

Bluff City 30: Extracurricular: Out Of Time Pt. 4

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[Recap begins]

Austin [as Barry the Doorman]: Hey, uh, Ms. Key...there are some officers here looking for you.

[Cut]

Austin: One of the rooms that you were just in, like, it's as if a cement—like a, like a wrecking ball goes through the wall of one of them—as like a boulder, basically, like just busts through the wall as you begin to teleport away to the next one. The people chasing you clearly are more than just cops with guns.

[Cut]

[Music [Extracurricular: Out of Time](#) by Jack de Quidt starts playing]

Janine [as Chanti Park, AKA Grouse]: Any sounds like trees breaking? Like a pop. Like a big pop.

Austin [as a bird]: It was—it was very dark. And, um, it was like a big spider.

Janine [as Chanti]: Big spider?

Austin [as a bird]: Like—uh, I don't like the all-black spiders. With the long legs. They hurt people. They hurt birds. They hurt us. When you try to eat them, they bite back. She had long legs like a spider.

[Cut]

Austin [as Alexandra Hughes]: Ms. Key, do you remember when things used to be *different* around here?

Ali [as Caitlin Key, AKA Verge]: Yeah, absolutely.

Austin [as Alexandra]: What if I told you that all of that changed because of...I think, this.

Ali [as Caitlin]: I thought it was in response to the parade.

Austin [as Alexandra]: It was a little of [sigh] column A, and a little of column B. They knew they had to get things back on track. And someone told them how to. Someone gave them the ability to. To make things like *this*—

Austin: And, like, gestures all around her.

[as Alexandra]: And in exchange, the normally very, very stuck-in-their-ways City Hall made an exception. For this.

Austin: And gestures to the Tunnel Project.

[as Alexandra]: I thought it was a metaphor. But it's a big hole in the ground.

Ali [as Caitlin]: Champ, you wanted to destroy something?

Art [as Elana Flores, AKA The Champ]: Yup!

Ali [as Caitlin]: Perhaps we can find an opportunity to throw a wrench while we're here.

Art [as Elana]: Great. So, like, what are these, machines? Or...

[Cut]

Austin [as construction worker]: You can't shut this place down! This is a big operation. This is the city project!

Art [as Elana]: No, no no. No it—no.

Austin [as construction worker]: Yes!

Art [as Elana]: This is the Whitakers?

Austin [as construction worker]: It's the city! Yeah, the Whitakers, and the Nebraskas and—I heard, well, what are they—the out-of-town family. Uh, the Verandanzas? Something like that? A bunch of different—money from everywhere, but the city said yes to this pro—this is a city project. The police come through here! Lieutenant Merisi. She doesn't take shit from anybody. And she checks in once a week. Someone here is gonna get hurt because of this. She's gonna hurt somebody.

Art [as Elana]: Well I'm gonna hurt her first. Don't you worry about people getting hurt.

[Music ends]

Austin: Welcome to Friends at the Table, an actual-play podcast focused on critical worldbuilding, smart characterization, and fun interaction between good friends. I'm your host, Austin Walker, and today we are continuing our game of *Capers*, a superpowered game of gangsters in the roaring '20s, designed by Craig Campbell. Joining me today, Ali Acampora.

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

Austin: Janine Hawkins!

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

Austin: And Art Martinez-Tebbel.

Art: You can find me on Twitter [@atebbel](#). And I usually have a bit of shtick here, and I have just nothing right now.

Austin: You got nothing? You got no shtick?

Art (overlapping): Nothing. No shtick!

Austin: Hm.

Art: Hm.

Austin: Ugh—trying times.

Janine (overlapping): Like, promote a good recipe you tried lately?

Austin: Yeah! Do that.

Art: Um...

Austin: Or a bad one.

Art (overlapping): Who's even eating anything anymore?

Austin (overlapping): One that needs some help.

Art: We got—we went up to a restaurant. Just got like a tray of enchiladas and ate those for three days. It was great.

Ali: Oh, yeah.

Austin: That sounds good. Well, here we—here we are, having (laughing)—having given you exactly the time it is that we've recorded these episodes. Except, we've of course recorded these episodes over the course of like, a month. It has been three weeks since we last played. Which means we are, again, going to be a little shaky on some of the rules. I did a refresher, but, you know. What's a refresher good for?

Art (overlapping): When we started playing this game, you could go to a restaurant, or see a friend.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: Mmh.

Austin: Uh-huh.

Art: Now that might never happen again.

Austin (overlapping): You can still see a friend. [Laugh] You can still—you can still get on a camera, or look out your window, and be like "Yo, there they are!" [**Ali** laughs] "What's good?"

Janine: Bold of you to assume I have friends I can see from my window.

Ali: Yeah...

Austin (Laughing) Yeah! God. Have you seen all these—we're not gonna go down this road. We're gonna—I'm gonna stay on track. We need to get through this game.

Ali: Mhm.

Austin: Um...

Art: The parades? You mean the parades?

Austin (overlapping): Last time—Yeah. [laugh] (Jokingly) “You seeing all these *parades*?” Ah...last time we played, what happened? Y'all fought people in a quarry, I remember?

Art: Mhm.

Ali: Mhm.

Austin: Um, you got some information. Alright, can we break it down like at the high level one more time, just so we're all the way on board.

Art: Sure.

Janine (overlapping): That'd be great.

Austin: Should I do that?

[Ali laughs]

Art: Yeah I don't—if you're gonna like, ask questions, I was not gonna have answers.

Janine: (Laughing) Me neither.

Austin (overlapping): At all? Okay.

Janine (overlapping): (Laughing) I thought “Let's break it down to a high level” was “I'm gonna walk you through this.”

Ali: I have *some* answers...(laughing) if you want this to be...

Austin (overlapping): Okay. Yeah, and I'll jump in. I'll jump in when it's—

Ali (overlapping): Okay.

Austin (overlapping): —when it's appropriate.

Ali: Sure...

Janine (overlapping): Dateline! 1920's-ish!

[Ali and Austin chuckle]

Austin: So...

Ali: Yeah. So, okay, so we're all—[laugh] let's start from the very beginning, that we're all superheroes. I'm from Blough City, the other two are from Bluff City. They came to the—

Art (overlapping): Great answer. Great answer.

[**Austin** and **Janine** laugh]

Ali: (Laughing) They came here, uh, mysterious circumstances. Going around town, we all linked up, and then we were sort of...hired by people that I, Caitlin Key, work with. Who I guess own the hotel that I have a bar at?

Austin: Mhm.

Ali: And their son was accused of killing a police officer.

Austin: Three. A bunch of them.

Ali: (Laughing) Three whole police officers. Um, so they wanted me to figure out what actually happened, and sort of help me pin it on somebody else. We set—[laugh] in the process of investigating this, we've figured out that what's going on is that a bunch of...rich people, business people, politicians, people with their hands in some pies, are developing this Tunnel Project. Do we know that?

Austin: Yeah! Yeah! A hundred percent. Yeah.

Ali (overlapping): They're building a tunnel, yeah.

Austin: No, I think at this point, we know it's called the Tunnel Project—

Ali: Okay.

Austin: —which is just a very simple bad descriptive name. [**Ali** laughs] It's a tunnel. They're building a tunnel. You're right.

Ali: Yes, right. And we know that the point that we went to a big...um, like work lot, and there were (laughing) a bunch of people digging up a tunnel, and we were like "Stop doing that." Um...and that's where we last saw our heroes.

Austin: Yes.

Janine: Also, we went to a big Hollywood party.

Ali: Yes, there was that too.

Austin (overlapping): Yeah, some additional little details about, like, the world and the characters you've interacted with. Some important NPCs. The first is you've spoken to the son of the Whitakers, who own the bar—or own the hotel that your bar is in. Or, at the very least, they give you protection from the police. I don't know if they actually own it. But they—they're the one who were like "Hey, don't hassle—don't hassle Key's bar." So you met Jewels, Hollis

Jewels Whitaker, who is kind of a flirty piece of shit. You met, um, Horseface. Someone named Horseface. You never got his real name, I don't think. Who...

Art (overlapping): Horsington Faceburg.

Austin: No, I know his real name. **[Janine snorts]** I have a real name for him. No one asked.

Art: I just said it!

Austin: No, it's not that one. Cause I have another bit. You're stepping on my other bit. It's fine.

Ali: Don't we know it? I feel like there was a back and forth where we found it.

Austin: Mmh. I feel like I never delivered this punchline. **[Ali laughs]** Anyway. Um...[laugh] the...um...Horseface worked for—works for the Tunnel Project. Works for the Whitakers. Works for Hollis, and needed Hollis to come fix some water pumping machinery from the swamps, basically. From the wetlands. And their big water pump that's, like, removing all of the water from the wetlands so they can build this Tunnel Project. And they, on the way, said "Horseface—" They got pulled over by some cops. He doesn't really know what happened. There was—there were loud noises, things got dark for a second. Cops wound up dead. Everyone split. Horseface went into hiding. For—to his credit, Hollis seems to not want you to hurt Horseface, and seems to know that Horseface will be sent to, you know, take the hit for him, or for whoever did the killing, if Horseface gets arrested.

Austin (continued): So you've done some jobs protecting Horseface. You've done some work kind of, like, keeping him out of the cops' hands. There was a big fancy party. You met Gale Green, who is the, uh, partner of—or I don't think they might have been married. The wife of Grouse's mentor. So you did that. She was sad. She was sad and, like, disconnected from—couldn't quite put together her own past. What else? What else is important here? You met Hollis's girlfriend, or someone he has seen a little bit. The kind of world-traveling person. I guess like—I think I gave you the vibe that she had been to both Bluff and Blough and maybe somewhere else too. Alexandra Hughes. Who kind of clearly knows more about what's going on that she has let on. And then—and then, yeah. You busted up some security guards at the—at The Tunnel Project. Trying to think if I skipped anything. Oh! And the information you found there after beating it up is that the order of events as it seems to be is:

Austin (continued): Horseface goes to this party at Gale Green's house because the pumps broke. Gets Hollis. Hollis comes to fix the pumps. On the way back, Hollis's car and Horseface's truck, along with some of the people in that truck, get pulled over. The cop stuff happens. Um, and you—and stuff goes bad. Hollis goes into house arrest. Horseface goes into hiding. And you learn that from the quarry's stuff, that all of the—the kind of through-line here is this person Lieutenant Merisi, who is a—who seems to be a superpowered cop. A member of what's called the Myst PD—the Mysterious Phenomenon Division, or whatever. And that she was called—she was kind of, like, tagged to be called in to anything regarding the Whitaker boy, Hollis Whitaker. And so, she seems to have maybe shown up at the crime scene. All signs point to her having maybe killed those other cops. You have no idea why she would have done that, or what her motives are, if that's the case. But also you—I forgot, you interviewed a bird. Grouse interviewed

a bird. And there was also some, just like, looking at the crime scene for clues, and you kind of put together that, given what happened there, it's probably this Lieutenant Merisi who did the killing itself. Or, who seems to have maybe been there at the very least, with her weird powers. So. Um, I think that's where we left, and you left the quarry last, is what I recall. But I don't know what your plan is from there. (Animated) What do you do?

Ali: Um, I think the thing that we wanted to do was go beat up some cops? I don't know if we wanna...

Janine: Refine that plan a little?

[**Austin** laughs]

Ali: Refine that plan. Maybe go back to the hotel and...do a refresh? But I guess the assumption would be that we would have done that in between episodes.

Austin: Yeah, I think that that's—well, I don't know how we're cutting this, so who knows?

Ali: Fair.

Austin: Uh, but—but, yeah. I think going back to—going back to the hotel's totally fine. I mean, this is really an investigation in your hands at this point. Like, I've given you all the clues, in the sense that (laughing) I'm out of prep. Except for character stats. Like—

Art (overlapping): Now we are Mr. Police Man.

Austin (overlapping): The story is in front of you. You are—the, yeah. You are now—I was gonna say “You know the clues, Mr. Police Man,” but given the fact that the mystery seems to be revolving around corrupt police people. That seems like it may have muddled things. [Laugh]

Art: That's also kind of what the movie “The Snowman” is about.

Austin: Is it?

Art: Well, sort of.

Austin: Okay. I haven't seen this movie.

[**Ali** laughs in the background]

Art (overlapping): There's institutional powers.

Austin: I see.

Janine: Is Alexandra still in our car?

Austin: Yeah, she's still with you. Yeah, yeah yeah. She kind of rode out there—

Janine: Can we float the idea of attacking cops to her and see—[laugh]

Austin: Uh, yeah. She laughs (laughing) at you.

Janine: (Laughing) Okay.

Austin: And goes, um, you know.

Austin [as Alexandra]: I've been around the world. I don't think I can remember a single time that attacking a police station has gone well for anyone.

Janine [as Chanti]: Okay, so we need some kind of ruse.

Art [as Elana]: What about the movie "Assault on Precinct 13"?

Austin [as Alexandra]: I'm from the 1920's, dear. I don't know **[Ali chuckles]** what that movie is.

Art [as Elana]: Well, go buy stock in Lawrence Fishburn. **[Austin laughs]** And it's gonna pay off. Big.

Ali (overlapping): Carefully—carefully writing this down [laugh].

[Timestamp 00:15:00]

Janine: Mhm.

[Austin laughs]

Austin: Well, yeah yeah, Caitlin can do it. Yeah, exactly. *God*. No, *you* should buy stock in movies. (Laughing) You're in LA before *movies* really blew up.

Ali: (Playing along) Oh...*movies*. Underlining it twice. [Laugh]

Austin (overlapping): Movies! The moving pictures, **[Art laughs]** yeah.

Ali: Um...

Art: Pick some space where you think you could put a lot of big empty buildings here, and buy that land.

[Ali laughs]

Austin: Um, so yeah. I think she thinks—I think, actually, what she probably does, I'd also add, is just like—

[as Alexandra]: If you're going to do it, drop me off at the hotel first.

Ali [as Caitlin]: [Sigh] Well, fine. We can get prepared anyway.

Art [as Elana]: Yeah we probably need to...I don't know. Look at a map?

Austin: Don't look at me. I don't have a map of 1920s Blough City. But we could just talk about one using the Theatre Of Our Minds!

Ali: Mmh.

Art: I think what I really mean is like, blueprints. I know you don't have those either, but—[laugh]

Austin: I don't—oof. Ah, you know...(laughing) "blueprints police station" will get me on a watch list. But...

[Ali laughs in the background]

Art: Uh-huh, don't do that.

[Ali laughs]

Austin: Let me check the Roll20 Marketplace.

Ali (overlapping): Just the, like—

Art (overlapping): Maybe, like "blueprints DMV"? Like that might be closer—[laugh]

Ali: Um...

Austin: [Laugh] That's worse! That's not good typing either. [Laugh]

Art: What about, like, blueprints Canadian DMV.

[Austin and Janine chuckle]

Ali: Just google "blueprints for hobbyists," and then browse through. [Laughs] Just building a safe cache.

Janine: That's just gonna get you a bunch of gundams.

Ali: Yeah...

Austin: Mhm.

Janine: Looking for hobby-grade blueprints.

[Austin chuckles]

Art: The Blough City police are in a giant robot person.

[Janine and Austin laugh]

Austin (Jokingly) Ooh. Blough City's at it again! [Laugh] So unpredictable!

[Art laughs]

Janine: I wonder if there's a—if there's a—if there's a map...of the police station from "Rambo."

Art: We don't even need a real...blueprint—

Austin (overlapping): We don't need any of this!

Art (overlapping): —we need, like, to talk about what blueprints might be like.

Austin: That's right. That's correct. What we need is a list of rooms, at best. And we barely need—I mean, in this system, you're right. We actually do need some sort of quick and dirty map. But more importantly, I want y'all to talk about what the plan is, and we can generate from there.

Janine: Yeah, I'm also—I'm almost not—I'm not on team “Let's go to the police station.” I'm probably more on team “What if we coax that fucking asshole out and then fake some sort of other thing that the police would have to call in that would engage the same mechanisms that took over on the bad night. And then deal with that. You know.

Austin (overlapping): See this is the reason why we talk. This is why we talk it out.

Art (overlapping): And then when they're gone, we talk over the police station [**Janine** and **Austin** crack up] so when they come back, we got all their stuff!

Janine: Yup, that's it.

Art: So Janine's plan is better than mine.

Ali [as Caitlin]: I think that's a great idea, Grouse. That makes more sense...I was initially against the “barging in the police office stand” plan and, realizing that I was wrong about the “beat up all the quarry people” one, [**Austin** gasps in the background] I was...giving too much too soon, I guess.

Austin: I did find a police station map, but we—it's just not—

Art (overlapping): Wow...there's so many more *rooms* than I would've guessed.

[**Ali** chuckles]

Austin: Yeah, this is not even like a big police station. Uhm...I think uh—I'm trying to think of other things here. You know what—before you actually drive back, like as people are getting back in the car, I think this a moment where Hughes says—

[as Alexandra]: To my fellow travelers, before we go back, this is how you get home...I'm not saying that Blough City couldn't still use your help, but...I bet there's a route right back to Bluff, down that tunnel.

Art [as Elana]: It's tempting.

Janine [as Chanti]: It's a huge tunnel. It's not going anywhere.

Art [as Elana]: You don't know that. Everything's weird here! We go and it could be yesterday tomorrow and then the tunnel won't be here.

[**Austin** and **Janine** laugh softly]

Janine [as Chanti]: You got me.

Austin [as Alexandra]: She makes a point. Anyway, I just wanted to raise it. There are other ways, they're just a little more arduous.

Ali [as Caitlin]: How many ways are you aware of?

Austin [as Alexandra]: I've done it by land, and I've done it by sea. Land is a *long* walk. Sea is...a sickly ride.

Janine [as Chanti]: I can just have birds carry me, so I'm not super worried about either of those.

[**Art** laughs]

Austin [as Alexandra]: I'm sorry to say, my dear, the birds would not make it.

Janine [as Chanti]: That just doesn't make sense.

Art [as Elana]: (Sarcastically) That's what doesn't make sense. [**Austin** and **Janine** laugh] I'm glad we're really drilling down the impossible and the possible here.

Austin [as Alexandra]: When I say that it's a long trip, I don't mean that it's a day's hike. I mean that you need to pack reserves. Rations. There's a reason why, when I visit the city, I visit for a season.

Art [as Elana]: So there's seasons here.

Austin [as Alexandra]: There's seasons back home, and when the winter's bad, I sometimes spend it here instead.

Art [as Elana]: How do you know when it's not winter anymore?

Austin [as Alexandra]: I keep track of the time. You'll get it. If you stay long enough.

Art [as Elana] (overlapping): I don't think you can!

[**Austin** laughs]

Austin [as Alexandra]: I have a little book.

Art [as Elana] (overlapping): You all make me so mad!

[**Austin** and **Janine** laugh]

Janine: She has a smartphone...(laughing) she just hides...

Austin (overlapping): (Laughing) Yeah...

Janine: And it's, like, disconnected from the network so it's just keeping time internally.

Austin: [Laugh] All that bit before about not knowing (laughing) what an email was was a *bit* for her. [Ali snorts] She's been lying.

Ali: (Muffled) God...

Austin: It's not true. She also doesn't know what an email is. Don't worry. That was all—that was all genuine with you, Caitlin.

Ali: (Muffled, laughing) Okay.

Janine: She's from the future. She only uses Facebook Mail.

Austin: [Laugh] Right. I'm moving us to the speakeasy. That's fun. That's what you have. Um, so yeah—

Art (overlapping): God, imagine a world where email doesn't exist but Facebook does...

Austin: No.

Ali (overlapping): Very easy to imagine...

Art (overlapping): We haven't—(laughing) we haven't explored dystopia *enough*.

Ali: Um...[Austin laughs] I, uh—well, I think on the ride home, I ask why...why this character is going back and forth so much.

Austin: Um, she says that she...

[as Alexandra]: There are lots of things to see here. I find myself inspired. Our friend, Elana, doesn't like the way time loses itself here. I find it fascinating. I'm sure *you* would be overwhelmed by the sensations of walking the Boards of Bluff City. I find it liberating. The city I'm from is so much more *pale* than these.

Janine [as Chanti]: You ever seen the movie "Westworld?"

Austin [as Alexandra]: We've been over this—[Janine and Austin laugh] movies...ah...

Janine: I know she hasn't seen it—this is—this is...

Austin: Uh-huh.

Janine: ...this is just to grow some Champ joke of—

Austin (overlapping): Uh-huh.

Janine (overlapping): —that's some fucked up tourism shit, like the—[Art laughs] that's—mmm....

Austin: Um, yeah, I mean, she'll—she's—this is the thing about her at this point, especially knowing that she's now dealing with people who have done at least one of these trips. She's kind of an open book on this. Like, I don't think that she's being cagey about *anything* here...and would happily—would, like, *too* happily give you her life story, right? And maybe does on the way home. Uh...which I'm not—I'm not gonna do that in character, but the long and short is like, she was the daughter of a struggling businessman from Philadelphia who's from a rich family, who owned land in Atlantic City, but the father was like not in good—kind of, broke out to become a rich business man in Philly by himself, and when that didn't happen [laugh], he had to come back to live in Atlantic City and spend time there and work there every summer on properties owned by his father. And while—and this is like—this was in the previous intros for the last set of episodes. While visiting her grandfather's house, or being kind of *locked* in her grandfather's house over the summer as a teenager, she found a way here. She found a way to *Bluff* city, and then years later found a way here. And so, for the last, like—and she just kind of, again, will just tell you this straight out—for like, the last fifteen years, has been kind of going between the two cities, back and forth. Or the three cities, I guess, back and forth, in order to just, like, see the world? And escape her shitty existence as, like, an heiress locked inside of a mansion, basically. So, yes, there is a troubled tourism to it, but it originates in like a—in a place that is less troublesome—and, I think that she almost thinks of herself as, like, having, you know, tri-citizenship? What's the—what would be—dual citizenship is two. What's three? Is it just tri-citizenship?

Art: It must be, right?

Austin: It must be.

Ali (overlapping): Yeah...

Austin: Multiple citizenship...in the sense that, like, she grew up in these cities. She, like, went through adolescence in these three cities. Also, she writes horror novels. That's her vibe. Um, it's a very boring story, the way she tells it. In the—like, because she's so...because three of you are superheroes [laugh], one of you owns a bar—she's like someone who is at her best talking about things that are not herself. And when she isn't talking about herself, she's a lot of fun. But when she's, like, trying to tell her story, it's very droll and very, like, she wants to be above it all, in a weird way. Anyway. You get back...to the speakeasy. Um, what does getting ready for whatever this is entail? Also, does anyone check in on Horseface? You got Horseface a room, right?

Ali: Yeah. Horseface has been in a room.

Austin: Okay.

Ali: Horseface got dinner. Got a meal.

Austin: Mhm. He got to eat some of the—whatever. What was the thing he wanted again? The candy he wanted? Was it candy? Was it matches? What was it? [Laugh]

Ali: Oh....

Austin: Those are the same to me...

Janine (overlapping): He doesn't eat matches! What? [Laugh]

Art (overlapping): Those candy matches, it's a companion to candy cigarettes that fell off a long time ago.

Ali: Oh, yeah...[**Janine** and **Austin** laugh] taste great together.

Austin: Mmh. [Pause] He's fine, don't worry. I'm not threatening him at this moment, but..

