.

“Some major powers increase your traits beyond the normal maximum of three. You must have a rating of three in the trait in order to take the associated super-trait power. These powers increase the likelihood of you succeeding in trait checks with the trait and provide some additional benefits. Some major powers simply provide on-going, permanent bonuses, or special capabilities usable at will without a trait check.”

Uh, I don’t want to get into necessarily exactly how power checks work, but the big thing here is that you don’t get to, you don’t get to add skills to your power checks, so your humanities, having “humanities” does not mean that your telepathy works better. Per this game, anyway. I’m not saying in reality... in reality, it might be the case that having a humanities background does help your telepathy. I don’t have telepathy, I couldn’t tell you.

ART: It couldn’t hurt!

AUSTIN: Right? That’s what I think. Um...

ART: Also, so they don’t have bird telepathy, but they *definitely* have bird telekinesis, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah, def, oh don’t worry about that one.

ART: Okay.

AUSTIN: We’ll scribble it in real quick, don’t worry about it.

JANINE: Well, they have bone-slash-organ shifting, so it must be in there somewhere.

AUSTIN: They do...

ART: [pained] Ooh!



AUSTIN: "Powers have boosts, special augmentations that improve the power's capability to make it more versatile. You declare that you're using one or more boosts at the beginning of your turn, before you take your trait action or movement. You can only use each boost one time during a turn, but you can use up to three different boosts during your turn, even if they're from different powers." This is a game. This is a game.

"If a boosts augments a power, it can only be used for the power it's associated with." Yeah, that makes sense. You can't use your bird telepathy power for doing super-punches. That's a different power. "For each boost you choose to employ, you reduce your card count," du-du-du-du-duh... Oh, right. This is actually important. The way boosts work is that, let's say you had a three, let's say you had like, a really strong super-punch, but one of your super-punch boosts, I'm making this up off the top of my head, one of your super-boob, super-boost, mm. Super-punch boosts.

[Ali and Art laugh loudly]

AUSTIN: Was that you do double damage to robots. Or something. To get that effect, instead of drawing three cards like you normally do, you would basically be spending one of those cards, to get that boost. So you'd be like, ah, I'm just gonna draw two, but I'll get that cool boost I have, basically. "Boosts happen in addition to standard effects," du-du-du-du-duh... Um, not gonna go through all this... Here we go. No, this is all just basic. This is all just, yeah. Uh-huh. Okay.

JANINE: Can I just, I. 'Cause I mentioned bone-slash-organ shifting, can I give an example, an actual example of a boost—

AUSTIN: Please! Yes.

JANINE: —that is attached to bone-slash-organ shifting?

AUSTIN: Will you set up what bone-slash-organ shifting is, first, please?

JANINE: "Bone-slash-organ shifting: you manipulate your bones and organs to create a variety of effects."

ALI: Mm.

AUSTIN: Okay. Sure. I can, you know what? I do that every day.

JANINE: Sure! A lot of this makes sense, bone armor. That makes sense. Bone spurs... is a... you get bones spurs in your hands that make you punch better.

AUSTIN: That's Wolverine.

JANINE: Um, yes. "Bone throw boost: instead of standard effect, you can fling little bones [breaking off laughing] around from your hands!"

ALI: [laughs] Uh...

JANINE: "As an agility slash ranged weapon attack."

ALI: W-w-w-w-w-w-wait. Wait, wait, wait.

AUSTIN: That's a real thing. This is a real comic book thing. Unfortunately.

JANINE: Uh-huh!

ALI: Okay, I just really need to back this up.

ART: That's Marrow, right?

AUSTIN: That's Marrow. Marrow does that. I'm sorry.

JANINE: Can fling little bones from your hands!

ALI: But you can manipulate... your own bones?

AUSTIN: Yes.

ALI: Where are the... are these extra bones? Are the bones lost?

ART: Well, you can manipulate them to get the extra bones.

JANINE: You know, they're little bones.

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah, yeah. You get extra bones.

JANINE: You can also get slither boost from this.

AUSTIN: "Instead of a standard effect, you can liquefy yourself as a free action, allowing you to pass through areas as small as one square inch. While in—"

ART: That's great.

JANINE: Gooigi. Gooigi has this, this is Gooigi's power.

AUSTIN: That's Gooigi.

ART: I'm sick of liquefying taking too many actions.

AUSTIN: [laughs] I wanna read over, just high level, the minor powers available to us. "Acid stream: you create a stream of corrosive acid. Alter form: you change the fundamental nature of your physical form." And this is like, really broad. Uh, because... there's a lot. Like, acid stream, basically, you basically get it. You're doing an acid stream, you're hurtin' people, that's basically what you're doing. Maybe you boost it, whatever. Alter form—

ART: Also, against Twitch's terms of service, now.

AUSTIN: Bad. Alter form is... "Changing the very fundamental nature of your form." Could be, I would imagine that could be... Or maybe I'm wrong. I guess I'm wrong. I expected that to be like, some Mystique shit, but it's all just, it's actually...

JANINE: Gas. Liquid. Density. Two density ones.

AUSTIN: Density. Two different density ones! Density decrease and density increase. So that's like Kitty Pryde, or the Blob.

JANINE: Some of these, some of these sound kind of redundant. Like, immovability boost. I feel like, if you're turning to gas, someone's not gonna be able to move you. They're not gonna be able to push you.

ALI: They could put you in a balloon, and throw you outside.

AUSTIN: That's not true! Or turn a fan on.

JANINE: Damn. Right.

[Austin and Ali laugh]

AUSTIN: Or go, [blowing sound] phwoooo!

[Ali and Art laugh]

JANINE: [laughing] Great.

ART: There are certain people who are gonna really love this episode.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh!

ART: We're really... there's a person where this is gonna be their *favorite* episode we've ever done.

[Ali continues laughing]

AUSTIN: Didn't play a fucking game at all! "Body armor: your skin is tough or sheathed in a hard material." That's like, it has boosts about like, taking less fall— this is it! See, you take energy damage, or less fall damage, or, et cetera! You can also *give* that shield. That's cool. You can imbue someone else with your body armor, that's fun. "Bone or organ shifting. Cold beam: you create a blast of arctic energy." And then, the boosts for that are things like, oh, I do it as a fog, I do it as a blast, I can turn into, I can make something out of ice, apparently. You know. Bobby Drake does that.

JANINE: Like a ramp, specifically. You can specifically make a ramp.

AUSTIN: That's a different one. That's ramp boost.

[Ali laughs]

JANINE: Oh. Well, yes.

AUSTIN: There's also ice shape boost.

JANINE: Yes. Well, I'm saying it specifically a boost, 'cause, yeah. Yep.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Uh-huh. "Concussion beam: you pummel targets from a distance with a bolt of pure force." Some Cyclops shit. Um, "dimensional manipulation." Minor power. Don't even worry about it. [Art laughs loudly] Minor power, dimensional manipulation. "You can extend your senses to other realms and even transport yourself and others through space," minor power. It takes a minute to do it, it says, trait action, but this is like... I guess this is like, ah, Kurt, right? This is Nightcrawler. Presumably. Right?

ART: Yeah, uh-huh.

AUSTIN: Right? Okay.

JANINE: But also, just like a lot of... like, things included in here are like, smelling. You smell good.

ART: [laughing] Smell boost: you can smell what you're viewing!

AUSTIN: No!

[Art laughs loudly]

AUSTIN: [laughing] I thought you meant... I thought you meant you *smell*, like you would be nice to smell.

JANINE: [laughing] No, no no no.

ART: No, it means you can see things in other dimensions... *and* smell them!

JANINE: So it is like Kurt, right? Like, Kurt has to be looking at something to teleport there, so he doesn't get stuck in a wall? He has to be looking at something he's smelling so he doesn't smell a wall!

AUSTIN: Yeah! Yes. So he doesn't smell a wall! He's like, "wait a second, I think that smells like wall."

[Janine and Art laugh]

AUSTIN: "Dimensional pocket: you summon forth small objects, seemingly from nowhere." This is just hammerspace. This is just... Every anime I watched in the 90s. Um...

JANINE: Size boost.

AUSTIN: S— wait, what's size boost do?

JANINE: It's only a two foot dimensional pocket.

