

The Road to PALISADE 06: Wagon Wheel Pt. 2

Transcriber: Anachilles#1091 (Live at the Table version); thedreadbiter (intro and edits)

Austin: The Road to PALISADE is a show about war, politics, religion, revolutionary violence, and the many consequences thereof. For a full list of content warnings, please check the episode description.

Austin: As you approach Palisade from the distance, it reflects all of the lights of the Mirage, so it has, you know, some — sometimes it looks like it's kind of deep purple. Sometimes it's green or orange. But as you get closer and closer, it becomes duller and duller in places. It becomes increasingly, I mean, especially post Principality invasion, bombed out in places. There's lots of areas that have fallen into disrepair.

[["Permanent Peace"](#) by Jack de Quidt starts playing]

Austin (as Wine): Wait — didn't you used to have a body scanner here?

Art (as Doctor J): Used to.

Austin (as Wine): The invaders.

Art (as Doctor J): I presume.

Austin (as Wine): You showed up one day and it was gone.

Art (as Doctor J): Like you say. Could have been the invaders, could have been... you know, someone pretending to be an invader.

Austin (as Wine): Opportunists.

Art (as Doctor J): You never know.

Austin (as Wine): I've heard stories from out there, what people do when the war comes to them. They sell things that you would not believe, to get a ticket away.

[cut]

Janine (as Lishan): You shouldn't, you need to... you can't be here. You need to go, because if you're up to something, then, then... it'll be bad.

Ali (as Ce): Oh, I'm, I'm sorry, I'm, I'm not up to anything. Uh, you know, me and my, my, uh, companions here came through with Wine, who you might know, and we just, you know, wanted to reach out and see what was up, see if people needed anything. We're with, uh, Millennium Break. This is just a mission, in, in community support.

Janine (as Lishan): I need to know that you're not going to get me in trouble. Because, like, if you... set up shop here, and word gets around that you you've set up shop here, I'm eating it.

[cut]

Austin (as Wine): What's your goal? What are you here to do?

Art (as Broadleaf): We're here to... to make, to join the communities, to make... I can't... I've known you for, for months now!

Austin (as Wine): An outsider like you could never join these communities together.

["Permanent Peace" concludes]

Austin: Welcome to Live at the Table, an actual play livestream focused on critical world-building, smart characterization, and fun interaction between good friends. I'm your host, Austin Walker. Joining me today, Art Martinez-Tebbel.

Art: Hey, you can find me on Twitter at [@atebbel](#).

Austin: Ali Acampora.

Ali: Uh, hi! You can find me over at [@ali_west](#) on Twitter, and you can find the show over at [@friends_table](#).

Austin: And Janine Hawkins.

Janine: Hey, you can find me at [@bleatingheart](#) on Twitter.

Austin: Today, we are continuing our game of Wagon Wheel, a game by Weston Leigh Humphreys. Uh, actually, that's not true. There's a, there's a, I realized this yesterday, which is, or not yesterday, but last time we played. I want to get this name right, because the name on my PDF is not the name on — it's WL Marigold Crow-Humphreys. So all of those components are still there, but I want to use the updated title page, not the one that's in my PDF. And it is, of course, a hack of Stewpot by Takuma Okada. And, it is, good! If you missed the first session, you should probably go listen to that first. The quick summary is, hey — Palisade has been invaded by the Curtain, by, by Kesh and Nideo in their hopes to turn it into a sort of launch platform to retake the Twilight Mirage, to invade the Twilight Mirage and take it over.

Uh, the people, at least some of the people of Palisade, would like that not to happen. And, though they offered up some resistance of their own, they were simply out-powered by the biggest galactic empire, half, I guess, of the biggest galactic empire known to, to history. So, easy to understand how that might happen. Uh, and so they have called for, for help. Uh, they sense — they, because it's obviously the big, the big planet. They didn't all get together and send one person. But, a handful of communities, or at least representatives thereof, who had been impacted, sent word to Millennium Break, to come help, basically. The character I'm playing, Wine, pronouns they/them. Wine is the excerpt of the Divine Bounty, was sent to hook up with Millennium Break, and they came back with the rest of the crew. Do y'all want to introduce your characters? I guess, give me, give me your class, your adventure class and your restoration class, along with pronouns. Art?

Art: Yeah, uh, I'm playing Broadleaf. Broadleaf's adventure class was Bard, and restoration job is chef. And they are an elephant person.

Austin: That's true, they are an elephant person.

Art: And I feel... like I'm not doing a good enough job of getting the height of an elephant person across, I'm going to try to focus on that this time.

Austin: Okay, okay. This makes sense.

Ali: Mmm.

Art: Elephants are tall, is all I'm saying.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. I get you, I do. Ali?

Ali: Yeah, I'm playing Ce Gul, whose pronouns are they/them.

Austin: Wait, I think they're they/he. On the sheet, it's they/he.

Ali: They/he, sorry, it is they/he, sorry, that was my bad. Uh, ahem — the adventuring job was ranger, and the restoration job is gardener.

Austin: All right.

Art: I think I forget Broadleaf's pronouns in my flailing —

Austin: I think you did.

Art: Over trying to remember what my adventure job was.

Austin: It's how it goes.

Art: Because I didn't write it down on here, it's just the, the moves.

Austin: Right.

Art: But Broadleaf's pronouns are he/him.

Austin: Okay. Janine.

Janine: I'm playing Caeso Wair, pronouns are he/him. Uh, his adventure job is swashbuckler, and his restoration job is rancher, and he has a horse named Doppler.

Austin: Oh, right, Doppler, great name.

Ali: True.

Janine: What I decided, most closely, I was trying to look at, like, which kind of horse, and I realized the thing in my head was sort of like a Przewalski but larger, kind of — a lot of prehistoric horse lines looked a little bit more like that, so it's kind of in that vein.

Austin: Uh, love it. Uh, I forgot to give Wine's jobs. Uh, adventure job, cleric, restoration job, mystic. We had arrived in a town in the Bounty Valley — Eversin was the name of the town, [spelling] E-V-E-R-S-I-N, and had done a few little scenes. Wine had met with the medic in town, and helped check out some of the sick folks here. Ce had gone to a, it sounded like a smoothie

bar, where they met Lishan Charles, uh, who is the Seneschal here, Seneschals are left behind by the Curtain in small towns outside of their immediate reach where they can't apply direct pressure or keep, you know, an occupation force established. And, uh, uh, there was a little bit of a back and forth that put things at risk for a while, but then Ce pulled it out. Uh, and then Broadleaf had a big dream about flying, and about it being yesterday and bad things coming today, right? And we didn't trust you. Am I remembering that right, Art?

Art: Mm-hm.

Austin: Okay. And otherwise, Broadleaf and Caeso just kind of set up the, the camp here in town. Uh, I think as written we have one more game here in this town. We do three games per town. But I kind of feel like the dream doesn't count because it's not really engaged with the town, you know what I mean?

Art: Yeah, we were just trying to be ominous, right?

Austin: Yeah. So I feel like we should do two more here in Eversin before we uh, move on, before we hit the road, before we hit the bricks. So, who has a mini-game they'd like to play? Thank you, Weston, in the chat —

Janine: I'm going to [unintelligible] these over.

Austin: Saying, “absolutely love how you all handled the dream game.” Appreciate it. Uh, yes, for people listening, the mini-game selection here, we have On the Road, which we've already done, that's those things you do at the very beginning of the game. A Montage, which is a thing that we can spend our community points for. Currently we have 4 community points and 0 suspicion points. Uh, we can spend those to basically skip over a coin flip, ensuring that we succeed by doing a montage instead of the coin flip.

Get Acquainted, which is where you connect with the town and its residents. I feel like that's what we did, I did that, right? Uh, Serve a Meal, uh, Protect the Town, Mend What's Brought, Pass On Knowledge, A Rest, It Takes Two — which seems to be a dance scene — Rebuild the Town, Accept Instruction, Friend to Friend — which is a, “hey, we've got to talk about something.” There's some internal tension here — uh, A Dream, Root Out Corruption, Tend the Hurting, and Move On. Uh, so I think that means, I think we need a Caeso scene and a Ce Gul scene.

Janine:I would like to Rebuild the Town — a prominent structure in the town has been gravely damaged.

Austin: Okay, let's take a look at that game. Do you want to read the, the game?

Janine:Yeah. Uh, uh...

Austin: Page... 36.

Janine:Yeah, I'm skipping, I'm just figuring out where the start point is for the stuff that's like new to this one. Uh, a prominent structure in the town has been gravely damaged. Use the following questions to help set a scene. What type of structure is it? Choose at least one. A gathering place, a monument, a place of worship, an access point like dock, stairs, or a bridge, a storage center for food, medicine, or other things, something else. Where is it located in the town? Choose at least one —

Austin: I guess we could do these one at a time, probably, right?

Janine:Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: And this is, you play, you're playing Caeso, because the game picker plays their character.

Janine:Yes. Uh...

Austin: So what is it, what's —

Janine:I have an image, I have an image of what I want to do action-wise, that I need to pick a building to fit. I wonder if, I think it's like, maybe... uh.... Maybe like one of those marketplaces that's like, mostly open-air, but there's still like a couple walls —

Austin: Yeah.

Janine:And like, some sort of, like, roof-like protrusions that kind of, you know, so it's like, half-enclosed. But that also makes it really vulnerable to getting a chunk of it knocked the fuck down.

Austin: Yeah, sure.

Janine:Uh, so I think it's something like that. Uh... where is it located in the town? In the center of town, as part of another structure, built into a geological feature on the edge of town, throughout the town, something else. Uh... I think... probably, probably on the edge of town?

Austin: Yeah.

Janine:I think there are probably more established, more like, solidly built shops in the center of town, and the marketplace is kind of, in, kind of like, you know, if you're coming from out of town to trade, you would come to this place —

Austin: Right, right. You don't have to go into the middle.

Janine:So it's sort of like a middle — yeah, yeah. You don't have to drag your whole-ass setup into the middle of the town.

Austin: I do want to shout out the idea of, not for this, but for other buildings we built into the geological feature, because we talked about this has —

Janine:I considered that really heavily.

Austin: These, these high cliffs — and so the idea of like, some of the other structures being effectively, one of the walls is a cliff with like a facade on it, or like, you know, some sort of insulated, you know, fourth wall, or built into it, like, like, you know, like a little bit of a cave.

Janine:Yeah.

Austin: But I feel like that doesn't give us the thing that you want here, which is that it's all fucked-up, as, as much.

Janine:And also I wanted, I was thinking of a thing that would have practical access to these bike-drawn track sort of things —

Austin: Right, oh, the slower, yeah.

Janine:If people were coming to trade, you would want something that has a lot of space around it. So building into the stone would maybe kind of restrict the flow of traffic a lot, both people traffic and traffic-traffic. Anyway. How is the structure visibly damaged? Choose at least one: it actually looks [chuckles] fine to you.

Austin: [laughs]

Janine: Something seems off, but you can't quite put your finger on what. There's obvious surface-level damage. It's clearly no longer whole, you're not sure how it's still standing, it's in complete ruin. Uh... I kind of... I want something in between, there's obvious surface-level damage, and it's clearly no longer whole.

Austin: Sure.

Janine: Uh, because I don't think it's like an entire wall fell down. But I also don't think it's like, "well, the siding is a little bit fucked-up."

Austin: Right. Maybe it's like, maybe it's like it's not that much damage, but the damage that it is, is really important, you know what I mean?

Janine: It's like structural?

Austin: Yeah, it's like, if we don't get to fix this whole thing, it's just, the whole wall will fall apart. You know, it's a, it's a load-bearing thing, but it's, yeah.

Janine: Uh, how did you come to be repairing the structure, choose one. Someone from the town asked for your help, you noticed the damage and asked someone in the town about it, you simply saw something that needed to be done and set to work. Uh... uhhhh, let's see. To be honest, I think Caeso [Cai-zo] would just start — sorry, Caeso [Cay-zo], I'm going to do that for the rest of my life.

Austin: Uh-huh.

Ali: [laughs]

Janine: I did it to myself too.

Austin: Mm-hm.

Art: No one did that to you.

Janine: [laughs] No. I think Caeso would, if it was thing that was within his ability to just handle it, he would just start doing it. And I think that's more interesting to me, to capture.

Austin: Even though it's not, like, your place, to do that, you would just go for it? Okay.

Janine: Yeah, I think, so the thing I was thinking of was like, oh, there should be a sort of thing where he has to tie something to Doppler and then throw it over a, a, like hinge point, I forget what it's called in like, simple machine language — not a fulcrum, but like, and not a pulley, but like a proto-pulley —

Austin: Mm-hm.

Janine: What you have a rope over something — this doesn't matter. And, tie the other end to like a beam or something, that has to be lifted up into place. Uh... probably not too high, but it's probably just like, oh, I bet it's like a... decently-sized beam that just needs to be vertical, and then he can like resecure it, or something like that.

Austin: Right, right. Right.

Janine: Uh, and then the rest of it is like, well, you know, there's other stuff that needs to be done here, but this is the first step, and it's something that I know how to do right now, and I'm just going to take care of it because I'm in the area.

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: And I have a horse and a metal rope — [laughing] so, like, why wouldn't I do, do that.

Austin: Can I introduce a character here who responds to you doing this?

Janine: Yes, please do, that's, I think, yeah, that needs to happen.

Austin: I think there's a, there's a sort of a middle-aged marketeer here, has kind of a puffy vest, glasses, human, with kind of, round glasses and uh, uh, thinning hair. His name is... let's see. It's, Tivanon. And Tivanon is like —

Austin (as Tivanon): Uh, uh, uh [flustered] — did the Seneschal send you?

Janine (as Caeso): Nope.

Austin (as Tivanon): Oh, okay, uh... ha-ha... uh, we, we already have in the request for, for repairs. We can't, we can't — you can't. Uh, could you please put it back?

Janine (as Caeso): You've got a lot of repairs to do around here, I'm sure they'll find a way to keep themselves busy. One thing's fixed.

Austin (as Tivanon): Uh, the, there's an order that — we put in a request and they're prioritizing the orders. And if we skip ahead, it... it could be trouble. Are you — I don't?

Janine (as Caeso): If we skip ahead, there's other stuff they'll just — there's other stuff they can fix here. I'm just, I'm just going to fix this one thing, so this wall doesn't come down on your head.

Austin (as Tivanon): Sir, sir, sir, sir — there's other things they could break here.

Janine (as Caeso): Mm-hm? ...So you put in a request for the thing to be fixed, and they're going to show up, and if it's fixed, they're going to break something?

Austin (as Tivanon): You act as if you don't know how they work. They look for any little, any little aggression, any little insult. I shouldn't say this, but I think that they are deprioritizing our need here. Uh... I am not exactly, uh, confident that if we skip ahead and do an unauthorized repair to infrastructure, that it won't get more people hurt.

Janine (as Caeso): Can't you withdraw the request?

Austin (as Tivanon): No, they do an inspection, and if you fail to, uh, put in a request for any damaged infrastructure, that is also, ah, a crime. You have to use their system

Janine (as Caeso): All right, well... how about this? I'll put this big one back up, but then we can take that little one over there by the, by the entryway? We can take that one down, then, paperwork's still in order. Beam fell down, beam fell down. But it's a little, it's a little skinny one. The door can support itself, it'll be fine. No one's the wiser.

Austin: This sounds like a coin flip.

Ali and Janine: [laughing]

Austin: I think maybe the coin flip here is doing it versus convincing him. I think that's a good ploy, right?

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: Does that make sense? Or do you think convincing him is more interesting? What do you think is more interesting to flip for? Maybe overcoming the fear —

Janine: Uh...

Austin: Is more interesting, I don't know.

Janine: I mean, I... I think it's, given what we've done already, I think it's more interesting if the coin flip is like... does beam A go back into place, does taking beam B down not actually fuck up the door, doorway area, like the entryway?

Austin: Mm-hm.

Janine: Uh, because we've had the sort of like, people-convincing coin flip so far. Uh...

Austin: Uh... I think, I think we could probably — let's answer a couple more of these questions before we flip this coin, actually. So we know you're doing it yourself. How do you attempt to fix it? Choose one. You took it on yourself. And here, it's, what is the biggest challenge?

Janine: Uh... I think... so I think, I think... mmm. Maybe my answer here is closest to, there is more to the problem than you originally thought. Where I think, like, you know, there are a lot of things you can do alone.

Austin: Uh-huh.

Janine: You shouldn't necessarily do them alone. It's much slower, like — I suspect the thing that happens here is like, because he's doing it alone, he has to often stop and go back and make sure the knots aren't slipping, or like, resecure things, or nudge things into place.

Austin: Mm-hm.

Janine: Like, he doesn't have that extra set of hands to guide the thing that he's hoisting. So, he has to like, kind of go back and forth between Doppler and the beam, and make sure everything's working — and it's just like, it — [laughs]

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: It takes a lot longer than it should, right? And there's a lot more room to screw it up.

Austin: Mm-hm. All right. Are you going to spend a skill or any community points?

Janine: Uh... I think I would like to spend my hold fast, expert use of knots.

Austin: Ooh, sure. That makes sense.

Janine: Right? Seems like the one to do?

Austin: Yeah, totally.

Janine: Uh... that's a bigger line than I was intending for it to be.

Austin: It did not come through — oh yeah, there it is. Yeah, big line.

Janine: Big line.

Austin: There you go.

Janine: That's a little —

Austin: Uh... so it means you get to flip 3 coins, and choose the best two. We're saying 1 is a heads, and 2 is a tails, so 3d2.

Janine: It, it feels so weird to roll a d2.

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: It's, I don't know, it's weird to me.

Austin: [rolling program pings] That is a 1 and a 2. Uh, because the best is the 1. A 2 is not as good, unfortunately.

Janine: Mm-hm.

