

[Marielda 06: The Valentine Affair Pt. 1](#)

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AUSTIN (as the Narrator): [*slight drawl*] Now there ain't a damn thing that's ever happened in Hieron that I ain't know about. That gives me what you might call a unique perspective. Which comes in handy now and then. Take for instance ghosts.

(Music starts - "Marielda")

You know, specters and phantoms. Vampires. The undead of all sorts. Most folks will tell you that ghosts come from extreme circumstances. A traumatic death. An unavenged betrayal. A depraved killing. They couldn't be more wrong. See, I know the man what moves the soul after the body goes. He ain't leaving behind those that have been wronged. Ghosts ain't about quality of death, they're about quantity. See, sometimes that old boy gets very busy. Can't keep up with them. Maybe a war is on. Maybe it's a flood or a fire. Too many lives to process, and some are bound to slip through the cracks. After all, the truth is, all death is traumatic. But don't get me wrong. Every now and then, a ghost does want a little revenge. But that ain't supernatural. That's just numbers.

(clarinets begin in earnest)

(Music ends)

AUSTIN (as Claret Holiday): You weren't followed, of course.

DRE (as Sige): No.

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): No.

AUSTIN (as Claret): You took precautions?

DRE (as Sige): Absolutely.

AUSTIN: did you- did you take precautions?

(pause, DRE laughs)

SYLVIA: Think we would've, after the stuff with Zaktrak, right?

AUSTIN: I mean, no one said anything.

SYLVIA: Okay, well, I--

DRE: I mean, we did split up.

AUSTIN: You wanna do a Prowl roll for me? As a flashback?

DRE: Oh god, / don't. (laughs)

SYLVIA: Hey, guess what! I don't either! (Ali laughs) So I guess we just *lied*!

AUSTIN: (chuckling) What-- okay! I just love her being like--

SYLVIA: Could I make--

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. What's up?

SYLVIA: the case that like, while they were going, like, Aubrey was keeping a lookout and roll Survey instead? I hate to do that, but...

AUSTIN: I don't think so. Like, what-- That would tell you if you *had* a tail, but it wouldn't

SYLVIA: Okay.

AUSTIN: get rid of a tail for you.

DRE: Mmm.

SYLVIA: Wh-mm. Yeah.

DRE: I mean.

AUSTIN: But maybe you wanna have that whole scene, that's fine.

DRE: We could-- yeah.

SYLVIA: yeah.

DRE: I think that would be more productive for us

SYLVIA: (crosstalk) Okay

AUSTIN: Than Prowling.

SYLVIA: (sighing) Yeah, I guess we roll Survey then to see if we did. And if this is a flashback I don't know-- do I have reduced effect? (crosstalk?)

AUSTIN: No, you don't have reduced effect. Risky, risky controlled.

SYLVIA: (crosstalk) So, risky, risky standard you mean?

AUSTIN: Oh sorry, risky standard, yeah.

SYLVIA: I rolled 6.

AUSTIN: Nice work!

SYLVIA: Thank you.

AUSTIN: That means you get what you want! And in this case it means you know that you definitely have a tail.

SYLVIA: Okay. Do we know what they look like?

AUSTIN: Yeah, they're also Fontmen.

SYLVIA: okay.

AUSTIN: It's two of them, a man and a lady, each one in the same similar white suit, with the canes. And they-- You catch them on the, like while you're moving from Chrysanthemum into Helianthus, it's under-- you catch them while you're walking under the train track, that's like the raised train track on the way to the Southern Bucket. I think you spot them in a reflection, and in a place where there aren't enough people for them to just like, hide out, basically. What do you do?

SYLVIA: This is within the flashback still, right?

AUSTIN: Oh yeah.

SYLVIA: Okay.

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): How do you wanna deal with them, Sige? (chuckles)

DRE (as Sige): You know how I wanna deal with them.