Art: Well, we should find out what his name is.

Austin: Well don't—you can't just go do it. It has to come up naturally.

Janine: Hickory sticks. That's the equivalent of candy matches.

Austin: Oh yeah. Okay.

Janine: Not *candy* but, you know?

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Art: Horseface doesn't wanna come, right?

[**Janine**, **Austin**, and **Ali** laugh]

Austin: No, I don't think so.

Ali (overlapping): Well, that's—that's—I mean, we can—if the police are...

Janine (overlapping): We could lie...

Ali: If the police are actively searching for Horseface, and for us I guess so it doesn't matter. But, you know, if we wanted to do a little, uh...a trick-er-ooo...[Laugh]

Austin (overlapping): Yeah, if you wanna...

Janine: I mean I—

Ali (overlapping): ...have them go arrest Horseface and then we show up.

Janine: I was thinking of using bait that was slightly more appealing in terms of using the person as bait...

Ali: Sure...

Janine: ...than Horseface, who just seems to be a lovable doof with a shotgun. [**Ali** laughs] And a bad nickname? [**Austin** chuckles] Lovable is strong.

Ali (overlapping): Wha—he had a preferred—we didn’t get a name, but he gave us a preferred nickname. And it’s *that* that I don’t remember...

Austin: Oh, he did give you a preferred nickname. Fuck, what was it?

Art (overlapping): It was like The Quickster...

Austin: Horse Legs! It was the Quickster! [Laugh]

Janine: God it—

Austin: It wasn’t Horse Legs. [**Art** laughs] (Laughing) It was The Quickster. (Muffled) It was The Quickster.

Art (overlapping): Horse Legs was a joke—

Austin: Yeah—[Laugh]

Art: —that we made about it.

Austin (Laughing) He definitely didn’t say “Call me Horse Legs!” It was The Quickster.

Ali: Um, also what’s the maximum hits in this game?

Austin: It depends on—

Ali (overlapping): I think I might have lost some...

Austin: You *definitely* lost some.

Ali: How do I regain them before...

Austin: That’s a good question!

Ali: ...fighting the police.

Austin: That’s a good question. You regain—

Art (overlapping): Mm, I’m down to half hits.

Austin: See, these are good questions to ask right here. Recover...(Reading) Regaining hits. You regain hits over time. Regain one hit every hour while awake and engaging in normal day-to-day activity. You don’t regain any hits while performing strenuous activities. You regain three hits every hour while sleeping. Note that it’s possible for these recovery rates to vary slightly based on in-game situations at the DM’s discretion. For example, sleeping on a boat in—[laugh] in a storm-tossed sea wouldn’t allow you to recover as quickly as normal. I think everyone should—I think the ride back and then, like, getting settled is an hour. Everyone should get one hit back.

Art: Maybe we should do this in the morning.

[Pause]

[Ali laughs]

Austin: Sure!

Ali: I mean, yeah.

Janine (overlapping): It's been some hours since y'all were, like, shot at and stuff though, anyway, right?

Art: No, that wasn't the last thing.

Janine (overlapping): Although I guess there was that whole other fight, yeah.

Austin: That was the—yeah, the fight that hurt them was the fight-fight.

Janine: Right.

Art: I mean, it's just like—

Austin (overlapping): As a reminder—

Art: —the police will respond all the time.

Austin: They will.

Janine: That's true.

Art: Don't say it like that.

Austin: Why? THEY WILL! [Laugh]

[Art and Janine chuckle]

Art: They'll respond—

Austin (Continuing the joke) WHAT DO YOU DO!

Art: WITH A BRAND NEW CAR!

Austin: [Laugh] Yeah. We're trying out something new. We're trying out like a—

Ali: Mhm.

Austin: —Monty Hall, GM mode, you know?

Janine: Um...my Hits are okay, so maybe while they're recovering, I could do a preparatory kind of thing?

[Timestamp 00:30:04]

Austin: That's a good idea. Um, your maximum Hits, by the way, are four plus two times your resilience, plus two times your charisma. So, Caitlin, yours would be four plus four plus uh...two.

Ali: Oh so eight.

Austin (overlapping): So nine is your—is that right?

Ali: So nine is my max—

Austin: Is your max, yeah, yeah yeah.

Ali: Wait you said four plus four plus two.

Austin: Oh you're right! Four plus four plus two—

Ali (overlapping): That's ten.

Austin: —is ten. Yup.

Ali: Okay.

Austin: You're good. [Laugh] You know how math works. Not me!

Ali: [Laugh] I would like to sit still for five hours please!

[**Janine** laughs]

Austin: Well you can—[cracks up laughing] Well remember if you *sleep*, you can get three back per hour.

Ali: (Laughing) Okay.

Art (overlapping): Nope, nope, we're gonna do them sitting still, thank you.

[**Austin** laughs]

Janine (overlapping): And there's no—and there's no TV here, so...

[**Ali** laughs]

Austin: There's radio, maybe...You're in a—you're in a speakeasy. You just kind of hang out. Lounge. And there's like—

Ali (overlapping): Yeah, uh-huh.

Austin: —people. Uh-huh. What's the preparatory thing that you wanna do? Uh...Chanti?

Janine: I wanna find some kind of zoo.

Austin: Oh, interesting. Okay.

Janine: It's the '20s. They gotta have some sort of fucking novelty zoo with really horrible conditions.

Austin: [Laughs] Well you said it. [Laugh] Uhm...you just ask around for—I'm sure Caitlin knows where the zoo is, right?

Ali: Yeah...um—

Austin: 1912 is when the L.A. zoo—the Griffith Park Zoo was founded. So—

Janine: I mean even—

Art (overlapping): Oh, that one is the most depressing place. It's abandoned now, but you can, like, go there, and I think teenagers go there to...to do stuff.

[**Austin** chuckles]

Ali: Mm...

Art: I mean, like, smoke cigarettes and...have sex. You know, that kind of stuff.

Austin: Standard stuff, yeah.

Art: Yeah, not like—not like...

Janine: Run a fake zoo...

Austin: This image of—

Art (overlapping): Not like run a fake zoo.

Austin (overlapping): Run a fake zoo...

Janine (overlapping): (Laughing) Running a teen zoo!

Austin (overlapping): Uh, this image of the zoo...

Art (overlapping): It is—it is *small*, for a zoo.

Austin: ...is depressing.

Janine: Yeah, no, all the zoos from that period, that's—

Austin (overlapping): (Laughing) That's—[Laugh]

Janine: —honestly, for the time, that's sort of impressive.

Austin: Okay.

Janine: There's a zoo...

Austin (overlapping): I believe you.

Janine: ...it's not really a zoo, but like, there's a park that keeps animals in, um, in a town that I'm familiar with, and...

Austin (overlapping): Fifteen animals in 1912 at the zoo.

Janine: ...it just has, like, large—large-ish I'd say like—I'd charitably call them, like, maybe like, six by six by twelve cages. And they just put birds and shit in them. And there's just like a row of these cages, and it's just like "Here you go!"

Austin: Do you wanna tell me what you think this zoo was before it was the zoo?

Janine: This fictional zoo or this zoo with the picture?

Austin (overlapping): This—no, the one that I sent you a picture of.

Janine: Uh...[sigh] is the answer relating to the little—the sheds being houses?

Austin: No.

Janine: Okay.

Austin: Well, I mean they're not houses.

Janine (overlapping): A dump?

Austin: They're—no. It was—it was—what if I tell you that it was originally some sort of farm?

Janine: That was gonna be my original guess, to be honest.

Austin: It is Griffith J. Griffith ostrich farm.

Janine: Oh. Okay. Uhm...

Austin: Uh...P.S. Griffith J. Griffith, complete piece of shit! So, don't—[laugh]

Janine (overlapping): Of course.

Austin: —don't go looking into that guy thinking you're gonna find a good, happy story!

Janine: (muffled) No...

Austin: That man is a murderer!

Janine: Oh! [Pause] That's bad in a different way than I was expecting.

Austin (overlapping): Janine, you're gonna hear about this dude on one of your (laughing) podcasts at some point!

Janine: Yeah, what's his name? I'm gonna put this in a tab for later.

Austin: Griffith J. Griffith, who used the title of Colonel, [sounds of typing in the background] but official records of military service (laughing) don't support that claim.

Ali: Sure they don't.

Austin: His only—his only military title he ever received was Major of Rifle Practice with the national—(laughing) with the California national guard.

Janine: Damn, this dude looks like Teddy Roosevelt!

Austin: Yeah, he does. Full name Griffith Jenkins Griffith.

[Pause]

Janine: Ew...

Austin (overlapping): Do you know that—

Janine (overlapping): Okay...

Austin (overlapping): Yeah I told you. I told you. I told you.

Janine: Yeah...[sigh]

Austin: Anyway. His ostrich farm didn't go well ever, just as a note.

Janine: My other—my other zoos are often bad stories that—there's a zoo in, um, Amsterdam where there's just like, big cats but they're just, again, in these, like, just in like a fenced-in cage. Like, smaller than the area you would give preschoolers to play in. Um...

Austin: [Rueful laugh] Oh, god...anyway, so yeah, this place exists—

Janine (overlapping): And old-timey zoos suck! They fucking suck.

Austin: This place exists, it's probably run by someone who's a lot like Griffith J. Griffith. Uh, what do you—

Janine (overlapping): Is it also a former ostrich farm? Cause that would suit my needs pretty well.

Austin (overlapping): Yeah! Yeah, a hundred percent, right? Like we may as well—it's just this park, right? It's just the park zoo, which is what it's called.

Janine: I was hoping for cassowaries, but I'll settle for ostriches.

Austin: Let's settle for ostriches. I almost said "ossowaries" which is—(laughing) which is not [Janine laughs] that's not—"ossowaries" just isn't gonna do it at all, right? That's—

Janine (overlapping): That's—you know I—

Austin (overlapping): —that's like a...

Janine: You know how I've been hinting at how it felt kind of weird with this system to limit myself to birds, and maybe I would expand into something else? It's bones.

Austin (overlapping): It's bones!

Janine (overlapping): (Laughing) I have bone telekinesis now!

[Ali laughs]

Austin: You're a necromancer now.

Janine: And telepathy. I can communicate with your bones.

Austin: [Laugh] Honestly, goth Grouse—

Janine (overlapping): (Laughing) That would be so good.

Austin (overlapping): —is kind of sick.

Janine: Oh...

Austin (overlapping): I have that move on deck. That's in one of the expansions of (laughing) this game I bought.

Janine: (confused) Goths?

Austin: No, necromancy. [Laugh]

Janine: Oh, okay.

Austin (Laughing) Goth. Yeah. The Goth power. There's a—[laugh] there's a bunch of minor perks or whatever that you can buy for it. It's great.

Janine: I don't wanna bite my season seven act.

Austin: Uh-huh.

Janine: Um...yeah, so I'm gonna talk to some ostriches. Like, I wanna find a shitty zoo and convince the ostriches to rebel, (laughing) I guess.

Austin: What is the—let's do this as if it were a—in Forged in the Dark you'd just do, like, a side operation without actually playing it all the way out. I think this is just using your bird telepathy, right? I think this is a check using Charisma? 'Cause you're just trying to convince them, right? The—I would say that telepathy lets you—let's you talk to them, and then it's like the Charisma that lets you talk them into it. Um...this is an evening, so it's, like, kind of a dead night at the zoo. [Laugh] There's more ostriches than there should be because of formerly being an ostrich park—or an ostrich farm. It's become—this is like the opposite of the Bluff City Zoo in that, like, it—like you said, joyless and, like, scary? It doesn't feel like a safe place. It feels like walking through a public park at night. Not like walking through, like, a *place* like a place of business that has employees. You don't see anyone for minutes at a time [laugh]. Except for various animals.

Um, so yeah. Give me a—I think this is a Charisma—a Charisma Check? Do you have any skills that you could add to that Check?

Janine: Uh...

Austin: And what's your Charisma? Your Charisma is...two?

Janine (overlapping): I feel like Insight would be the most relevant skill?

Austin: You think Insight and not Diplomacy? [Chuckle]

Janine: I mean, I think they're both relevant, but I think in this specific case...it feels more—

Austin (overlapping): Yeah, sure.

Janine (overlapping): —to me there's like—there's a thing about Diplomacy as a skill that does not feel emotional.

Austin: Mhm.

Janine: It feels, like, more tactical?

Austin: Yeah...

Janine: Which, to me, speaks a lot more to, like, talking to people?

Austin: Sure—than animals. That's fine. You have both of them. You get the bonus card from either of them. I'm gonna set a challenge difficulty—actually, wait. Here's an important—here we go. This is why you play these games, is that—fuck, they don't have ostriches? In this book? I was like, "I'm excited, I can look up an ostrich, and [laugh] see what it's stats are..." Would you say an ostrich is more like a horse or an owl?

Janine: Neither? Extremely neither.

Austin (overlapping): A monkey or a wolf?

Art: It's more like a horse.

Austin: A falcon? Is it more like a falcon or a gorilla?

Art: We're being stupid. An ostrich is clearly a bird horse.

Janine (overlapping): I would—is there something smaller than a—is there something smaller than a horse? Like a big goat? Or...

Austin: A dog? Too small.

Janine: No...

Austin: A monkey. A wolf? An owl. An—[laugh]

Janine (overlapping): (Laughing) It's a really short list of animals that you're giving me.

Austin (overlapping): A dog? A crocodile? A crocodile!

Janine: Birds and crocodiles are—no...

Austin: Yeah!

Janine: (Skeptical) Mmm...

Austin: Birds and crocodiles are!

Janine: (Muffled) I don't know about that...

Austin: I—listen, I can go and—(laughing) would you say it's more like a monkey or like a manipulative ghost?

[**Janine** laughs]

Art: Manipulative ghost.

Austin (Laughing) Would you say it's more like a crocodile or [laugh] Al Capone?

Art: It's like the manipulative ghost of Al Capone.

Ali: Yeah...

Austin: [Laugh] Good—that's a good arc. We should play that fucking game.

[**Janine** laughs]

Art: [Laugh] Just like, being the tough guy bravado of Al Capone, but also kind of being, like, "Well you'd do this if you *really* liked me."

[**Austin** and **Janine** laugh]

Austin: How do you think he got—[laugh] he got his grave dug up? Or his secret vault opened? (In an Al Capone-ish accent) "I promise you there's real good stuff in there..."

Art: (Laughing) Wait, he *wanted* them to open the vault?

Austin: Yeah! So he could get his—the rest of his spirit out?

Ali: Oh...yeah.

Art: Oh! Was his spirit in that vault?

Ali: Yes.

Austin (overlapping): Yeah!

Art: Did it po—did it possess Geraldo? Is Geraldo (laughing) Al Capone?

Janine: I was gonna say, that's why Geraldo's like that now.

Austin: Can I tell you the truth?

Art: ...yeah!

Austin (overlapping): I can't find an ostrich in these books, but I *can* say, from this book, (reading) "One of the largest municipal parks in the state, Griffith (laughing) Park sits in the foothills of the Santa Monica mountains! While the park was initially well cared for, it has fallen into disuse in recent years. Feeding off the increasing darkness in...*Blough City*...the park is turning (laughing) into a Gloaming! The animals that took up residence there during its downturn have started *invading populated areas*. Local animal control [laugh] departments have had little luck containing the spooked beasts as they flee a Gloaming in the making." That's in one of these books. It's just already here.

Art (overlapping): All they got up there is coyotes and mountain lions.

[**Austin** laughs quietly]

Janine: I'm sorry, but that zoo started as an ostrich farm, and you're gonna say that the animals there are freaking out and causing problems and whatever, but you're not gonna have stats for an ostrich?

Austin: Well, the book doesn't say that there's an ostrich. I know that cause I'm doing—

Janine (overlapping): Okay, but that's a fact, though. That's a fact that they are—

Austin (overlapping): —good GM research twelve minutes ago. That's right.

Janine (overlapping): —that they are passively invoking by invoking that place.

Austin: By invoking the place, that's correct.

Janine: They looked at the same wikipedia page you did.

Austin: They did. You know what, I'm gonna roll—

Janine (overlapping): Guaranteed.

Austin: —listen, listen, I'm gonna roll with this other book that I bought money—spent money on and say, yeah, when you get to the zoo, something is *off* about this *fucking* zoo. Like, not just a little off. More off. And these are definitely gothed-out animals. These are definitely "gloamed" animals.

Ali: Mm...

Austin: Uh, anyway. I'm gonna say that it's most like a crocodile. And that gives me a defense that you need to beat.

Janine (overlapping): Yeah, I was thinking that, like, the—you know, those things are very different, but also in terms of stats—like, crocodiles can be fast. Crocodiles can—

Austin (overlapping): Yes.

Janine: —make swift attacks...

Austin: Mhm.

Janine: Ostriches can do both those things.

Austin: It's true. Alright. I have a number in my head. Which means you can start to draw cards. Your Charisma is two. Your Insight adds one to that, so it's a three. You get to draw three cards here. That's a ten clubs. Do you wanna keep the ten of clubs? As a reminder, the ones that you...the colors [read: suits] that truly super matter are clubs and spades. A club is that it's—even if you succeed, there's a complication. If it is a success—or, if it's a spade, then it gives you, like, the bonus. So ten of clubs. Keeping it or are you drawing again?

Janine: I'm gonna draw again.

Austin: Okay.

Art (overlapping): Ooh...

Janine: What?

Art: Ten is so high!

Janine: But it's a club...

Art: But there's so many lower numbers.

Janine (overlapping): It's also not really, like, *that high*, right? Isn't nine like average or something.

Art: I thought eight was average.

Austin: Eight is—eight is average. Ten is challenging. Queen is hard. Ace is incredible.

Janine: There's a gloaming! [**Janine**, **Austin**, and **Art** chuckle] I truly don't know what that means in this context. I only know it in—in the context of that campfire song. But it sounds very bad.

[**Ali** laughs in the background]

Art: Hey, how you doin'. Al Capone's ghost here. [**Austin** laughs] You do what you want.

[**Janine** laughs] I'm just saying.

Austin: [Laugh] Which campfire song is this?

Janine: It's (half-hearted sing-song) "In the gloaming, in the gloaming, come sing in—fire—come sing and be merry. Fire is burning, fire is burning, draw nearer, draw nearer, in the gloaming—" that one.

[TIMESTAMP 00:42:54]

Austin: Eight of hearts. You gonna keep it—

Janine (overlapping): Like around...

Austin (overlapping): —or you gonna draw again?

Janine: [Sigh] I should've—I'm gonna regret not setting it—standing at that ten, huh? [Sigh] That's a—well, great. Yeah, perfect.

Austin (overlapping): That's a (laughing) nine of clubs! Is your third card here. Do you wanna spend any Moxie?

Janine: Yeah...

Austin: Okay. You can spend a Moxie, as a reminder, because before we actually—before you do it, I wanna make sure that you spend it in the best possible way—to do some stuff! Let's find out what. Let's see that list again. Moxie...boom. You can spend one to increase your card count by one, you can spend one to...uh...buh-buh-buh-buh-buh—mm, in this situation, it looks like that is gonna be—I mean, you could spend one to shape the narrative and just make this happen. Though you've already started this action check so at that point it's like, you know, we should just roll that out. So yeah, I think the thing you could really do here is—is just get that extra card.

Janine: Wait, why would anyone—if you could just spend a Moxie to get the thing you want...

Austin (overlapping): Yeah, so you're not spending it—you're not spending it to get a success. You're spending it to shape the narrative—(reading) "modify the GM's description of the scene or situation in a *minor* way, provided the GM approves. For example, you might find a needed piece of gear on site, or gain—"

Janine (overlapping): Oh...

Austin: "—unexpected assistance from an NPC you know." Which is, like, really what it would be, would be, like, in the middle of a fight, being like "I'm gonna spend a Moxie to have a bird show up." [Laugh]

Janine: Yeah, right.

Austin: You know. Or like, "Oh, can I spend a Moxie to go quickly, like, recruit a bird?" [Laugh] Anyway—but I do think that doing the card will give you a better outcome. Or, I mean, I don't know what the card is gonna say. But I think succeeding at this check would give you a better outcome than just spending one for "shape a narrative."

Janine: Yeah, I'll do—I haven't been earning any Moxie through this.

Austin: You gotta do your thing, right? What's your...

Janine: My thing is—the problem is my thing is kind of silly.

Austin: Uh-huh.

[Timestamp 00:45:00]

Janine: It's like (reading) "Gain Moxie when you make your way through a significant encounter and you do everything right." What does that mean? [**Austin** chuckles quietly] What does "doing everything right" mean? [Laugh]

Austin: You tell me, Chanti. Also, you do also get it when you manage to do your virtue, or when your vice gets you into trouble.

Ali: Um, what did you do in the last scene? Just make the argument for it. That's what I did.

Austin: See? This is what play—this is how you gotta play these games.

[**Ali** laughs]

Janine: I talked us out of running into a police station.

Ali: That's right.

Janine: That's doing some—

Austin (overlapping): Do everything right...

Janine (overlapping): —that's—I did it right.

[**Ali** laughs]

Austin: You can get a Moxie! Listen, [**Janine** and **Ali** laugh] I'm not holding onto these Moxies like with an iron—

Janine (overlapping): It just feels like everyone else has gotten a Moxie and I'm just sitting here with a dwindling little pool of Moxie.

[**Austin** laughs quietly]

Austin: Anyway, spend your fucking Moxie. [Laugh]

Janine: Yeah, yeah. [Pause] Okay. Fuck off!

[**Ali** laughs]

Austin: That's not a good roll. That's not a good—that's a three of hearts.

Janine: Ugh. Did all the cards we drew last time get shuffled back in, or are they still...

Austin (overlapping): Yes, I shuffled all of them back in—

Janine (overlapping): Oh, well that seems unfair.

Austin (overlapping): —I shuffled them. What? That's the *game*? [**Janine** laughs] You shuffle them at the (laughing) end of every scene!

Janine: Oh, okay. Okay.

Austin: Um, that's a three of hearts. This just does not go the way you want—

Janine (overlapping): No...

Austin: —and I *think* it's because of the Gloaming...[laugh]

Janine: (Laughing) Oh my god...

[**Art** laughs loudly]

[**Janine** laughs]

Austin: What?

Janine: (Laughing) It does—I don't—

Art (overlapping): No, I just think there's a punchiness to our...*post* lockdown...

[**Ali** and **Janine** laugh]

Austin: Recordings? Yeah.

Art: ...recordings. And I'm just—I like it. I'm having a good time.

[**Janine** and **Ali** continue laughing in the background]

Austin: Me too. Listen, we gotta—we *gotta* in these difficult times. You know, I think maybe you should make a Shade (laughing) Check.

Janine: What?

Austin: You know? A Shade check?

Janine: I don't know what that is.

Austin (Reading) "A Shade Check is a special kind of Reaction Check that you make when your character risks falling to corruption from the Gloam and its denizens."

Janine: Uh...

Austin (Continues reading) “The GM will tell you if you need to make a Shade Check. (Laughing) If you commit an act of *evil* while in a Gloaming, make a Resilience/Willpower check.” It’s alright, you didn’t do that. You didn’t make a—you didn’t make anything evil here. But, I do think that this is a Reaction Check for, uh...you know, this could go well for you. I’ll be honest. I’ll be honest! This could go well for you! Um, give me a Reaction Check that is Charisma—one second, let me look up how this fucking works. And also let me see if you have things. Uh...buh-buh-buh-buh-buh-buh...Charisma Insight. This is the same thing you just rolled, basically. You’re bargaining with spirits without knowing that’s what you’re doing. [Laugh]

Janine: (Unenthusiastic) Oh, cool...