AUSTIN: Oh, you get a *five foot* dimensional pocket, instead of a two foot dimensional pocket. You can put a person—!

JANINE: If you have a dimensional pocket, the... the yardage of it seems... I don't know!

AUSTIN: [laughing] Uh-huh.

ART: Oh, these are so good, I'm so excited that we're working through this whole list.

AUSTIN: Yeah, pocket boost. You can boost your dimensional pocket with pocket boost, which says, "the object or objects you retrieve can appear in a pocket, handbag, suitcase, or other container that you're wearing or holding, or that you can see within thirty feet of you." That's wild!

ART: Uh-huh!

AUSTIN: That means you could reach in, and then put it in someone else's purse. That's a good power to have. The cops do that all the time. Under Mayor Bloomberg. Elec—

ART: [laughs, groans] I can't wait for President Bloomberg.

AUSTIN: I'm... gonna die. Electr—

ART: Oh, I'm gonna die too.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. "Electric bolt: you create an arc of pure electricity." You do it like that, once, okay, whatever. Right?

ART: Okay, with the boost, they gotta be good— ah, these are boring boosts.

AUSTIN: These are kinda boring boosts.

JANINE: A lot of these are ones that are in other things, like the strafing, and all that.

AUSTIN: Right, right, right.

JANINE: See, that's the thing! If you're not gonna have bird telepathy, but you're gonna have the acid thing, the ice thing, and the electric thing, when I feel like you could just have a general, like...

[01:00:00]

AUSTIN: Energy.

JANINE: Burst-slash-bolt thing that you adapt to whatever the fuck you're bursting or bolting.

AUSTIN: Well, ice... The thing is, you don't want electric, you don't want electric, I want ice bolt, or whatever, ice breath, whatever the fucking thing that one's called...

JANINE: That's true, you can't make a ramp out of electricity.

AUSTIN: To make a ramp. Right. Don't tell that to Static Shock, who can could still fly with it, but I would guess Static Shock probably has a second power of flight, right?

JANINE: He's not flying with a ramp.

AUSTIN: Is it telepa— or, telekinesis, he has, though?

ART: No, isn't it like electromagnetic manipulation? That's why he has to like, fly on a metal object, because, like, he doesn't "fly," he's riding on something.

AUSTIN: Right... he's like... right, he is riding on something. And he's... but he's not quite at the Magneto level, where he could just, like, carry himself.

ART: Right, no, the Milestone-verse was lower power level than the...

AUSTIN: Gotcha. Than the Marvel.

JANINE: What if he had a helmet like Magneto's, but then used the helmet and lifted the helmet.

AUSTIN: [laughing] Lifted himself!

JANINE: So he'd just like, attach it to his head really securely.

AUSTIN: [laughing] Like a really... that's a bad neck pain! No! God!

JANINE: [laughs] He could have a harness!

AUSTIN: Ugh. "Energy resistance," you're good against various energy types, that one's boring... "Flight," here we go! This is what I'm saying! "You can soar through the air with the greatest of ease," but you can only fly at the same— by rank one, you can only flight at speed 30, which is the same speed you can run. I think, from turn to turn.

JANINE: That's still pretty good, as far as flying goes.

AUSTIN: What?

JANINE: You're still flying.

AUSTIN: You're still flying... I just think it's funny. I always think it's funny, that like, without super-speed, flight is kind of... it's still, it's not bad, I'm not saying it's a bad thing to have, but I wouldn't...

JANINE: You don't have to like, follow the streets, you know? You could just...

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally. It would still be faster to get to work that way. But I would still have to leave, like, an hour early. You know what I mean? It would probably still be quicker for me to take *the subway*.

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: Uh... "You can carry a maximum of 30 pounds of gear with you," unless you take the "chaperone" boost, which lets you "carry one willing person with you while flying, until the beginning of your next turn." Um... there's force fields, those are pretty straight-forward... Still minor powers, "heat beams." We're only at H? Jesus Christ. "Hypnosis: you can put people in trances, extract and implant information."

JANINE: Hey, why is... what's this picture of Alex Navarro doing here?

AUSTIN: [laughs] Oh, that's not, that's rude!

JANINE: I can only say that 'cause two pages later there's a picture of me. So...

AUSTIN: Okay. Well, we'll get there. I haven't seen this yet.

[Ali laughs]

JANINE: It's me and she's holding a gun with her hair! So! [laughs]

AUSTIN: Oh, great.

ART: I'm reading all this on the, on the Roll20, so I'm not seeing any of the pictures.

AUSTIN: Oh, you should get one of the books! The book has the good stuff!

JANINE: That's a shame.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Hypnosis... all sorts of hypnosis boosts... including one called "twin boost" which is *not* about creating a fictional twin in your, in your hypnosis target. And I think that's a mistake.

JANINE: Mm.

AUSTIN: "Mental shields"... that's just like a regular shield. You know? "Power augmentation: you can energize and de-energize your own powers, as well as those of others." I don't know... It's like, give everybody else... better... boosts. Oh, I guess that's, um... who does that? What's the... Parasite? Does Parasite do this? In Superman? Art?

ART: I'm sorry, I was distracted trying to come up with the book.

AUSTIN: De-energizing, de-energizing powers?

ART: Yeah, that sounds right.



AUSTIN: Yeah... "Power sharing: you can use other people's powers, and grant yours to them."  
Um... "Probability manipulation," minor, oh, sorry, I skipped "prehensile feature," that's Janine.

JANINE: You skipped prehensile feature!

AUSTIN: That's you, Janine. You're holding two guns, one in each hand, plus a third gun with your hair.

JANINE: That's my high school hair.

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: That is your high school hair.

JANINE: I haven't had that in a while.

AUSTIN: It's a lot of hair.

JANINE: I miss holding guns with it.

[Ali and Art laugh]

AUSTIN: "One of your body parts is prehensile, you can use it like an extra limb. When you take this power, choose hair, tongue, or tail. [Art groans] This feature functions as another limb."

JANINE: I don't even get to— I have to pick one of three features?

AUSTIN: Yes!

JANINE: I can't even define my own feature?

AUSTIN: Absolutely not! You don't get to have... prehensile tongue *and* hair!

JANINE: What if I want a prehensile coat, or something? Like...

AUSTIN: That's not... that's not a part of you!

JANINE: What if my power is...

ALI: [laughing] Is that a limb?

AUSTIN: That's a perk! That's a trem-power, or whatever. That's not a regular power!

JANINE: [dejectedly] Sure.

ART: [laughing] Prehensile coat.

AUSTIN: [laughs] As a trait action, duh duh duh... okay, you could, so with prehensile feature, you could punch good, grapple good, parry good, or... move fast? You could, you could have prehensile hair that makes you run fast. Or swing.

JANINE: Which of these, I'm sorry, which of these is happening in the picture?

AUSTIN: Prehensile feature. Attack.

JANINE: But which of these boosts?

AUSTIN: None of them. I don't think that— I don't think that your character could actually do this with this power.

JANINE: Okay.

AUSTIN: Oh, it "holds items and operates controls."

JANINE: Okay.

AUSTIN: "You gain advantage on any trait check where having a third arm would be beneficial." Such as climbing or wrestling.

ART: Like having a third gun pointing in a different direction!

[Ali, Austin, and Janine laugh]

ALI: Mm-hm!

AUSTIN: You know, you're covering all your exits! Or whatever. [Ali laughs] "Probability manipulation: you can manipulate the probability of something good or bad happening." The most, one of *the* most powerful powers, in Marvel, probability manipulation, uh... minor power. Don't worry about it.

ART: It's exceptionally meta in this game, in that it allows you to look at the cards!

AUSTIN: Oh, that's awesome! [gasps] That's the coolest power! It does. So the way this game works, is that again, you draw cards from a deck. If you have probability manipulation, the effect

is, “look at the top card in your deck and place it in your discard pile if you want to. Discarding a card with this power has no effect. Special: only one may be manipulated at a time. The player or GM must flip...” Wait, oh, it is your deck. Okay. Okay, okay, okay. Uh... So you have to clear... that’s weird. The fact that you would then clear the next card... I guess to prevent cheating? That way you’re not looking at two? Anyway, the point is, the fact that you can like look at the next card that you’re going to draw, and be like ah, that’s not good. Fuck that. Discard that. Is great.