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): I figured I did. (DRE laughs)

DRE: Especially because they've already tried-- I mean, they've already come into our library, and tried to light our books on fire. So this is very much of an "eye-for-an-eye" to Sige. God, cause in my head I'm like, "Oh, we turn into an alleyway and then basically double back to face them," but I don't even know if Sige is that subtle.

SYLVIA: Well, Austin said we see them under the train tracks and there's not enough-- there's not a lot of people around.

AUSTIN: Yeah. If you wanna confront them (crosstalk) you can just confront them.

SYLVIA: (crosstalk) We could take them right there. Well, you could take them right there. (ALI laughs)

DRE: I almost think Sige, like-- Aubrey, I guess probably signals Sige that she sees somebody, and almost think Sige just turns around and just-- just, goes for it. And just rushes them.

AUSTIN: Okay.

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Boom. Alright. Put a clock on the table. It is a six-point clock, and this obstacle is "These Fontmen." These specific ones. What do you, what do you do? How do you deal with them? Are you just like, tackling? Are you punching? Are you...

DRE: No, I think I pull out my trench knife.

AUSTIN: Alright, so give me a, well, what's it look like? So there's two of them, they are like-- I think when they see you start charging them, they are caught in a moment of surprise. Because like, "Yeah, wow." You're a big man and you're just like sprinting at them. (laughter, from DRE and someone else) Also, because you have "Strike First, Strike Hard," I'm giving you... this will be a controlled instead of a risky.

DRE: Okay. Yeah, I guess it's probably just a Skirmish roll.

AUSTIN: Yeah, sounds good. What's it look like?

DRE: Oh. Uhhm.

AUSTIN: Like what are you trying to accomplish here?

DRE: Oh, I'm trying to kill 'em. I think it's-- Aubrey signals to Sige, Sige just kinda nods, turns around, charges, and as he's charging, just kinda pulls the knife out from his, I guess he keeps it on his belt on his pack. (chuckling)

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally. Sure.

DRE: Hold a reverse grip and just lunges for one of them.

AUSTIN: Alright, sounds good. Give me the Skirmish.

DRE: You said controlled?

AUSTIN: Yeah, controlled, uh, controlled standard.

DRE: Okay. (sucks in breath) Woof, really?

AUSTIN: Yeah, you rolled a three, somehow. (ALI pity groans) You rolled a two, a three, and a three. That ain't, that ain't great.

SYLVIA: Oh, Jesus.

AUSTIN: That ain't great. Alright, so on a... controlled, it's not as bad, thankfully? I think you probably just do limited effect-- oh wait no, sorry, cause it's, it's, the way this works is, (reading aloud) "You block, you hesitate, or you falter, press on by seizing a Risky opportunity or withdraw and try a different approach." So I think that like, as you're charging, you grab the knife, and they move a little quicker than you thought that they would? Like you're-- you push the knife in where one of their

throats would be, but surprisingly, she slid out of the way, and activated her cane. You still have the initiative, which means you can go ahead and make another move, but it's a risky movement.

DRE: That's fine. Yeah, I'll just push the attack.

AUSTIN: Alright, give me another Skirmish check here.

(pause)

AUSTIN: Alright.

DRE: That's better.

AUSTIN: that is better. So, standard effect is two, I believe. Two? Yeah, two ticks. So I think you have a quick melee with them, and manage to get a few good slashes in? But neither of them-- they've kind of like, circled you, they've kind of like broken away from you a little bit? And kind of like, are keeping you pent in between the two of them, so where you can't get in close enough with the trench knife. Aubrey, what do you do?

SYLVIA: I'm gonna try and do, like shoot a dart with some choke dust in it, maybe? If that would make... does that make sense? Does that work?

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally.

SYLVIA: So I'm gonna take a stress so I have one die for that.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Give me a roll.

SYLVIA: Uh, risky?

AUSTIN: It will be, no this is, this is controlled. You're not involved in this fight. But you haven't-- you're not involved in this fight and it's at a moment where they've kind of, everyone's just kind of circling each other so there's not as much of a risk that you'll like, hit Sige by mistake, or anything like that.

SYLVIA: Standard?