Austin: So, uh, so we do end up getting, if I remember this right, we do end up getting a suspicion point, let me just double-check that that is true. Uh, playing the game... mini-game mechanics... yeah, heads community point, tails, a suspicion point. So that means you get 1 community point and 1 suspicion point. At this point, with this low suspicion, we don't have any immediate consequences, but as a reminder, once we start getting up there with suspicion points in any given town, they may ask us to leave, or they may straight-up kick us out. Uh... so,

I'm just double-checking. I think it's 4 and then 5, that they'll kick you out on? At 4 they ask you to leave, at 5 they force you out. So, we're still doing okay here. I'll add the 1, the 1, uh, suspicion point in Eversin. Uh, what is the next step on this game?

Janine:Uh, are you successful? Choose one. No, things are worse than when you started. Kind of, the structure is in a better place, but there's still a lot of work to do. Uh, yes. It's better than new, if a little different. Uh, the... I think, I think we're sort of, by necessity, I have to say kind of, here, because part of this fix involves breaking it more. [laughs]

Austin: True, true.

Janine:So, it's like, yeah, the structure is in a better place, but there is still a lot of work to do, that's, that's — you cannot argue that.

Austin: Yeah. No, yeah.

Janine:Uh... what is the town's reaction? Take time to set a scene showing how things end up, and how others react. Any other relevant characters may be present. If you have checked off an adventure skill during this game, take a new restoration skill and talk about how you learned it. If you checked off a skill from any job or had any significant — sorry, or had a significant moment with another NPC, consider recording a memory. Uh... so yeah, reaction scene.

Austin: Yeah, I'm curious. So, it's been, do you think, how far after this. I mean, it says to take, I guess it says, take a time to set a scene showing how things end up. Do you think that part of the suspicion here is the thing of like, other people have the same concern, even though they enjoy that this is getting fixed, they're worried about what the fallout could be? Like, where does that one suspicion point come from?

Janine:[laughs] I mean, I think that one suspicion point comes from, the people who understand the risk of what he was doing maybe understand why the door was broken.

Austin: Ah.

Janine:But there's also a bunch of people who are going to show up and be like, “well, that thing's fixed, but what the fuck happened to that thing?”

Austin: Yeah, yeah.

Janine: Uh... like, they're just, they're not going to necessarily put those things together, and... and it's just going to kind of, maybe feel a little bit arbitrary, and kind of hostile in that arbitrariness.

Austin: Right.

Janine: Uh...

Austin: At the very least, it could be as far as like, "you didn't do a great job," you know?

Janine: Yeah. "You forgot this thing right here."

Austin: Yeah. I would say, most of the people who work at this place, I bet understand that — they probably don't understand the scheme you came up with, but if it was explained to them, at least some of them would get brought on board, you know?

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: Uh, which is probably why it's only one suspicion, you know?

Janine: Yeah. Uh... I'm also going to take handy: one way or another, you always get the job done.

Austin: Uh, sure. This makes sense.

Ali: Mmm.

Austin: Yeah, that adds up.

Austin: All right. And one more here, one more, one more mini-game in Eversin from Ce. Or wait, did you — you did a scene, but you didn't pick a game, right?

Ali: Yes. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Should I still pick a game?

Austin: Yeah, I think so. And then we'll, we'll move towns, yeah.

Ali: Yeah. I was thinking of Pass on Knowledge. Uh...

Austin: Awesome.

Ali: Yeah, because this is sort of I think, uh, it being our first town, and sort of establishing Millennium Break, and people here with the idea —

Austin: Yeah

Ali: Of like, we set up that clinic, but in terms of actually having hands around to help, and being available to learn stuff seems like a good...

Austin: Yeah, agree.

Ali: [laughs] beat, at this part of the story, or whatever. So, yeah. Pass on Knowledge is on...

Austin: 30.

Ali: Uh, yes, sorry. [laughing]

Austin: You're good.

Ali: [reading] The game picker should play their character. The game picker may invite other players to join them. Uh, we're going to be doing a coin flip. Uh... oh, no. Pass on Knowledge is not what I was looking for. I was looking for Accept Instruction, which is actually —

Austin: Oh, it's the other way.

Ali: The game that's right after, yeah. Yes. Yes.

Art: Wait, what page is...?

Austin: Accept Instruction is page 39.

Art: 39.

Austin: Pass on Knowledge is, we give the place some knowledge. Accept Instruction is, an NPC teaches us something.

Ali: Yes, yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah. Which felt more honest to like, the, like —

Austin: Mm-hm.

Ali: Getting your bearings, like —

Austin: Yeah, we're the outsiders here.

Ali: Right, right, right. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Um, okay. So, this game is for two players. The game player should play their character as the student. The other player will play the teacher. This is — this will likely be someone we've already met, but it can also be someone new.

Austin: Who do we have as NPCs? We have Lishan Charles, the Seneschal. We have, uh, this person who I just did who's this like, market seller guy, uh, Tivanon.

Ali: We should put them in notes, just to —

Austin: Yeah, I'll do it right now. Yep. I mean, the Seneschal is, thankfully. Uh, and then —

Art: Uh, did my doctor have a name?

Austin: Your doctor didn't have a name, I don't think. I don't think we had a name for your doctor.

Art: If we do the doctor again, maybe he'll have a name, but if we don't —

Janine:[laughing]

Austin: Oh my god, why is this tool so bad? Hoo... it's just impossible, it's just, I'm just going to have to —

Ali: [laughing]

Austin: Hate this.

Ali: Uh, is anyone raring to be like — because this seems like a paired game, so is anybody like, yeah, I want to be a teacher right now? I guess, Art, you're the one who hasn't done —
[laughing]

Art: Yeah, I would, yeah, sure.

Ali: Hey, hi, hello. Okay.

Art: Hi, what are you trying to learn? Doctoring? I have a doctor already. Is that — [laughs]

Ali: I was thinking that, because like, when I was, when I was thinking of the scene I was like, we should get, we should get some foundational clinic helping, if that was like, sort of why

we're here. But I didn't want to do Tend the Hurting, because I didn't like, want to frame a scene around an injury.

Austin: Mm-hm.

Ali: And because it just seems like, more honest that Ce would be the person running errands while... actual, like, medical workers are doing the medical stuff. Uh...

Austin: Doctor J, thank you, Jack. Jack Shirai in chat notes, Doctor J.

Art: Oh, that's right, it was Doctor J.

Austin: The Doctor J.

Ali: [snorts, laughing]

Art: The Doctor J.

Austin: The historical Doctor J.

Art: Uh-huh. Now, so old.

Austin: [laughing] Uh-huh.

Ali: Is Doctor J a real thing?

Austin: Doctor J is a —

Art: Yeah, Doctor J was a — a basketball player.

Austin: Basketball player.

Ali: Oh, okay, okay. [laughing] Uh, yeah, so the, the game has questions for each of the teacher, students. I'm going to read them all first, then we can go over them. The teacher is, who are you, what do you want to teach the student and why? How do you feel about the student, what is your relationship like? And then student is, what are you doing when the teacher approaches you? How do you feel about the teacher? What is your relationship like? How do you respond to their offer to teach you, and why do you accept it? Uh... so.

Art: And if I remember correctly, this doctor was overwhelmed and kind of tired.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: Yeah.

Art: Luckily, a very easy character space to get into.

Austin: [laughs]

Ali: [laughing] uh-huh. And, I feel like the, like, what are you doing when the teacher approaches you is kind of an easy question, because I think that Ce is willing to be available. I guess I stumbled into characterization for them that was like, "I really believe in the work of Millennium Break, and that's why I'm... [laughing] willing to tell people state secrets."

Austin: Right.

Ali: And now that's like, instead of being a player mistake, that's like a characterization, like I'm proud of my work for Millennium Break, so...

Art: [laughing] and you're proud of your state secrets.

Ali: [hard laughing]

Art: [laughing] Don't let anyone tell you what your state secrets are.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: So then, yeah, Art, these are the teacher questions for you. Who are you —

Art: Who are you, Doctor J, famed basketball player slash —

Austin: Slash doctor, medical doctor.

Art: Pioneer doctor.

Ali: [laughs]

Austin: What do you want to teach the student and why?

Art: What do you want to teach the student and why? I mean, I think some of it is, you know, if y'all are going to be here for a little bit, and I mean, I think Doctor J doesn't know that this is the last scene in this town [laughing]

Austin: Uh-huh.

Ali: [wheezes laughing]

Art: But like, it doesn't mean that necessarily that scene follows.

Austin: I would say it's probably worth saying that Doctor J might know that. I would say we should be up front about that, if that's a thing, you know?

Art: Sure.

Austin: In the sense that like, you could do a, "hey, before you go, here are some stuff to know about this place."

Art: Sure. But like, Ce could also be helping here at this clinic for a little bit before.

Austin: Yes. Right. We, our time, this is not —

Art: Our time's wrapping up, it's not like, literally I'm going to finish this scene and then Ce's going to walk out into the wagon and go.

Ali: [laughing]

Austin: Right, and this was not, like, this didn't all happen in one day. This presumably happened over the course of weeks or something, you know?

Art: Yeah, yeah. So it's a little bit passing on knowledge, a little bit just getting another set of hands here at the...

Austin: Right.

Ali: Mm-hm.

Art: We said clinic, clinic's what we were using for the...

Austin: Clinic is what we were using, yeah.

Art: How do you feel about the student, what is your relationship like? I mean, I would say that we don't have a relationship as, as such, yet. But, you know —

Ali: Fair.

Art: And I guess, like, it's not a great first impression of this clinic, is that Wine came in and was like, "I'm pretty sure you're stealing these medical supplies."

Ali: [chortles]

Art: But, I think Doctor J is a, is a person with the capacity for forgiveness, and for, you know, not painting with a broad brush.

Ali: Yeah, fair, that's very — [laughing] I was about to be like, that's a very noble characteristic, but we don't have to describe that right now. How do you feel about the teacher, what is your relationship like? I feel like it's a similar thing, where like, it's two people who don't really know each other, but in the like... I think that there's like an eagerness to help, to especially be like, "I'm going to prove myself, and I want to show that us being here is a good thing for these people," on top of being like, I can recognize that the situation is like, shitty for this person, and, you know, I would like to help them, they seem overwhelmed, and I, I have two hands. Uh...

Art: Yeah, great.

Ali: [laughs] Which I guess also plays into, how do you respond to their offer to teach you, and why do you accept? I say yes and I accept because it is my job to be here. Where does the teaching take place? Set a scene, show where this is happening, use as many senses as you can. Ooh. Okay.

Art: Oh.

Ali: I guess if this is like, within the clinic? Is it like, right outside the clinic?

Art: Sure, I mean, it could be either.

Ali: Sure.

Art: I'm really flexible here. I mean, there, there's people — I guess it's like, do you want to be, do you want to be learning on real patients, or do you want to be learning in sort of a like a slightly controlled environment?

Ali: Probably a slightly controlled environment. I don't know that I'm like —

Art: All right.

Ali: Doing the healing stuff?

Austin: Right, like is this, is this, here's my — is this here's how you do surgery? Is this, here's how you collect the healing herbs we have? Is this, here's how you set up this equipment? Is this, here are good workflows for... that you can recruit people into for, uh, for clinic work?

Art: I think it's more of the first stuff — not the surgery, not surgery. I forgot surgery was the first thing you said. [laughing]

Austin: [laughs] You got there.

Art: But the, uh, you know, more of the like, yeah, uh, here's how to, here's how to put on, here's how to do a splint. These are the herbs we want, I think that's the answer was, something that you wanted the student to learn but ends up coming naturally is like, "oh yeah, you have this naturalist experience, you're great at picking up all the herbs," or whatever, you know?

Austin: Mmm.

Ali: Oh, sure, yeah, playing to my strengths.

Art: Yeah, playing to your strength. We need... whatever, sixleaf coriander, which controls fever.

Austin: Oh yeah.

Ali: True. True, true, true. In this case is it —

Art: Something I thought it would be easy to pick up that the student struggled with is dunking from the free throw line.

Austin: [laughing]

Ali: [snorts laughing]

Art: I just thought you looked more athletic than that, and then you really didn't have it, I...
[laughs]

Ali: Yeah...

Austin: Listen, you can't joke. If you're going to do a basketball scene, you have to do a basketball scene.

Ali: [laughing]

Austin: Are you doing drills, are you playing HORSE, but each time you shoot, you have to say the name of an herb, a local herb that helps heal people?

Art: Yeah, I think that's it, yeah, I think it's —

Ali: [laughing] Very educational.

Art: Experience of herbalism, knowledge, with HORSE. Yeah.

Austin: Uh-huh.

Janine: It's funny, because you're also playing a local herb.

Austin: Wow, damn, shots.

Ali: [laughing]

Art: Uh, and yeah, I think Doctor J just wipes the floor with you in HORSE, because they're one of the top 75 NBA players of all time.

Austin: Mm-hm. Which is a big — which is wild, in the future. Because it's all future players.

Art: Oh yeah.

Austin: Basketball players got worse at a certain point, soon. Uh... and the list just never changed again.

Art: Well actually, what I learned from being alive for both the 50th and the 75th NBA anniversaries is that like, they're really not willing to confront, "are the older players still worth it?"

Austin: Right, right.

Art: They didn't like, bump old players off this list. They just added 25 new ones. But they're not really taking into account —

Austin: You said best 75, which means he's held on. Yeah.

Art: Uh-huh. Because now it's like the top 120,000 list, or whatever.

Austin: Right, okay.

Art: Getting them all together for the ceremony is really a pain in the ass.

Janine: Meanwhile, me and Ali are just like, wow, I can't believe Doctor Jart's a really person.

Ali: [outburst of laughter] Yeah, true. [laughs] I love your peeling cream, Doctor J, really great to meet you.

Janine: Thank you so much for the [unintelligible], sir.

Art: Thank you. Uh...

Ali: [laughing]

Art: I really have tried to branch out, in the several million years, is it?

Austin: No, no. Tens of thousands.

Art: Tens of thousands of years —

Austin: Hundreds of thousands, I guess, if you go back to pre-Rigour era. Yeah, hundreds of thousands.

Art: [laughs] Well, we're going back to now.

Austin: Yeah. We don't know.

Art: Hundreds of thousands of years since I've played [unintelligible]

Ali: So, senses-wise [laughs], is this like where the clinic, there's like mumbling voices, there's like footsteps everywhere, it smells really clean, and you're showing me already pre-dried herbs? Or is this like — [laughs]

Austin: The sounds of sneakers on hardwood floor. Squeaking —

Ali: [laughing] Or we're out, we're like on the edge of a field, and there's like the fence on the edge of the town, and you're about to send me out —

Art: I think the clinic is like, sort of at the edge, and you get the transition in these spaces from like... yeah, from like, the squeaky-clean operating —

Ali: [laughing]

Art: Theater slash basketball court, and [laughing] then the much more, like, the immediate rustiness of the outside.

Ali: Yeah, okay, yeah.

Art: You really describe yourself in and out, in the locker room area of the hospital slash gymnasium.

Ali: True, yeah, okay, yeah. It's funny that we're, we're joking about this now. But there's like a place that opened recently, to, to me, where it's like, it's like an upstairs of like a warehouse —

Austin: Mm-hm.

Ali: And they're supposed to be putting like, more stores into it, but there's only one there now. So it's just like, this whole floor that just feels like a high school gym —

Austin: That's fun, yeah.

Ali: Because it's just like, this empty space. Uh... so I've been thinking about high school gyms for like a week now. [laughs] so here we are playing basketball.

Austin: God, maybe — I, I actually now, I'm like, okay, well it means that the clinic is in the destroyed high school —

Ali: [laughing]

Austin: And the two things that are left are like, some of the admin rooms and like, the nurse's office which have become an ad hoc clinic.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: And the basketball court, and the high school gym. Yeah.

Ali: Mm-hm.

Art: Mm-hm.

Austin: Which is like a good place to — I've given blood in high school gyms, you know? Like —

Ali: Oh, 100 percent, yeah.

Austin: You can totally use that space, it's useful.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: [laughing] also, you can do dunks there.

Ali: [laughing]

Art: But some people, like... shouldn't we be using the space, you know, the basketball court space, as space for more patients... but when you have Doctor J in your town...

Austin: [cackling]

Art: You have to let him do what he does!

Austin: [laughing] yeah.

Ali: [laughing]

Austin: Yeah, that was part of the rule. [catching his breath from laughing] Unbelievable.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: Anyway. Doctor J had a wonderful afro, I just need you to know. Like if you didn't know about Doctor J, if you didn't know like, what Doctor J looked like at the time, like, Doctor J, all-time fro. Anyway. Also, like — the thing about being Doctor J is, that his regular name is already the best name. His name is Julius Irving, which is just an incredible name.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: So the idea that he was like, “oh, no, I got to be Doctor J,” is like a real, it is like really stunting on 'em, because even his, even his government name is good, you know?

Ali: [laughs]

Art: Yeah, I feel like this was a ploy on his part, because he's like, “well, I'm going to be one of the best basketball players of all time. I bet if I get the nickname Doctor J, I can get a lot of honorary doctorates, that most athletes don't get.”

Austin: Ah, sure. Sure. Yeah. There you go. Anyway.

Janine: You know, just think that he was like — I'm the Doctor of Baseball. I'm so good at this that I'm scholarly. I have a PhD in dunking.

Art: Maybe that's the root of it, but...

Austin: No, his, his — apparently he had a high school friend who he was called, who we played basketball with, and he called his high school friend The Professor, and so his high school friend called him The Doctor back, and that's where it came from.

Ali: [laughing]

Janine: Aw, I love that.

Austin: It's really good, it's really good.

Art: I don't think he ever got an honorary doctorate, which is a real shame. If you're listening to this and you are a Dean of a university —

Austin: Yeah, you should do this, yeah.

Art: You make that happen.

Austin: Apparently, he says, “later on in Rucker Park,” in Harlem, which is a famous, uh, outdoor basketball court in New York, “when people started calling me Black Moses and Houdini, I told them if they wanted to call me anything, call me Doctor,” which is great. Also that means that this is where that — what is the name of that movie? Uh, is it He Got Game, is it that one? It is, it's He Got Game, uh, the Denzel Washington — I mean, the Spike Lee joint starring Denzel Washington, includes a whole section where he's talking about a dude named Jesus — uh, uh, actually, wait, he's Jesus. His name is Jesus.