JANINE: This game needs more of that.

AUSTIN: Agreed.

JANINE: It needs more of like, interacting with your deck as a mechanism for how you manipulate the world with your powers.

AUSTIN: Yes. Um... I mean, I will say the core mechanic is really good about that, and there’s cool stuff with the different suits, and that stuff is really cool. *Damn*, you can get repeat boost, where you use the boost of probability manipulation, and you place the top card of your discard pile onto the top of your deck. That’s really cool. Alright. Let me keep moving. Psionic beam. It’s like the breath ones. It’s like ice beam, except it’s... brain.

JANINE: “You pummel a target’s mind with pain.”

AUSTIN: I guess it’s with the mind, and not the body, right? That’s true.

JANINE: It’s like, pain... it’s like a pain-ray.

AUSTIN: The forgetting boost is really good. “If you hit the target they cannot target you with attack or power on their next turn; additionally, they do not see or hear you until the beginning of your next turn.” That’s really good. “Puppeteer: you control small objects from a distance.”

JANINE: “Target any non-living, unattended object weighing less than 30 pounds that fits in a two-foot cube.”

AUSTIN: Uh-huh! I feel like this might actually be... Janine?

JANINE: Yeah, this is what I’ve been thinking. Is maybe, it might be this.

AUSTIN: It might be this.

JANINE: Because so far, *nothing* else has been. This is the closest we’ve gotten at this point.

AUSTIN: Yeah, well, we’re only at P. We could get to...

JANINE: Uh-huh. There's some good ones coming up.

AUSTIN: We could get to— I haven't, I haven't—

JANINE: There's actually only one more page of minor powers left, which is a little alarming.

AUSTIN: That's, okay, wow, that's quick. Okay. You—

ART: The first major power sure works, though.

AUSTIN: Okay. We'll get there. Don't spoil for me!

JANINE: Yeah. Yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: Um, you... ooh! The thing about puppeteer is, the first minor boost with it is, instead of a standard effect, the object falls apart and needs to be repaired or rebuilt before it's useful again. Don't do that!

JANINE: Oh, I don't like that... Oh, but the third one is dance boost!

AUSTIN: "The object dances erratically for three rounds, even if you have moved out of range."

JANINE: [laughing] Why? What is this for? I don't...

AUSTIN: 'Cause you... if you're like a, if you're like a evil...

JANINE: Do I have to read more comics to get this?

AUSTIN: Yes. If you're like an evil puppeteer type villain, you could have, like, a bunch of dancing—

JANINE: Or a Scooby-Doo villain.

AUSTIN: Or a Scooby-Doo villain.

JANINE: Like if I want to trick people into thinking something's haunted.

AUSTIN: Something's haunted! Yeah, exactly. When, in fact, it's haunted by you. Um... Yeah, that's, some of these are... mm. Mm. Mm.

ALI: How many of these are we allowed to have?

[pause]

AUSTIN: [unsure] Yeah.

[Ali and Janine laugh]

AUSTIN: Uh, perks, powers...

JANINE: Was it like, two at rank one, or something...

AUSTIN: It's two minor... or, sorry, it's two minor at rank one, one minor at rank two, or one major at rank one. I might give you a little extra boost, 'cause some of these are older characters who've played a full session, so I might give you like, one level, but, let's keep moving. Sonic screen. You yell. You do a yell. That yell can make people not be able to hear, that yell can be really loud, it can shatter things.

[excitedly] "Speak with objects: you speak to the spirits of inanimate objects to learn things." This might also be... you might be able to do this. I mean, not that birds—

JANINE: Birds are animate.

AUSTIN: I know, but we could just, eh.

JANINE: And I— they're animate.

AUSTIN: They are animate. Um, "you ask one question of a simple natural object. The object must be naturally occurring, such as a rock or a tree." That's, okay. That's weird. So you couldn't ask a cassette deck. I guess they didn't exist. You couldn't ask a piano, with this. Oh, unless you get the complex object boost... "You can speak to—"

JANINE: Or "corpse boost." Great.

AUSTIN: [laughing] "You can speak to a more complex man-made object that has moving parts, like a pistol or a motorcycle." Or, yes. Animate [pronounced as in "inanimate"] boost would let you talk to animate things... Wait, no, that's not true.

JANINE: No.

AUSTIN: Sorry, that's *animate* [pronounced as in "animation"] boost.

JANINE: That makes it louder. That makes the object louder!

AUSTIN: [laughing] That makes the object loud. Telepathy! See, here we go! Telepathy says, "you can read thoughts and project your own to others." It's, "you can hear the target's thoughts

for one round,” I don’t think... is there a check on this? Let’s see... Yes. Charisma insight versus the target’s mind... Wow, there’s a— oh, no, there isn’t, I was looking at the next thing. I was looking at where it said “lightning boost” and I was like, damn, how does telepathy give you a lightning boost!

[Janine laughs]

AUSTIN: Um, emergency boosts... yeah, okay... yeah, sure... Connect to people within one mile. Weather manipulation. Yeah, okay. That’s standard shit. Sleet boost. And that’s it! Okay, wow. That’s minor powers. Major powers! Animal affinity. This is not what you want, though, is it?

JANINE: No. Nope. Cat eyes, claw, or bite...

AUSTIN: Also, is that a picture of Art as a werewolf? And a beard. I’ve never seen Art with facial hair. Is that true? That’s not true. I’ve seen you with a moustache. Oh, you had that, oh! You had that terrible moustache!

ALI: You had a moustache?

ART: Which came immediately after it, I grew it out and shaved it down to that moustache. So, I just didn’t have that kind of beard.

AUSTIN: I must have seen you with a beard, you just didn’t have this. Yeah. Art had a bad moustache. For like...

ALI: Wow...

AUSTIN: How long was that?

ART: One day.

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: Why is it so powerful in my mind?

ART: I had a beard for like, a month? I shaved out of that and moustache, went to Professor Welsh’s class, she turned around to address the class, saw my face, and *lost it*, had to sit down.

[Austin laughs loudly]

JANINE: No!

ART: She was having a hard...

AUSTIN: No, it's worth it. Professor Welsh is, my all time, one of my all time favorite professors. Very, like, one or two. Really up there. And, yeah. Perfect. Beautiful.

ART: And then I went home and shaved my face, 'cause I looked ridiculous.

JANINE: Aw...

AUSTIN: It was like a biker moustache, it was like a...

JANINE: [put-off] Oh.

AUSTIN: You know, like a Hulk Hogan, like a Fu Manchu.

[Ali sighs]

JANINE: Like with the blunt ends?

ART: The moustache part *was* a bit. I wanna be very clear.

AUSTIN: He was not "trying" it.

JANINE: Okay.

AUSTIN: Um... Animal power— wait, "animal affinity" is not what I would call this power! "When you select—"

JANINE: You know, it's, no. It's, it's not.

AUSTIN: "When you select this power, choose one boost other than 'lesser animal form' or 'greater animal form' to use as the standard effect for this power. It is no longer considered a boost; it counts as the standard effect." So that is like, you get cat eyes that let you see in the darkness. Or you could—

JANINE: Or owl ears.

AUSTIN: Or owl ears, or you can claw. That's not what you want.

JANINE: Or scent boost, again. But... different.

AUSTIN: Does that one make you smell good? No. It doesn't.

JANINE: [simultaneously] Yeah. You smell real good.

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: Okay. What's up, Ali? [Ali continues laughing] Having fun? What's up? Is this the power?

ALI: Art has, no, Art has provided a photo of his facial hair.

AUSTIN: Oh, is there a photo?

JANINE: Oh... god!

ALI: Wait, but there's a spoiler in there for me, too, so be careful... what you're looking at in our Discord.

AUSTIN: There's a *spoiler*?

ALI: Yeah, because I've been waiting for you to [trails off laughing] finish reading these fucking powers!

JANINE: Oh, yeah.

AUSTIN: Oh, okay. I've not read it. I didn't, don't worry, I didn't read it.

[Ali continues laughing]

JANINE: That's, yep. Yep. Yep. Yep. Yep.