Austin: Which is—which is, you know, it’s happening. So as Charisma—a Reaction Check is different than a regular, like, Check. A Reaction Check, I *think*, is when you just draw a single card and then you add to it. (Reading) “When you need to make a Reaction Check, the GM will tell you which Trait and Skill to apply. Flip one card...um, and one card only. Add your score in the appropriate Trait—” In this case, two from Charisma plus one from Insight—(continues reading) “to the card. Add a plus one if you have an—” Yeah, we did that already. Buh-buh-buh-buh-buh. Okay. So, yeah! Give me that—this could actually be *extremely* funny, depending on how you draw.

Janine: Got a nine, plus three, so that’s twelve.

Austin (overlapping): Plus—plus three. So, that’s twelve. Okay.

Art: Or a queen...

Austin (overlapping): (Quietly) Let’s see here...[pause] right, a queen. Thank you. Listen, I appreciate the...thing here. Um...alright. So.

Janine: Is there any outcome from this—

Austin (overlapping): You...

Janine (overlapping): —where I get cool ghost powers that aren’t evil?

Austin (overlapping): You are now Touched.

Janine: Okay. [Laugh]

Austin: Your character can use Call Upon the Gloam (laughing) *power*.

Janine: (Laughing) Sick.

Austin: Uh, let’s find out what the fuck that is! [**Art** and **Austin** laugh] (Enthusiastically) You can play games like this! You’re just—you can do it! It’s allowed! What you don’t wanna do is have this happen multiple times. Alright, Call Upon The Gloam is a power. That says (reading) “You summon the power of the Gloam to aid you in your endeavor.” That’s all it says. That’s not all it says. (Muffled) I’m lying.

Janine: (Emphatically) What the *fuck*!

Austin: I'm lying. I'm lying. I'm lying. (Reading) "Free action. Instantaneous. You gain one additional card flip during a Trait check or Power check. You *must* use the result of this additional flip. Once you use this Power, you cannot spend Moxie to aid your Check in any way this turn. If you succeed in this Check, you succeed per the normal rules, but you also remove that card from your deck *permanently*. If you fail this Check, you do not lose this card from your deck. You can call upon the Gloam a number of times per game session equal to your Shade Track Rank—" which is one. (Continues reading) "However, you can only do it once—so you can—for the rest of this game, you can just draw an extra card, and if you succeed with it, you delete it. And that's because you're drawing on what, in this setting, is tied to the darkness of the 1940s and 50s? But in our setting, is going to be tied to the general weird malaise of Blough City. Plus the Tunnel Project and some other shit. You know? I posted it in our group chat, so. So yeah, here—the thing that happens is you don't manage to woo over these birds. The birds are...uh...woo over is the wrong word. You don't manage to convince them to come fight with you because they don't want to escape. They are, like, corrupting this place. Or are part of the corruption of this place, and have begun to own it in such a way that they're like "No. If you want to hang out with us, stay here. With us." They don't say "hang out" either 'cause they're weird ghost birds or whatever. They probably say something sick and cool that I can't come up with at three in the afternoon because I'm not in my 'sick and cool' mode until, like, 7 pm.

Janine: It's probably just, like, one of those scenes in Sailor Moon where—

Austin (overlapping): Yes.

Janine: —someone shows up to, like, an area and they're like, "You all have to—gotta get out here!" And then everyone turns around and their eyes are all red and glowy.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah. And they're like "No, stay with us!"

Janine (overlapping): "Hey, do you have floppy disk?"

Austin: [Laugh] Exactly! (Cartoonishly evil voice) "Play this computer game! It's not *evil*. [**Janine** laughs quietly] This is the first time I've felt good about myself! I'm a Sailor Moon victim."

[Everyone chuckles]

Janine: (Laughing) Okay...

Austin (overlapping): (Laughing) I liked Sailor Moon! This is not a—this is not a *judgement* of Sailor Moon. Anyway. But you manage to pull away, and with it, you take some of whatever the darkness is brewing in Blough City. And recall and shuffle your cards. [Laugh] Um...meanwhile. At the speakeasy. Y'all been napping. [Laugh]

Art: No, we've been sitting! Still!

Ali (overlapping): Yeah.

Austin (Laughing) Sorry. Apologies.

Ali: Mhm.

Austin: Are you—are there, like, things popping off in the speakeasy? Is there like a live performance tonight? Caitlin, paint me a little bit of a picture of what, like, hanging-out recovery time looks like.

Ali: Yeah, I think, you know...it's a vibe. [Laugh] Um...I—it's weird because I don't feel like—I feel like people's reactions to...what's happening in the city either means that it's less busy or more busy?

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: When there's this sense of like, "Oh, the Myst crew is out..." There are these unanswered questions...it's probably more, like, people just coming in just to, like, have a place to be for the night. Um...

Austin: Yeah...yeah. It's way less just like hot boppin'—like, hanging out and trying to find a hookup for the night and way more just, like, "please pour me another. [Chuckle] I am scared."

Ali (overlapping): Right, yeah. Right. "I don't want to be on the streets tonight. I'm gonna wait for—" yeah.

Austin (overlapping): So then maybe the—sorry, go ahead.

Ali: Well, I was just gonna say, it's a situation where, like, you're waiting for someone to pick you up so you're not...

Austin: Right.

Ali: ...you know. It's that sort of...

Austin (overlapping): Right.

Ali: ...organized groups of people going out together so they're not arrested. Um...

Austin: Yeah. [Ali laughs] I like this. I like this. So, I think this is probably, like, a laid back vibe in terms of who's playing music. Maybe there's someone at a piano. There's not, like—it's not, again like (laughing) dance music playing. It's way more just like that background smooth—not smooth jazz—and cool jazz, I guess, technically hasn't been invented yet, but that's what's playing.

Ali: [Laugh] There's probably, like, a lounge singer?

Austin: Yeah, sure! Yes.

Ali (overlapping): You know, you still commission your people. You still pay your servers.

Austin: Yeah...

Ali: Um, you know...

Art: [Laugh] At least in fictional worlds...

[**Ali** and **Austin** laugh]

Ali: Uh-huh! [Laugh]

Austin: Yeah.

Art: If you have it—

Ali (overlapping): I think—

Art (overlapping): —just go to a place near you and give them money.

[**Ali** laughs]

Austin: Yes.

Ali: I think Caitlin has been tending the bar most of the night. Um...I think that counts as relaxing...

Austin: Yeah, agreed. [**Ali** laughs] I think you've relaxed, I think...uh, Chanti, you're back. You come back. No birds attached. What's the—what's the (laughing) Gloaming look like? How can people tell you've been touched by *The Shade*?

Janine: Um...is it a—mmm....I'm...my issue here is that I don't wanna—I wanna give a *cool* answer, but I'm worried the cool answer is a thing that will make people terrified and cause a lot of (laughing) problems...

Austin: Sometimes that's true about all cool things.

[**Art** laughs, **Janine** chuckles]

Janine: That's not how I play games, (laughing) Austin, that's not—I don't know what to tell you. Um...

Austin: What's the—what's the premise? What's the idea you have?

Janine: Um...I don't know—I want something that's, like, cool but practical. And also not, like—[sigh] you know, if I say she walks in and she's covered with like, fucking wispy ghost fire or whatever the fuck, and everyone's just like "Hey, what happened?"

Austin: Uh-huh.

Janine: And then that becomes a whole, like, "What?" That's just a whole...issue? Um...which wouldn't be good right now. We have other things to focus on. Uh...

Austin: It can be light—it can be more restrained than that.

Janine: Yeah...

Austin: It can be like a subdued thing. It doesn't have to be a big dramatic thing.

Janine: Mmm....

Austin: It can get—it can be something that you're, like, priming to get more dramatic when you use this Ability. You know? Just, like, maybe the wispy ghosts only show up when you actually use the Ability, instead of...all the time? But, like...

Janine: I'm gonna give an answer that's incredibly cheesy.

Austin: Uh-huh.

Janine: But it's cheesy in the way that, like, happens when you grow up on '80s and '90s cartoons. I think that Chanti's outfit that she was wearing, um...has—I forget the original color, but I wanna say it was a little gold and stuff like that. Very gold. I think now it is that sort of oil-slick, like, black with the iridescent purple and green stuff?

Austin: Ooh, sure.

Janine: That shifts in the light and it's a thing of, like, did you change? Or...

Austin (overlapping): Right.

Janine: ...did you just change clothes into some sort of—'cause she has a bunch of outfits anyway, so...[laugh]

Austin (overlapping): Mmh.

Janine: Maybe she just changed! I don't know. Um...

Austin: Yeah, that works.

Janine: Very much the moment of, like, when the evil twin walks in and everyone's like "Wow, that hair dye looks good on you!"

[**Austin**, **Art**, and **Ali** laugh]

Austin: Yeah. Good. Uhm, is there any conversation here? Or should I move forward?

Art: I don't know how you really engage with someone about this. [**Austin** chuckles quietly] "Hey, you friends with a bunch of ghosts now?" I mean, like, that doesn't sound—

[**Austin** and **Janine** laugh]

Austin: Doesn't *sound* like you. I just—you know.

Art: "Yeah you're looking—you're looking ghost-y. A little..."

Janine (overlapping): “That’s a nice outfit. Really Gloamed-out. That’s a thing people say here for some reason. [**Ali** laughs in the background] I don’t really understand *why*, but...”

[**Austin** laughs quietly]

Art: “Lotta—lotta ghostin’...lotta ghostin’...have you not been calling people back because you look...like you’re ghost—a ghost.”

[**Austin** laughs pityingly]

Austin: *Great*. (Laughing) Good talk! [Deep inhale] Um, alright. So, things are winding down. You know, people are leaving, and...I think—how do people get into the speakeasy again?

Ali: They...um...

Austin (overlapping): Is it an elevator?

Ali: They take an elevator to a certain floor, walk to the—

Austin (overlapping): Right.

Ali: —other end of the floor to a different elevator, and then...

Austin: Take that different elevator down...

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: ...which pops them out somewhere on this map. I’m looking at this map and I’m realizing I don’t see a way into this. Oh, I see, it’s *this*—the way in is this fake phone booth on this map. We’ll call that the second elevator, if that makes sense.

Ali: Oh, perfect. Yeah.

Austin: You see what I’m talking about?

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Alright, so...uh...I think everyone’s left...you’re doing, like, your final sweeps or whatever. Like, literally, you’re sweeping up. [Chuckle] Not like (laughing) you’re on patrol. Um, and...uh...the...elevator noise kicks in. As if someone’s coming down the elevator. I think, you know, there’s probably a couple of NPCs around. There’s probably, like, the piano player, like, having one last drink at the bar. There’s probably, like, another bartender or something...I think that that’s—that’s probably it, right? Um, but you don’t expect anyone to be coming in the elevator right now. What do you do?

Ali (overlapping): Yeah, that’s not good. Um...wha...huh?

Art: Sort of, like...I don’t know. I don’t know what the security measures are. So I’m like “we should do....”

Austin (overlapping): Yeah, me either.

[**Art** continues vocalizing out of uncertainty, **Austin** chuckles]

Ali: Um, well there's like...there's like an elevator attendant, right? Is it old enough that...the assumption is that they got past that person and are now here, so we're fucked anyway?

Austin (overlapping): That would be the assumption.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Well...I mean, maybe it's the elevator attendant, right? But you wouldn't expect—

Ali (overlapping): Right.

Austin: —the elevator attendant to be coming down right now, I guess is the thing. Right?

Ali: Okay, sure. Yeah.

Austin: I'm basically being like "Your spider sense is tingling. Some shit is about to go down."

Ali (overlapping): Right, right, right. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: You know—you know enough, you know?

Ali: Sure. Yeah. Um...I probably have a gun (laughing) under...

Austin (Surprised) Oh. Okay!

Ali: ...my bar, right? And I'm a superhero? And fucking....let's—it's gonna happen. [Laugh]

Austin: So that's—yeah. That is where you're at. You're at "It's gonna happen."

Ali: I can't—I can't, um, lock the door to the elevator prior—I guess I can, 'cause I'm...[laugh] portal superhero, so I can literally do that. But, this person....

Art (overlapping): Is there a bouncer?

Austin: There—yeah! Well, I think the bouncer is probably the person who runs that second elevator, right?

Ali (overlapping): Yeah. There's—yeah—

Austin (overlapping): They just, like, straight up—

Ali (overlapping): —the elevator attendant. Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Art: Alright, so there's not an exterior—*external* bouncer?

Ali: Well, I was, like, that was me working through that there wouldn't be.

Austin: Right.

[Timestamp 01:00:00]

Ali: ‘Cause honestly I would love to be able to (laughing) say out loud, like “Yeah, she hires someone to watch the door.” But like, there’s already a system in place for that. And it’s having an elevator attendant. [Laugh]

Art: Sure, I’m saying do you want me—

Austin (overlapping): Right.

Art: —to go over and stand by the door?

Ali: Sure! Yeah!

[**Austin** laughs]

Art: Yeah. Great.

[**Ali** chuckles]

Austin: You should have control of your stuff now, I think? Can you move these tiles around?

Ali: Maybe I do, like a—like, a three...

Art (overlapping): And there’s the door?

Ali (overlapping): ...like a very specific three-knock on the door—the wall that’s like...um...the wall that Elana’s on the other side of. You know? Like a bang-bang-bang...

Austin: Like a “Hey!”

Ali: ...“please come out here?” [Laugh]

Austin: Right. Sure!

[Pause]

Art: So you want me where?

Austin (overlapping): Elana, do you—[Laugh]

Ali: Huh?

Art: You want me where? *Here?*

Ali: Yeah, just...yes.

Art: Where’s the front?

Ali: Um...

Austin: The fro—wait, what do you mean the front? You mean, like, the...

Art: Where's the elevator opening?

Ali: I'm assuming...

Austin (overlapping): It's the southeast. It's where, uh—it's this, like—

Art: So, like *this* would be a good spot.

Ali: Yes.

Austin: Sure.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: I'm adding other NPCs here. Here is a lounge singer. Here is a piano player. Who is getting a drink. Lounge singer is, like, in the back somewhere, probably. Like, maybe in the bathroom, let's say. And then this is that—this wolf lady, who's *sick*, is your bouncer. I'm reading her as a wolf lady. I think she's a wolf lady. So she should be in the elevator. Anyway! And then, Chanti, where are you at in this speakeasy?

Janine: Um...

Austin: To paint the picture for people at home, there's like—the elevator door would open up, and immediately across from it you see a long bar where Caitlin is set up as a bartender. That—behind the bar has, like, a little back room area, obviously, where there's like a little business table...desk. And then some kegs and stuff. Then there's kind of a big floor where there's tables to sit and drink at. There is a kind of piano and a microphone up on a stage. And there's like a back room. There's two back rooms. One—and they're off to the west, basically. One to the—one seems like a big card room or a conference room, maybe? It's kind of like a conference room. The other is like a smoking lounge with, like, plush red chairs. And both of those are off to the west. That's the kind of basic—also there's some bathrooms off to the side, also. Don't worry about it...

Janine: Are there any windows, or is this, like, underground?

Austin (overlapping): You're in the basement.

Janine (overlapping): Shit. Okay. Right.

Austin (overlapping): Yeah. You're—you're under the ground.

Janine: Or, like, (laughing) half windows?

Austin: Caitlin?

Janine: It's fine. It's—[laugh]

Austin: Probably not. I think, like, that's (laughing) probably a bad hidden situation—

Janine (overlapping): Mm-hmm.

Austin: —if you could just peak in a little window on the floor and be like “There are people (laughing) drinkin’ down there!”

Ali: [Laugh] Yeah...

[**Janine** laughs]

Janine: You could paper over...

Ali: Also, hotel windows are so weird ‘cause it’s like...I don’t think you could open them even if...it was one of those sort of conference rooms, right?

Janine: Mmm...

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Janine: I feel like I’m fine where I am. I don’t know. [Laugh] I’m trying to think of, like, a better...

Austin (overlapping): Just sitting in this—yeah, that’s fine. You don’t have to be...

Janine (overlapping): ...place to be, and that seems fine.

Austin: Uhm. So! You hear the elevator kind of slide all the way into place. And you see the wolf—uh, the wolf lady, who is the elevator operator slash...bouncer, is knocked out cold on the ground. And standing above her are three cops. Three of the cops, in fact, that had chased you around at the mansion—at Gale Green’s mansion. There is the big dude, Herbert Lock, aka Flagstone, who was the one who had some sort of rock powers going on. And then there are two just, like, other Myst PD officers with him. Porter and Ale. [**Janine** chuckles] And they are...[**Art** snorts] they are just—they’re with—they’re just, like, all three together. They don’t have guns out or anything. They have clearly knocked out your car—your bouncer, which is no good. Or your first bouncer. I guess Elana, now, you’re in the mix. Uh...and they say, um...do they know your name? They don’t know your name. Elana. Right?

Art: Well I’m hoping that they don’t see me here.

Austin (overlapping): In front of the elevator—

Art (overlapping): That they’re coming out here?

Austin: Oh, I see. You’re seeing that they’re gonna come out through here one at a time. I was thinking—

Art (overlapping): Yeah, I thought this was a door...here? I didn’t know the whole thing was door.

Austin: I see. Yeah. We can do that. That’s fine. [Stammering]

Art: I mean I can also just be here, you know?

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Let's—do that. I think the whole thing is a door, probably.

Art (overlapping): Okay.

Austin: If it's an elevator. I don't think the elevator (laughing) has, like, a little door you open.

Art: Well, I mean old elevators are kind of dimmed, right?

Austin (overlapping): Though maybe it's a different time. That's possible, yeah. I was imagining this as like a freight elevator grate—

Art: Mmm...

Austin: —but that's on me for not communicating that. Regardless, yeah, I think this cop walks out. This cop walks out. Uh, and the other cop walks, like, forward a little but between the two of them. Are you gonna act before they can do anything?

Art: Yeah, I would like to hit this one as hard as I can!

Austin: [Laugh] Okay!

Janine: Bigsby?

Austin: What?

Janine: He looks like Bigsby from *Wolf of*—from *Wolf Among Us*.

Austin (overlapping): He does look like Bigsby from *Wolf Among Us*. That's true. His name is Herbert, actually...

Art (overlapping): Oh, and I should—my Hits are back, 'cause we've been...

Austin: Yes. Yo got your Hits back. A hundred percent. Alright. This is a Brawl Check, right?

Art: Uh...

Austin: This Pusher roll...

Art (overlapping): I'll use Strength and Fisticuffs?

Austin: That sounds right. Give me a second to see if you get a Bonus because of, like, surprise. I think you get Advantage here. Which means that you get an extra Check—an extra card Check—or, an extra card in your Check, basically.

Art: Great, I would like to sac—it's one Sacrifice for a Boost, or two Sacrifice for a Boost?

Austin: One Sacrifice for a Boost, I believe.

Art (overlapping): Alright, i would like to take the Push Boost, and I'm attempting to just kind of, like, bowling pin these three.

Austin: Okay!

Art: I wanna hit this guy and push him—and push him! Push him!

Austin: Tell me what Push Boost says.

Art: Aw...(mumbling) you know I don't know that...

[**Janine** and **Art** chuckle]

Austin (Quietly) I think that I got it. (Reading) “If you—(laughing) if you hit the target—” wait no, sorry, that's Concussive Beam. I bet you it's the exact same. (Continues reading) “—you push it. (Laughing) Ten—ten feet.”

Art: You push it real good.

Austin (overlapping): Super strength, right?

Art: Push Boost—you push it ten feet. Yeah. So...

Austin: Mm-hmm! Under that, and that'll change your Damage a little bit based on how this goes.

Art: So it's—my Strength is a four...

Austin: Yes.

Art: ...plus one for Fisticuffs, minus one for Boost, plus one—so it's five cards?

Austin: Wait.

Art: Plus one for surprise...

Austin: Yes.

Art: Minus one for the Boost.

Austin: Yes, so that cancels.

Art (overlapping): Four for Strength, one for Fisticuffs. So five cards.

Austin (overlapping): Yes. Five cards.

Art: And now my cards are orange.

Austin (overlapping): Wait, wait, wait. Is that true? Is that true? Does it add—what's the thing that adds just to the number. That's Helping. That's Helping. Right?

Art: Right.

Austin: Helping adds to the number, but having the actual Skill adds to the cards.

Art: Oh, okay.

Austin: Yes. I think that that's right? I'm think—I'm saying I think that that's right.

Art: Um...I'll just look up Skills real quick.

Austin (Reading) "Add one to that Trait Check—" yeah, you're good.

Art: Okay. So five cards.

Austin: Yup.

Art: I'm done!

Austin: [Laugh] And drew—

Art: All I needed was one! [Laugh]

Austin: What'd you get? An *ace of diamonds*! You're done. You're keeping it.

Art: Or, would Damage—oh, it's Damage by suit though, right?

Austin: Damage is by...is your Damage by suit, or is—it's not by color for punching?

Art: Well, by color, but red's the bad color, right?

Austin: Red is the bad color, yeah.

Art: I don't know, I'm not—I'm gonna keep it. I'm—what am I? Uh, I guess I have four cards...[**Austin** chuckles] It just—it—ugh, letting go of an ace feels bad, you know?

Austin: It does. It does feel bad.

Art (overlapping): Especially because I got a bad joker in there.

Austin: You got a bad joker.

Art: I'm gonna keep the ace.

Austin: Alright. I'm gonna give you bonus Damage here just from having—doing the Push Damage. You kind of bowl all three of them over. Or you—you hit the first guy, and he stumbles back into them, and the thing that happens is he—as he starts to move backwards...like, begins to—actually I don't know if he has to begin to do this. This is just a thing that he has. Uh...*god*. This is wild. Okay. So he—his body begins to kind of—his *skin* begins to harden up into cement. And so he ends up, like, punching down as you knock him backwards and stabling him—he still takes Damage from this. But that actually hits them (laughing) behind him even harder, and you've done good Damage to both of them. Because his, like—the weight of his cement body has been thrown into them. But he has not lost his footing in the way that you would think he might have. And I think he, like, pushes himself back up and he says with his loudest cop voice—

[as Officer Herbert Lock]: I'm here to issue a warrant for the arrest of Harry Houdini!

Austin: And then swings at you.

Art: Wait, what?

[Ali laughs]

Austin: He swings his fist at you.

Art: Um, okay.

Austin: Actually we should—we should—let's finish this and then go into initiative. Um...so, what is your Body?

Art: Um...believe it's "bangin' mama, but where your brains at?" Um, nine.

[Austin laughs]

Austin: Great. Good. Alright, he is going to try to hit you. He does not have Fisticuffs, which is good for you. He does have Athletics, but I'm not gonna say that that counts here. So this is a straight Strength Check for him. [Pause] That's a four of spades. No. That's a queen of hearts. Yes. And that is going to do—let's see. Color Damage plus one, so again he fires at you and does two Damage to you, Elana.

Art: Is this—this is Physical or Force?