Art: He's Jesus, yeah.

Austin: His name is Jesus Shovelsworth, is the — but the name, the name actually comes from someone that they called Jesus, because of the way he played ball. And so now I'm like, “oh, is that just a stand-in for Doctor J?” And I don't, I don't know if that's true. Anyway, we're way off-topic at this point.

Ali: [laughing]

Austin: But I was just watching scenes from this movie last week, so it's top of mind.

Art: God, those old Nets uniforms fucking went for it.

Austin: Yeah, they were really good —

Ali: What's something you thought would be difficult for the student [laughing] for the student to learn, but ended up coming naturally?

Art: I —

Austin: That one we answered, we answered that one.

Ali: What's something that you thought [laughing]

Austin: Those are answered.

Art: I've answered both of these questions.

Ali: [growls]

Austin: The first one was a real answer, too, because the first one was about your, your herb knowledge —

Art: The herbalism —

Austin: Being out in the wilds and finding stuff.

Ali: I only just realized that these are a choose-one. Okay, so, my options are: how do you feel about the teacher taking time to show you something new? What's something especially satisfying about your new skill? What's something frustrating about the teacher's instructions?

Art: It seems like you're frustrated with all of the basketball talk.

Ali: [laughing] [snorts]

Art: And I hear you.

Ali: Uh... I feel great about the teacher [laughing] showing me something new. Uh... I feel like there's something like, like, the especially satisfying thing about it is probably the, like, both of the like, being able to explore outside of the town, and being able to understand the planet a little bit more, and then just also, just like, oh, to like, this person trusts me, to like, go out and do my own thing, and like, whatever.

Austin: Mm-hm.

Ali: But also just the thing of like, the like, double satisfaction of being like, “oh, I've done this thing that's like surprisingly sort of easy.” Like, it's not like a difficult thing to leave town to go find some, some shrubs or whatever. Like, it's potentially a little bit dangerous and like, but it's like a nice activity. [laughing] And like, the feeling of being like, I've been able to do a small thing for somebody who doesn't have the time to do it for themselves that also has this like, sort of like, bigger effect overall of being like, this is literally medicine, of like, yeah, I'm doing it.

Austin: Is that, you said, like, that doesn't have the time to do it for themselves. Is there a point at which you're just bringing in, by week two of this, you're coming in with herbs, and other plants and stuff, without being, without kind of walking together through the fields at that point? You've totally internalized what the list is, you start to anticipate some of those needs, et cetera?

Ali: Mm-hm.

Austin: That's good, I like that a lot. Uh...

Ali: Teacher: how long do you spend teaching the student? Choose one.

Art: Mmm... I think this is a few days.

Ali: Yeah. That makes sense.

Austin: Mm-hm.

Ali: Together.

Austin: Sorry, I've got another clarifying question. Do you get the sort of, "all right, here are the plants for this region. You're going to find that if you go north by 50 miles, things start to change, and you should look for this one instead," or do you stay really focused on this place? That's to the Doctor, I guess.

Art: I think it is a little, moving it out, pressing at the edges a little bit.

Austin: Okay.

Ali: Yeah, I image Ce would be sort of eager to be like, "oh, if, you know, beyond like —" uh... dodging active military or whatever, being like, "oh, if there's a field of this stuff that's within this next 10 miles or whatever, what's in the next 5?"

Austin: Right.

Ali: Uh, just the sort of like, natural curiosity that isn't like, guided by Doctor J.

Austin: Mm-hm.

Ali: Uh... together, do a short scene that shows the student finally getting the hang of the new skill. How does the teaching and learning experience change your relationship, if at all? Answer separately for your own character. Ooh. I guess Austin set up a really natural scene of the student getting the hang of the new skill, which would be Ce just like, coming by, like as the clinic is opening, and being like, you know, "I went out this morning, I woke up really early, I couldn't get back to sleep, so I just figured I'd go for a walk, and I figured you'd need some of these. Good morning, Doctor J."

Art: Yeah, it's just like a giant stack of —

Ali: [laughing]

Art: It's like a week's worth of, you know, it's very...

Art (as Doctor J): Oh my god, that's — that's so much, thank you.

Ali (as Ce): Oh, no problem.

Art (as Doctor J): I can't tell you how much, how much I felt under the weight of this, when you got here, and how... how your help has really gotten me, you know, caught up on top of things I can, I can really work at, at doing better for this town now.

Ali (as Ce): Oh, I appreciate you saying that. That's, I, I'm happy to help. Uh, yeah. Thank you for all the [laughs] the HORSE drills.

Ali: [laughing] is that what we were talking about?

Austin: Yeah. Uh-huh.

Art (as Doctor J): Yeah, playing HORSE. I know the old traditions are not what they were, but I appreciate your willingness to learn on that front, as well. But you have to remember that you're really shooting from the legs, and not from your arms.

Ali (as Ce): Uh... wait, I'm supposed to shoot from the legs.

Art (as Doctor J): Yeah, shoot from the legs, the legs are where your shot —

Ali (as Ce): Oh, because the center of gravity, right? Like I have to, like —

Art (as Doctor J): No, that's not why, but as long as you remember it, it's fine.

Ali: [laughing hard]

Ali (as Ce): Well, I guess I need some more lessons on that front. But, I'm glad that you have your herbs.

Art (as Doctor J): Yeah, it's great that the town is going to be healthier than they've ever been. And some day —

Ali: [laughing] than they've ever been?

Art (as Doctor J): And someday you won't be so embarrassing on a basketball court.

Austin: [laughs]

Ali: [snorts]

Austin: Jeez.

Ali (as Ce): I hope that, too.

Art (as Doctor J): I'm sorry if I don't sound like myself from what you might know me from in historical documents. I didn't take the time to really center myself in that idea.

Ali (as Ce): Yeah, we didn't have, we didn't have any basketball courts back where I grew up.

Art (as Doctor J): I believe that. I didn't mean that in a mean way.

Austin: [laughs]

Ali (as Ce): No, no, I understand, I was — you know.

Art (as Doctor J): Yeah.

Ali (as Ce): I started from square one, did my...

Art (as Doctor J): Uh-huh.

Ali (as Ce): Well... [laughing]

Austin: [laughing] time to hit the old trail...

Ali: [laughing]

Ali (as Ce): It was good to see you.

Art (as Doctor J): Yeah, it's been wonderful.

Ali: [laughing]

Art (as Doctor J): Bye.

Ali: How does the whole teaching and learning experience change your relationship, if at all?
Answer separately for your own character.

Art: I think this has been really great for Doctor J. It's let him, you know, it's probably been a long time since he's taught anyone how to play basketball, and that's really meaningful. Uh... and the like, having someone, having an outsider come and care about the wellness of the town is, is really important. That's like a really significant thing for someone who's like, kind of become a, a grumpy person.

Austin: How about for Ce?

Ali: Yeah, I think Ce learned a lesson in supporting someone else's hobbies when you're getting to know them... [laughing] and, uh, [laughing] also, you know, like — not only being able to connect with someone on a personal level, even if that was all a bit, but like... [laughing]

Austin: I don't know that was a bit.

Art: I don't know!

Austin: I've added notes, Palisade has an elite and competitive basketball culture.

Ali: Hell yes.

Art: Oh, sad news —

Austin: Don't tell Sylvi.

Ali: [laughing] Are we now not playing Armour Astir, are instead going to find a basketball league game, game.

Austin: A sports —

Ali: God, there's probably —

Austin: There are, for sure.

Ali: A few good ones out there. Uh...

Art: The whole season's going to be a Let's Play of the [unintelligible]

Austin: Uh-huh.

Ali: [laughing]

Austin: Uh, final things here, right? Uh, now that you've taken time to learn from your teacher, take a relevant skill from any restoration job without checking off a skill.

Ali: Ooh.

Art: Oh.

Ali: From any restoration job.

Austin: Also, we didn't flip a coin there, that's because coin flips were optional in that scene, just to reiterate for people.

Ali: Oh, sure.

Austin: Did not necessarily feel like we hit a point where there were like, coin flip stakes.

Ali: Right. Yeah, it could have been like, Ce goes out to find herbs, is there danger?

Austin: Right, right.

Ali: But it just didn't feel like that's what we were setting up.

Austin: Was the vibe, yeah.

Art: Yeah.

Ali: I'm, um, taking the skill bioluminescent. You are radiant — these are adventuring jobs. [laughing] I should be looking for restoration jobs. Uh... [laughing] oh, herbs. You've mastered the use of every leaf and flower.

Austin: Boom. Love that. Look at that, look at that.

Art: There you go.

Ali: That's from the healer tab.

Austin: There you go.

Ali: And I'm a gardener, so it's a very smooth.

Austin: Yeah, that's [unintelligible]

Art: And Janine's already taken horse, so we can't try to adapt that to...

Ali: [laughing]

Austin: Uh-huh. Next time. Uh, all right. The next game we have to play here is Move On. Everyone plays their character, no coins are flipped. This game takes you from one town to the next. How do people, uh, of the town you're leaving feel about you? Consult your success and fail ratio. We only had one suspicion point here. Uh, so that's positive. And we got 5 community points, which feel solid to me.

Art: Mm-hm.

Austin: My only —

Art: And the inspiring sports movie we just witnessed, about to launch the whole community.

Austin: I would say, that's a thing that I think maybe is like, maybe our actions helped convince people here, hey, it's totally good that Millennium Break is in the mix here, but I don't know that we did much coalition building, so to speak, do you know what I mean?

Art: Sure, sure.

Austin: We were not out here, you know — I think repairing the clinic and rebuilding the clinic, and repairing the marketplace, are big material fixes. Uh... and I think that was probably well, you know, I think we get positive there. And probably a little negative attention from the people who are, you know, happy to collaborate with the Principality. But, I bet, I bet this is what Wine is probably ruminating on, on the way out, is like, "we've got to do a better job of like, it's... " Most important thing is to help people. Second most important thing is to try to figure out a way to build enough power to like, get the fucking Curtain off of our planet, you know?

Art: Mm-hm.

Ali: Yeah. There's nothing to say that like, when the first Principality unit came by, they weren't also like, "what kind of food do you need?"

Austin: Right. Or the opposite thing, right, which is like, if the Principality rolls into this town next week, they might just break all the shit we fixed again.

Ali: Oh, sure, yeah.

Austin: Right? Uh... I think that is, as a person from that place, I think that is what Wine specifically is like, that is how Wine feels about the success and failure here. Do other characters have differing feelings about the situation? Or not even differing, just, what do they feel about Eversin, as we leave it?

Art: What a town where I had a weird nightmare that —

Ali: [laughing]

Art: Apparently took up several weeks of my time.

Austin: [laughing] I have to imagine that we can kind of extrapolate from the sorts of things we chose to do, that we continue doing things like that during our time there, right?

Art: Uh-huh. Yeah.

Austin: Stealthily repairing stuff that we were supposed to not repair, helping people with their day to day tasks for important things, stuff like that.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: Any other... Caeso or Ce? [pause] all right.

Ali: [laughing] I mean, I don't know if I have more to say that hasn't already been set up, in terms of like — yeah.

Austin: What kind of stories do they tell about you when you leave? I feel like that's also been covered, kind of. No one's been traveling with us, so no one's going to decide to stay in the town. Uh... does anyone from the town join our wagon? Characters that join don't have to be crew.

Ali: Mmm.

Austin: Uh... I could imagine Tivanon joining as like, “hey, I want to move some...” In fact, maybe the idea, maybe the place we're going to next needs supplies, and Tivanon, as a merchant, is like, giving, has got together a care package of some sort, to add to our care package. And it's like, big enough that we got — Tivanon's bringing his own slowder, carrier. And so there's like, joins the convoy, even if I'm not going to be on the wagon, you know? Or maybe —

Ali: Oh, sure, sure —

Austin: Or like, my trailer to your trailer, you know, and I'll stay up in the cab.

Ali: Oh, sure. It's like an escort mission, basically.

Austin: Yeah, totally. Uh... what on your wagon needs tended to or repaired? Who does what? I feel like this is just, you've got to get an oil change done, you've got to do basic maintenance. We didn't, you know... no one shot at us, no one, we didn't take any hard bumps.

Art: Yeah.

Ali: Mm-hm. Yeah, this is all just day to day stuff.

Austin: Yeah, we didn't have to like, use any parts for anything special. Uh...

Ali: Maybe we need to do some sort of recalibrating with like, the like, engine.

Austin: Sure.

Ali: Blow fans to account for the extra weight for something.

Austin: Yeah, that makes sense, totally. Do we have — I guess, we don't have a de facto engineer type, huh? I guess, in a way —

Art: No.

Austin: Caeso was our closest, because he knew how knots worked.

Ali: I'm a goggles guy.

Austin: Yeah, sure, sure.

Ali: So there's a little bit of that there.

Austin: Yeah, goggles do help, for sure. Uh... we do our best. You know, and maybe that should come into play a little bit here, is like, we don't have a de facto mechanic. And so, taking this second full trailer of supplies might end up... you know, taxing our wagons a little bit here, the BigStar.

Uh, if you have enough community points to upgrade the wagon, do so now. So, let's see here — wagon upgrades. We have 5 community points. With 4 community points — all right. With 3 community points, we can go from level 0 to level 1. As a reminder, we have level 1 accommodations and level 1 utility. We have level 0 crew, and level 0, that's it. Those are the three things. It's crew, accommodations, and utility. Uh... it costs 4 points to go from level 1 to level 2, and 5 from level 2 to level 3. So we could add level 1 crew, or we could upgrade accommodations or utility from level 1 to level 2.

Art: Sort of sounds like we should get ourselves a mechanic.

Austin: It sort of does sound like that, doesn't it?

Janine: Yeah, it does.

Austin: Hire someone to help out.

Art: We didn't introduce a mechanic in this town, but...

Austin: Well, it says, it says, hire someone to help out. This could be an NPC from the most recent town, someone who's been tagging along, or someone new. Who did you hire, and what did you hire them to do? Uh, we could meet someone on the way. I know the, I mean, the rest of this, I'll go back to the move on really quick. The next thing is, uh, how long are you on the road before you get to the next town, and then as you arrive to the new town, discuss the following questions together: what is the name of the town, how big is the town, how many residents are there, what kind of area is it in, what is the weather like, what kind of people live here? What is your first impression of them, and what seems to be their first impression of you? And I actually know the general area that we're going to. Just to reiterate, I had like 3 ideas for places that I want to get onscreen in a broad sense, more so than, I don't have characters, I don't have — I have culture more than anything else.

And the second place is called the Shale Belt, the way that you might call something the Rust Belt, or the Bible Belt or whatever, right? And, I can image us getting a mechanic here, from somewhere. Maybe outside of a big settlement, a big city or something, or a big town, and instead just like, a roadside, you know, garage or something that we have to stop off at. The Shale Belt is where the concretists live. They are descended from the people who we used to know, in, in Twilight Mirage, as the people from Concretetown. Not the Concretetown Particulars, who joined up with Advent, but like — I mean, maybe some of them. But, the people who lived in the part of one of our planets in Twilight Mirage. I want to say it was Moonlock, where the New Earth Hegemony had built these buildings with this kind of special concrete, that was like, supposed to be faster-acting and cheaper and stronger. And it fucked up their respiratory — uh, they had like, uh, uh, they had this thing where they had to be around that concrete to breathe easily, basically. And outside of it, they had a kind of a breathing apparatus set up, where they had masks on, and had to have either kind of, special devices with them, or otherwise have, have, you know, someplace to get back to quickly that had that concrete.

And it's obviously been a long time since then. And so I think the thing that they've done is, they've begun to, it's a couple of things. It's like, it's like, both a new type of surgical prosthetic, in which they literally incorporate parts of the composite concrete into their body, in ways that allow them to have what they need to breathe more easily, as long as they're able to do maintenance fairly regularly on their kind of cybernetics. So it's like a more integrated style of cybernetic prosthetic here. Prosthetic's probably not even the word. It's, it's, it's, you know, it's a breathing aid, it's a, it's a, it's like a respiratory aid.

And the second thing that they've done is actually spread sort of, made agreements with other communities, even ones who are the people from the concrete town aren't from, where they have, people have agreed to like, put parts of the like — basically, have parts of their cities use this concrete, in a way that's just like, “of course, yeah, we'll build our sidewalks out of that. That's not a problem for us, so that you can breathe here. That's the sort of thing we're totally happy to do.” And so, and so there's agreements with other towns. And over time, this whole region ends up being a place where a lot of these concretists end up living.

I don't, I kind of imagine part of the reason, part of the reason I call them concretists is, I don't know that they are the religious sort. I think that they're like, these like... very... you know, Twilight Mirage is a very spiritual season. And a very spiritual place. But I like the notion of like, one of the people who ended up, one of the groups of people who ended up here on Palisade

just doesn't have that in them. It's a deeply secular place, and they're very interested in physical, like, just physicality, in an extra special way, given it's a culture that has dealt with disability in such a way that it is not a disability for them anymore. I mean, it is a thing in the sense of disability when you think of the practice of maintaining the body and maintaining special equipment and stuff, but it's not a social disability at this point, because they've built a culture around taking care of themselves and others, in this way. And I think that that's, for them, is extremely grounded. Not that there are no concrete, not that there are no people from the Shale Belt that have religious perspectives on Divines or anything else, but I think that they kind of developed a sort of ideology of very grounded, results-oriented materialism, in a way.

Uh, so that is my idea for this place, broadly. And I could imagine a sick, you know, concretist, cyborg mechanic who's happy to join up with us, you know? I imagine these people have also suffered under the Principality arriving. So, does anyone have a cool name for a mechanic who could join us? Also it sounds like we're agreed that we want a mechanic, going up to crew level 1. Is that true?

Ali: Yeah, I have no objections.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: Okay. Boom.

Janine: I went to my random name generator, and the one it gave me was... a little bit too on the nose.