AUSTIN: Okay. Uh...

JANINE: Oh, god, it's so bad.

AUSTIN: I'm very excited, 'cause I did not see what you just posted. Lesser animal form boost and greater... so if you wanted to take on all aspects of an animal, you could do that. Or, some... aspects of an animal? What's the difference between lesser and greater animal form boosts?

JANINE: Uh... A level one or two animal vs. a level three or four animal.

AUSTIN: Oh... great. Uh... Sure.



ART: Where are the animal levels?

AUSTIN: They're, they're later. I don't...

JANINE: Big? The big ones, probably? Big ones are more... or less?

AUSTIN: Probably more. "Dimensional step, dimension step: you can instantly travel across space." Why is that different than... the, the Nightcrawler one?

ART: Maybe this is Nightcrawler and we misinterpreted that one?

AUSTIN: Maybe. No, this is like a portal.

ART: Mm.

AUSTIN: Which feels... you can fire, oh, this is like...

JANINE: And you can like bring people through it, and stuff.

AUSTIN: What's the... what's the character I'm thinking of, Art? Spot, is it Spot? It is. It's Spot. The Marvel character villain that Spider-Man fights. Sometimes.

JANINE: These portals seem too small.

AUSTIN: Six feet tall?

JANINE: Even the size— oh, wait, the size boost says both portals are only two feet in diameter.

AUSTIN: That seems like the opposite of a boost.

JANINE: That seems... [laughing] that does sound, that seems bad! I would like a bigger portal than that, personally.

AUSTIN: I would like a bigger portal than that. Okay. "Elasticity: you can stretch your limbs, torso and neck." Some Mister Fantastic shit, sure.

JANINE: Okay, that seems like the other thing, though. Isn't that organ and bone manipulation?

AUSTIN: No, that's organ and bone manipulation!

JANINE: This is also organ and bone manipulation, though.

AUSTIN: “At rank one, you can elongate up to two limbs, including your neck, up to 15 feet each, as a free action.” You can’t do that with organ and bone manipulation!

JANINE: I guess... I don’t know.

AUSTIN: Um... Eugh. “At rank two, you can elongate all four limbs and your neck up to 15 feet each.” I hate it. I hate this.

ART: [laughs] Your torso’s still the same size, though, so you have 15 foot...

AUSTIN: [laughing, disgusted] Eugh! Ooh, hoo!

ART: Arm, legs, and neck!

JANINE: Great.

[01:15:00]

ART: And your same little, you know, I dunno, how big’s a torso, two, two and half feet?

JANINE: About as big as a portal.

AUSTIN: [sighing] Yeah... “Ladder boost: you elongate your legs and arms up to 20 feet each. Other characters can climb up and down you at full speed without making any trait checks.” Great.

ART: Oh, I hate...

JANINE: Pass. At full speed!

AUSTIN: Uh-huh!

JANINE: Anyway, we should keep going.

AUSTIN: “Goo generation!”

ALI: Mm-hm!

AUSTIN: “You secrete viscous, sticky goo [Ali laughs] from your hands. Effect—” Oh, it’s a free action. “Your target is yourself—”

JANINE: “Continuous once activated.”

AUSTIN: “*Continuous* once activated.”

JANINE: [laughing] It just keeps going.

AUSTIN: [laughing] It keeps going. “You create sticky goo [Ali sighs] that covers your hands; you cannot be disarmed—” I’m just gonna keep reading straight through.

JANINE: And what’s the first boost?

AUSTIN: No, I’m gonna—

JANINE: Okay!

AUSTIN: [laughing] “You cannot be disarmed, you can climb vertical surfaces at your normal speed without making treks— or, checks. Trait checks.” Number one boost: ball boost. This is just... *meant* to be, Spider-Man.

ALI: Mm-hm.

AUSTIN: [continues laughing] “You fire a single ball of goo at any target within range.” Sealing boost, “non-sticky boost: any goo you create this round is not sticky!”

ALI: Only this round.

ART: What does *non* sticky goo do?

AUSTIN: [laughing] I don’t wanna think about it!

[Janine laughs]

AUSTIN: Rope boost, okay, you shoot a rope of goo from your hand. Of course. It’s just— it’s...

ART: It’s Spider-Man, but they found a real gross way to talk about it.

JANINE: Yeah, it’s the worst...

AUSTIN: It’s the worst!

JANINE: It’s like the worst way to describe— like, no one thinks, “oh yeah, Spider-Man, he has goo constantly secreting from his hands!”

[Art laughs]

AUSTIN: [laughing] “Illusions.” [Ali laughs] They’re all around us. “You create a realistic illusion from nothing,” at rank one... more illusions... uh-huh... “Adornment boost: instead of a standard effect, you create a small illusion. Must fit into a three-foot cube that must be placed on your person. You can only have one illusion of this nature in existence at any time. It cannot be used to change your body’s physical shape or size.” Sure.

JANINE: This game really loves cubes.

AUSTIN: It loves ‘em. “Influence emotions,” which to me feels a lot like a previous psionic thing, but sure... “Invisibility,” major power. Major key alert. “Mimic,” I guess that’s the one, that’s the Mystique one, for sure. “Read/write boost.”

JANINE: Ooh, “garb boost.”

AUSTIN: “Read/write boost: until the beginning of your next turn, you can read and write one language that the person you’re mimicking can read and write!” What! How’s that work?

JANINE: But that’s also distinct from “language boost.”

AUSTIN: “Until the beginning of your next turn, you can speak one language the person you’re mimicking can speak without mimicking them— or, while mimicking them. You *cannot* read and write the language.” What!

JANINE: Why— I don’t understand why you’d be able to do one and not the other. To be honest.

AUSTIN: Well, there’s lots of languages that don’t communicate how you would speak them, even if you could read them.

JANINE: I guess. Yeah.

AUSTIN: I don’t know. “Speedster,” you’re fast. That’s the Flash one. “Super agility,” wait... is that the Flash one? I guess...

ART: No, speed one is right.

JANINE: The Flash is fast. That’s the thing.

AUSTIN: Then what’s super agility? It’s like dodge-y.

ART: I think that’s Spider-Man. Yeah.

AUSTIN: That’s Spider-Man.

ART: That's the non-goo parts of Spider-Man.

AUSTIN: The non-goo... So, Spider-Man is super agility and goo master, or whatever.

[Janine sighs]

ART: And spider sense is probably coming up, right?

AUSTIN: Super agil— uh, super charisma? No.

JANINE: That would've been animal affinity.

AUSTIN: That probably would have been animal affinity. The things spiders have.

JANINE: Mm-hm.

AUSTIN: "Super expertise"...

ART: It's tricky, 'cause they don't.

AUSTIN: [laughs] "Super perception?" That's probably... super perception. No. Nope. Uh... "Health sense boost: choose one target you can see within 30 feet. You know how many hits the target has remaining." Cool. That's how that works. "Super resilience," you're real tough. One of the super resilience boosts is "immediately cure yourself of *any* disease you've contracted!"

ALI: Mmm!

AUSTIN: Damn! Um... I'm skipping over some of these. As a super perception person, you can instantly know if someone is lying, that's one of the boosts there. That's cool.

JANINE: Also taste things real good.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Sure. I like super expertise's "flaw boost: after studying something for five minutes, you notice the biggest flaw in the situation or system." You're just, you're able to be real fuckin' mean to people. Spend five minutes with someone and just drop the hardest diss they've ever heard.

[Ali and Art laugh]

AUSTIN: Aw, damn. What was that thing Pusha T said? Um...

ALI: When?

ART: "You are hiding a child?"

AUSTIN: [laughing] No, it was after that. It was after that, but yes.

ALI: In that song?

ART: [laughing] It doesn't take five minutes to...

AUSTIN: No, it was in the... [laughs] It was afterwards. It was in an interview, where he was like, eh, he was just mean. He was just very mean, in a very deep way, about Drake and Drake's lack of love for his family.

ALI: [laughs] Sure.

ART: I mean, of course Drake doesn't show love for his family. They're not underage actresses.

ALI: Mmm.

AUSTIN: [laughing] Oh-ho! Get 'em. Get 'em.

JANINE: Yeah.

ART: Come at me... Drake!