Austin: This is Force. Yeah, totally.

Art: So I have minus one.

Austin: From an Ability?

Art: From Kinetic Absorption.

Austin: Okay. Cool. This is gonna be very funny. Because of the way your Abilities work together. Alright, so—

Art: So that makes it one.

Austin: Yes, so you take one here and get pushed back a little bit. And I think at this point, he kind of, like, steps out into the room a little bit. The two other cops kind of try to issue their way into the room. Getting their footing. The piano player (laughing) hides behind the bar, and the singer locks the door to the bathroom. And now we're going into Initiative. We're going into round order, which means we need to...roll for Initiative, or whatever it's called in this stupid system. Alright. So, make an Agility/Sense Reaction Check. So everyone draws a card, and your Initiative is going to be the, um, the number of the card plus your Agility score, plus one if you have Sense. I'm gonna do two different draws. I'm gonna do one for Flagstone and then

one for the cops, if that's okay. I'm gonna do Herbert first—Flagstone first. That's a king, plus his Agility is two. So that's ace plus one. Does not have Sense, so he's at ace plus one.

Ali: I just got a nine of diamonds?

Austin: Okay. What is your Agility score?

Ali: My Agility score is two.

Austin: So that is a jack. Do you have Sense?

Ali: Yes.

Austin: As a skill? So that's uh, a queen. You're at queen.

Ali: Perfect.

Austin: Was that...Janine? Who's six is that.

Janine: Yes. Sorry, I was muted. I got a six.

Austin: Oh, okay. You have—what is your Agility? And do you have Sense? So eight. And I need one from you. Champ.

Art: Seven.

Austin: Seven. Plus Agility? [Pause] And also do you have Sense?

Art: I do not have Sense. My Agility is two.

Austin: So nine.

Art: (Quietly) Nine.

Austin: Okay! And then I need to do one more for the cops, who have three Agility. Which is more (laughing) than this super cop I made. Jesus Christ. Okay. They do not—oh, they do have Sense. Wow, they—they're alright. And they rolled [laugh] a *queen*. A queen plus one, two, three. Is—that's an ace plus two, right? And then, they also have Sense. So they go first. These rando cops are killing it over there. They're both hurt real bad. So the order is: cops, Flagstone, Verge, Champ, Grouse. The cops, at this point, begin to draw their weapons, and are laying down a sort of covering fire? And I think the thing that's gonna happen here is that you would need to make—you would have to—whenever you do anything, you're going to get into a situation where—by you, actually I mean Caitlin and Chanti, who are both across the room in this situation, are going to need to make a Reaction Check in order to close the distance with them. If you try to do it by moving across physical space. And, like, charging at them or whatever. Or else you'll get caught, right? And I wanna say covering fire—they're not just, like, blasting the place up. But they're like—they're doing the thing that's actually a lot scarier, which is they are—each time that they pull the trigger, it's like a very individual act. It's not like the fun gangster movie thing of just, like, spraying bullets. It's like BOOM. BOOM. BOOM. And like,

things are breaking around you, and it's actually even less rhythmic than I just said. It's kind of staccato and overlapping in a really kind of scary way. So that is what they are doing with their action. They are not actually trying to hit you so much as take control of the situation with overwhelming force. And at this point, Flagstone is going to try to spear Elana. [Art snorts] So here it comes again!

Art: Love it.

Austin: This time—this time, Flagstone is going to use—ooh, you know what? That's not what's gonna happen. Flagstone—I (laughing) remembered what Flagstone does. He is...going to—let's see what the map looks like here. Um...I need to measure something. Now we're fucking playing. Now we're fucking playing! Real—real games. [Laugh] Alright, so...yeah, that totally works. Uh, let's see how this goes! [Laugh] Let's see how this—(laughing) how this move works! What do I roll for this Power? That I'm glad we're gonna get to see. Um, Major Power, Free Action...I think that *this*—okay, it's an Agility Ranged Weapons Check. What is your...your Body again?

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Art: Body is nine.

Austin: Alright! His...do-do-do—Agility is...two. Does not have Ranged Weapon, so he only has two cards here. And he is only gonna get one chance at this, because he only has—because he's using a Boost. And you'll see what that is in a moment. Oooh, a four. So—oop, I moved everybody by mistake. Whoops. Uh, with a four, he misses but what happens is—and you tell me how you get away from this—he basically fires off—like, he reaches out his hand, and shoots out uh...some cement. Some, like, liquid, hard, quick-drying cement. And what he is using is his Power “Goo Generation.” [Laugh] Uh, and [Laugh] is firing out a sticky, like—it would've locked you in place had you gotten caught by this. And instead it slams into the, uhm, the table and then, like, kind of forms a web between the table and the wall. Like the corner of the elevator here. I'm gonna draw some cement goo down. You tell me where you're going to avoid that.

Art: Um...so this is where the goo ends up, and he starts here?

Austin: Yes, totally.

Art: Um...I think it's just like *here*, right? I think it's just like diving, right? Yeah.

Austin (overlapping): Yeah. Yeah. That makes sense. Um, alright, so that is both of their turns. Verge, you're up as these cops start to move in. \

Ali: Yeah, um...I kind of don't wanna move from where I am 'cause I'm under good cover?

Austin: Yeah, totally.

Ali: But, I...[siren goes off in the background] I wonder if I could put...

Austin (overlapping): (Referencing the siren) That's the rest of the Myst PD coming right now.

Ali: [Laugh] Um, actually, how many...do the other patrons feel at risk here, in like a major way?

Austin: The—the...this dude does. I mean, yes, right? One of them is in the bathroom. She's locked herself in the bathroom—that's the lounge singer. And these are both like employees, actually, right? They're not even just patrons.

Ali: Right, yeah.

Austin (overlapping): And then the piano player is...I think the piano player is, like, looking over to you for signal, you know? Like—

Ali: Sure. Because the thing that I'd like to do, actually, is put up, like, a force field?

Austin (overlapping): Oh, okay.

Ali (overlapping): So at least I can create, like, a safe zone...

Austin: Sure.

Ali: ...in front of a door that they can go into or something, right?

Austin: Yeah. That makes sense.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Do you wanna, like, direct them somewhere and...[sigh] force-field them in? Or—or, I think this dude is a lot easier for you to force-field in. She is locked in the bathroom. I'm gonna say, like, that is probably a, all said, safe-ish place to—

Ali (overlapping): Yeah, she's probably good there.

Austin (overlapping): —I mean, it's not 'cause bullets are firing, but like it's gonna be safe as anywhere else—

Ali: Right.

Austin: —in the sequence, you know?

Ali: Yeah-ye-ye-ye-yeah. But for everybody else, like, if I could...I guess I could put one up...um...like, if there's multiple people I would say, like "Go into this room," and then I'll put it in front of the door.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah-yeah-yeah.

Ali: But if it's just this dude, then...

Austin: It's just this one dude. I wanted to get rid of—I wanted to, like, make sure that you basic clientele were out of here by the time this happened.

Ali: Okay, sure-sure-sure. Yeah.

Austin: Partially because I think it just—this is just the clock ticks.

Ali: Right.

Austin: Like, if you had said “We’re gonna go set up this sting immediately,” then we would’ve done that. But the other half of it is just, like, I don’t want to manage **[Ali chuckles]** thirteen different patrons who are all being shot at.

Ali: (Laughing) Okay...

Austin: It’s a very easy for me to end up defaulting to like, “And then one of them gets winged! Which one? I don’t know! There’s thirteen, none of them have names.”

Ali (overlapping): Yeah...fair-fair-fair. Yeah, regardless, I still think that’s my first instinct.

Austin (overlapping): Yes, I like that.

Ali (overlapping): Which is, like, I’m gonna set up this force field. If any of the player characters wanna stand behind it at any point, they can? **[Laugh]** Because it’s—

Austin (overlapping): You wanna mark where on the map it is? Or do you wanna draw it, even?

Ali: Sure...

Austin: If you have that ability?

Ali: Maybe, probably the best way to do this is...it’s a four by four force field here, right?

Austin: It is. Is that what it is? Is that what it says?

Ali: (Reading) “Four by four translucent shimmering plate of force next to you,” but then I can **[sigh]** walk around—I have the Boost to walk around it...

Austin (overlapping): You could, like, move it...yeah. Yeah.

Ali: Okay, so I’m actually gonna put it right here? And it’s gonna kind of be—

Austin (overlapping): I looked away. I looked away. I’m sorry.

Ali: Well, just give me one second...

Austin: Oh, you’re adding it. I see.

Ali: Yeah, it’s gonna be right here. And then it’s gonna be, like, one of those, like, little bar situations where, like, if somebody really needed to get onto the other side of it...you know what I mean? They could go under it.

Austin: Okay. I think I know what you mean.

Ali (overlapping): You know what I mean? Yeah.

Austin: Yeah. Uh-huh. Um...alright. Cool! Um...Champ. Your turn again.

Art: Oof. You know, a bear can't help me.

[**Ali** laughs]

Ali: (Laughing) Sorry...

Art: No, no—it's *good*, it just doesn't help me personally right now. Um, things—things can just exist, you know?

Austin: Things *can* just exist.

Art: I think I wanna keep going toe to toe with Cement Boy.

Austin: Yeah. Uh-huh.

[as Flagstone]: My name is Flagstone! I *earned* it!

[Pause]

Art [as Elana]: For what?

Austin [as Flagstone]: *Class*.

Art [as Elana]: No, I'm not having this conversation.

[**Ali** laughs]

Austin [as Flagstone]: Where'd you earn your name? The *gutter*?

Art [as Elana]: I'm—sure.

[**Austin** laughs, **Art** chuckles]

Austin [as Flagstone]: You're not good at this!

Art [as Elana]: I said—I'm not doing this.

Art: I'm gonna do Damage Boost.

[**Austin** laughs]

Austin: (Muffled) Mm-hmm.

Art: And I'm just gonna go for, like...I think it's just, like, I'm going for a left hook. I'm just trying to put this guy on the ground.

Austin: Mmm. Mm-hmm.

Art: So it's four plus Fisticuffs minus one, so it's four.

Austin: Yes. Correct. So, give me your first. Ace of hearts!

Art: (Laughing) Ace of hearts!

Austin: You're swinging these aces right now! I mean—

Art (overlapping): Alright!

Austin (overlapping): —you're getting them all out of the way now.

Art: I can't—I can't take the diamonds and not take the hearts. I got the Damage Boost. What are we doing here?

Austin: What are you going to do, right? So you, again, swing hard on this. And, *again*, as you hit, the—there is the sense that, like, his hard cement body is just very, very good at taking hits, unfortunately. But the Damage gets through. You, like, literally crack part of his, like—his chest off. You, like, leave, like, a serious mark in the statue that is his chest. But he also—

Art (overlapping): Okay, that's plus two hits of Damage, right yeah?

Austin: Yeah. Yeah—wait, plus two from the Dam—from the Boost, right?

Art: Yeah, for the Boost it's plus two.

Austin: Gotcha. Yup. Even with that, he seems like he's good. He has a *lot* of Hits. That is the thing that being cement does for you. Um...

Art (overlapping): Yeah, I'm—I'm sure.

Austin (overlapping): Now, Grouse—

Art: Good work if you can get it.

Austin: Yeah, totally. Grouse, this is a rough place for you. I don't know how many birds are in here.

Janine: Yeah, that's my problem, right? Again—

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: —this is the problem with—with...

Austin: Bird tele—bird telekinesis. Yeah.

Janine: This is the pro—[laugh] this is the fundamental problem you get when you don't account for a really basic kind of superhero power [**Austin** chuckles quietly] and then it has to get hacked in in a way that limits the—

Austin (overlapping): Well—wait-wait-wait, real quick—

Janine (overlapping): —basic function of those powers...

Art: If there was still bird telekinesis in this game, you would (laughing) still be in a tough situation.

Janine: Yeah, but—I don't know, I just feel like it would—

Austin (overlapping): It would *feel* less bad.

Janine: —there would have been a chance for them to balance it, instead of *us* doing it on the fly—

Austin (overlapping): Yes, I understand.

Janine (overlapping): —just being, like “Let's just take this big Power—”

Austin (overlapping): I suspect—

Janine (overlapping): “—and make it small.”

Austin: —I suspect the thing that would've happened there is you would have gotten more Boosts in the end, because you still were gonna be like “And now I have regular telekinesis. On top of the bird powers that I normally—” Like, you know what I mean?

Janine: Yeah...

Austin: Anyway, the point—what I was gonna say is: are you still wearing that bird in your hat?

Janine: Yeah, but that's, like, a *tiny* bird and there's three cops.

Austin: That's true.

Janine: I have a different idea.

Ali (overlapping): They could be very...

Janine: But—

Ali (overlapping): ...confusing? [Laugh]

Janine: I mean, they'll just shoot it. Or goo—they'll *goo* it, is the thing. The thing that'll happen is that bird's gonna get gooed. And a bird cannot endure a goo-ing.

Ali: Mmm.

Art: It's on my family crest. [Laugh]

[**Austin** and **Janine** laugh]

Janine: “A bird cannot endure” on the top, (laughing) “goo-ing” on the bottom.

Art: [Laugh] Uh-huh. *Really* big letters on “goo-ing.” [**Austin** groans at the joke, **Janine** laughs] I just wish someone had had better (laughing) layout skills.

Austin: (Laughing) That’s the—family name. [**Janine** chuckles] Art Martinez-Goo-ing.

[**Janine** laughs]

Art: Yeah, they messed up—at Ellis Island, they were like “It’s *not* ‘goo-ing.’” And they were like “It’s Goo-ing!”

Austin: [Laugh] “We’re gonna put—”

[**Janine** continues laughing in the background]

Art: “It’s not—” “Can I—” “It’s—it’s not ‘Goo-ing’, you get a—you get into America, but ‘Goo-ing’ stays here!”

[**Austin** and **Janine** laugh]

Art: “Tebbels.”

Austin: (Laughing) “The last people were named ‘Tebbel,’ you’re named ‘Tebbel.’ [Laugh] Keep moving.”

[**Janine** chuckles]

[Pause]

Janine: Um...so...the thing—I wanna—I think I wanna spend a Moxie to, like, what’s the thing? Like, introduce a character or something?

Austin: Yeah, it’s like—it’s like—

Janine (overlapping): What’s one of the options?

Austin: —change the situation, a little bit, basically. Uh..you could introduce an element, right? To the story, basically. What do you wanna do?

Janine: Um [sigh]...so, I want the elevator to go back up, ‘cause someone’s waiting at the top of it.

Austin: Ooh, okay. Wh—who’s waiting.

Janine: Rupert.

Austin: Oh. Yeah! Sure! We haven’t seen Rupert—

Janine: We haven’t.

Austin: —this whole arc, right?

Janine: No!

Austin: So—so, this time, I think—yeah, what we get is just, like—does Rupert show up this round or next—let's say Rupert shows up next round. Right? The elevator—

Janine (overlapping): That's—that's kind of my way to soften this and make it less OP, right?

Austin: Yeah, totally.

Janine: Like, that's my—that's my way to make this feel a bit less...eh...you know.

Austin: Is the shot—the shot is the elevator goes up, and then it goes 'ding!' and—

Janine: Yes.

Austin: —standing in the middle of a hallway on the eighth floor of this hotel, is Rupert. Can you describe Rupert for the audience that may not remember him?

Janine: Rupert—

Art (overlapping): How *dare* you! [**Janine** and **Austin** laugh] If you're listening to this and you don't remember *Rupert*—oh my god...

Janine: What was that made-up bird type—Cock-of-the-mock or something?

[Typing sounds]

Austin: Cock-of-the-rock? Cock-of-the-walk?

Janine: It was like a—

Austin: 'Cause cock-of-the-rock is a real one.

Janine: It was like a—not, but it was like—yeah, but it was like *fake*.

Austin: Yeah, ours was fake.

Janine: It was—yeah...um...don't google the thing I googled. Um. [Laugh]

[**Austin** and **Art** laugh]

Janine: [Laugh] Um...

[**Art** bursts out laughing again, **Janine** and **Austin** continue laughing]

Austin: Learn from our mistakes...

Janine: Mm-hmm. Um, so he's like—he's like red, right? He's like a red, like, medium-sized...very angry bird with, like, a weird head thing?

Austin: I'm gonna read...

Janine: Going back to our old—to the old-timey...

Austin (overlapping): Yeah, to our very first...the very first time he ever showed up, right?

Janine: He's an oyster dipped in marinara sauce.

Austin: Uh...Syliva says (reading) "The Andean cock-of-the-rock..." uh, let's see here...we talked about it being...very cassowary-like. Uh, here we go. What we had said was, um...(reading) "All red, orange, and anger. Sharp-talon cruelty." Is how I described it at some point. So, you know! There you go.

Janine (overlapping): So he looks like that, but he's wearing one of those leashes that starlets used to keep their exotic pets on?

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Janine: There's like a really classic picture of Phillis Gordon with a cheetah, and she's, like, shopping...and she just has this cheetah on this, like—you know, it's a relatively—it's a decent chain, but like, the way she holds it makes it look very dainty.

Austin: Okay.

Janine: There's also this picture I have of this lady that I don't know who has a snake on a leash, which is a weird...move, but okay? Um...so I'm picturing him—

Art (overlapping): Tell me more.

Janine: [Laugh] Um, don't google that. **[Art laughs]** So...[laugh] I'm picturing Rupert basically—Rupert is Rupert, but Rupert, I think, in this context is wearing, like, a little jeweled collar with a chain hanging loose.

Austin: Okay. Great. Uh...alright! So, yeah. Next round, Rupert will be here. Um...

Art: I want, like, the Rupert hype music. But, like, old-timey—

Austin: (Sing-song) Duh-duh-duh-duh-duh—*oh*...[laugh]

Art: —what's ragtime hype music sound like?

Austin: (Laughing) What's—what's—

Janine: What's ragtime hype music for a mean bird (laughing) sound like?

Austin: You don't wanna look this up 'cause it's gonna be someone British who's decided that they're gonna make rap good. **[Ali laughs]** By making it more gentlemanly, or some bullshit. I'll say it! I think chap hop is shitty.

Art: Um, this is the first time I'm hearing that phrase, and...

Janine (overlapping): Is that still around? I thought that was an internet joke.

Austin: This is the first time you're hearing *chap hop*?!

Art: Yeah.

Ali: I've ne—yeah, I've also never heard of this.

Austin: You're *good*. Let me tell you.

[**Janine** laughs]

Ali (overlapping): I'm good, yeah. Closing the tab...

Austin: You're...

Art (overlapping): I—this—yep. Uh-huh.

Austin: Did you click through? Did you look? [Pause] Uh, anyway. We're not—I'm not—yeah, we're just not going—you feel free, at some future point, to google this thing I hate. We can go back—

Janine (overlapping): What's the Chappist subculture? Don't answer that, [**Austin** laughs] but *Chappist*? [**Austin** laughs, **Ali** sighs] Anyway.

Austin: Uh-huh. [**Ali** laughs] Um, we all have jokes. We're all just gonna move on. [**Janine** chuckles] Let's come back around to these cops, and I think one of them...begins to try to crawl under the force field. And the other one steps forward, gun out, and says—

[as unnamed Myst PD cop]: Everyone get on the ground right now!

Austin: And is making a...a directive threat, let's say at you, Chanti. And if you do not do what he says, he's going to make an attack on you.

Janine: I...hmm...I feel like Chanti's bond with Rupert is such that she would [**Austin** chuckles] just play along right now, because she knows...right? Like—

Austin (overlapping): Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm!

Janine: Bird telepathy is one thing, but she's been hanging out with Rupert for a while.

Austin: Yeah, y'all are buds. Y'all are—yeah, it's like a whole thing.

Ali: Yeah, Rupert has sidekick status.

Austin: That's correct.

Janine: Yeah. That was my original concept for Chanti—was that she was Rupert's (laughing) sidekick.

[**Ali**, **Austin**, and **Art** laugh]

Austin: (Laughing) That's true. That was the original—and we were like, "Well..."

Janine (overlapping): Austin talked me out of that, and I *mostly* think that was a good choice, but sometimes I wonder.

[Timestamp 01:30:00]

Austin: Yeah, that's fair. Um...alright! So yeah, you go on the ground. I think this cop feels like "Hey, this is going good. We're doing the right—we're getting it together now." Um, and that is the cop's turn. And now it is Flagstone's turn again. And this time, having seen you use powers, Caitlin, Flagstone is gonna fling some of that cement goo your way. What is your Body score?

Ali: My Body score is...nine.

Austin: Okay. Again, because of using a Boost here, it's—he only gets one card for this. But I'm gonna spend Moxie on it if it goes bad. I still have a bunch of Moxie left, so. That's a six. Ignoring that one, and spending one Moxie! For another six. Again, a blast of this, like, cement goo slams past your shoulder and hits the back wall, completely cementing a bunch of bottles, which break and now they all smell like booze. And you're safe. He's kind of completely missed twice in a row. Let me—um, let me adjust my Moxie. [Quiet laughter in the background] Listen, I didn't say he was good at this, he just can do it.

Ali: Can I—

Art (overlapping): Janine posted a very funny picture.

Austin: Yeah, you're up. What's up?

Ali: Um, hm...hm-hm-hm-hm-hm...I have the Ability to...um...(reading) one time before the beginning of your next turn, when a projectile attack (laughing) hits you, it misses you instead and a small pair of portals redirect the projectile." Is there an opportunity for me to have done that—

Austin: Even though he missed.

Ali: Yeah...

Austin: Sure...

Ali: Sure!

Austin: That's more interesting than not letting you have it. [Ali laughs] I think the book says—rules as written, no. [Laugh]

Ali: Right. Well...in between—[Laugh] in between my last turn and my current turn, I was hit with a projectile—partly hit. So—but, given the, like, time span, I want to be able to, like—

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I gotcha.

Ali (overlapping): —get the full force there, yeah...

Austin: So what, uh—what's that do? Read me the move?

Ali: Oh, uh—(reading) “One time before the beginning of your next turn, when a projectile attack hits you, it misses you instead as a small pair of portals redirect the projectile.”

Austin: Okay. Give me a...give me a Ranged Attack to see if this hits him. Is that what—

Ali: Sure.

Austin: —you're trying to hit him, or you're trying to hit one of the cops? Who are you trying to hit?

Ali: I mean, I would say that he's probably my number one target as the...[sigh] person with the biggest risk here, just by fucking up twice?

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Ali: [Laugh] But it's multiple portals, so if one of these cops got caught up in it, I wouldn't complain...

Austin: I—yeah. I mostly think it's a—this is a—you're doing a Ranged Attack, basically.

Ali: Yeah, okay.

Austin: So, I just need to see who you're—who to compare your thing to. So I think this is an Agility Check, and if you have...if you have, like, Thrown Weapon or Gun Skill or something, you can use that on top of that. But I think this is just, like, a straight-up Agility Check otherwise.

Ali: Okay. So, do I pull—I still pull a card?

Austin: Yeah, you're gonna pull—you're gonna—how—two Agility—

Ali: Okay.

Austin: —so you're gonna do this twice.

Ali: Okay, perfect.

Austin: It's an eight. Do you wanna keep that eight?

Ali: [Sigh] I have the Slight of Hand Skill. Does that—

Austin: Mmm, no. I don't think so. That's—

Ali: No...