AUSTIN: Yeah, standard effect.

SYLVIA: Four.

AUSTIN: Alright, that's, that's not so bad. I'd say I think you now have, hm. So I think you catch them with the dart, and-- is this the choking or is this the knockout?

SYLVIA: It's the, it's the, um... Actually, yeah, it could just make it be the knockout. That would make more sense.

AUSTIN: Yeah. So I think it's that and I think that you see that it like, the dart goes in? But the jacket that they're wearing, the like, suit jacket? Is protective in some sense, some sort of armor. So only a little bit of the dust gets into their blood. It's also just like, not meant to be a dart weapon, (crosstalk) like it's meant to be breathed?

SYLVIA: (crosstalk) No, it's, a gas.

AUSTIN: So you see them like, stumble a little bit? The dude that you hit? but he doesn't fall over yet. Sige, what are you doing, when you see one of them get caught by this dart?

DRE: I guess I move my attack to focus on the one that's been stunned by Aubrey's dart. Or not stunned, but kind of...

AUSTIN: Yeah. So you're going for like a death kill, or a death blow? A death kill.

DRE: Yeah. A death kill!

AUSTIN: That's it. (crosstalk) Give me, give me a roll.

DRE: (crosstalk) That's my new anime, Death Kill.

(pause)

AUSTIN: Okay.

DRE: (indistinct) fours.

AUSTIN: So I'm gonna say, you do it, so your knife goes right into his chest, and he like, (mimicking someone stabbed) "Uh-- ah!" and then falls over. But before you know it, the remaining Fontman, the lady has her cane, her weird lazer cane thing, at your back. Think you either need to take singed as a level one harm, or resist.

DRE: Hmmm.

AUSTIN: You're down to no stress, right?

DRE: Yeah yeah yeah.

AUSTIN: Hm.

DRE: I'll just take-- I'll take singed. And that's a one.

AUSTIN: That's a one, yeah.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: So I think that we, like, jump back forward in time? Oh, sorry, you still haven't dealt with her. Right. Duh.

DRE: Yeah (laughing)

AUSTIN: I forgot that she's still alive. Um. What do you do once you're singed?

DRE: Oh. Uh,

AUSTIN: She's like, so she-- the bottom of that cane is just like, constant fire. And she just like, scrapes your back with it? And there's this like, huge scar of --instant scar tissue. Across your back.

DRE: That's my favorite shirt, too. And it's ruined.

AUSTIN: Ugh, goddamnit.

Dre (chuckles): Sige is angry and so he whirls around and tries to basically take this cane and shove it-- flip it and shove it back at them.

AUSTIN (sucks air through teeth): Good. Alright. Give me a.. Oh you know what? You're a small gang. I guess there's two of them, so it wouldn't have come up until right now. Go ahead and give me a roll, risky but then great effect. Except it's reduced by one, so standard effect.

DRE: I do have The Brutal, which gives me potency versus physical targets?

AUSTIN: Oh, yeah, then it's still great effect. Yes. (laughing) Even when you're limited on a one-on-one fight you're great. You built a combat man.

DRE (hisses): Another four.

AUSTIN: That's fine. Four is a success.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: The only-- the thing that ends up happening is that you shove her cane? Is that what you said, you kill her with her own cane?

DRE: Yeah

AUSTIN: Alright. So you do that and she yelps, and when she does, you see from a kind of, there's like a warehouse nearby? Someone who's near the door look over at you both, and then like, (gasps), gasps and hurries up and shuts the door. I'm gonna increase your heat by one. That's all.

DRE: That's it.

AUSTIN: Increase your heat by one. So I think we've jumpcut now to back to her [Claret] being like, "Did you take precautions?" and you're like, "Yup!"

(laughter)

AUSTIN: and then it's just a shot of the scar across Sige's back.

SYLVIA: Wait, did we take that cane, by the way?

AUSTIN: Oh, maybe! (crosstalk) Did you take that cane?

DRE: (crosstalk) Oh, absolutely.