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: I can't believe Drake released an Art Martinez-Tebbel diss track! It was real corny.

ART: That'd be the best thing that could ever happen to our podcast.

AUSTIN: A hundred percent. Are you kidding me. God... [pause] Alright. Super strength.

JANINE: That's the end.

AUSTIN: Super strength is the last one. Right? You can jump, if you want. And, push boost. Where is just... telekinesis? Did we miss that? I guess that's puppeteering.

ALI: Yeah...

JANINE: Yeah, sure.

AUSTIN: It's weird, because if I do a search, "Elizabeth Watkins, Lady Death. Watkins is a caper with telekinetic and electrical abilities."

JANINE: Here's the thing: talking to animals is like a pretty common super power. I don't even read comics and I can name multiple heroes that do it.

AUSTIN: Right. Animal talk.

JANINE: So it's a little weird that like, I have to take a thing that would actually just let me talk to people.

AUSTIN: People. Yes. Um...

JANINE: Which is a thing that I don't think that Grouse can do.

AUSTIN: Right. I think, the thing that we could do, for Grouse, is make a new power.

JANINE: Say she got better at it, but like...?

AUSTIN: Oh. I, yeah, that also, we could do that. But there is a "how to create a power" bit, and we could just figure that off. Figure that out. You know?

JANINE: Mm.

AUSTIN: [while reading or searching] Power creation... Uh... Sorry, I just did—

JANINE: 'Cause yeah, even if we use telepathy, that doesn't, that doesn't fix the bird telekinesis thing.

AUSTIN: [claps once] [laughing] I just searched for power creation, and it just gave me... it took me to the "animals with powers" page, of the GM toolbooks [Ali laughs], and it said "creation slash summoning powers: goo generation." So it is just encouraging me to make an animal... [Janine laughs] That can goo generate.

JANINE: A very sticky animal.

AUSTIN: Mm-hm! [slowly, while typing] Creating... a... power! Is that what it is? "Creating new powers. Creating new powers is a bit of an art unto itself..." Um, buh-buh-buh-buh-buh... "If something proves too powerful..." [pause] Um... "Rank one to five..." Yeah, yeah, yeah... I can look at this stuff off-mic. And maybe do that bit, and see if it makes more sense— for now, maybe I would say take that stuff, and then after we're done, I can sit down and see, like, oh wait! I can just fix this.

JANINE: Mm-hm.

AUSTIN: That does... that gives you a little bit more, you know. Specificity.

JANINE: The problem is that it's gonna affect whether I take one major power, or two minors, or, you know?

AUSTIN: Totally. Yeah. I think, the other thing here is, I will do the thing that you get more, a little bit more powers to start out with. I have to find out where that is. Where is that... [a few words said away from the mic, inaudible] Character advancement. I'm gonna, I think I'm gonna give everybody a major advancement. Which gives you... Or, I'm gonna give everybody two advancement points, that's the way this works.

You're gonna get a level, so you get two AP, and with that, and this is all on page 20, you can either get a new skill— So, one AP will get you a new skill, a new minor power, or increase a minor power up. Trem-gear, which is the type of gear that mimics a minor power. A perk, which you can only choose if you have no powers. Or, you can spend both of them to get an increased trait, which would raise one of your traits up to three. Or, from one to two. A new major power or increasing the rank of a major power, or, again, giving you a piece of trem-gear that increases your stuff up to... to level, or it gives you power stuff.

Really quick, just for completeness, there are perks in this game for your like, Batman character, who doesn't have any powers, and those perks are, there's only a handful of them: "Fleet of foot," that means you can, your foot-speed is increased to 40 feet. You move a little further. "Hardy body," which means you get plus one to your body score. Which, I don't know what your body score is. What's your body score? Anyway.

"Lucky: once per game session, when you botch," and a botch is like, when you fail the check and also you've drawn a club. In this game, clubs... It goes, clubs, diamonds, hearts, spades. It's alphabetical. Clubs are bad, spades are good. And if you fail and get a club, you botch the card, you botch the thing you're doing. You get like a negative effect. Whereas even if you fail, but get a spade, it's kind of like, no... but! Here's a good thing! Um... So, "lucky: once per game session, when you botch, you succeed instead. Treat the success as if you got spades on the card and apply a boon to the success." That's really great.

"Power restraint," which is... um... I think it's like, you... can resist powers. That makes sense. "Power resistant." I said "power restraint." Power resistant. That just explains itself. "Quick reflexes," is what it sounds like. "Refocus: once per game session, you can re-flip your entire trait check. Ignore the results of your current trait check, even if you botch it. Start over from scratch. You can't use this perk to re-flip after you've flipped the bad joker. The bad joker won't ever let you get away."

"Specialty skill," which gives you another bonus to one of your skills, and you'll never botch it. "Tough" gives you extra hit points. And "wily mind," you just get a better mind score. Which, again, I don't know what, I don't know off-hand what body and mind do, but they must do something. Uh, do people have their powers who are not... not Grouse?

[Ali laughs]

ART: I think I have to, like... I think I have to switch my stats up, 'cause I think...



AUSTIN: You want super strength?

ART: The closest thing to what I had is super strength, and it's, it's clumsier than what I had. But...

AUSTIN: What did you have before? How did it work before?

ART: It was like energy projection. With punching, and the way to do that in this system is super strength.

AUSTIN: Right, it's not concussive beam, because that's beams.

ART: Right, there's not...

AUSTIN: Right.

ART: They don't have concussive punch. So I get... three perks? Is that right?

AUSTIN: You get three boosts, yes.

ART: Three boosts.

AUSTIN: You get three boosts. So also, you have super strength one. So, yeah, what are your boosts? Let's read the actual thing... "You are far stronger than any normal human," it's continuous, "your strength must be three before taking this, at rank one your strength increases to four. At this rank," or, sorry, at rank two it would increase to five. "Your fisticuffs and melee weapons, including thrown weapons, attacks, deal the better of suit hits damage or their normal damage." Don't know what that means yet, but you do more damage.

Then, your three, your boosts that you could choose from, are damage boost, which is you do more damage, jump boost, you can jump 30 feet as part of your movement, or up to 30 feet. Not just 30 feet. That would be a very funny power to have. [laughs] Jump regular distance, or 30 feet! Nowhere in between!

"Knockdown boost: if you hit the target, you also knock it prone. Penetration boost: you can punch or throw things through up to *eight feet* of conc—" Oh, sorry—

ART: Eight inches of concrete.

AUSTIN: "Eight inches of concrete, or thin steel plate, to hit something on the other side. Push boost: if you hit the target, push it 10 feet. Range boost: ranges for your thrown weapons double until the beginning of your next turn." Thoughts on this?

ART: Yeah, I think, what respects the older fiction is damage boost, push boost, and knockdown boost.

AUSTIN: Yeah, me too. I agree with that. Um, cool! Ali—

ART: I gotta get to penetration boost, it sounds awesome.

AUSTIN: It does sound awesome. Maybe you, if you level that up, you'll get that. Anyway. Ali.

ALI: Yeah, um... I'm still torn on like, what I get to... how many of these things I get to pick? So I might, like, look over this after we're recording.

AUSTIN: Revisit it, yeah. It's— yeah, go ahead.

ALI: But I think that I'm gonna go for like, a portals build.

AUSTIN: Ooh, that's fun! Portals build.

ALI: Um, I... I feel like it's a fun idea for this character. So the major power that I sort of have my eye on right now is dimension step, obviously.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Fun getaways.

AUSTIN: So, you're leaning... that type of build.

ALI: Yeah, that kind of power.

AUSTIN: Okay. Um... cool. Janine, do you have a strong feeling now, having looked at this for a long time? Or do you wanna stick with...

JANINE: No...

AUSTIN: Okay. Sounds good.

JANINE: I don't know. I have, like, ideas of things to maybe do, but like... It all, I don't know. It doesn't feel quite there.

AUSTIN: Fair. I am quickly checking to see, straight up, if they have... if there's another book that just straight up has animal powers in it. Because, why not. It's probably not— the three expansions are, "Pirates," "Noir," and "Covert;" my guess is, none of those have this, but... I will

check. Um... Alright. Well, powers. We talked about them, we looked at them, we laughed. We had a good time.