Austin: —stealing stuff. I get it. No. [Laugh]

Ali: No. Acrobatics, no?

Austin: No...

Ali: An *eight* of hearts...I only get one more card left...

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Ali: Um...I'm gonna pull one more.

Austin: Alright.

Ali: [Laugh] That's a six.

Austin (overlapping): Six of spades...

Ali (overlapping): What happened to my...

Austin (overlapping): ...unfortunately, no. So, you do redirect that thing. It goes flying, you know, back towards—towards, uh, the dude who sent it. But misses him, and slams into the side of the wall. And he says—

[as Flagstone]: Tricky, tricky!

Austin: Um, and his turn is over. Champ! Back to you. He's now in a weird place because he's, like, behind...you have to kind of, like, get to him if you wanna...or did you get to him again after he already did the—yeah, you did, right? You went back at him. So you're on the other side of this wall. Yeah, you're good.

Art (overlapping): Yeah, yeah, I'm on the other side of the wall, yeah.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Art: And I think I'm just—I'm gonna—I'm gonna hit this guy 'till he falls down.

Austin: Okay.

Art: Do the same thing.

Austin (overlapping): Just gonna go back and forth. What's this—what type of punch you throwing here?

Art: I think I'm gonna try to, like, just—try to like put him out with an uppercut? Just, like—

Austin: Okay.

Art: You know, if it's—if he's all rock, maybe rock on rock like that is gonna hurt, you know?

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Ali: Mmm...

Austin: You could google that one. That's fun. Um...

Art: "Does rock on rock hurt?"

Austin: [Laugh] Ro—[laugh] it's just rock on rock. Uh...ooh a queen of hearts. You keeping?

Art (overlapping): Um, alright!

Austin: Doing all these big cards, but all in red.

Art: All my red big cards are here.

Austin: And again, super—you're using your Boost here again?

Art: Yeah, using the Damage Boost.

Austin (overlapping): So that's three Damage? Right.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: Um...alright! I would say, at this point, he...you catch him with an uppercut. You chip his chin. He says, like—

[as Flagstone]: If you ruin my boyish good looks, (laughing) I'ma be mad!

Austin: [Laugh] And, like, stands his ground. This is—this is—you're chipping—you're literally chipping away at him.

Art: [Sigh] Uh-huh.

Austin: Um...

Art: (Laughing) This sucks.

Austin: Oh, yeah. Uh-huh. What, uh...Janine! Grouse. (Sing-song)
Dun-duh-duh-dun-duh-duh-dun-duh-duh—[laugh]

Janine: [Laugh] Um...I don't know how to handle the scene mechanically.

Austin: I think this is probably still some sort of Power roll, right? Tell me what you wanna *do*, and we'll go from there.

Janine: Um...the thing—I mean, the thing that I want to happen in the movie in my head...

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Janine: ...is the elevator, you know, hits the basement floor.

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: The door opens. Rupert walks out. Like—

Austin: Right.

Janine: —very casually. Rupert walks into the speakeasy. Very casually.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Janine: And then just fucking loses it on that Bigsby-looking guy.

Austin: But the Bigsby—wait. Oh yeah, the cop, you mean.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: Yes-yes-yes-yes-yes. I gotcha. I gotcha.

Janine: Who's, like, engaged with Elana. Just, like, a bird just walks in and just goes at this guy's back.

Austin: Yeah. Uh, one second...

Janine: He's the closest one there. You know...he's—

Austin: Yeah. Totally.

Art: (Laughing) I thought you were gonna call Rupert 'The Closer.'

Janine (overlapping): Got the worst jokes.

[**Janine** chuckles]

Austin: That's very good.

Janine: I do have Rank three in Bird Puppeteering, so...

Austin: [Laugh] So there's two ways we could do this, I think. I think one of them is to just let you do Bird Puppeteering. The other is to let Rupert do the roll...and I think that would be...by looking at Rupert's stats. And Rupert's stats are—would you say Rupert is more of (laughing) a crocodile, an owl, or a wolf? [Laugh]

Janine: He is a wolf.

Austin: Yeah?

Janine: An ostrich is a crocodile, but Rupert is a wolf.

Austin: Okay.

Art: Wait, is a wolf (laughing) better or worse than a crocodile?

Janine: I mean, I'm—

Austin: (Muffled) You don't need to know that.

Janine: —you know, it's not a—it's not just a question of numbers. It's a question of attitude and lifestyle.

Austin: I appreciate that.

Art: Great.

Austin: What we know, though, is that crocodiles—or, that Rupert does not have the Swimmer Ability, allowing him to swim at it's full speed.

Janine: That's true, that's canon. He can't swim.

Austin (overlapping): That's canon. He cannot swim. Um, definitely not a horse, though. We know that much for sure. Uh, alright. Hey! Pack Hunter. (Reading) "The wolf gains advantage on attacks whenever another wolf is attacking the same target." I think that means that Rupert has an advantage here on attacking Flagstone because Elana is part of the pack.

Janine: (Laughing) That fucking icon!

Austin: What's up? What's wrong with the icon?

[Art laughs]

Janine: (Laughing) Nothing. I just looked away, and then it was there.

Austin: And then it's here.

Janine: It's—it's good.

Art (overlapping): I didn't know Rupert was...a cellphone. [Laugh]

[Janine and Austin laugh]

Austin: Um, give me—oh, okay. So. So. Fisticuffs Bite, plus Strength is—so four. You have four dice here. And Rupert has one Moxie. I'm gonna send you Rupert's stats. [Laugh]

Janine: I'm gonna use Rupert's Moxie to make the elevator go up again. [Laugh]

Austin: [Laugh] And get a second cloned Rupert. Rupert found a cousin.

Janine: Who's the real Rupert? That's the—that's the—

Austin: (Laughing) Yeah...

Janine: —that's the conflict for the end.

Austin: Um...alright. So, Rupert is rolling—or not rolling, but again has three in Strength, plus one in Fisticuffs. So that is...four cards you could draw here. I'm gonna make you draw from your deck, and not mine. [Laugh]

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: This NPC. [Pause] That's a six of spades.

Janine (overlapping): Six of spades. So I don't like that.

Austin: Uh-huh.

Janine: And that's a six of hearts.

Austin: Don't like that. Let's do a—*third* six in a row!

Janine (overlapping): Okay, I've drawn three sixes in a row. Are you sure you shuffled this shit?

Austin (overlapping): (In an exaggerated voice) The Gloooaming! [Laugh]

Janine: Mmm...

[Art laughs]

Austin: Yes, this is definitely shuffled. There's no (laughing) deck of cards that's shuffled—that's, like, pre-shuffled where all the numbers go in a row like that.

Janine: I don't fucking know how Roll20 works.

Austin (overlapping): But if you *do* get—

Janine: That's a five.

Austin: God, if you had gotten the six of clubs, I would've *lost* it! [**Janine** sighs] We would've shut this whole recording down and thrown it away!

Janine: That's a seven of diamonds.

Austin: You have one more.

Janine: [Sigh] It's Rupert!

Austin: I—Rupert has Moxie.

Janine: Mmm...

Austin: Rupert has Moxie.

Janine: I'm gonna use Rupert's Moxie to...

Austin: Well, I thought you still have one more. I thought you said you—or is this it.

Janine: Wasn't that four? Six, six, five, seven.

Austin: Oh you're right, that's—yeah, you're right. So you're gonna spend your one Moxie?

Janine: All of my fucking pulls are trash today.

Austin: Mm-hmm. All the good ones went to Art.

Janine: Three.

Austin: Ugh!

Janine: Okay. Sick.

Austin: Three! [Laugh] Um...[**Janine** sighs] I'm dragging all your cards over here so we keep 'em—keep the table a little clean. Uh, Rupert charges in at—oh! Oh. Rupert has Advantage, 'cause this is two—Rupert has Advantage, so you get one more. Because of the Pack Hunter thing. Right?

Janine: Okay...

Austin: Oh no, sorry. That's not true. That's not true, we already—

Janine: Mmm...

Austin: —oh. no! That is true. That is true. One more.

Janine: You're really messing with my emotions. [Laugh]

Austin: I'm sorry. There's a lot to balance.

Janine: Okay, that's an eight. That's better than a three.

Austin: Better than a three...

Janine (overlapping): That's the best card I've drawn out of that row...

Austin: Unfortunately it is still not enough...

Janine: Ugh.

Austin: ...and, uh Rupert—Rupert is, like, pecking away at the back of Flagstone, who is like—

[as Flagstone]: You're ruining my jacket!

Austin: And [laugh] who, like, spins around to try to, like, push Rupert away. Is like "Ah!" Surprised to see a big bird. [Laugh] But is not phased by the incom—which is weird, because if Rupert could actually get a good hit in, you're convinced that Rupert would be hitting much harder (laughing) than Elana is. Uhm...and that is your turn. We're back around to the cops. This cop—the one who—uh, this cop just crawled all the way through and under, and is now pointing a gun at you. I'm gonna move the piano player to this back room, where I feel like it's maybe safer, Caitlin? Um, but this cop has crawled under that force field where you said there was a little thing, and is standing up to point a gun at you, but his turn is getting through that force field, basically. And then this other one, now, has wheeled around and is going to take a shot at Rupert. And we'll see how this goes. Um...buh-buh-buh-buh-buh. Agility, three...Guns, one. Lotta cards here. Rupert's Body is ten? Right? Uh, ten. Yes. Alright. Uh, drawing a card. [Sigh] This cop is about to shoot Rupert. Drew an ace of spades immediately.

Janine: Can I, like, Gloam or something? Is this the Gloam moment somehow?

Austin: [Laugh] You know?

Janine: How do I Gloam this? [Laugh] [**Austin** chuckles] Engage Gloam!

Austin: Inside—in terms of—I think the Gloam, in this system, has to be a thing you do on your turn. Turn. Like, the way attacks work in this is just a straight check. Rupert will probably—how much HP does Rupert have? How many hits? [Sigh] Okay! We're gonna see how this goes. [**Ali** sighs] I don't love it. Actually, we already know how this goes. Rupert...[sigh] Rupert gets shot. This cop just shot Rupert. And it's bad. If—it's bad. [**Ali** sighs] Rupert squawks really loudly...the cop is shook. The cop's never shot a big bird before. Um, I think everything stops for a moment...and the cop goes like—

[as Myst PD cop]: Oh, geez.

Austin: And I think that that cop's turn ends and Rupert is badly hurt on the ground.

Janine: I'm just telling you now, if Rupert dies in a speakeasy after basically one turn of showing up, I'm never playing another Bluff game again.

Austin: Uh-huh. I get it. I also have to play the game by the rules.

Janine (overlapping): I know.

Austin: The rules are that is how attacks work. [**Janine** sighs] And the cop drew the *ace of spades* on their first card.

Janine: Yeah...

Austin: I'm sorry that they didn't also draw six-six-six-seven-three. [Laugh]

[**Janine** laughs]

Janine: You forgot the five.

Austin: Oh, yeah. (Laughing) Apologies. [Pause] Um...That's the cops. Oh, Flagstone gets to go. Uh, is now going to try to punch you through that, like, the concrete wall that's behind you, Elana. And this is just a regular fucking punch. I think there's a point at which—when the bird goes down, he goes like—

[as Flagstone]: I guess the gloves are off.

Austin: Uh, and...[**Ali** laughs] forms big concrete gloves around his fists, and then swings at you here. Um...three—your Body again is ten, so here is the first card. That's a seven. That's a serious miss. There's a queen of spades. Um...he is going to hit you very hard. Uh...let's see here...color Damage plus one, so that's three. And then with a spade, that's also an Advantage card. So he's going to just Boost that by another Damage. So that's four—four HP. Four hits to you, Elana. I think you still have armour, right?

[Timestamp 01:45:08]

Art: It's—[stammers] it's minus one, yeah.

Austin: Okay. So three Hits. Where you at on Hits?

Art: That would bring me down to...six.

Austin: Oof. Okay.

Art: That's alright. That's okay.

Austin: You sure? Okay. Alright! Um...who's turn is it? Verge.

Ali: Yeah. Um...whew. Okay. I, um—I want to...open up a portal, and then go on the other side of it, and beat the shit of the cop that just shot a bird? [Laugh]

Austin: Yes. Yes. Good. What is, uh—what's that—

Ali (overlapping): I would like to do that.

Austin: Yeah, what's that look like. I mean, it looks like the thing you just said, I guess is what it looks like.

Ali: Um, it looks like me coming behind this guy and slitting his throat.

Austin (overlapping): Oh-ho-ho.

Ali: Is what it looks like.

Art: Mmm...

Ali: If only...

Austin: You didn't buy a knife during character creation, unfortunately.

Ali: I probably have the money for it. I don't know. I—

Austin: (Laughing) You can have a knife.

Ali: —I feel like I did. I think I had a knife because—

Janine (overlapping): You're at a bar! You gotta cut limes!

Ali: Yeah!

Austin: Yeah, you can just grab the knife from the—yeah, totally.

Ali: Um, I was—there was a long time when I was considering if this was gonna be like a knives/portals build? [Laugh]

Austin: Oh...right.

Ali: (Laughing) Or just a portals build.

Austin: *Classic* knives portal build.

Ali: Yeah for a little—for a *significant* part of this character's development, she was gonna wear suspenders with knives tucked into them. She can have the one now. [Laugh]

Austin (overlapping): And then you decided to not be cool as shit? What happened? [Laugh]

Ali: [Laugh] Well, 'cause I really leaned into portals...[laugh]

Austin: Mmm, I see. That's true. You did do that. Uh-huh. [**Ali** continues laughing in the background]

Ali: Um, but yeah, I can still have the one.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Ali: Um...and, yeah! I—

Austin (overlapping): I'm gonna say, you could—you could use Stealth here to do the thing that you're talking about, as a Bonus to this attack.

Ali: Okay, sure. I think—[laugh]

Austin (overlapping): Especially given this dude is fucking, like, *shook* on having shot a bird.

Ali: Sure. Definitely killing him, though.

Austin: Uh-huh!

Ali: Um...not feeling that one back...

Austin (overlapping): [Laugh] Well now we got some cop murder! [**Ali** laughs] No, I got you. Um, give me your...

Ali: I'm trying, yeah.

Austin: ...your Strength?

Ali: Oh!

Austin: Oh, well that's an ace of diamonds.

Ali: That's an ace of diamonds. Perfect.

Austin: This cop drops the gun, and then falls to the ground. And is...as wounded if not more wounded than the bird was...

Ali: Definitely more wounded on purpose!

Austin: Yes. Well, he *did* mean to shoot the bird. I don't wanna (laughing) clear his conscience that much. He just didn't realize what he was doing at—you know, really.

Ali: That's too bad!

Janine (overlapping): *Mmmh...*

Austin (overlapping): But was happy to have done it. [**Ali** laughs] You know?

Ali: He paid his life for that mistake. [Laugh]

Austin: He did.

Ali: Soul buddy.

Austin: The other cop is just, like—goes to shoot at you, and then you do that, and then he goes like “Ah, I can't, 'cause there's a (laughing) force field.” [**Ali** laughs] And has to wait until it's his turn—

Ali (overlapping): (Laughing) Exactly.

Austin: —so that he can do anything else. [**Ali** continues laughing] Grouse it is your turn. What's up?

Janine: [Long sigh] There's not really any me-getting-in-there, huh? It's a pretty—there's a wall, there's...

Austin: [Laugh] There's a—yes. There is a—to desc—yeah, to describe, people at home listening, there is a concrete wall that's kind of made this blocked in the entryway from the elevator? In a way that, like, would be really interesting level design, if this was a (laughing) first-person shooter. Um, and then lots of bodies in the mix. You could get in there though, now, especially because this motherfucker is...*boop!* Upside down. And dead. Uh...you could try to rush in there—

Ali (overlapping): Um, which means, I guess I'm like here?

Austin: Oh, yeah. Do you want to move yourself? Yeah. Sure. [Pause] Also—

Janine: Um...

Austin: —I'm gonna look up some moves...

Ali: Oh, that also means that there is...do you think this would help you at all Grouse?

Austin: Oh, good call. Yeah.

Ali: There are now two portals. Or Elana, or anybody, or Rupert.

Austin: Or Rupert.

Ali: You want me to put (laughing) Rupert through a portal and—(laughing) he comes and he—

Janine: Um...[**Ali** laughs] I don't know what that—I don't think that *gets* us anywhere—

Ali: (Muffled) No, but...

Janine: —necessarily.

Ali: ...it's on the table. [Laugh]

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Janine I do—I think there is something I want to do with that portal, though. Um...which is...I think the thing I want to do is...we're, like—mmm. We're purely into, like, revenge moves at this point, to be honest.

Austin: Oh, yeah.

Janine: So I think the thing that Chanti does is she sends her hat bird to that portal to go for—to go for what's-his-name's eyes.

Austin: Oh, love it!

Janine: Like, specifically, like “Okay, your body's made of rocks. What about your eyeballs?”

Austin: “What about your eyeballs?” Yeah. Great. Good.

Janine: Small bird. Portals.

Austin (overlapping): Uh-huh.

Janine: Very confusing situation.

Austin (overlapping): Yup.

Ali (overlapping): Mm-hm...

Austin: Mm-hmm. Uh, give me a...what is your Bird Telepathy stat? What's it say, how to do that?

Janine: I would still say this is Puppeteer.

Austin (overlapping): Or this bird, this is—you're right. This is Puppeteer. You're right. You're totally right.

Janine: Um...[**Austin** chuckles] I'm gonna call this—

Austin (overlapping): (Laughing) Not telekinesis.

Janine: —I'm gonna...[chuckles]

Austin: (Laughing) Puppeteer.

Janine: I think I made this joke when we—when we played before, and now I think I'm gonna make it not as a joke. I wanna use the Steel Boost?

Austin: Oh...okay. So this is a Power Check.

Janine: I got Damage Boost too but, you know...

Austin: This is Power Check versus the target's Strength Defense. Which is...[typing sounds] so, you have three in it, which means you get three cards.

Janine: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Uh...where's your first card? This eight is your old card, right? It's a ten of spades! [Janine sighs] Spades is a—is a Bo—is the benefit one.

Janine: Is that...

Austin: Yeah. Spades is the highest. Spades are high, clubs are low.

Janine: [Sigh] On the one hand, I've got an increasingly stacked deck.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Janine: On the other, I super don't wanna fuck this up and get another bird shot. [Austin cracks up] Um...

Austin: Uh-huh. I will say...so the thing that's different—the thing that's difficult here is—I mean, that's not true. You could have—if we knew this game really well, you would know by now what his Strength is. Based on the number of cards I get to play when he attacks. Which is—his Strength is three, and so his Strength Defense is ten, which means ten does it.

Janine: I'll take it then, cause it's [Austin chuckles] spades.

Austin: Yes. Yes.

Janine: If it was clubs, no. But—[chuckle]

Austin: Right/ Yeah-yeah-yeah. Exactly. With that spade, you're going to get a...Boon. And the Boon that I'm going to give you is...[phew] what's a good Boon for this terrible thing that's happening? Um...let's say that it is—well, I think it's exactly the thing that you kind of set up, which is...you've done—I guess I'll give you a choice. You could either do (laughing) additional Damage here, or...I'm gonna say...quote, "knock someone down," which is basically going to be in this turn, like, he is going to lose his turn as he tries to—as the adrenaline starts to pump in for him to figure out what to fucking do next. But he's just, like, very very—this is bad. This is a very harmful thing you have done.

Janine: Mm-hmm.

Austin: What is the—what is—oh, the spade. So that's spades Damage. Actually, we're gonna treat this the same way as if it had been a Rupert attack, so it's actually more than that. This is a lot of Damage you just did, even before you pick—even if you don't pick the, um, the bonus Damage. That's four Damage.

Janine: I'm gonna pick the bonus Damage.

Austin: Okay. Uh, boom. Alright. He, like, drops to his knees, but you can see that he's, like—he starts screaming and like shoves your bird away, but the damage is definitely done. I think, like, when he stands up, he just has a concrete eye now. Right? Like, fills it in with concrete in one of his eyes. And, it looks cool, but it's also terrifying, because you know—this is all just terrifying. This has gone really, really dark. It's a reminder that Blough City be like this. [Laugh] We are not—and I think, I would like to even say to some degree, for Chanti and to Champ, this doesn't *feel* right. This doesn't feel like fighting feels for you. Bluff City fighting doesn't go like this. Rupert doesn't get *shot*. [Laugh] Uh, and you've never sent your birds to peck someone's eyes out before.

Janine: There's no big bubbles that pop up saying "Biff!" and "Zow!" and "Honk!"

Austin: Exactly! Totally. It's as if this has not been stylized right. And that's sort of scary. I think for you, Caitlin, this maybe even goes the other way a little bit? Where it's like, that—this feels too choreographed. There's a sort of narrative rhythm happening here that shouldn't be happening, and those two things are kind of colliding in this fight in a really uncomfortable way. At this point...the cop who—[laugh] the cop who (laughing) crawled under this portal is—or, under this barrier—this, what do you...force field. Now realizes there's no one here on this side of the force field anymore, [**Janine** and **Ali** crack up] and goes—

Janine: Just seal it up. Just fucking (laughing) lock him in it.

Austin [as Myst PD cop]: [Sigh] Geez.

Austin: And begin to start crawling back under. And again, his next turn, he'll be back to where he can do anything. In this moment, he cannot. And then, Flagstone...*god*. I think—[sigh] I think is just gonna try to slam into *you* now, seeing that you've killed the cop, Caitlin. And say, as he's doing it, he's like—

[as Flagstone]: You've been on the Most Wanted list for a long time, Verge!

Austin: Uh, and tries to swing at you. Again, he has three in Strength. Um...what is your Body? [Pause] Hmm, clubs I don't think I want. What is your—what is your Body score, Caitlin?

Ali: My Body score? Sorry—

Austin: Yes.

Ali: It is nine.

Austin: It's nine. I'm not gonna keep this ten. I think he wants—he wants not to have—I am gonna keep this king. And he is going to, again, slam this concrete fist into you. Just like a *gut* shot. Just like a heavy gut shot. And, you know, there's like blood running down his face. His concrete, you know, cement face actually. And just gives you this heavy body shot. His uniform is ruined. Is just like a—not a splash page, but a large panel, basically. And you're going to take...two Damage? Let me see...plus the Boost, yeah. That's—that's yeah. You're gonna take two Damage.

Ali: Okay. And there's still Resistances...in this game?

Austin: There's not any—there's none of that. No. Wild to play a system where it's just like “Yup! Take blank Damage.”

Ali: [Chuckles] Okay. I think it's my turn now?

Austin: It is your turn now. As you stumble backwards into your own, like, force field a little bit? You know—

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Austin: —and, like, get your—steady yourself against it and the bar?

Ali: Yeah! Um...that's interesting, and actually kind of plays into...what I was hoping to be able to do.

Austin: Oh, buddy.

Ali: [Laugh] My force field has a Boost—

Austin: Uh-huh.

Ali: —where...I guess—it doesn't work as turns. I hate this game. [Laugh] (Reading) “One time before the beginning of your next turn, when a physical attack is absorbed by the force, the attack instead struck the attacker, dealing damage based on the attacker's next card flip to make the attack.” Maybe this just doesn't work, we can move on.

Austin: Yeah...

Ali: But what I—what I kinda wanna do is, like, pull it in front of myself or wrap it around me and, like, goat him to punch me again?