Austin: What was it?

Janine: Alfred Archana.

Art: Wait, where is the H?

Austin: Arcana with an H?

Janine: Like Arch-ana.

Austin: Arch-ana... Alfred Archana's not bad. If we pronounce it like a "ch" I like it.

Ali: [laughing]

Janine: Are you sure you don't want Tzion Rogier?

Austin: Czion?

Janine: Zion Rogier, that's my Mass Effect OC name.

Austin: Wow, okay. Tzion's kind of great.

Janine: Tzion's kind of great. Oh, I like this one — [unintelligible] that's my joke character name.

Austin: Uh-huh. Uh, let me add crew. Crew level 1. So how far down the road is it before we have to stop? Are we traveling hours or days before it's clear that we need someone to fix these fans?

Art: I mean, I think if it's not days, it doesn't feel as urgent, you know?

Austin: Right, because then you're just like, we'll just go back to town.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: But if you're in between these places, the cliffs start to lose their color and become this other different color. You know, in my mind, this is like, lots of... it's like a monochrome rainbow. Not a monochrome rainbow, but like a rainbow of, of, kind of grays and blacks and silvers and whites... is what the cliff faces take on the color of. Obviously, the sky still maintains its kind of incredible, uh, you know, you can see the Twilight Mirage on the right days, and all that stuff. Uh... but, yeah. Are we going with Tzion, or are we going with... what was the last name of the first one? It was Arcana, Archana. I kind of like Tzion Archana, there's something there.

Janine: Sure.

Austin: Let's do it.

Art: Mm-hm.

Austin: So is this a... it's so hard for me not to think about just like... a little roadside garage in the model of, like... I guess in the model of like, the Final Fantasy XV roadside garage that is at the start of that game, which is just a type of garage, you know, that's just a type of — you know, a small structure, gas station out front, you know. Little, little, you know, shop inside, that has, you know, kind of old candy bars.

Art: Yeah, yeah, like, you know, a Route 66 feel.

Austin: Yeah, exactly that, yeah.

Art: Small, and it's a desert around you.

Austin: Yeah. Ren M says, “do these folks not use the NEH-style possessive names like the Particulars did?” It's been so long, uh, I can imagine that might still exist in there somewhere, but, you know, as a reminder, you know, we had a, a Concretetown Particular named Kentucky's Corona, for instance. There were lots of NEH names — Ocean's Roar, and — what was Ocean's Roar — Wind's Poem, right? Uh, uh, I don't know that I'm continuing that. But I'm not going to say that that's like, a no. If someone wants to do an NEH-style name, I'm certainly not going to say no, you know? But what I would say is, it's probably evolved in some way. It's been thousands of years. Uh, and names change a lot, even in fantasy, science fantasy settings where things actually stay the same over thousands of years, more than they change. Uh... I have to imagine it's evolved in some interesting direction. I wonder if it's like... I wonder if it's like, there's a communal surname style thing that is more about, like, your town, or your, your... because the thing with the NEH names is like, they change from generation to generation, you know. There was not a surname sense. Everyone was so hyperindividualistic, but also built into this idea of, you were someone's or something's, that you would build it into your name, but it meant that, like, you could have a sibling that did not share any part of your name, like Robin's Song and Morning's Observation, right?

And, so there's a degree there that's like, I wonder if that's been replaced with like, a sort of... you know, one of the potential town names I have written down here is Crestin. So I wonder if like, if you asked, uh... Tzion their full name, it might be like — Crestin's Tzion. You know what I mean? Uh... that doesn't really work, that doesn't have the right flow to it, but I wonder if there's something that direction. Something to think about. We don't need to solve that today. Uh... does anybody have ideas for what this cool mechanic sounds like, or looks like?

Art: Hm. [pause]

Austin: I kind of like the idea, there's like, the fun thing here is I basically read you all of the notes I have for this whole culture. They're just not fully developed yet, because that's like the point of this, in some ways. I kind of like the idea of like, if they're going to incorporate this, this composite material into them, that we, that it is actually like, what if you built, what if you built

cyborgs out of statuary, you know? A little bit out of statue, if there was like, that sense of like, you are part material, in that way. Part concrete, part marble, part whatever that physical stone ends up look like. Like, what does a stone cyborg look like? Which also ends up echoing some of the stuff that we've seen with statues on Nideo, mechs and Divines and stuff, like, your character, Fealty, in HOUNDS, Art, that had all of those statues.

Art: Yeah. [pause]

Austin: I just searched, of course, for statue cyborg, and I don't know what I was thinking. It's statues of the DC character, Cyborg.

Ali: [laughing]

Art: Oh yeah, that'll... that'll happen.

Austin: Mm-hm.

Ali: Yeah, that adds up.

Austin: I don't know what I was thinking, I just searched for rock cyborg, and of course, we have an image of The Rock as a cyborg.

Ali: As a cyborg, sure.

Art: As a cyborg, yeah.

Austin: There's also one as a terminator, if the Rock was a terminator.

Ali: Are we not fancasting Dwayne Johnson as Tzion?

Austin: As Tzion? That's kind of fun.

Ali: [cackles]

Art: That's fun, and it's like, kind of on the downswing, Dwayne Johnson, because this is not a leading role, this is, uh —

Austin: No, this is side, this is... yeah. But I kind of like that as like, expert, you know, has been around the block a little bit, you know.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: Tzion has been here for a minute. Tzion's been, been... has been the leading man before, you know?

Art: Yeah, and really got into the human growth hormone.

Austin: Oh god, bad. Poor The Rock.

Art: Look, The Rock's on junk, I'm just saying.

Austin: [cackles]

Ali: [laughs]

Austin: Ugh. Art, do you have a Tzion in you, now that we know he's The Rock?

Art: As The Rock? I mean, I can... I don't have a Rock.

Austin: No, but you shouldn't do a Rock, you should do a Dwayne Johnson influence.

Art: Dwayne Johnson going for an Oscar?

Austin: Going for a middle-aged, you know, mechanic who's been around the block, you know?

Art: Yeah, like... just like, like a, like a... what does Dwayne Johnson sound like? It's like... [mutters] it's too much The Rock.

Austin: You don't need to go all the way to The Rock, you've got to go to Dwayne.

Art: But he's always The Rock, is the thing.

Ali: Yeah, that's — yeah.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: It's like [growls]

Ali: [hooting with laughter] It is exactly like that.

Austin: It's like that, you know? It is like that. Okay, let's frame it, then. Let's, you know what? Let's — because I don't want you to do it in a vacuum. We've stopped —

Art: What's the matter with your, your... with this — this rickety sonbitch?

Austin: It goes [engine failing noises]... [in response to Art's word choice] very aggressive!

Art: You need a new... well that's, he's aggressive!

Austin: He's aggressive, you're right.

Art: Show me a Dwayne Johnson — maybe we'll see this in the, and this take is blacked out in my house, but...

Austin: I need you to anticipate the turn. Find that Rock, you know, I need that, I need the part of the rundown where The Rock is not using guns, you know what I mean? It's contained.

Art: Yeah, but he's still mean to everyone.

Austin: He is still mean to everyone. I need Daddy Daycare, The Rock. Is that The Rock?

Art: That was Vin Diesel, I think.

Austin: Fuck, is it? No, it wasn't!

Ali: Mm-hm. Mm-hm. You want to go with The Game Plan, you want to go with The Tooth Fairy...

Austin: That's what I was thinking of, I was thinking of The Tooth Fairy.

Ali: That movie had its moments.

Austin: I bet he was mean in that, too, though. But, you know.

Ali: No, he had like a daughter that he was taking — sorry to go —

Art: I mean, but he was called The Tooth Fairy because he enjoyed knocking people's teeth out, I mean, we can't completely rehabilitate this character here.

Ali: Sure. Oh, right, wasn't he a hockey player?

Austin: He was a hockey player.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: Sure.

Art: And then he's the tooth fairy.

Austin: Yeah, this is true.

Ali: Sure, sure sure sure sure sure. Sure sure sure. Okay.

Austin: [laughs]

Ali: Anyway, yeah. So we're running into, are we...

Austin: Yeah. Our wagon comes to a stop, we have to push it... haul it? It doesn't come to a stop. It's breaking down, and we pull in, right?

Art: Yeah.

Austin: And we'll leave Broadleaf in the back to try to keep it from falling apart all the way so you don't have to play both Broadleaf and Tzion here.

Art: Yeah.

Art (as middle-aged character actor Dwayne Johnson as Tzion): So, what's the matter with this?

Ali: Perfect, just want to say.

Austin (as Wine): We think it's the hover fans. We were transporting supplies from Eversin.

Art (as Tzion): Hover fans... I swear with the hover fans, they stopped making them. It's hard to get the parts.

Austin (as Wine): Oh...

Ali (as Ce): They, they stopped making these?

Art (as Tzion): They stopped making them here.

Ali (as Ce): You have fans, though, right?

Art (as Tzion): You can't — a fan and a hover fan, I mean, you can't — you can't take the thing that, that blows the cool air on you while you're sleeping and put it on your wagon and go to town. It doesn't work like that.

Austin (as Wine): They're different? I thought they would be... it's just —

Art (as Tzion): Of course they're different. No, it's about, it's about capacity.

Ali (as Ce): Oh, sure.

Art (as Tzion): I can't use those parts, they'll burn out in two seconds.

Ali (as Ce): Yeah...

Austin (as Wine): So you don't have parts for, uh, a wagon, a BigStar, a slower wagon.

Art (as Tzion): Nah, I ain't, I ain't got parts for that. But you're in luck. I can make that run. You, you bring me with you... I'll keep it floating.

Austin (as Wine): Uh, we're headed north, deeper into the Shale, the Shale Belt. We heard that there was some fighting, and some people maybe needed help.

Art (as Tzion): Well I'm not, I'm not for that — these aren't, these aren't fighting muscles, these are repairing muscles.

Austin (as Wine): I suspect the fighting is over —

Art (as Tzion): You want me to go one on one with anyone up there, I can't do it.

Austin and Ali: [laughing]

Art (as Tzion): But you need someone to repair your, your wagon... I'm your man.

Art: Raises one eyebrow.

Ali: [laughs]

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Great. All right.

Austin (as Wine): Should we tell Tzion who you're with?

Austin: Looking at Ce.

Austin (as Wine): [muffled] Millennium Break.

Art (as Tzion): I know you're Millennium Break! I'm not, I wasn't born yesterday, I live out in the middle of nowhere, I read the newspaper.

Austin: [cackles]

Ali (as Ce): Sorry, buddy.

Austin (as Wine): Wait, they're writing about us in the newspaper?

Art (as Tzion): Yeah. Millennium Break. You know... they say that you're poisoning the hospitals and playing the worst damn basketball anyone's ever seen.

Austin (as Wine): Well, that's at least half lies.

Art (as Tzion): I know it's lies. I'm savvy.

Austin: [laughing] I love it when a character says the thing on their character sheet. I'm adding savvy, so it's Tzion Archana, he/him, savvy mechanic. uh...

Austin (as Wine): All right, then. We have a spot for you, uh, I really appreciate it.

Art (as Tzion): Yeah, it'll be great.

Austin (as Wine): You don't have anything —

Art (as Tzion): Going to be a lot of fun.

Austin: [laughing] Very eager.

Austin (as Wine): There's nothing... it's okay for you to leave this place?

Art (as Tzion): Yeah. You're the — no one comes through here no more.

Austin (as Wine): Because of the invasion...

Art (as Tzion): Because of the invasion.

Austin (as Wine): Sure.

Art (as Tzion): Also... I got no hover fan parts, and that's still what everyone's using. Piece of junk.

Austin: [laughing] ugh.

Art (as Tzion): And everyone comes in saying, “oh, take the fan from my house, and turn it into a hover fan,” and I'm like, “that won't get 3 inches off the ground.”

Ali (as Ce): Can you reinforce it with other materials, then put it on there?

Art (as Tzion): [pause] No.

Ali: [cackles]

Art (as Tzion): It's about — it's not about the strength of the fan blade, it's about the motor. Can't reinforce a motor.

Ali (as Ce): Well... yeah. Well, you're replacing the blade, aren't you? No.

Art (as Tzion): No, it's about the motor. The blade's nothing.

Austin (as Wine): I understand it's all about capacity.

Ali (as Ce): Sure, okay, yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: All right. We've gotten Tzion, here.

Art: You smell what Tzion's cooking!

Austin: Does Tzion cook for us? No — Broadleaf cooks for us.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Broadleaf cooks, great.

Art: Tzion doesn't help cook, because I can't go back and forth.

Austin: Yeah, exactly. [laughing]

Art: They'll bleed into each other, and I don't want it.

Austin: It's — they're very different characters.

Art: Very different.

Austin: Uh... how long from here does it take until we get to our next destination?

Ali: Probably another couple days.

Austin: Yeah, that sounds right. Yeah. As you arrive to a new town, discuss the following questions together: what is the name of this town? I have four potential town names here. I already mentioned Crestin.

Ali: Oh, wow.

Austin: Crestin, New Cascade, Vicsborough, and Braunton.

Janine: Where's Old Cascade?

Austin: Uh, probably on Earth, right?

Art (as Tzion): You don't want to know. Old Cascade.

Austin and Janine: [laughing]

Austin: Any of those sticking out, any of those feeling good?

Janine: What were the, what was the last one?

Austin: Braunton — [spells] Braunton. Braunton, Missouri. I know, it's not actually Braunton, Missouri, but it kind of feels like it would be, right? Braunton.

Janine: Braunton has big "small casino" energy.

Austin: It does. Is it a casino town?

Janine: It might be a casino town.

Art: But like a small casino, right? It's like —

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: Yeah, it's like, regional.

Austin: Mm-hm.

Janine: Like, no one, no one makes a trip of more than a couple days to get here.

Austin: Yeah. Otherwise, you go to the real, the big casino town.

Janine: Yeah. If you've got big casino money, you go to the big casino.

Art: It's called Big Casino.

Austin: It's called Big Casino, the big casino. Big Casino, write that down, Art.

Janine: New Casino, please. [laughing]

Austin: Sorry, New Big Casino.

Janine: This is Old Casino.

Austin: Yeah, this is Old Casino. Let me tell you, Old Casino has a fucking sound to it, IMO.

Janine: [laughing]

Art: But no one goes there anymore, not since they built New Big Casino.

Janine: Two s's?

Austin: Yeah, two S's. Old Cassino, Old Casino. Uh... the... so how big is this town? Small? I was going to say, it's like, it's the sort of casino town where like, you kind of are going for the buffet and the shows, you know, but like, not that they're... not that they're good shows, but it's

like a way to kill time, you know what I mean? Like, "oh, I wonder who's going to be there this weekend? Oh." You know?

Janine: Like, "well, we have to spend the night there anyway, might as well do something while we're there."

Art: Oh, it's Dane Cook and 10-dollar prime rib. That's too expensive... 4-dollar prime rib. Well, inflation, you know?

Austin: Inflation. Hundreds of thousands... [laughing]

Janine: Ugh...

Austin: 4-dollar prime rib doesn't make you hungry? Huh?

Janine: Is that just, is that just like a standard, really cheap, cheapish pot roast that they just stick a big bone in?

Austin: Yeah, oh yeah, for sure.

Janine: And they just say, no, it was like that.

Austin: It was like that. It's how it came. It's so tender, it fell off the bone, we had to stick it back in.

Art: I'm going to say the entire casino industry is based on loss leader prime rib, I think.
[laughs]

Ali: [laughs]

Art: Or buying prime rib in such bulk...

Austin: Mm-hm. Uh, what kind of area is it in? For example, it could be in a swamp, the mountains, the high desert, the ancient undead bone fields... not that last one.

Art: Well, you don't want to, you don't want to put a casino in your ancient undead bone fields, that's, uh...

Janine: [laughs]

Art: Or maybe that is where you want it.

Janine: It wasn't a bone field until they got through all that prime rib, and then it became one.
[chuckles]

Austin: Oh, it's the bones from the prime rib, right.

Janine: [laughing]

Art: Oh, and the undead prime rib cows.

Austin: God. I feel like —

Art: They have no ribs, though. The ribs are somewhere else.

Janine: [unintelligible] sheep.

Austin: [chuckling] I feel like, if we're coming from the place where the cliffs are extremely high, and we kind of were in that river valley, maybe here the cliffs have lowered, and we're getting that kind of like table plateau style... you know. And now we're just doing Reno, but —

Janine: Yeah, is there like, is it like one of those switchback like paths up to city, and it's like actually on the top of the thing now?

Austin: Oh, that's fun. I like that a lot.

Janine: That's part of what makes the journey take so long, is you have to zigzag your way up this —

Austin: And it's part of why the hover fans broke, is like, going up an incline that is extra hard, with all the weight.

Janine: Yeah, it's murder.

Austin: Totally. I love that. So it's actually, it's one of those things where like, from the right part of this town, we can look down and see Eversin, you know? It's just —

Art: Yeah.

Austin: And it's in the distance, it's far away, but we're up on a cliff, and we can kind of like, miles away and down in the valley, there it is. Uh, what is the weather like? Top of a mountain, or we've described it as kind of a plateau or cliff, so it's probably less...

Art: Yeah, I think it's like, it's like dark, you know how there's often like, clouds at the top of a mountain? It's one of those mountains. So it's always like a thick fog —

Ali: Oh...

Austin: I like that.

Art: And at night, when like, the lights are on, and like the neon of the casino, it like, it gives it this whole like, pinkish hue to the whole place.

Austin: Ooh, sure.

Art: And in the day, it's just kind of, it's kind of grimy.

Austin: Yeah, it's like, overcast all the time, and like, yeah. Great.

Janine: Mmm.

Austin: What kind of people live here?

Art: Well, there's probably some degenerate gamblers, just...

Austin: [laughs] Just talking about your experience here in, in real-life casinos. That's...

Art: And real-life casinos, go to towns with small casinos, and...