SYLVIA: 'Cause I wanna take those canes.

AUSTIN: Yeah, take those fuckin' canes. Those canes are good, add them to your sheets. Uh, she smirks when you say yes. And she goes,

AUSTIN (as Claret): Huh.

AUSTIN: Let's go back to the folks in the park! What's your plan?

ALI: (chuckling) Uhm, so I have added, in discovering Castille's nature,

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

ALI: Not sure if this is a belief or an instinct, but it is, "Don't start fights, but make sure you end them."

(JACK chuckles)

AUSTIN: (considering) That's an instinct, because it means I can torture you (ALI laughs nervously) with that a little bit, which is good. Okay.

ALI: This is how she acts now.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ALI: I did not realize that. Anyway, yeah, let's (laughing) let's also have a weird fight.

AUSTIN: So yeah, what are you, you're just rolling?

JACK: I mean, give me a second (crosstalk) to get (? indistinct, get out?) the shop first.

ALI: (crosstalk) Yeah!

AUSTIN: (crosstalk) Y'all are just jumpin' in? Oh, so you are hiding in the shop.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ALI: Okay. While I (cracks up) am fighting four people at once.(laughing) Wait a minute

AUSTIN: No combat abilities. This is it, this is what we're doing?

JACK: Wait, you have no combat abilities, Ali?

ALI: I (laughing) thought that I did!

JACK: Okay, I'm joining in. (ALI dies) So what happens is Hitchcock goes into the shop, and he sort of glances over his shoulder and sees all the Fontmen approaching and drawing weapons and things and just sort of says,

JACK (as Edmund Hitchcock): Okay, sorry, just give me a second. (ALI laughing) So sorry.

JACK: And draws his saber.

AUSTIN (as random mall shop owner): Oh, how are you doing, my friend? Come in, come in.

JACK (as Hitchcock): Sorry, I-- No,

AUSTIN (as owner): Take a seat, take a seat. (JACK laughing) Oh, when did you last change those boots, those boots are dirty! give, give me the boots. (laughter) Give me the boots!

JACK (as Hitchcock): No.

AUSTIN (as owner): Sir! (DRE cracking up) Why-- Sir! Sir. Why would you do me this dishonor, you come in with bad boots?

JACK (as Hitchcock): Uh, nope, just have to (ALI cackling)

AUSTIN (as owner): I apologize, they are good boots! They're

JACK (as Hitchcock): I-- I'm so sorry, sir--

AUSTIN (as owner): You take terrible care! Come, sit down!

JACK (as Hitchcock): (stammering) I-- just kee-- You know? Do--

AUSTIN: He's so excited to have a person in his stupid store, there's no one been in all day

JACK (as Hitchcock): Do you, ah-- (ALI dying more)

AUSTIN (as owner): You picked a great time, there is a sale right now! (crosstalk)

JACK (as Hitchcock): Did any of your friends just go on a train recently? I just met someone like you! The funniest thing. Look, have a great day now, I'm so sorry.

JACK: And er, I think I'm just gonna like, make sure my back's to him?

AUSTIN: Uh-huh?

JACK: as I head towards the door and draw my sword a little. (chuckling)

AUSTIN: (laughing) He's like walking out.

AUSTIN (as owner): No, no no! No! (crosstalk, ALI laughing)

JACK (as Hitchcock): Nonono, sir-- (crosstalk) Castille!

AUSTIN (as owner): Come back!

AUSTIN: And then he sees (laughter)

ALI: Um... God...

JACK (as Hitchcock): (wheezes) Just a second, Castille! Just, Just-- sir, you need to sit down, (ALI laughing) there is gonna be a minor altercation in the shoe-- corner. Ah, just,

AUSTIN (as owner): Oh.

JACK (as Hitchcock): Just wait here, just for a moment, sir, I will be back in, just a second, just, very briefly.

AUSTIN (as owner): First the Auntie Anne's closes and now this. Oy.

(wheezing)

JACK (as Hitchcock): Hard times, I'm sorry. It's hard times. (draws a breathe) Alright, Castille, let's mess 'em up!