[Art laughs]

AUSTIN: You know? Body. "Your character's body score represents how hard it is to hit them in physical combat. Your body score is equal to your agility defense plus any bonuses provided by powers." So for now, just write down your agility defense.

[01:30:00]

ALI: Oh.

AUSTIN: I don't *think* anyone, powers that have been listed, provide any bonuses. But if they do, this is where you would do that.

ART: Body armor, which I'm considering, would provide...

AUSTIN: Would, right? Yeah. And then mind is how difficult it is to affect your mind, and that is your perception defense plus any bonuses from powers.

ALI: Okay.

ART: I also thought about taking mind armor.

ALI: I also thought about taking mind armor!

ART: It's a good, like, it's a good thing to have, you know? It feels like it's a good, like, it can represent your focus, you know?

ALI: Also, it guarantees that we'll get some weird telepathy villains...

AUSTIN: Right. That is actually, right. [Ali laughs] Yeah. You know, you get it. You get it, now. Um... "Hits. Your character's hits score represents how hard it is to take your character down. It's a combination of physical toughness, sheer willpower to keep going while hurt, and a little bit of luck. If a character's hits drops to zero, they fall unconscious and might die. Your character's maximum hits is... equal... to... four, plus twice your resilience score, plus twice your charisma score."

ART: Oof.

JANINE: Sorry, wait, what?

ART: I wanted more hits.

AUSTIN: We always want more hits, don't we? Your hits, your hits, which should be on that, in that thing, still, is four, plus twice your resilience score, plus twice your charisma score.

JANINE: The score or the defense?

AUSTIN: The score.

ALI: Um... twice of one is still two, right? It's not a multiply two by one, and get two, sort of situation?

AUSTIN: Wait, what?

ART: Two times one is two.

AUSTIN: Two times one is two.

ALI: Okay! [laughs]

AUSTIN: Yes, yes, you got it.

ALI: What was I think of? It's fine.

ART: You're thinking of zero. You're thinking of... [Ali laughs] Two times zero is zero.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Probably thinking of that one. Uh... "Your speed represents how far you can move in feet in one round. Your character's speed is 30 feet plus any plusses, or bonuses, from your powers."

JANINE: Sorry, it's—

AUSTIN: It's 30 feet. Unless you have a power that lets you move faster than that.

JANINE: Okay. Okay.

ALI: Um, what was the mind math again?

AUSTIN: Mind math is... perception defense, plus any bonuses from powers. So it's whatever your perception defense already is.

ALI: Okay. And then body was...

AUSTIN: Body was...

ART: Your resilience defense.

AUSTIN: There you go.

ALI: Okay. Thank you. I didn't write it down, 'cause I thought I was gonna figure it out, but now I'm writing it down, and then writing the... I have to figure something else out.

AUSTIN: I see there's one more... a couple more things. Moxie, everyone starts with five. Nope, that's not true. Everyone starts with three. Your maximum is five. So write down three out of five. And moxie rules, moxie is like a thing that you can get, or a thing that you can spend, to get bonuses while playing, basically. You can spend a moxie to increase how many cards you're drawing during a trait thing, to reduce damage, to... take an extra trait action immediately, instead of waiting for initiative to come back around. "To shape the narrative," is one of these. "Modify the GM's description of the scene or situation in a minor way, provided the GM approves. For example, you might find a needed piece of gear on site, or gain unexpected assistance from an NPC you know."

ART: A fantastic way to find out that the GM running your game is a not good person.

AUSTIN: [laughs] "Can I do—" "No. No, you absolutely cannot do whatever it was you were going to say."

[Ali laughs]

ART: My description is the best description.

AUSTIN: [laughs] Ugh. Um, gear. "You keep track of what equipment your character—" Get ready for this shit. "You keep track of what equipment your character owns. You don't need to track everything here. But you should at least cover your most commonly used items, as well as valuable or rare ones. Your character starts with a hundred and fifty dollars. Purchase whatever gear you want with that money."

ART: Alright! I'm gonna have...

ALI: Does it include an outfit? [laughs] Sorry. Shoes are 70 bucks, I need to know this. Am I shoeless?

AUSTIN: Shoes are not 70 bucks! Seven!

ART: Shoes are *seven* bucks!

AUSTIN: Seven bucks!

ALI: *Seven!* Oh, okay.

AUSTIN: Sev-en. Sev-en. Oh, wait, no, *heels* are seven bucks. Pumps are two.

ALI: Ooh!

ART: A hat is two. A handbag is two.

AUSTIN: Ah, here's what I want. If you're going shopping, if you're taking this seriously and going shopping, I need you to read out what you're buying as you're buying it, for fun, for me. And I would say, don't waste your money on entertainment, and information that you've already done in the past. So like, don't get, don't tell me you bought a steeplechase race admission from last week. For two dollars.

[Ali laughs]

ART: I'm sorry, I've already written down: I have a hundred and fifty burlesque admissions, and I'm done!

[Ali and Austin laugh]

ART: My clothes are made out of burlesque admission tickets...

[Ali and Austin continue laughing loudly]

AUSTIN: Ah, that's perfect. Ugh.

ART: Entire, each—

JANINE: What if I just get a motorcycle and then a dress...

AUSTIN: You know?

JANINE: Motorcycle, very affordable. We could all get motorcycles.

ART: Let's all get motorcycles!

ALI: Okay, so we have a hundred and fifty dollars for real.

AUSTIN: Mm-hm.

ALI: Clothes are not, like, that's a real question that I was having... [laughs] ...I'll get mine.

AUSTIN: They're in here! It's the first thing! "Goods and services!" That's chapter six.

ALI: Ugh. You're right...

AUSTIN: It's *the* first thing. That coat's expensive.

JANINE: You can get six eight-ounce packages of nitroglycerine for that coat!

AUSTIN: [laughs] It's a nice coat!

ART: [laughs] Yeah, but you could also always buy a men's overcoat at half the price.

ALI: Mm!

AUSTIN: True! Won't stop you from doing it.

ALI: Yeah, I might do that. Um...

ART: Putting the Champ in 1920s clothing is causing me pain.

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: Why?

ART: Because it's just not quite right, and it's like, but I have to like... do it. And I have to do it very well.

AUSTIN: Yeah. You do. You do have to do it, yeah.

ART: And... but like, there's not, women don't have pants here!

AUSTIN: Yes they do!

ALI: Pants existed.

AUSTIN: Pants exist!

ART: It's not in this list!

JANINE: That's true, it's not on the list.

AUSTIN: Well, put it on the list. I'm gonna, you know what I'm gonna say? Uh... Wait a minute, are men's pants here? Trousers. There. They're just trousers. You can just buy trousers. Gender is a fuck.

ART: Um... But a skirt's much cheaper.

JANINE: I'm sorry, why are men's shirts broken down by fabric type, but women's aren't?

AUSTIN: Blouses are not. I don't know!

JANINE: Blouse is blouse.

AUSTIN: Blouse is blouse.

ART: Blouse...

AUSTIN: Blouse.

ART: [laughs] But, dress, fancy.

AUSTIN: Grouse's blouse.

ALI: Okay. It's—

ART: But there's not dress, not fancy. It's—

JANINE: Yeah, what if I want dress, casual?

AUSTIN: That's, uh...

JANINE: Is that just skirt plus blouse?

AUSTIN: That's just skirt plus blouse. Just add those together. Oh, you can just get one of those if you pick up... So, men's "shoes, comma, dress," is not dress shoes. That's men's shoes, dress. That's a different— it's like a combo. Just get, just get... Wait, what is the cost? Skirt and blouse is... 5.75? Yeah, I'd say that's 5.75. You know what, let's call that six dollars. Half the price of a fancy dress.

JANINE: Okay.



ART: [sighs] But then like, it's also like, maybe it's better, I should just dress, just lean in, fancy dress, hat...

AUSTIN: Hat. There's a hat. Two dollar hat.

ART: Two dollar hat, yeah. The fancy dress probably has a lot more mobility, it probably doesn't have full arms.

AUSTIN: It... versus the non-fancy dress, you're saying?

ART: Well, versus the blouse.

AUSTIN: Oh, right. Sure.