Austin: Uh-huh. Yeah, true enough. I feel like... I feel like this is a place that's like, if we described it as being that the casino industry here — not an industry. The casino, the one casino, has sort of bubbled up as being like an in-between place, then it's a lot of people trying to like, figure out how to make do. We joked about —

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: The 4-dollar prime rib, but I bet every week there's a new 4-dollar prime rib, a new gimmick, a new attempt to try to like — I was going to say squeeze the money out, but it's not

about squeezing the money out. It's about, like, trying to get by, and trying to get more attention, and trying to get more... you know, get more people to stay a little bit longer, and giving people bonuses. And, there's probably lots of people that are trying to make sure that the part of the town that has nothing to do with the casino also thrives, you know?

Janine: Yeah, I was going to say, it feels like there would be a constant small business churn, where everyone's like, "I've got the idea that's going to take off," and then it like lasts a year, and then they... you know.

Austin: Yeah. Local pheasant restaurant. And it's like, "I mean, we do have those pheasants, but I don't know that those high altitude pheasants..."

Art: [snorts]

Janine: And then you go there once and you're really excited but then you just never go back?

Austin: Yeah, it's like, a little too expensive, and like, it's good...

Janine: It's okay.

Austin: But it's not that good.

Janine: I can make my own pheasant.

Austin: Yeah, it's local.

Art: I'm going to link y'all to a casino that I drove past in the... what were we in, we're in Patreon here?

Austin: Sure.

Art: I drove past this casino on the way to visit my brother-in-law.

Austin: Do you not want to say the name of this place, are you hiding the...

Art: It was Casablanca, in Mesquite, Nevada.

Ali: Mmm.

Art: And you can see that for 19 dollars, you can go to their Friday seafood dinner, and the only seafood in the picture is a giant pile of shrimp.

Austin: [laughing]

Ali: Oh my god.

Janine: Is that shrimp?

Ali: Yeah...

Janine: It just looks like wood chips to me. It's just like all shredded stuff? I guess I don't know what seafood looks like.

Art: Well, the cocktail sauce in the front, I think — I think that's just individual shrimp, and it's not a very good picture, because —

Janine: It's just —

Austin: No.

Janine: Oh, I was looking at the crab legs.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: Yeah, which also looks like wood chips.

Art: Oh yeah, no.

Janine: That is a huge pile of — oh my god, that — I'm looking at the — I'm not a shrimp person, but the reputation of shrimp is such that a pile of shrimp that big just in a buffet table setup...

Austin: Yeah...

Janine: Makes me think like, oh, this is where I go if I'm really into getting sick. Like, not just am I prepared to get sick, but it's a thing I like doing... [breaking up into laughter]

Ali: I have a final tomorrow, and I know I'm going to go there and have a legitimate excuse.

Austin: Uh-huh.

Art: And if that doesn't work, I'll come back the next day for 19-dollar steak and crab legs.

Ali: [laughing]

Austin: Oh my god, unbelievable.

Janine: I'm sure it's fine, they've got a lot of ice on all this stuff, I'm sure it's fine.

Austin: Where was this, Art?

Art: I don't know, but that place had bad vibes.

Austin: Oh, this is in Mesquite, Mesquite, Nevada.

Art: Nevada, yeah. Yeah.

Austin: Yeah, sure. Welcome to the town of Mesquite, — oh, there's some work on Canyon Crest Boulevard right now.

Janine: Oh, shit.

Austin: Sorry, I'm on the official website, trying to get a sense, you know what I mean? What's popping, what's popping in Mesquite tonight?

Ali: [laughing] yeah, yeah.

Art: Well, if you go to the entertainment section of their... the entertainment calendar, and you can see all of the acts that are performing at Casablanca —

Austin: Right.

Art: And I'm going to say that I don't know who any of these people are.

Austin: You don't know the Greg Peterson Band?

Art: No.

Janine: Well you don't go for Greg Peterson, you go for Saturday Mimosa Morning or Sunday Mimosa Morning, and then you just see who's on.

Austin: And you stick around, then you stick around, yeah, exactly.

Ali: Mmm.

Art: Mesquite and Vegas's favorite variety and dance band.

Austin: Hm...

Ali: I want to go to Casablanca Rib Fest.

Austin: I'm saying!

Art: I don't think you do.

Ali: Hot air balloon festival — Joey Chestnut's going to be there.

Austin: Hot air balloon festival.

Art: [incredulous] Joey Chestnut's going to be there? [laughing]

Austin: Wow.

Art: Oh, if it's outside, I will say, this is the smokiest building I've been in in a really long time.

Janine: Why?

Ali: Because people smoke in there?

Art: People smoke in there.

Austin: People smoke in there.

Janine: Oh.

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: I haven't been inside of a building where people are allowed to smoke in... decades.

Ali: [singsong] There's a hot air balloon festival... [deflated] oh, it's over.

Art: [laughing]

Janine: Oh, it's coming back around. Next year, probably.

Art: Oh, this rib fest was like 5 months ago.

Austin: They need to update their shit, huh? Anyway, the point is, small casino towns are... it's tough. We have a entire season about it called Bluff City. Uh, maybe you've heard of it. So, yeah, I think that there's that. And then, and then, let's go on top of that. Is it now one of these fucked-up things where like, and also, the Curtain sends their soldiers here on break? And it's like, a bunch —

Janine: Oh, sure.

Austin: Off-duty, you know, soldiers —

Janine: You don't have to send them there. Like, if you've got leave and it's the closest place, then people will just, it would just be decided, like... yeah.

Austin: That's what I mean. Yes. Yeah. "Hey, this is where we go." And that's a mess. That's always a fucking mess. Uh... so, so on top of already being a struggling small city with a, with a casino that was not a major draw, we've now got, also, the kind of terrible R&R culture of a military occupation.

So... that feels like a vibe. That feels like we understand what's happening here. What is our first impression of the people who live here? Do we get a good read on what we all just said, or is our interpretation not as on the nose?

Janine: I... this is... so, I mean, you know, maybe there's a reason this doesn't happen often, but I kind of feel like it would be interesting if we didn't like them very much, if we —

Austin: Totally.

Janine: Like if we got there and we were like, "oh, this kind of sucks," or like, "these people are kind of..." "Because I feel like, in this kind of game, it's a little more common to be like, "I don't know, they seem strange but they're okay." You know, in the just going from town to town to help out kind of game.

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: Like, I think helping, being like, "we need to help these people, but also, we're not going to be upset when we have to leave, necessarily."

Austin: Well, and I wonder if this is one of those towns where there's very clearly the like — the book jokes, not jokes, the book talks about how a suspicion score can represent like the corrupt mayor versus the people who might like you.

Janine: Right, yeah.

Austin: So maybe, is this a place where you have this like, really unctuous casino owner, who is thrilled about the occupation, because it means more business. And meanwhile —

Janine: Totally.

Austin: Like, all of the people of this town are actually suffering. And in fact like, the owner is looking the other way when people, when the soldiers, you know, break people's shit and make unfair demands and hurt people and all the other shit that they do, you know what I mean? In fact, defend the soldiers and replace — you know, basically throw the people who live in this town under the bus. And that don't even mean that we all have to just hate that one person. I bet there's an entire kind of group of people who are looking to like, turn this to their advantage and kind of like, let — basically, if they were parasites before, they're double parasites now, you know? Uh... so I bet that that is grimy in a way that's like, easy to be put off, and it's also probably just like, dire in a way that's like, hard to look at, and it's hard to, I don't know. I'm playing Wine as being very broken of optimism. And so it's like, it's easy for me to think of them as being like, “ooh, there is not going to be a... even if we kick the Principality out of here, even if the Curtain, you know, gets pushed out, this place has its own deeper problems than just this current occupation,” you know? Easy to get demotivated.

What do they think of us, rolling up with all these supplies? i.e. what seems to be their first impression of us?

Janine: Given what we've established, I wonder if there's kind of, there's the sort of category of people who are like, “oh, thank god, someone who'll actually help.”

Austin: Right.

Janine: And the category of people who are like, “cool, free stuff. I just have to convince them I need, I need like, whatever. And they'll just like, fix my thing instead of me having to pay my, my, you know, handyman to do it.

Austin: Uh-huh.

Janine: The sort of, you know, people who actually need it, and the people who are like, “well, I don't need this in the same way other people do, but I just have to look like them and then I can get it.”

Austin: Yeah. So, I wonder if — we described there being — I mean, back when the dream happened, we described the sound of literally there being gunfire somewhere nearby that we didn't know where it was, and then I talked about how like, oh, we're bringing supplies to somewhere where they were hurt. I wonder if there was some sort of resistance here that just got squashed? And so if we were expecting to find people who maybe could help us, we've instead found people who are like — it's what you just said, right? The two types, so the people who really need our help, but then mixed into that are the people who are glad that whatever resistance was fighting has been squashed, and now they get free stuff, you know? Turns out, turns out you can't always count on... count on there not being reactionaries in the midst, in your midst, I guess. All right. We are here. It is time for some scenes, in this depressing casino town. Hm... I feel like we need a Broadleaf scene, Art.

Art: Yeah, I hear you, because the last scene was in the other episode.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: Uh, I mean, it's tricky because we don't like, have the stuff for it, but like, I sort of want to serve a group meal. What if we make some food that isn't a giant gross pile of shrimp?

Austin: That's fun, yeah.

Ali: [laughing]

Austin: What do you mean that we don't have the things for it?

Art: We didn't like, take any of the things for, the wagon things. We don't have like a kitchen on the wagon, we don't have the —

Austin: I see. But, you're a kitchen! They got kitchens here, it's a casino town.

Art: Sure, and like, we didn't take any of the ingredient things.

Austin: Right. Right, we didn't do that.

Art: But like, it's going to be fine.

Austin: We'll figure out. I mean, we'll play the game and see how it goes, right?

Art: Yeah.

Austin: Do you want to read us Serve a Meal, page 23?

Art: Yeah. It's a game for any number of players. The game picker should play their character as the host. Otherwise, roles will be decided during play. A coin flip is required. Prepare a meal for a group or just one person — it's going to be a group. How many, uh, are we making a meal for? You know, a, a large group. It's like a community meal.

Austin: Right.

Art: Uh, but I guess we, where is it happening? Because we don't have a kitchen. It sort of says that this is happening — I don't want it to be in the casino, then it feels like we're being taken advantage of, you know?

Austin: No. Yeah, totally.

Ali: [laughs]

Austin: How do we figure out a place — does Tzion know somebody, does Tzion know someone with like a church basement, you know...

Art: Yeah, Tzion's — over here like, I go to church on this — I drive all the way up here to go to church.

Austin: I did, of course, spend a lot of time... I know I said the word church first here, but being, "well, they're like, secular, they're extremely secular." So maybe they have some sort of like, maybe they still have that sort of religiosity, but for this other, you know, ideology, right? This thing that's not quite a theology, but is, you know... they're like secular humanists. That's a, that's a thing, you know? I could imagine that being a vibe.

Ali: Yeah. I mean, I feel like communities can have spaces that are, that have the vibe and, like, use of a church basement without the religiousness.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: It could be like —

Austin: It's a community center.

Ali: Yeah, yeah, like a place where you take, like, a sewing class or whatever. Yeah, yeah, adult activity thing that sort of exists in — well not specifically adult.

Austin: I know what you mean, yes. Tzion's taught some sort of, you know, DIY mechanic's class here.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: All right. So, big group, community center, you know, continuing education basement. [reading from game] If it's for a group, use the prompts for set a table. Uh...

Art: Hold on, what is your motivation for — we still have host questions.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah, sorry, yes.

Art: What is your motivation for fixing this meal? It's, it's to like, we're trying to come and have like a big community impact by trying to like break people off — I think we sort of covered this already.

Austin: Yeah, yeah.

Art: What are you making?

Austin: Great question.

Ali: Ooh.

Art: I worry that some of this is that I have shrimp on the brain —

Austin: Oh my god.

Art: But I think it's like a shrimp and grits with like a cornbread.

Ali: Ooh.

Austin: But it's like, good, instead of it just being a pile.

Art: It's like good instead of bad, yeah, uh-huh.

Austin: Right. Right. Because that's part of the thing, right? We're not coming in to be like, "you've got to do things our way, with our stuff," you know.

Art: We're also not even coming in to be like, "shrimp are bad."

Austin: Right, that's right. [laughing] Shrimp are good! You've just got to prep them right.

Art: They're good, these have the tails on them still, you know? It's got the... yeah.

Austin: Uh... what's the — there's one more, right?

Art: Like grits and cornbread are things that are easy to make for a lot of people.

Austin: This is true, this is true, yeah.

Art: How ready is the meal when company arrives? I think pretty ready. I think, like you said, grits and cornbread, things you can make a lot of — I think the shrimp might still be coming together, because again, we don't want them to walk in and see the giant pile of shrimp.

Austin: Right.

Art: I think doing batch shrimp is important.

Austin: Yeah. Uh...

Art: And then, so, uh, —

Austin: Set the table.

Art: Set the table, okay. Uh, how big is the group and who are its members? It can't be that many people, right? Because we just don't have that kind of money.

Austin: I don't know, you brought all that stuff from Tivanon, also, with us. So I wonder if we could get a — how big is too big for you? Are you saying like 100 is too big, are you saying 50 is too big?

Art: I'm saying 100 is too big. We could do 50.

Austin: The thing is, 100 could be as little as... 30 families. Or also, wait, are kids here? Is this a family meal? Or is this an adult meal?

Art: No, I think there are kids here, yeah.

Austin: 30 families feels like... it's a lot, but it's not that many.

Art: All right, I mean, you're the one who's got to figure out where we got 100 shrimp from. Or probably 200 shrimp.

Austin: [amused]I bet it's more than 100 shrimp for 90 people, or whatever.

Janine:[laughs]

Austin: All right, everybody, you get one shrimp.

Art: One shrimp.

Austin: I think, I think that this is part of what Tivanon was bringing. I've decided Tivanon opens up a crate, and it's just, it's shrimp, and when we see it, it's gross.

Art: Just shrimp.

Austin: It's gross, it's the gross buffet shrimp, but we're like, "we can do" — it's not the actual gross buffet shrimp, but it's like that presentation of just, a crate of shrimp is not an appealing thing. But, how do we turn what's not appealing into something good, you know?

Art: Sure.

Austin: Cooperation and love, and effort, and, you know... grits. Grit and grits.

Art: Grit and grits, that's the name of the meal.

Austin: Yeah. Famous talk given by Broadleaf at this event.

Ali: [giggles]

Austin: Grit and grits, uh, speech.

Art: Have you asked anyone to help you prepare the meal? Mmm... probably.

Austin: Yeah! I think we've all got to roll up our sleeves!

Art: Yeah, I think everyone's got to at least like, you know, stir the grit pot for a little bit.

Ali: Yeah. I've seen Top Chef, this is a very stressful and very taxing thing that we're trying to do here. 100 people is a lot of people.

Art: Yeah, and Broadleaf's only been a chef for like a week, so...

Ali: [laughs]

Art: Are we prepared? We've done this.

Austin: Yep.

Art: Uh... [reading] remember to flip coins, if you haven't already.

Austin: I feel like we do it during our turn, you know?

Art: All right, yeah. [reading] Host goes first, choose at least one of the characters and select one of these options... Oh, we need to like, come up with some people who are here, though, right? We need to —

Austin: I think so. I guess it's, let's see... I think we don't need to necessarily. We can be like, I'm a local chef who makes the bad shrimp. I'm, uh, — I'm a blackjack dealer.

Art: Sure.

Ali: [laughing]

Austin: You know? I work in a little cafe on the edge of town. I'm a construction worker — you know?

Art: Okay.

Austin: Do you want to read the — on your turn?

Art: [reading] On your turn, choose at least one other character and select one of these options. Ask one of the listed questions, which is a series of, you know, they're the kind of questions these games have.

Austin: Yeah, yeah. [chuckles]

Art: Engage in actual improvised conversation. Say something about the food, or excuse yourself from the table. The game ends when everyone at the table has said something about the food in a row, or when no one but the host is left about the table.

Austin: So that means that our, say something about the food is our sort of pass, basically.

Art: Right. Which I guess means that me starting by saying something about the food is wrong.

Austin: Well, as long as you, as long as the rest of us don't do it in a row, we get to keep going, you know?

Art: True. Yeah. So I guess I will start with, you know —

Art (as Broadleaf): This is my first time making grits like this, a more southern, Earth-style. I usually make it in a more al dente style, as preferred by the people in... somewhere else. The NEH style of grit.

Art: They've really lost the plot there.

Austin: Yeah, uh-huh. I wonder if you should do your coin flip here on just, hey, is it good? Is the food any good?

Art: Uh-huh.

Austin: Do you use a skill?

Art: Uh... I don't think any of my skills are particularly relevant.

Austin: Discerning? No?

Art: No, that's like, I feel like that's more someone else's situational meal.

Austin: Yeah, fair, fair. You don't want to wax poetic here? You can save that for your follow up, for if things go weird, maybe.

Art: Sure. Well, I can't — can I like, declare an intent to wax poetic in the future?

Austin: Yeah. You're going to have another scene here, probably, right?

Art: Sure, yeah, all right.

Austin: Or another, another —

Art: So maybe I should flip after I wax poetic.

Austin: Yeah, that makes sense, that makes sense. Uh... sorry, I lost a... where the fuck did I put that window? Oh, I see it, there it is. Okay. Let's go, I'm just going to read what the — for asking on the listing of questions, there's a bunch of questions. I guess we don't really need to read them all, I just need to pick one, right? Uh...

Ali: I think I can start here.

Austin: And this is you as Ce.

Ali: Oh, no, I was going to —

Austin: Not you as a player, you as —

Ali: No, I was — yeah. I think I'm an NPC.

Austin: Yep.

Ali: Like the woman who's here with her family and her kids, sort of has that air of somebody who... has a lot going on, is really involved with their family, is like, busy with their family. And — I hope to get you to make a commitment to the group. Do you? I think that she's like, "oh, this is so great, it would be great if you could like, do this once a week," or whatever. You know.