Austin (overlapping): Into hitting you. Yeah!

Ali: (overlapping): Yeah, yeah.

Austin: Yeah, I think that's what you do. I think you could set that up for the next round, basically.

Ali: Okay, perfect.

Austin: Yeah-yeah-yeah-yeah-yeah.

Ali: So, yeah. I think I do the thing of, like...I guess—Elana, how are you doing...wounds-wise?

Art: You know. Bad. [**Ali** laughs] But...

Austin: (Sympathetic) Mmm...

Art: I mean—[sigh]

Ali: Sure.

Art: I have six—six is—and, I mean, everyone is minus one, so like...

Ali: Fair, fair, fair. Okay, yeah. Because what I would've—the thing that I would like to describe is, like, Caitlin sort of making eyes with Elana. That sort of, like, "You can take a breather here." And then, like, pulling up her fist to this dude—

Austin: [Chuckle] Uh-huh.

Ali: —to just sort of start doing the back and forth, right?

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Ali: Like, I can make the ducks that I need to make...to open you up—

Austin (overlapping): Totally.

Ali: —and to—yeah, yeah, yeah. Okay. I did say "goat." Is the word "goad"? (Laughing) With a 'd'?

Austin: Goad. It's goad. Yeah.

Ali: [Laugh] Fair. [Continues laughing with **Austin**]

Austin: Goat telepathy.

Janine (overlapping): I like—I like (laughing) goat telepathy more...

[**Janine**, **Ali**, and **Austin** laugh quietly]

Austin: Alright, yeah. I'm good with that. Um...and now we are back to Grouse. No, Champ. Champ, it's your turn. Sorry. I didn't mean to skip you, Elana.

Art: Okay. So if I'm gonna take a round off...

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Art: ...of *this* part of the fight, do you think I could get this other—this one?

Austin: The cop who's crawling over—crawling? Yeah! You could try to, like, move around—yeah, I think his—I think that Flagstone's attention is locked now on Caitlin, and so yeah, you could charge at this guy who's on the ground. I'll give you Advantage on any attack you make on this dude who's still trying to crawl—I guess he's, like, getting up to his feet now that you've pulled the force field away, but he is not up on his feet until his turn.

Ali: Yeah, that super works cause he must think, like “Oh, my head is ducked under this thing—”

Austin (overlapping): Yeah.

Ali: “”—I can pull myself onto my feet and I get punched in the fucking head or whatever you're (laughing) about to do—”

Austin (overlapping): Uh-huh. (Laughing) Yes. Exactly.

Ali: The force field gets, like, *swoop* right in front of you.

Austin: Yup.

[Ali laughs]

Art (overlapping): You know how—you know how, like, NFL—in like, an NFL game, you'll see, like, someone go down and, like, the—but they still have to, like, hit them? It's like—

Austin: Yeah.

Art: —that, like, last second hit.

Austin (overlapping): Mm-hmm.

Art: It's like one of those. Right?

Austin: Yeah.

Art: He's down, but I'm gonna—I'm gonna put him down.

Austin: He shoulda—he shoulda signaled fair catch.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: Give me your Strength. You have an Advantage. So it's an extra—and extra card.

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Art (overlapping): And I'm gonna go for Damage Boost here.

Austin: Oh, yeah. (Laughing) Okay. That is the—

Art (overlapping): Good joker!

Austin (overlapping): —good (laughing) *joker*. So what I'm gonna do—I think the good joker benefit here that I'm gonna give you is that you're gonna have Advantage on whatever your *next* thing is too.

Art: Alright.

Austin: Um, that seems quick and easy, so let's do that one. You knock this motherfucker out. You don't have to—we don't have to calculate Damage. Both of the cops have had one Damage for this entire fight since Elana first hit them, and have been next to—next to being knocked out most of this fight. Now you've done that.

Art (overlapping): We forgot basic strategy, which is always get the adds.

Austin: Always get the adds first. [**Ali** laughs] That's a hundred percent. Yes.

Janine: Always try to punch the dragon at least once.

[**Austin** laughs]

Ali: Yeah...

Art: (Laughing) Wait, I think you're saying something different.

Austin: You're saying the opposite thing. Everyone has to punch the dragon so they get XP, but *then*, focus on the adds.

[**Ali** laughs]

Janine: No I'm talking about—I'm talking about the fucking—I'm talking about the Hieron bone dragon—

Ali (overlapping): Yeah...

Austin (overlapping): Oh...

Janine (overlapping): —where we didn't try to actually damage it, we just—

Ali (overlapping): Yeah, no.

Austin (overlapping): Yes, you're right.

Janine (overlapping): —(laughing) kind of panicked.

Austin: Yeah, that's true. That's true. Alright, so yeah—

Art (overlapping): (Laughing) Spoilers.

Austin: —you're pumped up, and I think that that Advantage comes from, like, you've absorbed—you punch—[laugh] you punch this dude so hard that you absorb some extra kinetic energy into your fists, Elana.

Art: Yeah, the reverberation.

Austin: Yeah. Exactly. (Mimicking a reverb sound effect) *Wohm*. Alright. Now, it is Grouse's turn.

Janine: Yeah...um...well, I've used the two birds I have access too.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Janine: (Unsure) Uhhh...ugh....[sigh]

Austin: I will say—I'm gonna read—I'm gonna read something here. Which is useful. (Reading) "If you drop to zero Hits, your character is either temporarily removed from the story, or will die. It's your choice. If you chose to have your character temporarily removed from the story, they are knocked out. Alternatively, they may be captured briefly, or otherwise removed from the immediate vicinity of the action. If they are knocked out, they wake up and they have at least one Hit." So you just [laugh] hang out for an hour. You'll get a hit point (laughing) back.

Janine: Yeah...

Austin: (Reading) "If you choose to have your character die—" duh-duh-duh-duh-duh-duh-duh, which you're not—I mean, I guess I should give you this option. If you choose to let Rupert die, Rupert gets one more turn before he dies.

Janine: No...

Austin: That extra turn is also his last, so spend any Moxie you have and do everything you can to make it memorable.

Janine (overlapping): No.

Austin: Um, you're not doing that. (Reading) "If you decide to reduce an enemy to zero Hits, you decide at the moment whether to kill them or knock them unconscious." I'm guessing this cop is dead. You mentioned. Is the cop you just hit knocked out or dead?

Art: Knocked out.

Austin: Okay. So, Rupert's—you know, Rupert's death is in your hands at this point. I'm counting Rupert more as a PC than an NPC.

Janine: Yeah. Um...

Austin: Which means you don't have to feel like you need to, like, make a roll to keep him in it. But if that's flavor you wanted to add, that would be fine. (Laughing) You know?

Janine: No. My struggle is mostly, like, making a roll that feels like it matters? [Laugh]

Austin: Yeah, I gotcha.

Janine: Because it feels like everything that I can do with Chanti puts a target on her head in a way that I don't have a way to retaliate—

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Janine: —because of the way my Powers work?

Austin: You're playing DPS. I get it. You've done the most Damage in this fight in this single action. You're definitely—you're definitely playing, like, the ninja or whatever. [Laugh]

Janine: Yeah...

Austin: No, actually I have to give the ninja to the person who teleported (laughing) *behind* someone and cut their throats.

[**Janine** and **Ali** laugh]

Janine: Yeah, that's—yeah...[laugh]

Ali: (Quiet) Thank you.

Janine: I'm a Kunoichi with a single throwing star.

Austin: [Laugh] Uh-huh. Nothing personal, kid.

Janine (overlapping): It's a pretty limited (laughing) class...

Austin: Um...[pause] so yeah. Uh...I don't know. It's totally up to you in terms of what you think is a thing that you would do. As always, you have other things to do besides your—you could yell, you could—you could try to set something up for somebody else, you could...you know...do other...stuff?

Janine (overlapping): Like the—it sucks 'cause, like, the most obvious thing is also the thing that...is least appealing.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Janine: Which is to get the dead guy's gun.

Austin: Sure.

Janine: Because that's that roll, is getting the gun. And at that point, I don't care.

Austin: I mean, at that point, I'm not gonna make you roll it. You could spend your turn getting this guy's gun.

Janine: Yeah, but I—[sigh]

Austin: You could move and then a free action would be picking it up. And, like, I don't wanna talk about it in those terms, but that's what—

Janine (overlapping): It feels like the thing that follows from that, though, is getting shot. And I haven't had a lot of luck today? [Laugh]

Austin: True.

Janine: And I would like to at least have Chanti in a decent—

Austin (overlapping): I mean, the two gun guys are knocked out. The two gun people are knocked out. The only person left is—

Janine (overlapping): Oh, I thought he had a gun also, because his character does. His art...

Austin (overlapping): Oh, I mean he might have a gun, but that's not how he's fighting. He's fighting with...his fists.

Janine: Yeah...

Austin: He's a concrete boy.

Janine: Ugh...okay. [Pause] [Sigh] I also still have that bird in play, but like, I don't—it's stupid to be like "And then the bird attacks again." That's not...

Austin: I think—what we're running into is, like, one of my favorite classic...tabletop, like, fight system issues, which is...the warrior, who in this case I would say is Elana, has one move, which is "hit." And they're very good at it. Everybody else has a bunch of stuff, but often it feels like it's the wrong tool for the job—

Janine: Mm-hmm.

Austin: —and they can become jealous of the warrior, who is just good at hitting things. Meanwhile the warrior can be like "All I fucking—I don't ever get to send birds to peck people's eyes out. [**Janine** laughs quietly] All I get to do is swing this sword real hard. And obviously, like, DnD specifically has gotten better about that role—or about those—that division of actions, but not *that* much better. [Laugh]

Art: Ironically, the best they did was fourth edition, and everyone hated it.

Austin: Yeah. Mhm.

Janine: I'll just pick up the gun.

Austin: (Laughing) Okay. So you move over here and grab dude's—whoa. (Laughing) I put you—oh, boy! [**Janine** laughs] Okay. Wait. I tried to—mmm. I tried to link those things up. Now they're not letting me put your—[laugh] there we go. There we go. And now if I hit 'group,' hopefully they'll stay together. (Navigating through Roll20) Advanced. Group. There we—eh. Mmh. [**Janine** and **Austin** laugh] This is not—(laughing) oh, boy.

Janine: It's close enough. It's good enough. [Laugh]

Austin: There we go! There we go. You've picked up his gun. That is a free action. Listen, if you wanna pull the trigger on this thing, I'm not gonna stop you. But also—or, if you wanted to hold it, so that that could happen after...after when this dude swings at...at Caitlin, and gets the force field bounce back thing, then you could also do that. Like if you—

Janine: That sounds way more sick.

Austin: Yeah. Let's do that. Um...I think with that, we—one second. Let me fix my headphones, which became tangled somehow. Alright, Caitlin, remind me how your Power works one more time.

Ali: (Reading) "One time, before the beginning of your next turn, when a physical attack is absorbed up by a force field, the attack strikes the attacker, dealing Damage based on the attacker's card flip to make the attack."

Austin: Yup. Okay. Cool. So, he's gonna swing at you as appropriate. I think, you know, he sees Chanti pick up the gun and is like—

[as Flagstone]: I'll deal with you in a second...*Ms. Bird.*

Austin: And then swings and misses. And then swings again...and then, I think would keep the ace of hearts. The three of clubs he would not have kept. He'll keep the ace of hearts, but he'll hit the force field. And do that Damage to himself instead. Color Damage plus one. So what's that look like as he hits the force field? And it goes back?

Ali: Um...I bet it sucks. [**Austin** chuckles quietly] He's made out of concrete?

Austin: (Laughing) Uh-huh.

Ali: Is this like a—is this—is this gonna hurt him? Like a lot-a lot?

Austin: It—you're hitting him for two Damage. Which is not nothing, but it's—

Ali: Okay.

Austin: It's—it's—I mean, are you—what are you picturing?

Ali: Well, cause I—

Austin: What's the panel look like?

Ali: I—I was picturing some...fist cracking?

Austin: Yeah, me too. I think it's just like...like *dust*.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Like, he hits really—he hits as hard as he can.

Ali: Right...

Austin: And...it just, like, (making sound effect) *phew!* [**Ali** laughs] But like, just powder in the air.

Ali: I think the force field, like, makes—like it's—it's just like a shimmering light whatever.

Austin: Yeah, yeah.

Ali: But when he punches it, it doesn't do that thing where, like, the...it, like gets...less translucent...

Austin: Yeah...

Ali: ...the harder it is in that area, and then just sort of—there's, like, a beat, and then there's the, like, slow...

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: ...cracks appearing on his fist from his...knuckles and then....(sound effect) *pp-chew!*

Austin: Yeah. [**Ali** laughs] It goes—yeah, (sound effect) *whuh-whuh*, then (sound effect) *pk-chew!* Right? [**Ali** laughs] And then the—there's like cement dust in the air. Chanti, are you pulling the trigger on this (laughing) *cop?*

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: Alright.

Ali (overlapping): Do it.

Austin: Give me an Agility Guns. [Laughs]

Janine: Well I don't have Guns, but I have two Agility, [laugh] so...

Austin: Alright. I'm gonna give you Advantage, given how disoriented he is at this point from the thing that just happened. So take an extra card.

Janine: Okay. [Sigh] That's a ten of hearts...

Austin (overlapping): Ten of hearts! Keeping it?

Janine: I mean his thing is—

Austin: Guns are—

Janine: —ten.

Austin: His Body is ten. You know that that hits.

Janine: I'll stick with that—

Austin (overlapping): And you know that—okay.

Janine: I don't want to—I'm just so shy about pushing it. Even though I know—

Austin (overlapping): I get it, yeah.

Janine: —at some point, I'm only gonna have kings and queens in there, and that's exactly when everything [**Austin** chuckles quietly] goes back in the deck and we shuffle and move on...

Austin: Heh, yeah. Mhm. [**Janine** laughs] Ten of hearts [laugh] hits and it does—it does Guns Damage. And Guns do *Damage*, is the thing. Let's see. Player section. Rules. Attack and Damage. Weapons Table. A gun does—it's a pistol. Suit plus one. You rolled a heart—or, you have a heart. And hearts do...what? Why would it not just be on the same chart? Here we go. Hearts do three, three plus one is four Damage. I think he just, like, turns to look at you and we get the panel of him raising the fist to hit you but the fist is gone, and it's just, like, the broken—it's like you're looking at a broken statue. You know what I mean? Uh, and it's—the panel of him taking that stance, looking, like, weary, and then the next panel is you pointing the gun at him, like, with—what do your eyes look like? What's the expression on her face as she pulls the trigger?

I/: Um...I think she's kind of, like, looking through him, right?

Austin: Yeah...

Janine: Like to her this is like a—this is like a “We need to get this through—we need to get over—we need to get this over with so I can, you know, actually do shit that matters right now.”

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: “And fighting—fighting *you* does not matter right now.

Austin: Oh, totally. And the bullet goes through him. Loud bang. Loud crack. He drops to the ground. There's a single hole through his chest. And, again, it's like seeing a hole through a statue. But the...the, like, area around the hole begins to kind of, like, crack. And he doesn't shatter into a billion pieces, but he, like, falls to the ground. And he is—is he—he is *dead*, I suspect? [Laugh] Um, you tell me. [**Janine** exhales a laugh] Does this knock him out or does this kill him?

Janine: Um...I think it kills him? [Laugh]

Austin: Okay.

Janine: Seems like it ought to.

Austin: [Sigh] Yeah.

Janine: Unless someone mixes some water in there and gives him a bucket and some time. [**Ali** and **Austin** laugh] Makes a nice driveway.

Austin: Mhm. [Laugh] My *god*. Jesus. Um...and I think in that moment, when he hits the ground, everyone gets a breath. Rupert kind of, like, is heavy breathing. I'm guessing you go to check on Rupert?

Janine: Yeah. [Scoff]

Austin: Rupert's going to be okay. Is hurt. Is out of action for the remainder of the scene. Gives you the sort of look that's like "I'm sorry I let you down." I don't know what—

Janine: (Sad) Aw...

Austin: —this fake bird...does?

Janine: Slightly less angry?

Austin: Yeah, it's like sad-angry instead of happy-angry? (Laughing) You know? [**Janine** and **Austin** laugh] And yeah, you know with your bird telepathy, Rupert really didn't wanna let you down and wanted to help more than he did. Um...and I think you—we get, like, the page turn is—or, we get like the bottom right panel on this page is, like, smoke coming out of a long cigarette holder, and the turn page reveals someone walking out of the other bathroom, and it's Lieutenant Merisi, who had previously used her shadow powers to get into that bathroom. And was in this room the whole time, basically, having come down in the elevator to begin with. This is—Lieutenant—what did I say? Mary Merisi? AKA Black Widow. In this moment, she is just wearing her, like, Myst PD uniform? But based on the descriptions that the bird told you, you know that she has some weird shadow magic spider-type shit. And she says—

[as Lieutenant Merisi]: [Sigh] What a *waste*. [Sigh] I'm not here to cause any trouble. Turn over Harry, and um...and we can be done with this.

Austin: So, yeah. So Merisi is here. And, yeah, has strolled out of the bathroom. And is—uh, Merisi is probably the same age as around you—maybe a little younger than you...Caitlin. I'm gonna just move these cops out of the way. [Laugh] So that they're not on the map. [Laugh] Um...just remember where they are. You know? They're just in this general vicinity. And so, yeah. She's here. Cigarette in her hand. I don't know that she's actually holding the rifle that she's holding in this image, but she does look sort of like this. You know, dark features. You know, close cropped dark hair with, like, a...what are those—what are those...why am I forgetting—why am I blanking on this? [Pause, interspersed with typing sounds] [Sigh] Those little swirls—why am I forgetting the name of these little—

Janine: Pin curls?

Austin: No, no, no, no.

Janine (overlapping): Or no, it's not pin curls. It's um...[sigh]

Austin: Like, almost like um...[Pause, typing sounds] like a stylized, like, curl of where her, like, side burns would be—or, like, the edge of her hairline is? Near her—here, one second. Um...I

have an image. I have an image, which is good. This like—in fact, I would totally—I would *totally* facecast her as FKA Twigs, actually.

[Timestamp 02:15:00]

Austin (continued): Like that is a hundred—that is—there she is! Uh, one hundred percent. And is...you know. Very calm about the fact that you've just killed three of her colleagues. Maybe because she's someone who's previously killed three of her colleagues. [Laugh]

Janine: Maybe.

Ali: Sure.

Janine: Might be a factor.

Austin: Mhm.

Ali: Mhm.

Art: Mhm. [Pause] Two of her colleagues.

Austin: Who—oh yeah, sorry. Yes. The other cop is not knocked out.

Janine (overlapping): There's—there's been more. She's probably killed—those probably weren't her first.

Austin: [Laugh] Who could say? [Pause] Thank you. [Pause] It's very good. [Laugh]

Ali (overlapping): And she just, like, "Oh, it looks like a mess" or whatever, right?

Austin: Uh, she—yeah, she said "What a waste." And sighed. And, yeah, took a drag of her cigarette.

Ali: Um...

Austin: [Sigh] I think she also—I think she also said, and I'm just gonna say it now so it's fresh...

[as Lieutenant Merisi]: Just turn Horseface...Harry over. And...all this'll be done. And we'll get out of your hair.

Art [as Elana]: No.

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: [Sigh] (Whispering to herself) Ugh, my *god*.

Janine [as Chanti]: We have no reason to believe that.

Art [as Elana]: Also, he's innocent.

Janine [as Chanti]: Also that.

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi] (overlapping): Yeah, *of course* he's innocent. He's not—[sigh] ugh...He's gonna be fine. I have nothing against him. Just give him an hour with me, we'll have him flip on the kid, and we'll be done.

Ali [as Caitlin]: You're trying to get the Whitaker kid for this.

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: [Laugh] Yeah, the little prick. Absolutely.

Art [as Elana]: Did you say Harry Houdini?

[**Ali** laughs]

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: Yeah. Harry Houdini.

Art [as Elana]: Harry Houdini?

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: Harry "Horseface" Houdini. Yeah.

Art [as Elana]: You gonna, like, put him in a straight jacket and put him in a tub of water?

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi] (overlapping): Oh my god. [Sigh] I'm sure he gets it a lot. I'm sure that's why they started calling him Horseface. 'Cause they couldn't call him Harry Houdini. I don't know what we're gonna do with him. What we're gonna do is interrogate him, and he's gonna tell us that the Whitaker boy killed those cops, and then...

Art [as Elana]: I don't know, I think he's just gonna escape.

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: Oy.

[**Austin** and **Janine** chuckle]

Art [as Elana]: I hear he's really good at it.

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: Yeah. I get it. 'Cause of the magician. The illusionist. Yeah, I get it.

Art [as Elana]: *Illusionist*. How dare you?

[**Austin** laughs]

Austin: Is that in defense of illusionists? Is that in defense of Harry Houdini?

Art: I'm really not sure. [Laugh] It just didn't feel right.

Janine (overlapping): He did—he didn't really—he didn't really work in illusions.

Art: Yeah, I mean it's an escape act.

Austin: He didn't do any magic?

Janine: He—Mm....

Austin: See?

Art: Well, you don't think Harry Houdini's like "Pick a card, any card."

Austin: I bet he did that.

Janine: His *thing* wasn't like—wasn't like "Put me in this tank of water upside-down straightjacket, then drop a curtain and now I'm free." Like, he—he did everything pretty much in plain sight, didn't he?

Austin: No, he started behind curtains.

Art: I mean, it's all a scam, but—

Janine: [Laugh] He was a notorious scam *buster*. He didn't like scams.

Art: Yeah, but like he's—but like the—all the—it's a trick. It's rigged.

Austin: His *brother* is the one who determined to stop doing it behind a curtain. Audiences liked to see him struggle to get out.

Janine (overlapping): Oh...

Austin: Previously he'd been doing it behind a curtain. That's a nightmare. [Laugh] What a nightmare thing to learn about audiences.

Janine: Audiences like to see him (laughing) struggle to get out.

Austin: Uh-huh. [Pause] Anyway.

Art (overlapping): Honestly, that makes sense. [Pause] So we're all satisfied that we did enough Harry Houdini stuff?

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: The only Harry Houdini stuff I'm interested in is bringing him downtown. Put him in a cell. Talking to him until he says that, uh....Hollis pulled the trigger on those cops, and then we're done. You get to go back to running this little bar.

Ali: [Sigh] I just wanna—I just wanna make a mental list of the things that we know for sure about this woman.

Austin: Oh, yeah.

Ali: We know that she killed the cops.

Austin: *Oh* yeah.

Ali: We—did we see that? Did we hear about that?

Austin (overlapping): No, but you have enough evidence—you have circumstantial evidence that makes you confident that's true. None of it would hold up in court. [Laugh]

Ali: Sure...

Austin: But you know.

Ali: Um, but what did the—I got—I picked up—

Austin (overlapping): And that she worked for the Whitakers. You also know that she worked for the Whitakers. She's part of the tunnel project. A hundred percent.

Ali: Yeah. Um...that's what was in that paperwork, right? That, um...

Austin: Yes. A hundred percent. That she was basically the liaison—like the police liaison for the tunnel project, and was supposed to be called in whenever a Whitaker was involved in anything anywhere.

Ali: Sure.