ART: I'm ignoring your house rules. I'm gonna play rules as written, thank you.

AUSTIN: [groaning] Oh, my god.

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: An actual play podcast, isn't it?

ART: Yeah.

JANINE: Wait a minute, I thought pumps were heels. Are heels not pumps?

ALI: They're smaller. They're smaller.

AUSTIN: So there are no flats available. Flats are free.

JANINE: I guess!

ART: It's heels, pumps, or barefoot, dammit!

AUSTIN: It's the twenties! [Art laughs] No one would dare!

ALI: Okay, here's what I have so far. I have a: watch, five dollars. I have a men's overcoat, fifteen dollars. I have women's shoes, pumps, two dollars. A women's skirt, 1.75. A women's blouse, four dollars. A women's hat, two dollars. An umbrella, five dollars. Um...

AUSTIN: Ooh, an umbrella! Smart!

ART: Umbrella's three dollars. You have two more dollars.

ALI: Oh, shit! Thank you.

ART: You got it. "Tobacco, smoking (pouch)". What? Why is pouch in parentheses, it comes with the pouch? Or to differentiate—

AUSTIN: It comes in a pouch. Yeah, it comes with a pouch.

ALI: I'm buying this pipe.

AUSTIN: There you go.

ART: There's no, you can only smoke from a pipe or a cigar?

AUSTIN: Cigarettes are illegal.

ART: There's no... there's no cigarette papers.

AUSTIN: Eh, the papers come in the pouch.

ART: Ah. That's economical.

ALI: No they don't.

AUSTIN: [laughs] Uh, you know. Just roll it in there. Add fifty cents, for some papers.

ART: Also, "matches, one hundred," for twenty five cents.

AUSTIN: I need you to keep track of each of those.

ART: [laughing] And, we're just carrying, I'm just carrying around a hundred matches?

AUSTIN: A hundred. Matches.

ALI: If I get a motorcycle, can it be like a cool Vespa? Do Vespas exist in the twenties? [while typing] 1920s motorcycles...

JANINE: Almost certainly not. 1920s motorcycles are very... Mm.

ALI: Yeah...

AUSTIN: Dangerous?

JANINE: Particular.

ART: Vespa?

JANINE: Well, if you consider what *cars* looked like in the twenties...

AUSTIN: Scooters...

ALI: They're just like bicycles with some shit...

AUSTIN: The first scooters were available in the twenties. In the 19— Here, I'm gonna link this.

JANINE: Not Vespas!

ART: But Vespa didn't exist until 1946.

AUSTIN: No, of course not.

JANINE: They're gonna be like those weird side-car things, right?

AUSTIN: No, this is less attractive than that. A lot of these are just bikes. With an engine on them. These are scooters, these are not motorcycles.

ART: Oh, it's a *used* motorcycle, for a hundred. A new motorcycle is three hundred.

AUSTIN: Oof.

ALI: Oh, wait. These are sick. Hold on. [laughs] It's like a piece of furniture!

AUSTIN: That is sick. That is sick! The thing you've sent is sick.

ALI: Look at this lady!

AUSTIN: Incredible. [Janine laughs] She's too tall!

ALI: There's a sunshade on it!

AUSTIN: It does have a sunshade. "A modern scooter equipped with sunshade."

ART: I don't think, I don't think *she's* too tall.

AUSTIN: Yeah, she's too tall! Her head's gonna hit the sunshade! She's leaning forward.

ART: But I think she's a normal sized person, I think it's the bike that's small.

AUSTIN: Oh, you think that the scooter is bad. Yeah, fair.

ALI: Um, I've decided that I can move through portals, so I probably don't [laughing] want a motorcycle, but if anybody else wants one... They're actually sick. Um...

JANINE: I priced out my entire outfit, but I have no idea what else I need. Oh wait, hang on, I forgot certain... [typing noises]

ART: I'm just gonna start picking up stuff, like "one stick dynamite." If I'm gonna have a hundred matches, I might as well have one stick dynamite.

AUSTIN: May as well! May as well. Right?

ALI: Oh, you have to buy the matches? Where's the matches...

ART: I mean, it's a quarter for a hundred matches. [Austin laughs] If you wanna go in on some matches...

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: You wanna split these matches, yeah.

ALI: I'll split these matches with you!

AUSTIN: Fifty matches each. Great.

ALI: I'll just buy my own...

AUSTIN: What, just in case?

ALI: Well, if I ever needed a match, he would have it! It's fine, we're good. Um... Do I want a lantern and a... lantern oil? Yes, I do.

ART: A *flashlight* is 60 cents!

ALI: Is it? Wait. Oh my god, you're right.

AUSTIN: That's less than three hundred matches!

ART: Also, at this price with matches, you could just light one and when it burns down, light another one. That's... that's your darkness...!

[Ali laughs]

ALI: Oh, I could just get a bicycle, what am I talking about with this foolish motor... cade stuff, I could just use my legs... You know...

ART: Okay, I need a used motorcycle. That's definitely...

[Ali laughs]

ART: And I'll spend some time in the, in the downtime actually nailing down what all these outfits look like.

AUSTIN: Thank you. Appreciate it.

ALI: Oh, did you buy multiple versions of clothes? So you could have multiple outfits?

ART: Not yet I haven't, but I'm thinking about it.

[Ali laughs]

ALI: Uh, what's a tommy gun?

AUSTIN: What's a tommy gun?

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Oh, it's like—

ART: It's the gun with like the big circular drum...

ALI: Oh, right, yeah yeah yeah.

AUSTIN: You'll see it and instantly be like, oh, yeah, it's one of those.

ALI: I don't think I'll shoot that much...

JANINE: Okay, I've spent forty dollars on clothing. That's where I'm at.

ALI: How did you manage that? Oh, I guess it's easy enough...

JANINE: So, I have a casual dress, that's six dollars; I have a fancy dress, just in case, that's twelve dollars; I have a hat for two dollars, a purse for two dollars, pumps for two dollars, a watch for, uh, five dollars—

AUSTIN: Gotta know what time it is, yeah.

JANINE: Neck— I, yeah. Like a necklace and bracelet set, I assume would be about five dollars too, like a decent one. But not like gold or anything, just like, you know.

AUSTIN: Mm-hm!

JANINE: Um, also, a Bramley corsele, that was about five dollars, that's what you wear to keep your figure, like, straight, and stylish.

AUSTIN: Is this in here? Okay.

JANINE: No, I looked that up.

AUSTIN: Oh.

[Ali laughs]

JANINE: Stockings also cost about a dollar at the time, so...

[Art laughs loudly]

ALI: Oh, yeah, okay. Lemme write this down... stockings...

JANINE: So, yeah, so I added stockings in there. And makeup, a full set of makeup, like, you know, a lipstick would be like ten cents, so I figured like, a full face of makeup, if you're doing the lipstick, if you're doing the cake mascara, which was relatively new, if you're doing the rouge and stuff, probably a little under a dollar, or at about a dollar. Especially for face powder, and all that stuff.

ART: Can you put your notes for original items in the chat?

[Austin laughs, sighs]

JANINE: I'll take, I'll take a picture of the gas bill I wrote it on... and put that there.

AUSTIN: I can't tell, I can't tell if, I can't tell if she's being serious.

JANINE: No, I did it all by hand, I calculated it all by hand.

AUSTIN: Oh, my god.

ART: Do you know that the computer you're using is an excellent calculator?

[Ali laughs]

JANINE: Well, no, I did the actual math with the phone. But like, I took notes. On my gas bill.

ART: I might not be able to afford this motorcycle, because I do want... a women's coat and a men's coat. And some work, men's work shoes, and women's... this is, this is, I'm taking the motorcycle off until I know I have the space.

[01:45:00]

ALI: You don't wanna start with a motorcycle?

ART: This is Friends at the Table, I don't care how we get anywhere.

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: Half an hour.

ALI: You can go through my portals! It's fine!

AUSTIN: Mm.

ALI: ...That I might not have!

ART: I'm thinking concussive blasts, and one of the boosts you can have for that is, you can shoot them down and just launch yourself in the air!

AUSTIN: Oh, that's cool. That's the character you had in, um... in "With Great Power!" You had that. Right?