Ali (as woman): The casinos usually serve whatever on... they do like a Tuesday prime rib situation, but it isn't very healthy, and it gets kind of stale, and... it's good to see everybody like this, you know, you go to those casinos and they try to sell you things,

and then it's just like, more of like a bar... [laughing] coming here to the old, the old basement, um, just seems a lot more friendly.

Art (as Broadleaf): As long as, as me and my crew are in town, we will be here every week to make a meal for this community.

Ali (as woman): Wow, really?

Art (as Broadleaf): Yeah.

Austin: I'm going to hop in on that as next character. I'm playing a construction worker, big, broad shoulders, hair down to my lower back. It's down right now. I put it up when it's time to do construction work.

Art: Sure.

Austin: I point out an odd quality of the wagon. Do you commiserate with me? Explain the quality or simply laugh. And I go —

Austin (as worker): You know, you said you're going to be here until, you know, for a little while, but uh, I've heard you guys do all sorts of helping people out. But your wagon's a piece of shit. It's falling apart. I saw the hover, the hover fans. Old model, falling apart. Didn't get them replaced. How are you supposed to expect that you're going to be able to us with anything better than grits, if you can't even take care of the old BigStar?

Austin: That's what I'm calling an odd quality of the wagon.

Art: Quality of the wagon, that it's a piece of shit.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: [laughing]

Austin (as worker): Sorry, excuse my language, I know there's kids in the building. Apologize. A piece of crap, crapola.

Art: Uh... I think it's just like, [unintelligible] laugh like

Art (as Broadleaf): Ha ha ha ha. Well, at least you know we'll be here for a little while longer still.

Austin: [outburst of laughter]

Ali: All right.

Art (as Broadleaf): And the food you're eating now, it's pretty good, right?

Austin (as worker): I mean, these grits aren't bad. Grits ain't bad. I, you know.

Art (as Broadleaf): Grits ain't bad.

Janine: I think Caeso's there.

Austin: Mm-hm.

Janine: I take the last portion of a dish. Do you smile at my enjoyment, or call me out for taking it?

Austin: Ohhhh.

Art: I think I want to split it a little bit, I think it's like a gritted teeth smile.

Austin: [laughing]

Janine: [laughing]

Art: I mean, I don't know if this is a thing that elephants can do, I don't know. But, you know. We're going to translate it as closely as we can. The like...

Art (as Broadleaf): [hiding irritation] Oh, I'm glad you're enjoying it... the food. For the guests.

Austin: [laughing]

Janine: Big thumbs-up.

Austin: Oh, boy.

Janine: Feed some of it to Doppler. Doppler likes grits, you know? Gotta eat.

Austin: Broadleaf, we're back around to you.

Art (as Broadleaf): [still irritated] Feed it to the horse.

Janine:[laughing]

Art: Uh...This is a wax poetic moment, I think. I tell a story that perhaps goes a bit too long. Do you humor me, or do you interrupt? I ask to the group as a whole, I think.

Austin: Uh-huh. Can we get a little taste?

Art: Yeah, I'm going to cut to the end. It's like —

Art (as Broadleaf): And then, Brother Ignatius, he wants new binding on his books too! And, you know, we're almost out of glue at this point. So... I'm basically making it work with, you know, waterlogged glue and tree sap, if you believe that.

Ali (as woman): Woah. Tree sap?

Austin: Tree sap... give me a, are you going to roll this, is this your wax poetic roll?

Art: Yeah, this is the flip. Yes, I'll flip for the whole meal. Yeah.

Austin: Okay, so 3d2. We want 1s, give me them 1s.

Art: Oops.

Austin: Nothing happened. Are you rolling real dice?

Art: Well, because I didn't put a space between roll and 3d2, so I got an unrecognized command.

Austin: Oh my god.

Art: All tails.

Austin: All tails. Suspicion, here, jumps.

Art: 2 suspicions.

Ali: Yowza.

Austin: Yowza. This story isn't going great. Wine is going to intercede, and it could go bad. I think, as you finish the story, Wine comes out of the kitchen pushing a really big cake, on a big, you know, big push tray.

Ali: [laughing]

Austin: And says, uh... this is — I think I'm going to use... I have two, I could either use pray, to basically literally — okay, I could use pray in two different ways. One is, I could like lead a group prayer, a secular non-denominational prayer. Or, I could use ward to create an invisible wall of protection. But that would be, instead of doing an invisible wall of protection, it would be a metaphorical wall of protection, around you, Broadleaf, as you fuck up here, right? As I'm just like —

Austin (as Wine): Thanks so much, everybody, for joining us, Broadleaf, for your great conversation. But we wanted to make sure everyone left not just with an empty stomach — or a full stomach, apologies, I'm not the poet here. Uh... with a full stomach, but also with a full heart, and you know, they say that no one can live on bread and water alone, or rice alone, I always forget the exact saying. In any case, there's cake here, if anybody would like some. We have plenty to go around, everyone should be able to get a nice slice. And with that, we also just, we want to make clear that we're here to answer any questions you might have about what we'd like to be able to do for you and with you here in town.

Austin: I'm going to roll 3d2 and hope for the best. I'm going to use ward, I think this is creating an invisible wall of protection.

Ali: [giggles]

Austin: All right. Yes.

Ali: It's emotional, an invisible wall of protection here.

Austin: 1, 1, 2. I'll take those community points. And I will cross off ward. And I'm going to say that was saying something about the food, really.

Art: And I think it's important to note that like, suspicion in this could just be like, not so much the people here are really not liking us —

Austin: Right.

Art: But like, people hear about it, you know? People who don't take kindly to this kind of shit from outsiders.

Austin: This is true. Do we have any other — I guess we have to keep going around until we all say something about the food.

Art: Well I think everyone loves my story, and —

Austin: Oh, I see. Yeah, I gotcha. Yes.

Ali (as woman): You should get more shrimp next time. I only got 4 shrimp on my plate.

Art: That's a lot of shrimp, I think, like... I'm not like saying this but like.

Ali: Well, if it's a shrimp-based deal...

Janine: I mean, how many shrimp can fit in a mattress, like a king-sized mattress?

Ali: 430.

Austin: Without context, that's going to be a hell of a thing to say.

All: [laughing]

Austin: Um... remember, to skip, you just say something about the food. I think Janine, you're up.

Janine: Yeah. Uh...

Austin: You can also, again, play an NPC if you like, or Caeso.

Janine: Yeah. Uh... [laughs] I just, I... [laughing] sorry, that last one is just, I break out into a song that's well-known in the town. Do you join it as best you can —

Austin: I know, I know.

Janine: Or do you stare at me in disbelief? I read that, and I was like, “this is the worst thing to do,” and then I was like, “wait, is it the best thing to do?” And then circled back to, it was the worth thing to do. Uh... but maybe it happens anyway?

Austin: The Braunton town song?

Janine: Not Caeso, not Caeso.

Austin: Yeah, some other. Yeah.

Janine: I want to say like, a... I had been kind of thinking of like, a sort of... street food vendor kind of person, and I was originally like, I'd like to have this person do some sort of comedy bit about like, this is a novel way for them to eat shrimp, they usually like eating it lukewarm and a little bit old, or something.

Austin: Uh-huh. [makes time-honored drumroll/cymbal noise to punctuate a bad joke]

Janine: Yeah. Uh... but I think, maybe instead... maybe it's sort of kicked off by the cake coming out? Like maybe it's kind of a local tradition that when you serve a big cake to everyone, everyone kind of like, sings this song...

Austin: I love that everyone's looking for us to start singing the song, and we just don't know that that's a thing.

Janine: Yeah, exactly.

Austin: “They're not, they're not singing the song.”

Janine: Like, “oh, they're bringing out the cake, they're bringing out the cake. That means they're going to sing, right?” And then there's just like, a little speech and then complete silence while some forks are handed out or whatever. And then I think this food stall sort of, this street food vendor who is one of the first ones to, to get their cake, just like, starts singing the song. Uh... and I think —

Austin: Can we get an example lyric? What's going on in the song?

Janine: Uh, so I think like tune-wise, it's probably... tune-wise, it's probably sort of like classic, like ship songs?

Austin: Sure.

Janine: It's a little bit slower, but it has a pretty strong like, rhythm to it. It's easy to imagine that at some point in the distant past, this was like a work song, but it's kind of just morphed into — this would be the song that you sing when you got your food at the end the work day, and everyone was like... you know. Or you were on your way, you were doing the last bit of hauling before whatever. And I think, so I think it's about, like... I think it's about like, stowing things away. Putting things away, and then eventually it sort of goes to like, you putting yourself away because you're going to bed. It's like a sort of end of the day kind of song, but everyone gets it when it's the last course of a meal.

Austin: Mm-hm. I love that. I have a thing to build off of that but I'll come back to it. Do we join in? Broadleaf, do you start to join in as best you can?

Art: Yeah.

Austin: We don't know the song.

Art: But I'm a bard, and my [character has] improvise.

Austin: You're a bard. You do, you have improvise, turn a moment into a song or poem on the spot, you're good at that.

Art: I'm going to end up crossing off all of my skills this scene.

Austin: Uh-huh. Uh...

Art: I don't plan to actually generate lyrics for this fake song, though, if that's what you're waiting for.

Austin: I would love one lyric, you know. One lyric?

Janine: This is why, I need to just — I need to stop looking at like, random whatever generators, and just keep AI dungeon open in a tab, and be like, AI dungeon, give me a song about working.

Austin: Uh-huh.

Art: I mean, give me a lyric, I'll give you the next lyric, how about that?

Austin: Sure. Uh...

Janine: Uh... let's — okay. Uh... let's lock up all the cupboards. Your turn.

Art: Okay. Let's lock up all the cupboards, and... what the fuck rhymes with cupboards? Uh...

Austin and Janine: [laughing]

Austin: Druthers.

Janine: Bugbirds.

Austin: Anything boards, yeah.

Art: Lovebirds is pretty good.

Ali: Ooh.

Austin: Lovebirds, yeah.

Janine: I said bugbirds, but okay.

Art: Lock up all the — I know, but I'm using mine. And I'm feeling better about it. Now I don't feel like I took anything from you. Uh... let's lock up all the cupboards, and make some space for all the lovebirds.

Austin: [laughing] weird work song, but sure.

Art: Well, you don't want them working if they're going to be... doing that.

Austin: You're right. Yeah, you sure don't.

Art: You sure don't.

Austin: Fair enough. Um...

Austin (as Wine): What a good meal.

Austin: Pass.

Ali (as woman): Did you remember to put salt in this?

Art (as Broadleaf): There's a lot of salt in it, all told. I really think —

Ali (as woman): Mmmm... okay.

Art (as Broadleaf): There's salt on the tables if you want some, but I mean, there's a lot of salt in there.

Ali (as woman): Okay...

Janine: Man, I wish I was a faster typer, because I did the thing and went to AI dungeon, and asked to give me a work song.

Austin: Love it.

Janine: I'll keep this very short, because obviously it's not relevant anymore, but it is very good. [reading] You are the lord of the land, you work hard to earn your bread, you fight the wolf with strength and with head. When the wolf comes, you fight him and beat him. When the wolf comes, you fight him and beat him. The wolf comes, the wolf comes, the wolf is coming after you. You are the lord of the land, you work hard to earn your bread. You fight the wolf with strength and with head.

Austin: [laughing] With strength and with what?

Janine: [laughing] Head. I think, I think like, with your brain, you know.

Austin: With your brain — I mean, maybe they keep singing different work songs! I mean, here's the thing. I'm going to tell you what my next scene is here. Because I'm taking, because I crossed off an adventure job skill, I'm going to write a new restoration job skill, and that's going to be the mystic's skill... restoration jobs, mystic... listen. Hear the heart woven between the words. And I think what I've picked up on here is, there is a... it's a literal thing and a metaphorical thing. One is, uh... the heart between the words — this didn't used to always be a casino town. This used to be some sort of, you know. We already talked about like, you're putting all this stuff away at the end of a hard day of work. Maybe there was some sort of mining operation here, or a... I kind of like a mining operation. We already know that there was some degree of like... "Oh, we use the rock nearby to help build these cool statue cyborg bodies." We know that — the kind of cybernetics, rather, and to make the cement and stuff like that. And the

second, more literal thing, which is to say, there is a strong work culture here, it's just that that work culture went from being industry to being service. But they kept that.

If they're singing any time someone brings a cake out, and they're singing about like finishing work for the day so you can like be with your loved ones, in maybe more literal ways than what most songs talk about, that to me says there's still something about the character of this place that is not like a roll-over-and-die type of community. And the second, more literal thing is, there used to be a mine here called Wolflord's Mine. And we've got to go fucking open it back up. So my next scene is going to be about that, is what I'm doing.

Art: You're going to make them trade the casino for the mines? We're really just moving the misery around.

Austin: There might be stuff there that we can use, that they can use, that the space there that they can use secretly, tunnels there that they can move people through safely. Secret storage places, you know... maybe it's all mined out, but it would sure be a good place to build a secret resistance, you know?

Art: This is how we're going to tie this into Sangfielle, this is the mines —

Austin: Uh-huh, this is the mines, the crossover mine.

Art: [unintelligible] come out into Sangfielle, yeah.

Austin: Did we get all 4 of our passes here? I guess we didn't get a Caeso — we got lyrics instead.

Art: But I think we're all intending to pass.

Austin: I think we're intending to pass here, right? That's the end of it?

Ali: Yeah, the comment on the food was the continuation of the song, which was a comment on the cake. [giggles]

Austin: Yeah, there you go. We're good. How does this wrap up, Art? Just the skill stuff at the end?

Art: Yeah. So, I'm going to trade wax poetic — or should I... should I trade improvise. I guess wax poetic is what I used during the —

Austin: Yeah. Yeah. And, Marigold notes in chat, each player can only flip once per game, per mini-game. So that was, yeah.

Art: Freehand... what a thick line this makes.

Austin: It's big, it's a big one.

Art: And I'll go find myself a new chef skill.

Austin: There you go.

Art: This will help with the next one. I'll take resourceful. Make a feast, no matter how thin the supplies.

Austin: There you go, love it.

Ali: Ooh.

Austin: I'm going to do a mini-game. It's Rebuild the Town. It's what Janine did in the last town. Turns out, more places need to be rebuilt. That's going to be a big thing. But I think that's the one that makes the most sense here for what I want to do. [reading] A prominent structure in town has been gravely damaged. Use the following question to help set a scene: what type of structure is it? Choose at least one. It is what I said before. I guess, in this case, it's a storage center for food, medicine, or other things. And I think it's a storage center for food and medicine contraband, stuff that the Curtain would take away from them. But also, for a resistance group that will slowly have to rebuild itself. [reading] Where is located in town? Choose at least one. I think it is... built into a geological feature. There is probably obviously a quarry, and and the quarry ends up going down into some interior mines for some deeper digging, so it's in there. [reading] How is the structure visibly damaged? Choose at least one. I think that it is, it's basically, it's not in complete — Janine, yours before was between surface level damage and it's clearly no longer whole, right?

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: Mine is in between it's clearly no longer whole and you're not sure how it's still standing. Um, it is, it's just fallen into complete disrepair, right? And disuse. That was before the invasion, even. Because I think it's like, this is one of those towns that, a casino comes after the industry has left, right? You mind all of the local stuff out, and then they had to reinvent themselves, and they reinvented themselves as a casino town and a kind of highway town.

[reading] How did you come to repair the structure? Choose one. Uh... this is either, someone from the town asks for your help, or you notice the damage and ask someone in town about it, or you simply saw something that needed done and set to work. And so, I think I noticed the damage and asked someone in the town about it. Does anyone want to play a townsperson who knows about this mine, this abandoned mine?

Ali: Sure.

Austin: Okay. We've kind of already answered some of this, but, I'll let you answer it in character. 37, page 37 here. Ask a townsperson at least one of the following questions. Were you at the dinner, is that where we met?

Ali: Yeah, I'm sure that makes it easy.

Austin: Yeah, that makes sense. So I think the two of these I'm going to ask are, what is the significance of this structure? Like, what's the community think about this old, abandoned mine at this point?

Ali: Uh... I think it's tough. I think it's a different answer for the older generation than it is the younger generation, right? Where, for the older generation it was like, not only did I see this place as sort of like a fountain for the town, but I lived through, you know, people losing their jobs or not having access to it anymore, or it not being a thing that we were able to gain from anymore. Whereas for younger generations, they're like, "who cares about this mine? Just don't go over there. Put a fence around it. We can go do other stuff." Yeah.

Austin: Yeah. And then, who's in charge of the structure?

Ali: Oh, that's... hm. [pause] Is it the sort of thing that like, like, like, like, uh, like a developer or whatever would come into town and be like, "I own the mine and this area around it, and because I own this, I'm going to invest in it, and, you know, there's going to be... it's going to be

the mine, but the people who work there are going to have access to these facilities or whatever because they work there.” And then it's just like, oh, this mine became a number on a page —

Austin: Right, yeah.

Ali: And someone off-planet was like, “we're not putting 0.2% of my budget towards the old mine on Palisade.” And it's just like —

Austin: Right. Well, it's probably not someone off-planet because of how Palisade has been kind of lost to the galaxy.

Ali: Oh, sure sure sure.

Austin: But somewhere else on the planet makes perfect sense. I think that's still the — someone in one of the major cities, somewhere. The more — my third area idea, which will probably end up being our final area, is, has some rich people. So, we'll see what their vibes are.

Ali: Oh, sure, okay, yeah, we'll see some investors, yeah.

Austin: Uh-huh.

Ali: But that sort of thing where it's like, if you live there it's this sort of like, all-encompassing thing that took over your life.

Austin: Right.

Ali: But because it was just a business opportunity for somebody disconnected from it, along with — along a long-enough timeline, someone's like, “I'm good, actually.” So, yeah.

Austin: All right — [reading] Set the scene. Show where this is happening. Use as many senses as you. I'm going to ask this person, to like, if they're comfortable with it, to go with me to check out the place, does that make sense? This former, this person who knows about the mine, maybe they used to work there? I'm getting the vibe this is an older person who maybe has that perspective.