Austin: [Sigh] She, like, sighs and realizes, like, that—that you don't have her part of this put together, kind of? And says—

[as Lieutenant Merisi]: Listen...I'm sure it's the same with you as it is with me, Key. You work with the Whitakers because you gotta work with the Whitakers in this town. You work with the Whitakers, you work with city hall. Turns out I tried to work with both of them, and both of them have done nothing but screw me over. Whitakers told me I do their job for a few months, I get to leave. I get to leave this fucking shitty town. Now it's—

Art [as Elana] (overlapping): It sucks here, right?

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: Yeah, it's *terrible*. I lived here my whole life. I didn't even know that there was another town until the Tunnel Project. They gave me a glimpse. That other place is good. This place is *hell*. And I wanna leave.

Art [as Elana] (overlapping): How'd you grow up here? Isn't it the same day every day?

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: (Whispering to herself) The same day every day?

Ali [as Caitlin]: Can we move on?

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: [Sigh]

Art [as Elana]: I don't think we can!

[**Art**, **Austin**, and **Ali** laugh]

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: It's one day and then it's another day here, though. You're right. And I wanna go to a place that feels like tomorrow. And they said I would, and instead what they did is order me around. And *demean* me. You know? The names that

they came up for people like us. Happy to do business with us. Happy to keep us on payroll. Just as soon, we'll support a law that puts us in cages. So yeah, if I, uh—if I can give them a little trouble by locking their precious prince up for a little while, I'm gonna do it.

Art [as Elana]: Fuck yeah! [Pause] Wait—

Janine [as Chanti]: (Confused) Uh...[laugh]

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: Fuck yeah. [Laugh]

Ali [as Caitlin] (overlapping): Now hold on.

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: “Now hold on” nothing. [**Ali** laughs] She's right. And I'll get you out of here too. I'm sorry for the thing that happened at the docks. I didn't—I didn't realize that you folks had your heads on your shoulder.

Austin: And I think you kind of—

Janine [as Chanti] (overlapping): Why don't you just go through the tunnel?

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: There are...there are people who would be upset. And the punishment would be severe.

Janine [as Chanti]: You have powers. Good ones, apparently.

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi] (overlapping): They have powers. [Pause] [Sigh]

Art [as Elana]: I don't understand what we're doing anymore! We're all on the same side.

Janine [as Chanti]: (Unsure) Um...[chuckle]

Ali [as Caitlin]: We're *barely* on the same side, let's back this up. You come in here with your police and try to shoot at us—

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: I didn't do any of that. I stayed out of it.

Janine [as Chanti]: Conveniently.

Ali [as Caitlin]: Yeah...

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi] (overlapping): Very Conveniently. Listen, if this goes down the other way—

Janine [as Chanti] (overlapping): Really worked out for you and not for them.

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: If they show up—I can't tell...these people—that one's knocked out, right? (Whispering) I can't tell these people [laugh] that they can't come here and serve a warrant. I can let it play out. And it played out.

Ali [as Caitlin]: (Sarcastically) Oh, so you were doing me a *favor* by hiding in that bathroom.

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi] (overlapping): No! I was not (laughing) doing you a favor. You took care of some people who had been sniffing a little too close to what I did, frankly.

Ali [as Caitlin]: Mmh.

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: And you can't say your hands are any cleaner than mine. Not now.

Ali [as Caitlin]: I trust my hands more than I trust yours.

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: I'm not asking you to shake mine.

Janine [as Chanti]: Was this a set-up from the start? Or is this just a convenience thing? Did you have to—have to kill those guys and then it all just kind of fell into your lap? Or was that a plan? Was that your way out?

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: It fell into my lap. I got mad. It snapped into place. The cop...[sigh] the cop pulled over two cars. A car and a truck. Realized there were other people in the truck. He got scared. He thought he couldn't handle it by himself. So he made the call. If he would've just [rueful laugh] gotten out of the patrol vehicle and gone over and checked and seen that all they had was water in the back? None of this would've happened. It's not illegal to move water in brown bottles around this town. But he didn't. He got scared. And so he called it in. And, it clicked into place. I figured out how I could bruise...those *fucking* Whitakers.

Art [as Elana]: "The fucking Whitakers" is right!

[Ali laughs]

Janine [as Chanti]: [Sigh] Champ...[Laugh]

[Ali laughs]

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: Champ? Champ's got it. And listen, let me be honest. The three, uh—the three pigs who were sniffing around the Whitakers? It's not like those folks had clean hands either. Key, you know—

Art [as Elana] (overlapping): Exactly!

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: —you know what it's like. We both grew up in this town.

Janine [as Chanti]: [Sigh] You don't think the people who would be mad at you and make trouble for you if you left through the tunnel aren't gonna be mad at you and make trouble for you if you frame their kid?

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: Well this is the thing...Chanti, right?

Janine [as Chanti]: Chan—it's a soft "sh."

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: Chanti. No one's gonna know I framed their kid, except you three. Four. I'm sorry about the bird. I hope it's okay.

Janine [as Chanti]: Not "it."

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: He. Sorry. I don't deal with a lot of birds. They spook me.

Janine [as Chanti]: I mean, Horseface will know. [Pause] 'Cause you're gonna make him say shit that he knows isn't true.

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: Horseface says shit he knows isn't true all the time. And this one instance he'll say it for the benefit of us all.

Janine [as Chanti]: Yeah, but he's your weak link. Why would you just leave him be?

[Pause]

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: We'll cross the bridge.

Janine [as Chanti]: Um? (Laughing) Not a good answer.

[Ali laughs]

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: What do you—

Ali [as Caitlin] (overlapping): She's right, it'll—it'll never be that clean.

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: Well, here's the thing I can do. Some who want to test a Face—

Austin: "Test a face." [Laugh] [**Janine** cracks up] That's his new nickname. Test-a-Face!

Janine: [Laugh] No!

Austin: That's a terrible—no. Cut. Bad. [**Austin, Art, and Janine** laugh]

[as Lieutenant Merisi]: Someone who's gonna testify—

Janine (overlapping): Don't google that.

Austin: [Laugh] Don't google that one. Uh, or Bing it. *Really* don't Bing it.

Janine: (Laughing) "Test-a-face gif."

[**Austin** laughs]

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: Anyone who testifies against someone as powerful as the Whitakers—I can bring in all of the strength the PD has to keep someone like that safe.

Janine [as Chanti]: And you really think you're the only person on their payroll who's doing black ops? Cleaning stuff up?

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi] (overlapping): [Laugh] No. Absolutely not.

Janine [as Chanti]: How do you protect him from that? How do you protect anyone from that?

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: How do you protect any of us from it anyway? That's the thing. Today. Tomorrow. (Laughing) Yesterday. One of these days, we're all gonna get stepped on by their boot. I just wanna...hit 'em first.

Janine [as Chanti]: Set their house on fire, then.

Art [as Elana] (overlapping): Fucking A! Let's bring Horseface with us! We'll sit on Horseface!

[**Ali** and **Janine** laugh]

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: (Laughing) You'll sit on Horseface? [Laugh]

Ali [as Caitlin]: I—*please*. [Laugh]

Janine: (Laughing) The fuck?

[**Ali** snorts]

Art [as Elana]: You don't have figures of speech over here?

[**Austin** laughs]

Ali [as Caitlin]: I—I don't...

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: Let me talk to him.

Ali [as Caitlin]: No!

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: Let me see what he wants to do it.

Ali [as Caitlin]: No! Because he thinks that the Whitakers are gonna kill him if he says anything about their son. Which they're going to.

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi] (overlapping): Well, and they will.

Ali [as Caitlin]: And you can't offer that protection if you don't think you have it for yourself. Get out of my bar.

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: [Sigh] You're making a mistake, Key.

Art [as Elana]: You're making a huge mistake!

[**Ali** laughs]

Janine [as Chanti]: Okay, what if we—could we—okay, what if we help *you* out. What if we, like, fake kill you here. Leave some, like, smoke around, and they'll think that you ate it with the other guys. And you just leave.

Art [as Elana]: And Horseface still dies!

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: Horseface still dies.

Ali [as Caitlin]: Yeah, and I'm super fucked.

Art [as Elana]: (overlapping): We can use—we can stick it to the Whitakers here.

Janine [as Chanti]: I mean, look. That guy sucks, but like, he didn't do the thing.

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: What's he gonna do? Rot in some...prison cell for a few years before his lawyers get him out?

Art [as Elana]: Not even!

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: Not even.

Art [as Elana]: He's got a whole criminal syndicate behind him! They don't go to jail!

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi] (overlapping): Got a whole criminal syndicate behind him. They don't go to jail.

Janine [as Chanti]: But doesn't—[sigh] how does it not make things worse for someone else that we haven't seen?

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: Of course, *everything* in Blough City makes something worse for someone you haven't seen!

[**Janine** sighs in character]

Art [as Elana]: The world! Sucks! This one, more than the other one!

[**Austin** chuckles]

Janine [as Chanti]: That doesn't mean we should make it suck more.

Art [as Elana]: No, we should—we should do what we can, and get the fuck out! With this lady quickly becoming my best friend! [**Austin** cracks up, pause] We're gonna go be P.I.'s! On the other side!

Janine [as Chanti]: What?

Art [as Elana]: I wish I had a snappy name for us as a duo.

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: Uh...

[**Janine** laughs]

Art [as Elana]: But no one would appreciate it, 'cause those TV shows don't exist here!

[**Austin** laughs]

Janine [as Chanti]: You're really making a lot of commitments about how much you think this lady wants to hang out with you. [Laugh]

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi] (overlapping): TV? Key, what's—what's TV? [Laugh]

Art [as Elana]: It's great, you'll love it.

Ali [as Caitlin] (overlapping): Do not even worry about it.

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: Also, yeah—

Ali [as Caitlin]: Oh, my god. [Laugh]

Austin: I do love the idea of like—Champ is what, nineteen here? Eighteen?

[**Ali** laughs]

Art: Something like that, yeah.

Austin (overlapping): And there's like, twenty-six year old, who she thinks is the coolest person in the world, [laugh] because she's wearing all black and smoking a long cigarette and down with revenge? And is just, like, starry-eyed at how cool she is. Love it.

Art: Revenge against *mobsters*—

Austin: Yes.

Art: —a group of people that Elana hates.

Austin: Mhm!

Janine: Yeah...

Austin: Right! True!

Janine: That's true.

[Timestamp 02:30:00]

Ali [as Caitlin]: She was a cop a minute ago.

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: Eh...the badge...

Art [as Elana] (overlapping): She's the cop who helped us kill two cops.

Janine [as Chanti]: How did—

Ali [as Caitlin]: She hid in a bathroom!

Janine [as Chanti] (overlapping): —she help us? [Laugh]

Art [as Elana]: She didn't help *then*.

[**Austin** laughs]

Janine [as Chanti]: Yeah, great. Then I helped do a lot of things.

[**Austin** and **Ali** laugh]

Austin: We're all complicit, Melissa. [Laugh]

Art [as Elana] (overlapping): (Laughing) You just killed two people! [Laugh]

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: This is what I'm saying.

Ali [as Caitlin]: No, this is what I—it's easy to say "we're all complicit" when you're the one wearing a police uniform. I'm not buying into the—

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi] (overlapping): I'm happy to take the uniform off once I get out of here. You don't have to buy in. This was always a way out for me. You chose working with the Whitakers the way you chose the work with the Whitakers. I chose the way I chose.

Art [as Elana]: (Muffled) Yeah!

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi] (overlapping): You wanted to be the person who ran their bar. I was the one who was gonna be behind their badge. That's all there is to this.

Art [as Elana] (overlapping): Yeah, you're both—you both made bad choices [**Ali** laughs] to get out of a bad situation. I get it.

Ali [as Caitlin]: This lady sucks, and you should stop (laughing) arguing!

[**Janine** laughs quietly in the background]

Art [as Elana]: We all suck! You all work for horrible people. Grouse just killed two people.

Austin: Grouse only killed one.

Janine [as Chanti] (overlapping): I didn't—I killed *one*.

Ali [as Caitlin]: I killed the other one.

Austin: There you go.

Ali [as Caitlin]: He deserved to die!

Austin (overlapping): Yeah, (laughing) Elana, the only person [**Ali** laughs] who hasn't killed someone in this game so far.

Ali: Um...what am I actually arguing for here? Um... 'cause I don't like or trust this person.

Austin: Yeah?

Ali: But I would probably...I mean, it seems—mmh. [Sigh] There's no way we can give up Harry without, like, real talk assurances...

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: ...that this stupid plan that she has is gonna play out the way that she wants it to. Because Chanti's right that being, like "I can protect him from the Whitakers, but I did it 'cause I was so scared of them!" doesn't make sense, and is a lie.

Austin: Oh, she wasn't scared of them, so much as...she's scared—mmh. So. Yes. I think the thing she's signaling is that she is not scared of what the *Whitakers* can do to her, she's scared of someone else. We know she is scared of Mr. E. Mask, and the weird forces that be—that are, like, the highest tiers of the Tunnel Project. The Whitakers—fuck 'em. But the...she's afraid if she goes to Bluff City to just live there, she will be tracked down by that motherfucker. And I think, maybe, it's worth just putting that out there, directly, right? Which is like, you know, the best she feels she can do—and maybe she says this, is just like—

[as Lieutenant Merisi]: As long as the rest of the partners in the Tunnel Project are active, I'm stuck. Here. In this city. The best I can do...is poke at the Whitakers and get a little taste of revenge now and then. As I do their work.

Janine [as Chanti]: Why did we rule out the fake-your-death thing again? Just because—

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi] (overlapping): I guess we haven't.

Janine [as Chanti] (overlapping): —they'd figure it out? Or something?

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: I think we ruled it out because fuck the Whitakers, and it doesn't hurt them at all.

Art [as Elana]: Bam!

[**Janine** laughs]

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: If the case you're making is...

Janine [as Chanti] (overlapping): I mean, like, there are Whitakers in other towns. [Laugh] We got other Whitakers to fuck with.

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: Yeah, I—if the case you’re making is you’ll get me out of here, one, how do I know I can trust you? How do I know you’re not gonna put a gun to the back of my head and pull the trigger the second we’re out of here?

Janine [as Chanti]: ‘Cause Elana would hit me.

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: Elana?

Art [as Elana]: I mean, it’s true.

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: Okay.

Art [as Elana]: But she did just shoot someone—she’s shot more people in the last five minutes [**Janine** laughs] than I’ve seen her shoot the whole time. Up ‘till now.

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: In life? Not just—

Art [as Elana] (overlapping): She’s trending. She’s trending bad. [**Austin** and **Janine** laugh] At this rate, she’ll be killing thousands of people...[**Austin** and **Janine** laugh harder] a *day*, in like a month.

Austin: Exponential. It’s bad. Alright. I think you can...I think this is an interesting case for her. Because what’s happening is, she is being—the question for her is “Do I want to hurt the Whitakers more, or do I want the thing that makes me want to hurt the Whitakers more?” Right? Um...which is, like, escape being demeaned—escape being treated as, like, a pet. Escape, like, being forced to work with people who hate you. Or has that damage been done such that she’s willing to set the whole world on fire in order to make them suffer a little bit? And I think that’s a difficult question. I think that’s a difficult question for anyone who’s in a situation like this. Who has turned to lashing out because the rest of their verbs feel like they’ve been...like...you know, erased basically. Or taken away from.

Janine: But also, she’s not gonna set the world on fire. She said herself—

Austin: Oh, yeah.

Janine: —that no one’s gonna suffer for this.

Austin: Well, no, the people who are gonna suffer—

Janine (overlapping): It’s just an inconvenience.

Austin: No, no, no. The *kid* won’t suffer, but they will suffer for having their names dragged through the mud. They’ll suffer because their son will have been—you know, there are all sorts of business things that will become harder once they are officially criminals and not just sort-of-criminals.

Janine: Mmm...

Austin: Right?

Janine: Mhm.

Austin: That stuff stings. You know? Mob families are known to be mob families, but there is a line that gets crossed in ego when you have to go to the courthouse in cuffs, you know?

Janine: Mhm.

Austin: She wants to humiliate them.

[as Lieutenant Merisi]: I hope they testify...like Test-a-Face does.

[**Janine** and **Austin** laugh]

Austin: Damn! Art just moved Elana—[**Art** and **Janine** laugh] this is why you use tokens. Elana just moved across the room to stand next to Merisi.

[**Ali** laughs]

Janine: Can you flip your token horizontally so it looks like Elana is extending her hand [**Austin** laughs] to the Lieutenant for a dance.

Austin: Is that a thing you can do in the—yeah.

Art (overlapping): You can do that.

Austin: Uh, you can do that. Yeah, there you go.

Janine: (Disappointed) Yeah...

Austin: That works.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: We could do it the other way. I think that's a thing you can do. Boom.

Art: Oh...

Austin: There you go!

Janine: Fantastic.

Austin: Uh-huh. Now that's a map. [Pause] Um...it sounds like there is a roll here, insofar as...you're trying to convince her to listen to her better angels. That's the phrase, right?

Art: Is it—

Janine: Yeah, better angels and worse angels.

Austin: Uh-huh.

Janine: And Criss Angels.

Austin: Criss An—listen to her Criss Angels.

Janine (overlapping): He's in the middle.

Austin: *He's* an illusionist. [Laugh] [**Janine** laughs] Criss "Horseface" Angel.

Art (overlapping): Listen to her inner mind freaks.

[**Austin** and **Janine** laugh]

Austin: (Laughing) Yeah, at least he wasn't Harry "Mind Freak" Houdini.

Art: I—it's, excuse me, it's "Criss Angel, Mind Freak" not "Criss 'Mind Freak' Angel."

[**Janine** laughs]

Austin: Apologies. I'm sorry. I'm sorry.

Art: That's what I've learned in the—in the isolation is that you can just watch magic tricks on youtube. It's great.

[**Austin** laughs]

Janine: Yeah...

Austin: So, yeah. I think this is a Charisma Check and it sounds like—sounds like there's some helping happening here? Between...between, uh....buh-buh-buh. Caitlin and Chanti. I don't know who is...who is the lead roller here, though? Um...it sounds like probably Chanti with Caitlin helping? But I don't know if that's mechanically the best play...

Janine (overlapping): Who has better Charisma? I have two.

Austin (overlapping): It's who has better Charisma, and then also who has a skill that lets them help. [Laugh] So you could definitely help.

Ali: I have a Charisma of two.

Austin: So I think actually the play here would be just for Chanti to do it. Make the roll herself? Because otherwise—your options are: Caitlin does it, which would be two cards plus one on each of the, like, card face values, or Chanti does it with three cards. That's kind of the choice that you have in terms of mechanical play. Or this is a group Trait Check, actually. Which we've not done. In which case, both of you do it, and if half or more of the characters are successful, the whole group succeeds. That's probably the best way of doing this in terms of giving you the best chances, right?

Janine: Yes?

Austin: As long as one of you succeeds, you succeed. Yeah.

Ali: Yeah...

Austin: So let's do that. You both get to make a Charisma Check. A Charisma plus a relevant skill, which Chanti has, Caitlin does not.

Ali: Okay. Drawing my card.

Austin: Okay.

Ali: Three of hearts.

Austin: Alright, you get another card. Three—let me tell you, three ain't gonna cut it.

Ali: [Sigh] Sure isn't. Ten of clubs...

Austin (overlapping): Ten of spades!

Ali: ...ten of spades.

Austin: And then...Chanti?

[Pause]

Janine: Two of spades.

Austin: Mhm. [Laugh]. You gonna keep that one, or...

Janine: No.

Art: We've learned that's not high enough.

Janine (overlapping): Three of clubs.

Austin: Uh-huh.

Art: We've also learned that's not high enough.

Janine: Oops, I have pen—I have white marker selected—

Austin (overlapping): [Laugh] It's fine, I got it.

Janine: —instead of—[laugh] okay. [Pause] Queen of diamonds!

Austin: Queen of diamonds.

Janine: Ey!

Austin: Look at that. Um, let me take a look at Merisi's stats to see the number. Alright! I think you see her...posture soften.

[as Lieutenant Merisi]: [Sigh] Alright. I've done a lot of actual...killing? I don't know how a fake one looks. What do we do?

Janine [as Chanti]: Caitlin, if we left the room, would that force field stay there until you, like, dismiss it?

Ali: Um...I have...approximately...sixty feet. Oh, I can also travel up to a mile away from it.

[**Austin** and **Janine** laugh, **Ali** snorts]

Janine: (Laughing) Those are different, so...

[**Ali** continues laughing]

Art: Several feet and two miles.

Ali: So I can leave it as it is, walk away—it's the force field that I know where it is, up to a mile. But if I wanted it to move with me...

Janine: No...

Ali: Um...

Janine: No. I don't—

Ali (overlapping): I can have it—

Janine (o: —we don't need that.

Ali (overlapping): Yeah. Okay. Sure.

Janine [as Chanti]: Um...[**Ali** laughs] my thought, in terms of faking her death—

Austin: Yeah.

Janine [as Chanti]: —is...we would need to make sure that people who know that she has smoke powers are the ones who investigate.

Austin: Mmh...

Janine [as Chanti]: That's part one.

Austin: Mhm.

Janine [as Chanti]: Part two, we need smoke. Part three, we need to trap the smoke in a way where it's obvious there was some sort of incident...and maybe she died and turned into (laughing) smoke.

Austin: Yeah, sure.

Janine [as Chanti]: Part four would then be, we can't leave until after the smoke trapped in the force field has been discovered and people are like "Oh, dang...she got killed."

Austin: "She got killed."

Janine [as Chanti]: And she's surrounded by dead and unconscious people so, like, it feels like if they found smoke trapped in a...force field cube, maybe they'd put two and two together. You know?

Austin: Mhm.

Ali [as Caitlin]: That / killed her? No. That's—this is a bad idea again. [**Janine** laughs] Um...[laugh]

Janine [as Chanti]: Okay, well how do you suggest we trap some smoke?

[**Ali** continues laughing]

Ali [as Caitlin]: I...um...

Janine [as Chanti]: I'm offering solutions.

Ali [as Caitlin]: No, I appreciate that. Thank you.

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: Could move the body somewhere else.

Janine [as Chanti]: We could use the bathroom? How's the ventilation in those bathrooms?

Ali [as Caitlin]: No. Yeah, the-the-the-the grand plan leading to..."Oh, we should get special superhero police investigators into this bar" [**Janine** laughs] is the worst...*possible* solution. Um...and I...

Ali: [Laugh] It feels bad to continually have to be like "No! I don't want that to happen in this game," but I feel like it's, like, an interesting point to have Caitlin have to continually argue with these teenagers—

Austin (overlapping): No, I agree.

Ali: —and be like "I have to fucking live here!"

Austin: [Laugh] Yes.

Janine [as Chanti]: You could come with us!

[**Ali** laughs]

Art [as Elana]: Yeah, have you considered *not* living here?

Ali [as Caitlin]: I—well, *briefly*, on the card right home, but like a bird got shot in my *bar* and now [**Austin** laughs]...I'm kind of like...

Janine [as Chanti] (overlapping): Yeah, that's a "*this place*" problem, I promise!

Ali [as Caitlin]: [Laugh] (Laughing) I feel like...having...

Art [as Elana] (overlapping): Yeah, Rupert's been shot zero times back home.

Janine [as Chanti] (overlapping): I've never had a bird get shot before!