ART: Yeah, uh-huh. Have we been here a while? We've been here long enough to accumulate all this stuff?

AUSTIN: We'll figure it out! It's up to you. What do you think? I think no. I think, not long enough that you... you've been here for long enough that you're like, alright, we're here. And you're not immediately like, "oh no! Where are we!" And like, you can imagine the montage of you guys being like, alright, how did we get, what do we do? What do we have that we could quickly sell for money? That's still valuable? What... obscure... you know, knowledge, do you have that

could turn yourself into spending, that you could get some spending money quickly. Um... Or, or, maybe you're buskers for a week, using your bird abilities and punching strong. And you quickly earn an hundred and fifty bucks.

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: Is—

ART: But like, we also have, we have a place where our second set of clothes live.

AUSTIN: ...Yeah. I'm kind of imagining, and maybe—

JANINE: We could have carpet bags.

AUSTIN: True. You could have carpet bags, or, how much are those?

JANINE: Uh, let me check.

AUSTIN: Um, a room is... Wow! Rooms are expensive. Three dollars a *day*.

JANINE: They have day... yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: For the cheapest.

JANINE: I mean, I guess it says a handbag costs like, two dollars, so, it'd probably be...

AUSTIN: Yeah, a little more than that.

JANINE: Yeah... Ooh! "The bag of many uses!"

AUSTIN: What?

JANINE: It says on this thing, one second. "New style leatherette, very popular, one dollar, the bag of many uses!" Oh, this is handy. Um... this does not really fit with the prices in the book, at all.

AUSTIN: No?

JANINE: This hat is twenty five dollars!

AUSTIN: Yikes! That's an expensive hat. What year is that from?

JANINE: Yeah! Uh... whatever year a well-dressed flapper thing would be relevant.



AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: I mean, this is also, this is an outfit being worn by Clara Bow. So, probably the mid-twenties, still.

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah.

ART: I took a men's tie, because I think, like, an Avril Lavigne-esque look would look really good...

AUSTIN: Yeah, I'm with you!

ART: A real 1920s Avril Lavigne look is a fine... option.

AUSTIN: Honestly, I feel like... I feel like the Champ could pull that off.

ART: Yeah, I think so, too.

JANINE: I truly have no idea what else on this list I would want or need. Like, it's—

AUSTIN: Well, you pocket that money. That's future money.

ALI: Yeah, we'll have it...

JANINE: It's so hard to imagine Chanti being like, yeah, I'm in the 20s, I need to get a lantern!

ALI: Especially you can get a flashlight for... sixty cents! I can't believe that.

JANINE: I don't think she'd even go for a flashlight.

AUSTIN: I bet those flashlights are bad.

ALI: Yeah...

JANINE: They like, barely had batteries back then, so.

AUSTIN: The flashlight was invented... Well, I guess the thing is, could there, I mean— okay, the first dry cell battery was invented in 1887, so, that's plenty of time to get to...

JANINE: Yeah! They had them, they just weren't good.

AUSTIN: They just weren't good.

ALI: Do we have any other stuff for tonight besides shopping?

AUSTIN: Level! "Your character starts at first level." I think that that's it. Um...

JANINE: God, BuzzFeed sucks.

AUSTIN: Yeah...? What'd they do now?

JANINE: I was trying to find the, I was trying to find the price of a standard pet leash in 1920...

[Art and Ali laugh]

AUSTIN: [laughing] Yeah, and *fuck* BuzzFeed!

JANINE: And BuzzFeed is like, "proof that pet owners in the 1920s were totally insane!" And it's just like, it's just like goofy pictures that people took. Like, this lady put a pair of glasses on a geese. And it's like, that's not what people were doing! These are just silly pictures that people took of animals. [Austin laughs] This is like, you, this is like if someone judged our culture based on the shit we do to animals, like, "when your cat needs a keyboard! Damn, those... 2000s were so stupid! [Ali laughs] Those people were dumbasses. They... put cats in front of instruments a lot."

[pause]

ART: Also, fair critique, future people.

[Ali laughs]

JANINE: "Dogs were expert stylists to the stars of the 1920s!" And it's just a picture of a lady and a dog is holding a makeup mirror in its mouth, and it's like, this is just a pi— it's just a promo picture!

AUSTIN: Yeah... I think we might be done.

JANINE: Mm...

AUSTIN: We'll just, Janine, off mic I will look at rules. There's a whole, there is a whole section of this book about building your own shit. So, that seems like a thing you can do.

JANINE: This feels like such a huge oversight!

AUSTIN: It does feel like an oversight! I agree with you!

JANINE: There are a lot, there are a lot of superheroes that fuck with animals! And not just in the way of, like, oh I have owl ears!

AUSTIN: Yeah... Yeah. I'm with you.

JANINE: It's just weird.

AUSTIN: There's a lot.

JANINE: It's weird to not have that, but then to have like, a bunch of different bespoke sorts of beam.

AUSTIN: This feels the most like a particular type of RPG that I played 15 years ago, 20 years ago. For that exact reason. Which is like, page after page of very broad abilities, with the expectation that you the player would specify in, until it was something unique. Or, or, never specify. And just be like, "I shoot my electric beam. I do electric beam damage, that's what I do." Instead of really flavorful stuff that feels like really unique.

JANINE: I get it, though. There's definitely a quality here that reminds me of... I only ever played Champions Online, the MMO—

AUSTIN: Uh-huh! Oh, yeah.

JANINE: But it reminds me a lot of picking my powers in Champions Online.

ART: You didn't play City of Heroes?

JANINE: I also— yeah, no?

AUSTIN: We played City of Heroes.

JANINE: We played City of Heroes!

AUSTIN: You two first talked while we were playing City of Heroes.

JANINE: Mm-hm.

AUSTIN: Or Villains. One or the other.

ART: Hard to confirm.

[Janine laughs]

AUSTIN: [laughing] No, a hundred percent sure.

ART: I mean, it wasn't recorded, so...

AUSTIN: Probably have a screenshot somewhere, on some old hard drive.

JANINE: Also, I'm talking all this shit about electric bolts but that was my main City of Heroes character, was that.

AUSTIN: Was Hadley, right?

JANINE: Was electric bolts and beams.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: Hadalie.

AUSTIN: What did I say?

JANINE: Hadley.

ART: See, I wish, I wish something like City of Heroes could still exist.

AUSTIN: DC Universe Online came to Switch *this year*.

JANINE: Mm.

ART: I don't, I played a little of that and it was not like City of Heroes.

AUSTIN: That's correct. That's fair. That's fair.

JANINE: Yeah. Also, I think—

ART: City of Heroes is so weird.

JANINE: Also I think City of Heroes does still exist, but it's like a private club, that like runs it privately, for themselves?

AUSTIN: That is also correct, yeah.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Alright.

[Ali sighs]

ART: Making fr— the making friends on the internet part of my life is over.

[Janine laughs]

AUSTIN: Probably true, yeah. Alright, I think that that's it for us today. We'll be back with a real episode of this after I figure out how to— I don't know why you name it "animal affinity!" And then it's not literally having affinity with animals.

JANINE: It's, it's, I mean, it's having an affinity *of* animals, or like... "with" in that you're animal-like?

AUSTIN: True. What if I just make animals that have telepathy, and can talk to you?

JANINE: That seems like a very significant change to the world!

AUSTIN: Difference. You're right. Well, it's Blough City, baby! It's all different!

ALI: Yeah!

JANINE: Instead of like— God, no, what if, what if that's true? What if Chanti doesn't have any powers at all, it's always just been that every single bird in this world is a telepath?

AUSTIN: Right! And they only like Chanti!

JANINE: And also totally plays along when she's like, okay, I'm gonna telekinetically bird-contol you! And they're all just like, yeah, okay, I guess.

AUSTIN: That's dark. I hate it.

JANINE: She's the only person we can talk to, so we may as well make her feel good about it.

AUSTIN: Without spoilers, I feel like we've done this bit before, with animals really being the ones in control. [Janine laughs] Um...

[01:53:19]

[Music track *Extracurricular: Out of Time* begins playing]

AUSTIN: Alright, that's gonna do it. We'll be back with a real episode in this game sometime soon! Look forward to that. Bye!

[Music continues until end of episode]