Ali: Yeah, I feel like that makes more sense, an old foreman or whatever, who's now like in his 60s or whatever.

Austin: Yeah, yeah. Totally. Uh... so, show where it's happening, use as many senses as you can. I mean, I just think it's like, I think that the first thing is, looking down into the quarry is a very strange thing. Because it's like, we were just looking down the cliff into the river basin below, when we first got to town, and then doing a similar lookdown at this deep, deeply dug, big, rectangular quarry, where everything had been lifted out by heavy machines. Maybe there's even rusting old mechs, you know, and stuff, scattered throughout this place. And then, when we get into the caves and the mines themselves, it's like — I think there was once a perfectly acceptable, you know, front office, and then all of the, all of the right things were in place for it to be built and operated, mostly safely, you know. The people here, again, given that they have the strong, old work culture, maybe — or this was a union mine, it fought for the right protections and blah-blah-blah. We get a lot of that with like the old Concretetown folks, right? Like, there is a real like, blue collar, union vibe. And I think maybe some of that is still here.

And, so those protections were in place. That was a generation ago, and so now, it's like, you know, the kind of archways that are built to hold things up are starting to fall. Some of the offices are just dusty, and shelves have been pushed over. And you get a lot of people from out of town just like come out here to, you know, go dick around, basically. Like, “oh, let's go to the old mine.” I think the locals probably know better at this point, and the young kids, like you said, it's just not their vibe. It's not cool enough to go hang out there. They're going to go get drunk, you know, at the, the lake or the pond or whatever, wherever they can go swimming, you know, jump off a cliff into a reservoir or something — which is not a good idea —

Janine:[laughing]

Austin: But people do that shit all the time.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: And that is, that is like the vibe in there, I think. Just lots of dust in the air. And, definitely going in there with like flashlights and stuff. Uh... how, [reading] If you haven't yet, it's a good time to flip coins. Consider whether one of your skills would be helpful here. I do have a thought for my last adventure job skill, but I want to save it until we get a little bit deeper in, maybe. If you haven't yet — I said that already. [reading] How do you attempt to fix it, choose one. I'd also love maybe to get help from someone on this, maybe from Caeso? Because I'm scared going into this mine, and Caeso's a swashbuckler. Would you be willing to come into this mine with me?

Janine (as Caeso): Can I, uh, fit a horse in there?

Ali (as foreman): Yeah, you can fit a horse in there. There was horses in and out of there when [in its prime] [slurring]

Janine: Great. [laughing]

Austin: I really love how you slurred, in its prime, together.

Art: Yeah. [laughing].

Janine: In its prime.

Austin: [Elvis-like voice] in its prime, in its prime... yeah. Uh-huh. Perfect.

Art: That's how it be.

Austin: That's how it be. And yeah, I think it's a huge project, right? Of like cleaning it out bit by bit. I think this is, for our time in town, here in Braunton, also Braunton with the old, abandoned mine, and it's turned into a casino — great name for a casino town that used to be an industrial town.

Ali: [giggling]

Austin: Y'all picked the right one. Uh... I think it's just like, this is what I'm going to be doing here, and so it's like, where do we even start?

Austin (as Wine): Caeso, have you ever done a clean-up of something like this? I know you did some repairs back in Eversin.

Janine (as Caeso): A bit more used to cleaning up messes on the surface of the things. This is a little difficult, or a little different when it's all penned up.

Austin (as Wine): Maybe, maybe it would help to just start clearing stuff out, and then we can think about repairs, just dragging stuff.

Janine (as Caeso): Yeah.

Austin: So this is, how do I attempt to fix it, choose one. I recruited the help of my fellow travelers. But I think I maybe also try to rally the townsfolk to assist. And this is where I'm going to use a skill. And I'm going to use my final adventure job skill, and the last lingering power of the Divine Bounty, who, I think died during the invasion, and also was already... I think Bounty was distributed, in a way, that we don't think of Divines. And that's one of the ways in which Divines on Palisade — not all of them, and certainly not the ones from the Principality, but one of the things that happened to the Divines who remained on Palisade after the Principality left is, they changed into something less like a big robot, over time.

We always talk about Divines as being infrastructure. And I think Bounty sort of spread itself — and I want to say, there's like, there's like some big question marks around why Bounty is here to begin with, because people who want to go like read the transcripts or relisten to the end of Twilight Mirage might recall that Bounty is somewhere, was supposed to be somewhere else at the end of Twilight Mirage. So I have like, made a decision about like, Bounty being here. Bounty left with one of the fleets, specifically. But I think Bounty winds up, after some amount of time, on Palisade. And, basically distributed itself throughout the river communities, like Eversin and the other ones. And the, the excerpt partially was about communing with this Divine that couldn't speak back in the same way, and then certainly, after the invasion, went quiet.

And so I'm going to use pray to beseech my deity on behalf of another — it's on these people — to do the thing that Bounty used to do, which was create food. And, throughout these mines, we're going to get things that can grow well in the dark, like mushrooms, and like, really delicious edible mushrooms, and maybe that's being also, like, we end up hunting for stuff down here, or the quarry itself, maybe the big rectangular kind of dug-out hole of rock somehow gets covered over with soil. And, crops, you know, small gardens, maybe. It's not a big rows of crops, right? It's not like industrial farming. But it is like, a little tomato garden over here in the corner has sprouted up.

And, and, over the course of the weeks that this repair goes on, Wine helps feed the people of the town who are willing to come help. And again, we're really zeroed in on food quality here, for some reason. But it's extremely fresh food, it's extremely, you know, from the ground here in this way. Um, and, and, this is the project that finally, truly cuts Wine off from Bounty. If Bounty exists at all anymore, if Bounty is alive, Wine can no longer feel them at all inside of their like, their soul, right? Their cybertome no longer has the sense of Bounty inside of it. So that is how I'm going to use this.

And I'm going to roll these dice, I'm going to roll 3d2, and hope that this goes well. Hey, 1, 1, 2, you love to see it. Uh... you hate to see it, because you spent a skill that you didn't need to spend, because you would have gotten two 1s, and that would have been a full success... but I'll take it. Uh, uh, so yeah, so that's how I use the skill. Uh, what is our biggest challenge as this happens? Either, someone else is working against our progress, the proper materials or tools are exceptionally difficult to get ahold of, or there's more to the problem than you initially thought. Does anyone have any ideas on that? Does anyone have a strong... someone's working against us to rebuild this place. The proper materials or tools are hard to get ahold of. Or, there's more to the problem. I think it's just worse in there than it was.

Ali: Yeah, it feels like with the scale that you were talking about and with the timeline you were talking about, it's like a little bit of column B, C, sort of situation, right?

Austin: Yeah, yeah. It's just so much bigger. It's like, it's like, when you, you get that thing of someone who gets a big idea, and they're like, "oh yeah, we can just totally turn this place around." And then it's like, looking at paperwork, looking at bills due, people knocking to collect, and they're like, "hey, yeah, you told us that you would da-da-da-da-da." It's like, "yeah, I know, I'm sorry."

Ali: I sure did say that.

Austin: I sure did say that, I thought this would come together easier. Uh... I think a lot of Oscar Isaac in We Need a Hero, the David Simon show about Yonkers. People should... I like that show. What I will say is, I like that show, that made me sob on an airplane.

Ali: Aw...

Austin: So, go into it knowing that it is about like, deeply racist communities pushing back on public housing. Uh... are you successful? Choose one. I think yes. I think, with the help of all these other people, I think, with the rolling those successes, I'm going to say... yes, it's better than new, if a little different. It's definitely not a mine. Or, no, you know what? I think that's too much. I think kind of. I think, given the scale of the difficulties, the best we can do is leave them in a place where they can finish it themselves, right? I think that's more realistic, is just, you know... it's not falling apart anymore, but we didn't get as deep of access into the hidden storage places that I had hoped. We didn't get, you know. I wanted there to be a whole system of tunnels running underneath the town that would like, let you sneak people between buildings.

And it's more like there's one evacuation tunnel, for if the Principality ever decides to like, go harder on this town, we can get people escaped out into the safety of the quarry at the edge of town, you know? But still, pretty good.

[reading] What is the town's reaction? How does this foreman feel about it?

Ali: Uh... complicated, right? I feel like it's the sort of like... you know, there's the nostalgia of being like, "you know, it's good to see this place isn't a dump, it's good to like — I know that I had a lot of memories here, and it's good to think that like, this hasn't just been abandoned, and it'll provide all the stuff for the city." And like, those are all very positive emotions that are not, you know... overdone by the bitterness of like, "well, this isn't what it was like when I was here," or whatever.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: But like, I feel like you reach a certain age where a lot of your responses to environmental stuff is like... sure, but also... you know.

Austin: I think part of it that's interesting, or maybe we'll just do this in character a little bit. I think Wine is like —

Austin (as Wine): I really wanted it to be more than this. I knew we weren't going to turn it back into a mine or that there would be wealth from it in gobs, but... I'm sorry we couldn't do more than build a pretty good storage place, and a little hidden bunker. But, I hope it gives you some... some amount of... uh, some sense of safety, uh, security.

Ali (as foreman): It's definitely better than what it was. Uh... you know, people just avoided that place, and now it can be... an option, you know.

Austin (as Wine): Yeah.

Ali (as foreman): We'll take care of it, don't worry. But, you know. Do big dreams and everything. People will figure that out when you go.

Austin (as Wine): I appreciate it.

Austin: I think that's all we need. All right. And that brings community up to 6. Not bad.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: All right. Does anybody want to have a scene here in Braunton?

Ali: Uh...

Janine: I think I would like to do a... Mend what's brought.

Austin: That's fun.

Janine: Something small but important is brought to you to repair or mend. Uh... I think I would like this to be a scene with like... you know, someone who doesn't actually need the help. Someone who... and in such a way where like, they don't actually need the help, and they also clearly don't really know who to go to with it.

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: Like, they're just going to, they're fully just going to like, the first person from the group that they see, just assuming like... this person will help me, it doesn't really... you know.

Austin: Right.

Janine: And just kind of assuming it'll work out, you know. Not taking an interest beyond like, do this thing for me. Uh... I'm wondering what it should be. I guess that kind of depends on like...

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: The person who shows up, and like, what the... it has to be something small, that's bringable.

Austin: Is it...

Janine: Important.

Austin: Uh... is it a tool? Is it a... like, is it, is it important because of what it does, or because of the like, sentimental value? Or the monetary value?

Janine: Good question. Uh... is it like a watch? Is it something like that, where it's like... something where, you would need outside help to fix it, probably?

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: And it could be important in the sense of like, well, you kind of need it. Uh... but it is also like valuable, it's, you know.

Austin: That makes sense to me.

Janine: And also the idea of a, like, a casino owner showing up to be like, "can you fix my watch?" And him to be like, "that's not really... our thing."

Austin: Who wants to play this casino owner? I can do it, if you need.

Art: I can be a casino owner.

Austin: With a, with a busted watch.

Art: Yeah.

Janine: Uh... let's see here.

Austin: I have it, do you want me to just go through it? You got it.

Janine: I got it. Coin flip is required, okay, good. Okay. Use the following questions... uh... holder —

Austin: So where is it happening? Show where it's happening.

Janine: Oh yeah. Use as many senses to show where this is happening... I think this is happening just kind of beside our, like, truck setup, like in our camp, campsite. Um, I think that's sort of what makes it like, baffling, is like, Caeso is maybe like, scraping some gunk out of, out of Doppler's hooves.

Austin: Uh-huh.

Janine: Like doing some horse maintenance —

Austin: Doing some cowboy shit.

Janine: And this guy shows up. Yeah, yeah, exactly. And this guy just — but he's, maybe he's like the only one around because everyone else is busy doing other shit.

Austin: Right.

Janine: Uh... yeah. So, holder, who are you, what do you look like, what is your name?

Art: Oh, I need a name.

Janine: You need a name.

Art: Someone fire up one of those name generators.

Austin: Is this Old Casino?

Art: Yeah, yeah.

Austin: Is this in your name?

Art: Just like, you know, Franklin Oldcasino?

Austin: Yeah.

Art: It's not really futuristic.

Austin: It's Oldcassino, you know.

Art: Yeah, Oldcassino, yeah. Franklin was the part I was not convinced about.

Austin: Sure, yeah.

Art: Is that futuristic enough?

Janine: I can just share the name generator I've been using lately. It has finer controls. I like it because it pulls on history and mythology in a way that's like, you get a lot of good sort of archaic stuff, uh, and not just — you also get a mix of like, “oh, that's clearly just a Swedish name.”

Austin: Right, right.

Janine: But you get a good variety —

Austin: This is behind the name...

Art: I got one that was like all consonants, that would have never... ooh, I like that one, but I reloaded through it.

Austin: That's how it goes.

Janine: Yeah. [pause] Oh, Gastone.

Art: Gastown Oldcassino.

Austin: Gastown Oldcassino. Well, I mean, can I admit something about the town names?

Art: What's that?

Austin: So, the town names that I made y'all choose between were Crestin, New Cascade, Vicsborough, and Braunton. And Crest, Cascade, Braun, and Vics are all brands owned by Proctor and Gamble. New Earth Hegemony has not... you know, new ball same as the old ball. So I don't think you can shake having built your entire culture around worshipping late-stage capitalism, and totally shake it. I don't think that Proctor and Gamble are still around, but I do think having that little echo is fun. So I think — what was this, you didn't say gas station. What was the name you just said?

Art: Gastown, I think it was.

Austin: Gastown Oldcasino is kind of —

Art: Oldcasino.

Austin: In that vibe in a way that's very funny to me. It's not Gaston? It's really Gastown, that's really what you got?

Janine: It was, it was, no, it was Gaston with an E at the end, Gastone.

Art: Gastone.

Austin: Gastone, Gastone.

Art: Gastone Oldcassino.

Austin: Stone Oldcassino. Oldcassino? Is there a D? Is it a silent D? Oldcassino?

Art: Old... I guess there's no... there has to be a D, right? Old... cassino. Oldcassino.

Austin: The important part is —

Art: I'm trying to like, move the pronunciation, but it's really hard to move the “dc” part. You know, I can't be like, “Ol...d'cassino.”

Austin: I mean, you could — Ol'D'Cassino.

Art: [spelling] Ol'D'Cassino?

Austin: Yeah, Ol'D'Cassino.

Art: Ol'D'Cassino.

Austin: It's like, it's Italian, you know?

Janine: Means oil of casino.

Art: It means oil of casino.

Austin: Yeah. I'm glad we've just invented a mobster, here, in a way that's the worst.

Art: Gastone [struggling to pronounce it] Ol'D'Cassino. Ol'D'Cassino.

Austin: Ol'D'Cassino. Yeah.

Art: Ol'D'Cassino. Well, that's going to work out great.

Austin: Uh-huh.

Art: What do you look like? Uh... I think this is just kind of like your, your run of the mill slimy jerk, you know?

Austin: Yeah.

Art: I think, you know, a suit that's like, a little too expensive, and like... you know, just, just looks like a jerk. Whatever a jerk looks like to you, that's Ol'D'Cassino.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: You approach the mender. What do you notice about them? That I think they could fix my watch, which is broken.

Austin: [outburst of laughter]

Janine:[laughing]

Austin: Hey, you, you look like you could fix my watch.

Art: I hear you're doing good things. I got a broken watch. Can you fix it? Sorry, I didn't introduce myself, I'm Gastone Ol'D'Cassino.

Janine:[laughing] Oh my god, okay. When do you first notice the holder is approaching? Probably when he's like, right fucking beside me. Would be.

Art (as Ol'D'Cassino): Hey, how's it going.

Janine (as Caeso): Ah!

Janine:I think the horse snorts. Uh..., what is something that stands out about them?

Art (as Ol'D'Cassino): Easy there, easy there, horse.

Janine:Uh... is the thing that stands out about you that you are standing like maybe 5 inches closer than most people would stand?

Art: Yeah, especially because we don't know each other.

Janine:And especially because there's a horse right here.

Art: Well, I'm very interested in the horse.

Janine:Great. Uh... questions.

Austin: Yeah. [reading] take turns asking the below questions. Each player may ask two questions. The holder goes first.

Art: Holder goes first.

Austin: And there's a list here of mender or holder questions, mender only questions, and then holder only questions.

Janine: Okay. Yeah.

Janine (as Caeso): I mean, I don't know that I can fix your watch, but I'll take a look at it, I guess.

Art (as Ol'D'Cassino): Well, what you might not have noticed about this watch... it was made over two decades ago, in the finest watch factories of this region... and I think what you need to see about it is, it holds two watch batteries. So, when the battery dies, the watch still ticks. It's a beautiful piece.

Janine (as Caeso): Yeah, okay... you should, I mean...

Art: What detail — what does the detail make you realize?

Janine: I think the detail makes you realize, like... this person is, uh, not necessarily practical. Uh... and that like —

Janine (as Caeso): If you want a watch that runs all the time, you don't need to get a watch that has two batteries it.

Art (as Ol'D'Cassino): No, this one has two batteries. Runs twice as long.

Janine (as Caeso): You could just get like a mechanical watch that you, that you wind, and then you never have to worry about a battery again.

Janine: That's probably a little more like Caeso's style, is like, fuck the batteries altogether.

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: So it's, you know, this is like —

Janine (as Caeso): Okay, well, two batteries is also going to make it bulkier, it's not going to... it's not, it doesn't, it's... also, batteries, they last a long time anyway? I don't know.

Art (as Ol'D'Cassino): It's not bulky, it's conspicuous, so people notice —

Janine (as Caeso): Fair, that's fair.

Art (as Ol'D'Cassino): So people notice the fine work.

Janine (as Caeso): That's — no one's going to respect you if they can't see your watch bulge on your sleeve.

Art (as Ol'D'Cassino): That's true — did, did you know my mother?

Austin: [laughing]

Janine (as Caeso): Certainly possible.