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: I mean—wait—

Janine [as Chanti]: Well...

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: —it's a "this place" problem *for now*. You think they're gonna build a tunnel and not go through it? That's the whole thing.

Janine [as Chanti]: We can fuck up that tunnel on our way through it.

Art [as Elana]: Or stay on the other side of the tunnel and fuck up everyone that comes through it.

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: That's what you were trying to do when you got knocked out and sent here. You didn't *know* (laughing) that's what you were trying to do, but you didn't do it successfully.

Art [as Elana]: This time we'll tie ourselves to something.

Janine [as Chanti]: Um...[laugh]

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: You got a lot of spunk. I...think...you're both gonna be part of whatever it is that tries to stop this from happening. I think you're getting ahead of yourselves if you think you're gonna, like, knock out this project on the way home. Honestly—

Art [as Elana]: Well—

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: —at this point?

Art [as Elana] (overlapping): —now that we're best friends, we'll figure it out [laugh] over there!

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: (Unenthusiastic) Great. At this point, I would love to find a different way out of here, that has nothing to do with the tunnel. Because if we go through there, they're gonna see me going through there.

Janine [as Chanti]: You could go the long way.

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: I don't know the *long* way.

Janine [as Chanti]: Well lucky for you, we know someone who knows some long ways.

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: Hmm.

Janine [as Chanti]: I'm not gonna go that way 'cause that person told me birds don't do well there and, like, I kinda doubt that, but also my bird's in bad shape so I don't wanna push it?

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: Yeah. [Sigh]

Austin: She's on board. You just need—we just need flavor for how you fake her death. That doesn't—that Caitlin is okay with, 'cause it doesn't put more cops in this bar.

Janine (overlapping): I mean, [sigh] we could do it the old-fashioned way, right? Which is, like, a fake radio call...where it's like "I need—I need—[mimicking radio static]" [**Austin** and **Art** laugh] and then like, (laughing) you know?

Austin: And then you push a car over a cliff, and it, like, tumbles and explodes...

Janine (overlapping): Static, and then there's like a gunshot in the background. We have a gun, I can shoot it into the dirt.

Art [as Elana]: I think we need a *body*, though.

Janine: Can make, like—

Janine [as Chanti]: She's a smoke person!

Art [as Elana]: *Whoa!* [**Austin** laugh] I don't think you're allowed to call people "smoke people."

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi] (overlapping): (Laughing) Again, listen, remember when I said they came with all *sorts* of demeaning names?

[**Ali** and **Janine** laugh]

Ali [as Caitlin]: Okay, yeah. I don't know where we're killing her, but it shouldn't be here. But...we're not gonna have—

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi] (overlapping): (On edge) We're not—wh—

[**Janine** laughs, then **Ali** laughs]

Ali [as Caitlin]: You know, "killing her."

Janine (overlapping): Air quotes.

Ali: Caitlin does quotation marks.

Austin (overlapping): Yeah, uh-huh. [Laugh]

Janine (overlapping): Smoke quotes.

Ali [as Caitlin]: You know...we're all on the same—come on...we're on the same page. Um...[**Austin** laughs] but yeah, just don't do it here. Do it outside or something. Go to the Whitaker's house and fake kill her there. We can make it look like *they* killed you! [Excited gasp] Oh my *god*! [**Austin** laughs] We can make it look like they killed you.

[Timestamp 02:45:05]

Janine [as Chanti]: Wait the whole reason—the whole reason we're not okay with this is 'cause she's trying to frame someone for a thing they (laughing) didn't do. [**Austin** laughs] We can't—

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: I thought the reason you weren't okay with it was because Horseface might get in trouble, or be hurt—

Janine [as Chanti] (overlapping): Well...

Ali [as Caitlin] (overlapping): Yeah.

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: —by the framing.

Janine [as Chanti] (overlapping): Okay. That too...in general—

Ali [as Caitlin] (overlapping): Well, we'll just leave Horseface out of it.

Janine [as Chanti]: [Sigh]

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: Dump the bodies at the Whitaker mansion.

Ali [as Caitlin]: All of them!

Janine [as Chanti]: Mm-hmm...

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: All of 'em.

Ali [as Caitlin]: This is five cops, at that point. Six! You're a cop—

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi] (overlapping): One of them—

Ali [as Caitlin] (overlapping): Are you still a cop?

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: I'm still a cop.

Ali [as Caitlin]: There you go.

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi] (overlapping): For now. [**Ali** sighs]

Janine [as Chanti]: Why would they kill their own person?

Art [as Elana]: The *cops* don't—what? Don't be—don't be silly.

[**Ali** and **Austin** laugh]

Janine [as Chanti]: No, why would the Whitakers kill their own person by killing her?

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: Why would their own person...

Janine [as Chanti] (overlapping): When she's already killed cops for them?

Art [as Elana]: That's gonna be, like, part of the investigation like **[Austin laughs]** the cops are gonna show up and see all the dead cops, and be like "Why would they kill *this* cop? This cop killed cops for them? What's happening here?"

[Janine laughs]

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: I think this is the play. [Laugh] I'll call it in, and I'll call in that I have to go—that I'm pulling into the Whitaker place, that I...found a lead. I can't say it over the radio. I'll draw something up that makes it seem like, maybe, this was more than a once—than a one time thing, and I'll...I'll make—[sigh] make a mess. In the—on the estate. Tell 'em where to find the bodies. We'll shoot some guns in the air. And then we leave.

Ali [as Caitlin]: And...and then after that...

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: Uh-huh/

Ali [as Caitlin]: Me and you...um...I don't know. If you wanna get out of here, there are other people that want to, too, and we have to figure something out—

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: 'Cause that—

Ali [as Caitlin] (overlapping): —'cause shit is getting bad. [Laugh]

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: Are you staying? You gonna keep running this place?

Ali [as Caitlin]: People still need it.

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: Fair enough.

Art [as Elana]: Yeah, if you leave, I'm sure no one will—

Ali [as Caitlin] (overlapping): It's a living, breathing...

Art [as Elana]: (overlapping): —no one will drink ever again.

[Ali laughs]

Ali [as Caitlin]: People come here for protection.

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: They did—

Janine [as Chanti] (overlapping): I don't know if that's gonna keep happening.

Austin [as Lieutenant Merisi]: Well, no one will have been killed here, so it doesn't—no one will know.

Ali [as Caitlin]: Yeah! [Laugh]

Janine [as Chanti]: (Doubtful)...

Austin: Also, I'm just gonna say, in this moment, that the (laughing) *two civilians*—

Janine [as Chanti] (overlapping): Is your bouncer okay?

Austin: —*left* [**Ali** and **Janine** laugh] before all this discussion happened.

Janine: (Laughing) Okay.

[**Austin** and **Ali** laugh]

Austin: The singer's just in the other bathroom being like "They're gonna *frame* the Whitaker boy?!" [**Janine** laughs] Um, here's the thing I want to do. Let's...let's just narrate this out. I think we're—I think we're here at the close, and like, let's each draw a card and narrate an element of this, according to what we drew. [**Ali** laughs] I don't think it's, like, a failure if it's bad, but it's like darkly-tinged. Do you know what I mean? It's possible—

[**Ali** continues laughing]

Art: Are you gonna reshuffle, or are we gonna—

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Let's re—you want—

Art (overlapping): —draw from—or, yeah—

Austin: Okay. [**Janine** groans] I'm giving everyone the option whether or not they want me to reshuffle.

Janine: No. Absolutely, I don't want that.

Art (overlapping): Yes! I have two aces—

Austin (overlapping): Alright, Art—

Art: a queen, [**Austin** laughs] and (laughing) the good joker.

Austin: (Laughing) The good joker! Yeah.

Ali: Um...

Austin: Recall....oh.

Ali: Oh, you recalled me. It doesn't matter. I didn't have—

Austin: I'm sorry.

Ali: No, that's fine.

Austin: Okay. I'm recalling Art now. I will not recall Janine, who said no. I will shuffle. And I am going to leave mine on the table also. Let's just go with what we got. Um...alright. Was that a draw or was that your card? Was that card already on the table?

Janine (overlapping): I was moving the other card—

Austin: Okay.

Janine: —that I had from before.

Austin: Alright.

Janine: That was my convincing card.

Austin (overlapping): So, who wants to add their first detail of this thing?

Ali: Oh, I already have a card in my hand. [Laugh]

Austin: Oh, just play it then.

Ali: Okay.

Austin: That's a seven of clubs. Clubs are bad. Seven is kind of mediocre at best. What—what's something that's colored kind of poorly in this—in this framing situation slash escape from town?

Ali: And this is just the whole...

Austin: This is that—yeah, the whole—the whole plan.

Ali: Um...

Austin: This is, like, either setting the bodies or doing the bit where you call in—where we call in the fake thing. It doesn't have to be about Caitlin, it just has to be about how it—how we *frame* the...events that follow.

Ali: Sure.

Austin (overlapping): Think about it like a Fiasco style “And then...” you know, “and this is the” blank.

Ali: Okay, yeah. Um...I think 'cause I'm the starting thing, I think that this is the scene of them, like, you know...emotions finally settle.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: Caitlin sort of pours everybody a drink [**Austin** chuckles] and then they, you know...[sigh] do what they gotta do, and then they get into a van, (laughing) and then they put all the bodies in it,

and they're going and they're gonna do what they gotta do. But I think that...the younger Whitaker sees us doing this?

Austin: Ooh, okay.

Ali: Um, and I—

Austin (overlapping): Like, from the...

Ali: Yeah, from his—

Austin (overlapping): ...the second floor window, or whatever.

Ali: Yeah. He's in his smoking room, in his stupid little *robe*.

Austin: (Laughing) Uh-huh.

Ali: Um...and I think that the, like—b-b-b-buh, I think the expression that he has is not...it's not, like, disappointed. It's not, like, happy. I think there's a part of him that's, like, impressed?

Austin: Mmm...

Ali: And I do think that there's a part of him that's like—we kind of saw him as this sniveling little weirdo who nobody cared about, but I think that when he's sort of considering the legacy of himself, [**Austin** exhales a laugh] that Caitlin—

Austin: Right.

Ali: —made him consider in the first scene of this game...

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: ...he is starting to think, like “Oh, I'm gonna—this is—this is gonna be useful for me one day, even if I don't...kind of, lay the trap out immediately.”

Austin: Right...

Ali: “I'm gonna let them...I'm gonna let this play out, but I'm gonna make this shit work for me.”

Austin: Cool.

Ali: Um, yeah.

Austin: Like it! Uh...Elana or...or Chanti? Who wants to go next?

Janine: Um...

Art: I drew my card, and it's a five of spades—

Austin: Yikes.

Art: If we want to try to like...[**Austin** laughs] get some back and forth, you might wanna—

Austin: Uh-huh.

Art: (Laughing) We might wanna have, uh...Chanti go first.

Janine: Um...the thing I've been considering, depending on my draw, might affect things in a big way, so...

Austin: Okay.

Janine: Oh! Okay.

Austin: It's the worst card.

Art: Ooh....

Austin: In the deck.

Art (overlapping): It's the worst card.

Janine: [Sigh] Is there something wrong with my deck? [**Austin** laughs] No, it's okay. This is—this actually...

Austin (overlapping): Famous gambler's phrase...[laugh]

Janine: I mean, this...this kind of [sigh] goes with what I was thinking. This is an idea that I first had when I was—when I didn't know, like, if the Lieutenant was gonna be a separate fight that we had to go do?

Austin: Mhm.

Janine: And I thought, like, if that was the case, the thing that would probably happen is that Chanti would just take Rupert and try to go through the tunnel.

Austin: Ooh...

Janine: Because, like...you know, Rupert is, like, okay...but he's not good in a way that she's comfortable with? [Laugh]

Austin: In terms of—

Janine (overlapping): And also—

Austin: —in terms of, like—

Janine: In terms of...in terms of health and in terms of, like, where this goes because, like...you know. It is a long trip—

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: —to go back not through the tunnel...

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: ..and not everyone is going to be going through the tunnel...

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: And something might happen that jeopardizes the tunnel, especially if some shit goes down...

Austin: Take another point of Shade, and learn a little bit about what makes the tunnel the tunnel, and why it's better to go the long way, even though it's harder. Which is, when you move through the tunnel, where you're at comes with you. You don't get to leave Blough City without it coming with you, and kind of *infecting* Bluff City a little bit here. We're not gonna play this game again, [laugh] but when we come back to Chanti, you know, the dress will have changed color again. You know? Maybe the—maybe, you know, her hair will be different. Rupert's feathers, maybe, at this point have changed a little bit. And we can talk about what that looks like the next time Rupert comes up. But like...there is—this is on top of, like, cameras seeing you go through the tunnels. Right? Going through the Tunnel Project. And, like, it also just being disorienting, 'cause it's not (laughing) *finished*, right? Like—

Janine: Mhm.

Austin: —you can get someone through it, but it's like...it's like going through an unfinished...like mining tunnel at a certain point? And it's, like, going through an unfinished mining tunnel that passes between dimensions? So yeah, I think that's part of the consequence here. Unless, do you have something else in mind, also?

Janine: Um...

Austin: Besides just having decided to make this decision? To take this action.

Janine: No, I mean I think it's—I think it is just a thing of like....yeah, I don't know. It's—it's weird 'cause Chanti specifically has Reliable—

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: —but it's a question of, like, who are you reliable to, in this case?

Austin (overlapping): Yeah. Sure.

Janine: Um...and also—

Austin (overlapping): Yeah—

Janine: —has Stickler, which, you know...what does “perfect” mean? What does “doing everything right” mean? To her, I think—I think Chanti is like...flexible in terms of, like, what people deserve to be punished for?

Austin: Mhm.

Janine: I don't think she's hardlining that way. But I think for her there's a difference between "Yeah, you did a thing that, like, I understand," versus "Yeah, I'm gonna help you...set someone else up and do all this stuff." Like that's a thing where, you know, she won't—she's not doing anything to stop them, either.

Austin (overlapping): Yeah, yeah.

Janine (overlapping): But it is a thing of like "I think I would rather just take care of Rupert right now."

Austin: Mhm.

Janine: So I think it is just a...like, "I gotta go, good luck."

Austin: Yeah...um, I think another element of this—that there's like a color of this, is that, like, we get her back in Bluff City, and there's a moment where she's like "What day is it?" And it's small, and it doesn't change—like, Bluff City hasn't changed, but there's a degree to which you're just like—you're not unfocused, even. It's just that things *feel* a little more gray to her, and that reflects this experience, right?

Janine: (Muffled) Mhm.

Austin: And reflects having lost a little of herself—or, having herself changed a bit in the process of going through the tunnel. Art, do you want to do your five of spades now? Or do you want me to draw one?

Art: I'm struggling with what five of spades really means.

Austin: It's not good, but there's a silver lining on it.

Art: It's not good, but there's a silver lining...

Austin: Yeah. [Pause] It's up to you if you wanna do that now, or if I draw a card and do an intermediary one.

Art: You go—[stammers] I need some time to brain—to...

Austin: There's an ace of diamonds. [Laugh] Um...

Art: (Quietly) That's pretty good.

Austin: I'm glad that fight didn't happen, because *immediately* [laugh] she would've gotten an *ace of diamonds*! Um...[sigh] the diamonds doesn't really matter, but the ace is good. I think this is the...I think this is...the Whitaker side of it, right? If I'm playing, like, from Merisi's position. He gets arrested. It's in all the papers. You know? You know, the Whitakers, this institution of the city—this institution that even—has always been so powerful, that they've—their reach has gone beyond the city to some degree. Is—are dragged through the mud. You know. People say

that all their holdings are scams, or that they're crooks...and they are. [Laugh] And some of their holdings get kind of brought out into public in a way—that they never would've wanted. It's a lot of, like "Hey...you know, they get a lot of exceptions from city hall to build unique structures. Hey, they're caught up in a lot of stuff, and also their kid is a cop murderer." And so I think that the specific thing that happens is they stop losing a lot of government contracts. They are, like, locked into the Tunnel Project in a way, but have to cede control over it to certain degrees to Blough City proper, and to their...silent partner. And so, like, they just lose a lot of political clout and...to build on...to build on...Ali's thing, I do think that to some degree, this is like Hollis being like "I'm going to get my revenge at some point," right? Like this the, like—which I don't think is a *bad* thing, but I just want to, like, zero in on that a little bit. He—I think he, like—he gets so arrested. [Laugh] He gets so sent to jail. [Laugh] He hams it up, in a way. He plays the—plays the part in a way that's like...he either doesn't care about the repercussions, or feels so safe given what—the amount of people from the Whitaker syndicate who are already in prison, or has decided to make a play to make a name for himself as this, like, top-tier gangster that he wants the credit even though he has certainly not done this thing. And, yeah...that is—that is the ace here. Um...which then, I think Art, puts you back at the "what happens afterwards." What happens after all this goes down? How do you get back? What happens when you get back? Et cetera.

Art: Sure. I think, like, Elana takes the long way, and it's...fine.

Austin (overlapping): Boat or land?

Art: Yeah.

[**Austin** chuckles]

Austin: Or, sorry, by sea or by land?

Art: By land.

Austin: So it's a—it's *literally* a walk through a desert. It's like...five days. You come—you both have to bring a *lot* of water. You have to bring a lot of supplies. But you do it with—Alexandra comes with you as your guide, because she's done it before. Why is it a five of spades?

[Pause]

Art: [Sigh] Um...I don't want to focus on the journey as—I mean we can, if we decide it's important or interesting—

Austin (overlapping): Sure. No, yeah. No-no-no.

Art: —I think it's getting back and, like, everything's just moved on.

Austin: Mmm...

Art: You know, like...

Austin (overlapping): You were here for longer than you thought, or just like...

Art: Yeah, it's like...

Austin (overlapping): ...it *feels* that way?

Art: It's like—it's like you get back and it's been—instead of whatever we said—months?

Austin: Weeks? A week. Two weeks. Three weeks.

Art: It's been...you know...much longer.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: And, like...it's not saying, like, no one cares but, like, people's shit moves on. Like...you know, the—you know the place she was staying isn't...isn't cool anymore, you know? I think we said in the original arc that she, like, stays with her old coach?

Austin: Yeah.

Art: And like, maybe he moved? And it's like...and, you know, the rest of the team is all...they, like, left for college, right?

Austin: Mmm...what's the—what's the Boon? What's the “But, there's a silver lining here”?

[Timestamp 03:00:00]

[Pause]

Austin (Continued): Are we getting—do we get Elana and [laugh] Mary Merisi becoming P.I.'s?

Art: I don't know if I want it to be *that*, or if I want it to be... 'cause part of the five could be like they just didn't get along on the trip?

Austin: Yeah.

Art: So I either want the Boon to be the, like, P.I. thing starting or I want it to be an “Elana moves in with Hilda.”

Austin: Oh, interesting. The thing with the Hilda thing is that I would want that to be a character decision. You know what I mean?

Art (overlapping): Alright, then we're P.I.'s!

Austin: Alright. Love it.

Art: And I'll—we'll come up with a name before it comes up again.

[Austin laughs]

Austin: Okay. We fucking better.

Art: Yeah, now we have to.

Austin: Now we've committed.

Art (overlapping): Gotta be great.

Janine: (Jokingly) Guns and Smoke!

[**Austin** and **Janine** chuckle quietly]

Austin: (Laughing) Gun smoke! I—guns, 'cause like—

Art (overlapping): Guns, like...

Janine (overlapping): Guns...smoke. [**Austin** laughs] Like, arms, and then...

Austin (overlapping): Like arms.

Art (overlapping): Like Gunsmoke, the (laughing) Western TV show.

[**Austin** laugh]

Austin: Yeah.

Janine (overlapping): Yeah.

Austin: People constantly ask you that, like "Why would you name your detective agency—none of this stuff is Western themed."

Janine: Well, she doesn't—she didn't know TV! She didn't know.

Austin: [Laugh] Right, that's true.

Janine (overlapping): She brought it up, and then...[laugh]

Art (overlapping): Maybe—maybe it *is* Western themed. [Laugh]

Austin: (Laughing) Oh my god.

Art: We got, like, the swinging doors...

Austin: Uh-huh. Cowboy outfits on?

Art: Uh-huh!

Austin: Love it.

Art: It's not bad!

Austin: It's not bad. [Laugh] Alright!

Art: Elana tries a poncho, it doesn't really work.

Austin: Mhm. Um...and then—

Art: Maybe it does. Let me think about it.

Austin: Just as color, can we come back to Caitlin? What is the effect on Caitlin—you don't have to draw another card for this. I'm not gonna risk that. Um...but, you tell me. What is the—what's it look like? You know, a week passes. Two weeks pass. All this court shit happens.

Ali: Yeah, I think that there's...there's sort of the...the, like, important thing of...the sort of downtrodden in...Blough City feeling like they got a win? We spoke about it, but there was definitely—the fact that there was this parade, and it was this revolutionary thing, and then it immediately was just, like all of that momentum was taken from them.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: And I feel like as a...like a (laughing) revolutionary force, dealing in a city that's kind of tough, like once you lose that momentum, it's hard to get that organization back.

Austin: Yeah...

Ali: So I think that you—you kind of see more people—the people who did not have the safety to be as bought in as they were when it looked like they were gonna actually have change in their lives are able to sort of come back into those risks again—

Austin: Mhm.

Ali: —or have that...that stability to sort of, like, help the other people around them. And, I think that...I mean, the hope that I was gonna have (laughing) was that, um...and now that it's three of these women instead of just two, was to sort of set up like a—like a...trolley system?

Austin: Mmm...

Ali: Or at least, like, a...mmh. The thing—the thing that my mind is going for (laughing) is underground railroad, and it's not that.

Austin: Right.

Ali: But it's close as you can get, which is sort of, like, just an organization of people like...if you wanna get out, you can sort of organize groups of people who wanna go...

Austin: Mhm.

Ali: You have a map set out, even if it's not always someone who's gonna be, like, escorting people back and forth. Even though I think that that rich...journalist lady might be up for that? Just to say that she's doing something fun and revolutionary, even though she's just like—

Austin: Oh, she totally—

Ali (overlapping): "I'm a tour guide!"

Austin: No, she a hundred percent will. **[Ali laughs]** I mean—sorry, I say this as someone who, like—the intro from her from the last arc was her much older. And signals a sort of understanding that...what's happening here is bad? That the Tunnel Project is scart. And not much older, but older than—older than...than she is here. And...and that, yeah, she is someone who has—is *totally* down to help...get people to safer places. The thing that scares her is that the Tunnel Project specifically is, like, blending the places. It's not so much travel between the places, which she's super happy to help with. So yeah, I think—yeah, between that group, like—

[Music [*Extracurricular: Out of Time*](#) by Jack de Quidt starts playing]

Austin (continued): —the weird thing here is that there is now this other way of leaving—or, moving between the towns that is a little bit more...known? Or, I'd say, between Bluff and Blough at least. The Bluffington side of it, I don't think she—she *specifically* is like “And no motherfuckers get to come here.” [Laugh] No one gets to go to her home. She does not—that is the other part of the Tunnel Project that scares her, is that, like, it's also being built in Bluffington Beach. It's also being built in Atlantic City, not just in these other places which, to her, are...alternate dimensions. And not her home.

[Music ends]

[Timestamp 03:07:23]