Janine: Uh... that feels like it's kind of been answered, the, why is this precious to you, in a roundabout way. Oh — I begin to assess the damage. Do you tell me the truth about what happened to it, or do you make something up?

Art: I make something up.

Art (as Ol'D'Cassino): Uh... you see, I was... helping... the local community... by doing, uh, dog walking. I was walking the dogs of some of my neighbors and employees, and the sweetest golden retriever you ever saw, his name is Maximus, he pulled too hard on the leash, and I fell, and I think the watch broke.

Janine (as Caeso): Doesn't seem like a big dog community to me, but...

Art (as Ol'D'Cassino): Yeah, people love dogs.

Janine (as Caeso): I guess.

Art (as Ol'D'Cassino): Maybe the dog was spooked by the high-pitch noise emitted by the two batteries, I don't know if I mentioned this, but the watch has two batteries.

Janine (as Caeso): Two very loud batteries.

Art (as Ol'D'Cassino): It's a very fancy — you might not be familiar with the technique...

Janine: I think I found this guy, on [thispersondoesnotexist](#).

Austin: You just linked just to [thispersondoesnotexist](#).

Janine: I just linked... fuck.

Art: I got a small child. I got a blonde child.

Austin: That's not, yeah, that's not right.

Janine: [laughing]. I just, I just... that doesn't work either. I'm so... I'm not having a good internet day, right now.

Austin: Right click, copy image...

Janine: I know, I know. Yeah. Bleh.

Austin: That looks like a person. I know who that person is. That's a real person.

Janine: Yeah. It's — yeah.

Austin: This one image that Janine sent me reminds me of, I want to say, a tech journalist that I —

Janine: Yeah, that's why, that's why I picked it.

Austin: Mm-hm.

Ali: I just got someone whose glasses like weren't edited out properly and it's really scary.

Austin: Oh... yeah. This person's [unintelligible]

Art: This is now Gastone Ol'D'Cassino for me, though.

Austin: Okay, I see, y'all have a different... oh, actually, mine is, I... this is the vibe that I was thinking in my head.

Janine: Oh yeah, that one's better, that one's better.

Art: That's — yeah.

Ali: Oh, wow.

Austin: That's, let me — how do I... uh, I don't know how I can... okay, I can do this. Boom.

Janine: Like an old version of, of, what's his name, the guy from the Perry Mason reboot.

Austin: Yeah, mm-hm. Uh, what is his name? Oh my god. I'm looking it up. Uh, Matthew Rhys. Matthew Rhys... just Matthew Rhys, right? It's not Matthew Rhys Davies, that's a different person.

Janine: No, that's a different person.

Ali: Should they be allowed to put infants on the...

Austin: They're not real.

Janine: They're not real people.

Ali: I know, but I don't want a... data face of 2-year-olds to be —

Austin: No, I get you. No.

Ali: In this person does not exist. But, yeah, I don't know. Anyway.

Janine: Uh... we need a question from the holder again, I think.

Austin: I believe so. Wait, what was your question just now? Oh, yeah, I remember now.

Janine: The breaking one. How did you break it.

Austin: Yes. Yeah. It presumably broke in a much more seedy way. You yelled at someone, you smashed your hand against the wall, or something.

Art: Yeah, I punched a wall or something, I don't know.

Austin: Classic shithead maneuver.

Art: I make a threatening remark, as a fear that you will break what I've brought. But I try to play it off as a joke. Do you respond in anger, or let it slide? Uh...

Art (as Ol'D'Cassino): You know, I'm sure you're going to be very careful, but I just need you to know that it's a very important thing to me, and I would hate to see what happened if you made it worse somehow. Ha-ha-ha... I'm kidding.

Janine (as Caeso): Ugh...

Art (as Ol'D'Cassino): I'm kidding. I don't have a team of goons that I use to control things around here. That's, that's an ugly rumor.

Janine (as Caeso): I mean, listen, I'm doing this work for free. It's going to be a get what you pay for situation either way. I'll take a crack at this, I'll try not to break it. But, I'm not a, I'm not a watch pro here. You brought this to a guy who was, who was, uh, scraping out his horse's feet. So...

Art (as Ol'D'Cassino): If you can fix a horse foot, you can fix a watch.

Janine (as Caeso): Horse feet don't need batteries, you know.

Art (as Ol'D'Cassino): That's, that's what I... I know. That's the problem. With horses.

Janine (as Caeso): Oh...

Austin: [chuckling] Mmm.

Art (as Ol'D'Cassino): Don't trust them.

Janine (as Caeso): It is, yeah. They would be more reliable if they had batteries, right? Uh...

Art (as Caeso): They would be.

Janine: The work takes longer than expected and I work through the night. Do you keep me company or come back in the morning?

Art (as Ol'D'Cassino): Well... I gotta go...

Ali: [cackling]

Austin: [laughing]

Art (as Ol'D'Cassino): We've got a lot of entertainment tonight at the casino. You — if you finish, you come by. We'll take care of you. Yeah. But, uh, you know, I'll see you in the AM, you know, that's what they say, see you in the AM.

Janine:I think Caeso's probably a little grateful on that, just like... I imagine it takes him a long time, because, part of it is just like, how does a watch work? Let's figure this out. And then maybe I can fix it. It's a little bit like —

Austin: Using, uh,...

Janine:Got to understand this thing to...

Austin: Using Ce's internet hookup to be able to look up old bulletin board message DIY repair, watch repair FAQs, you know.

Janine:God, I love that. Yeah. Yes.

Austin: ASCII art of a watch, of all the different watch parts. Or just like, really low resolution pictures or diagrams, you know.

Janine:Also it's like info from, maybe it's info from people who... I could imagein there being like a disconnect between the information about our watches and the information they have about watches, where like, all the pieces have some sort of name that someone came with, people have accepted as like this is what this is called, but it's not the name that like, we would recognize, uh, for a lot of things. It's just a little bit, it is like a kind of a bit of a game of telephone has happened, but it doesn't really matter. It's like, Caeso learns this shit that's just like kind of bizarre...

Austin: Totally.

Janine:But, makes sense, it works. Or does it?

Austin: Are you — I guess it's time to roll those dice, yeah. Are you using a skill?

Janine:Uh... I don't think any of my swashbuckler skills work for this.

Austin: Yeah. You could just always check a skill from your restoration job. So you're always allowed to use those.

Janine:Do those get crossed off, or just —

Austin: They get checked. I mean, I think they're also supposed to get checked as you've used them, uh, but you do, you do transfer sort of, I believe, from... you, you, all of your skills, you can continue to reference fictionally, you know?

Janine: Right.

Austin: But, but — you wouldn't stop being handy just because you used handy here, for instance. Or horse. Maybe you're going to use horse. What do I know?

Janine: I'm using handy, I'll use handy.

Austin: Okay.

Janine: Uh...

Austin: 3d2, looking for 1s.

Janine: Whoops. [laughing]

Austin: Oh my god. 2, 2, 2. That increases our Brauntton suspicion to 4. Which is the stage at which we're going to get asked to leave. But I guess we should finish this game first.

Janine: This also makes perfect sense.

Austin: It does.

Janine: It's like, "I don't know how to fix a watch." This powerful guy is like, "fix my watch." I cannot fix the watch. He's like, "get outta here."

Austin: [laughing]

Ali: [chuckling]

Art: Would be a real shame if something bad happened to youse.

Janine: He did literally threaten to bring his goons down if I fucked up his watch. It just adds up.

Austin: Uh-huh. It does, it does just add up. Holder, do you leave happy with the work? I mean, what's this look like? Can we just see the scene, instead of answering these questions, this last few set of questions on this one? You just come back the next morning?

Art: Mm-hm.

Austin: Also, I just love the idea of Broadleaf, Wine, Ce Gul, and Tzion, just being like, "Caeso, you've got to go to bed." And Caeso being like, "I've gotta fix this watch."

Janine: I picked the whole thing apart to understand it.

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: But now it's just like, I've got this one little spring, and I have no fucking idea where it goes. It's tiny, and I keep losing it, so I had to put it on a piece of tape. And, I just don't know where, I can't — I keep taking it apart and putting it back together, and I just can't find where this spring goes.

Austin: [chuckles] So then, yeah. I guess it's the next day, and, and, uh... you come back. We need to write this guy's name down. I've already... I've already begun to lose it.

Art: Gastone...

Austin: Gastone...

Art: Ol'D'Cassino.

Austin: Yeah, Ol'D'Cassino, yeah.

Art: Ol'D'Cassino.

Janine: I love how the last — the first thing we did of this felt very Sangfielle. This now feels very Bluff.

Austin: It feels very Bluff.

Art: Any time a casino owner — it's Ol apostrophe —

Austin: It's apostrophe, is it apostrophe?

Art: It's ol apostrophe, d apostrophe, cassino.

Austin: Okay, cassino, okay, yeah. Casino owner. Okay. Great. All right. Let's get the scene.

Ali: One more game? Or, oh, there's one more —

Austin: Yeah, I want to — uh, there's... I mean, let's, I want to see the scene. I want to see D'Cassino get mad. Ol'D'Cassino get mad and tell us to leave.

Art: He shows up with goons, I think.

Austin: Wow.

Janine: Yeah. He shows up with — like he's expecting the failure?

Art: He's expecting you stole the watch! This is a valuable piece of.

Austin: So this is, this is, this is a roose — this is a ruse.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: This whole thing.

Art: I hear you're feeding people and helping people. Get out.

Austin: Right. You've invented a reason to kick us out of town, which is to accuse us of theft.

Art: Yeah. Breaking it is honestly a favor... you did, to me.

Janine: Oh my god.

Janine (as Caeso): I mean, [sighs] listen, it's [sighs again]... I just don't know where this little bit goes. I tried to figure it out, but it's, it's such a little bit.

Art (as Ol'D'Cassino): You come to this peaceful community of industrious people, and you... you break our things.

Janine (as Caeso): It was already broken.

Art (as Ol'D'Cassino): You take something that's struggling, and you make it worse. What a metaphor we are seeing today, ladies and gentlemen.

Austin (as Wine): Who is... who are you talking to?

Art (as Ol'D'Cassino): I'm talking to my goons.

Austin: [laughing]

Janine: Who are here in the ring with me.

Austin: [laughing] I can't believe that Gastone is cutting such a good promo, out of the show.

Art: Yeah. I understand, NXT has this character right now.

Austin: Oh, really? Wild.

Art: Yeah, yeah, it's not great. Uh...

Art (as Ol'D'Cassino): Seeing that the lot of you wreck everything that you touch, I think it might be better for everyone if maybe you move along.

Austin: I'm trying to see if we even have a choice here. We've done the three games, and this time we did do three games, like genuinely, we did. But it feels like I want to stick it to this motherfucker, you know what I mean?

Art: Well, then you shouldn't have got so many contempt points, because this guy's going to make us all leave right now. I guess you didn't do it, you, you...

Austin: I didn't. Yeah.

Art: You rolled the dice, and it was fine. Everyone else really let you down on this one.

Austin: [laughing]

Art: Especially that elephant jerk, I hear he flipped 3 and got all 3.

Austin: That did happen. Uh... why can I not find... oh, here we go. Uh... 3... well... did I just invent this rule? Sorry, I'm... paging through.

Art: I know what you're talking —

Austin: I remember that being a rule, right?

Art: Yeah.

Austin: After three mini-games have been played in a town, play Move On to leave one town and go to the next. It does say that outright. So, we should be leaving around now anyway and setting up our final town.

Janine: Right.

Austin: I'm saying final town, even though we still have some adventure jobs left, just because we don't have infinite time left, and I'd love to get this third one on screen, does that make sense? And then, Ce, you should lead with a thing there? Does that make sense? As a game?

Ali: Oh, I was thinking maybe we would do Move On, because that's like an entire game's worth of stuff, and then it would be awkward to like end an episode at a new location.

Austin: I see what you're saying. Well, let's set up, well, Move On sets up what that location is.

Ali: Oh, okay, fair. I just, yeah. I hate leaving people with information that they like, need to retain for X amount of time.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah, I get that. Well, then we could end here, right?

Ali: Sure.

Austin: Because then, that's the — maybe what we do is, we end on an image of us leaving, and we pick up on us going, arriving to the next place after, after this. And I'll, I'll send you all my notes on what that next place looks like so you can brainstorm some shit, if that makes sense.

Ali: Sure.

Austin: So, what's it look like as we, as we get kicked out of town, escorted... are these goons just casino goons? I mean, I know they're Ol'D'Cassino goons. But are they casino goons, or are they Principality, Curtain goons?

Art: They're casino goons. And, I mean, we can decide how in-bed with the —

Austin: Right.

Art: With the Principality, is.

Austin: Yeah. I wonder if there's even a little bit of... entropy, in terms of like, hey, maybe not everybody who comes here for shore leave goes back. Some people go AWOL and wind up being goons at the casino.

Art: Sure.

Janine: Oh yeah, they go private.

Austin: They go private, you know.

Ali: Ooh.

Austin: Uh, yeah, that feels like a good — I guess we should answer this file, these things here. How do the people of the town you're leaving feel about you? Consult your failure and success ratio. We had big successes here, to be clear.

Ali: Mm-hm.

Austin: We just also had big failures.

Janine: High highs and low lows.

Austin: High highs and low lows.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: Is it, is it as simple as it seems, which is that like, the folks who came to our community meeting, the folks who they're connected to, leave with a positive relationship? And maybe more importantly, they leave with the space to try to figure out what they want to do next, and a connection to us, if not loyalty to us, certainly a sort of like, "hey, if we ever... " Maybe we get a shot of Wine talking to the foreman one more time, and being like, "well, if you ever need anything, we'll take the risk and come back," you know, and maybe there's one more meal, maybe like, we do the final, like, "all right, we have to leave town, bye. Tomorrow, or else, Ol'D'Cassino's going to come try to fight us, and we don't want to bring violence to your town. But we're going to do one more meal." Maybe it's a smaller meal, but we, you know, everyone eats, you know, some more grits. You do a spaghetti night, you know, whatever it is. Curry, maybe? Big pot of curry. And that gives us the space to like, see that there is like... okay. We didn't fix this place 100 percent, but that's not on us, and in a real way, it's going to be for them

to try to keep fighting and continue their old, the old spirit of, you know, making it happen on the ground for them. Uh...

What type of stories do they tell about us when we leave?

Art: Hm...

Austin: Do they shit-talk Broadleaf's cooking but in a loving way? Do you know what I mean?

Ali: [laughing]

Art: Sure...

Austin: Though you said that it was good, I'm not going to take that away from you.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: Do they shit-talk our singing?

Art: But like just being, like, crabby about it — yes — the worst singers we've ever had in this town.

Austin: But they have heart, they have heart. You know.

Art: Yeah. They don't know any words, they don't know that you sing when you bring cake in. Just the awkward sound of people eating cake in silence.

Ali: [laughing]

Austin: And then the other half of this that's — there's two more that are about this place and not about the next place. The first is, if anyone's been traveling with you, do they decide to stay in town? I mean, Tzion definitely doesn't. Tzion stays with us, right?

Art: Yeah.

Austin: Tzion's crew at this point. But I do think maybe Tivanon the merchant from Eversin stays behind, and maybe like, catches a different escort back that way, instead of whatever way we're going.

Ali: Mm-hm.

Austin: And then, does anyone new from the town join your wagon? Characters that join don't have to be crew. I kind of don't think so. I don't think anybody stood as someone who would want to jump onboard.

Art: Yeah.

Ali: Yeah. I'd be willing to make up a character that's like, "listen, man, I just got to get out of here". But we would be making up the person, yeah.

Austin: Yeah, that's fair. Yeah. Yeah.

Janine: People are like that, though. I mean, old mining town. Old casino town. I gotta go.

Austin: I gotta get out. Born to run.

Janine:[cackling]

Ali: Yeah. People are always saying this.

Austin: We get some sort of like, 20-year-old, you know what I mean? Like, "I gotta fucking beat this town. This town's..."

Art: Yeah, town full of losers and I'm going out of here to win?

Austin: Yeah, uh-huh, yeah. Exactly, yes.

Ali: We didn't get a Ce scene, but... Ce going down to the lake and running into the town.

Austin: Oh, that's fun.

Ali: [laughing] With their little droid, and...

Austin: I mean, if that's the sort of, like, if you want to give us that picture of what Ce was up to and tie that to bringing someone with us, I think that that's fine.

Ali: [laughing] Yeah, I think that works. Ce is like an explorer type person, a budding gardener. Would probably go down to the ravine —

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: Find someone who's like, "I'm trying to save up a ticket to go to..." rich person town.
[laughing]

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: Ce's like, "we got room on the wagon, buddy. We're leaving tomorrow."

Austin: Yeah, come on the BigStar.

Ali: We just got kicked out, so... if you want to make this decision, you've got to make it now.

Austin: Exactly. Yeah. Love it.

Ali: [laughing]

Austin: And they're just all aboard. They're like, yeah..., "you think I'm kidding. I'm not kidding. I'm going to see this whole world." You know, that sort of —

Ali: [more laughing]

Austin: All right. I think we all just give each other looks as you arrive with new stranger to come on this journey with us, but, it is what it is. I need you to come up with a name for this person by the time we start next time.

Ali: Sure, I can do that. I will remember to do that.

Austin: Awesome. All right. I think that that's the last of these questions we can answer now, but next time, we'll lead in with whether or not we want to repair the wagon, if the wagon needs further repairs, if we're going to upgrade with 6, we can continue to upgrade stuff, and we can answer that at the beginning of next time. And then, where we're going next is this, will probably be the final, the next recording will be the end of this, this game.

Thank you guys as always for joining us, thank you for supporting us. As a reminder, you can go to [Patreon.com](https://www.patreon.com) — or, that's not, we don't do the [Patreon.com](https://www.patreon.com) here. We do [friendsatthetable.cash](https://www.friendsatthetable.cash). That's the much easier mnemonic, for that one. Uh, yeah, we're back soon for another episode of Wagon Wheel, another episode on the Road to Palisade.

[["Permanent Peace"](#) by Jack de Quidt plays]