ALI: Yeah, um...

AUSTIN: Mm-hmm?

ALI: Two things. I have two options here.

AUSTIN: You do!

ALI: I can either have a bunch of magical throwing knives?

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

ALI: Or, we can talk about what attuning to a ghost field and making a ghost do what I tell it to (crosstalk) is gonna, like..

AUSTIN: (crosstalk) Yeah. You can attune to the ghost field and force a nearby spirit to appear before you and obey any command you give it.

JACK: (laughing) Oh my god.

ALI: That is a thing that I can do! (crosstalk)

AUSTIN: (crosstalk) That is a thing you do.

ALI: And I don't have to use Skirmish to do it.

AUSTIN: You have a two in Attune. That's a pretty good skill.

ALI: (wheezing) Yeah. Hey, Austin, so how does that work?

AUSTIN: Uh, y'know, you summon a ghost from nearby?

ALI: Okay. Yeah. Alright.

AUSTIN: Is that what you wanna do?

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: How... have you done this before? (ALI sighs) Do you remember doing this before? 'Cause I know sometimes when you do your vice you just go off and become a robot cop.

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: And I don't know what robot cops do.

ALI: *Right*. I don't feel like this is a thing that pala-din do, though?

AUSTIN: No. It's very much not a thing pala-din do.

ALI: (chuckling) I think that this is more of a thing that she's maybe discovered that she can do?

AUSTIN: Okay. Is this-- this isn't the moment she discovered it, so this isn't like her X-men, (crosstalk) "She has these powers" moment?

ALI: No... I think that like, sometimes when she transferred between her pala-din form and her cat form,

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

ALI: she's able to exist outside of them?

AUSTIN: Oh, sure, like she's like (crosstalk) as a spirit is passing through space and can literally see the other spirits-- It's sort of like in season 1 when Fantasma became-- stuck invisible and got to see his spirit, like servant guy?

ALI: Right, right. Like usually it's just like an automatic thing but sometimes, like one out of every ten times there's like a buffering, and she's aware of what she is out of. Both bodies.

AUSTIN: Does she ever look at herself when she does that?

ALI: I don't think that she's been out long enough.

AUSTIN: Okay. So yeah, you can totally do it here. Give me an Attune. And like, what's that look like? What's the-- how's that... like, does she use stuff, like is it a spell she-- Like, what's the visual... look of it?

ALI: I feel like it has to be like a spell or something? Like she probably has like a charm, or...

AUSTIN: Is this something with the tea witches, [they] helped her learn?

ALI: I think it's probably something the tea witches have helped her refine?

AUSTIN: Right, sorry, not learn, but yeah, refine. Like she has the skill. So does she have stuff from the tea witches that is like, literally how she does it?

ALI: Yeah, I think so. I was thinking of it being like, I think one of the weapons that I have is a demonbane charm?

AUSTIN: Yes.

ALI: And I don't think it's like, through that exactly but it's almost like a pendant that she has on a necklace that glows and becomes, like a lure?

AUSTIN: I see. So yeah, give me an Attune, and tell me again, just tell me what it looks like when she summons it. Like what the spell looks like, I know what the ghost looks like, don't worry.

ALI: (giggling) I think it's like a pendant that lights up?

AUSTIN: Okay.

ALI: and then like, it's almost like an electrical or a zapping sound? And then the ghost is there.

AUSTIN: Okay. You know what, change your demonbane charm to that. And that's what that will be, in your (inventory?).

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: I think that makes sense for you.

ALI: And this is gonna be controlled...

AUSTIN: No, this is risky.

ALI: ...standard?

AUSTIN: This is risky standard.

ALI: (laughing) Okay.

AUSTIN: I have to draw a clock also. One second.

ALI: (nervously) Okay, cool. Well, that's a three.

AUSTIN: Oh, you sure did roll a fucking three, didn't you. (ALI wheezes) Oh.. Ali.

ALI: (laughing) I dunno what's happening.

AUSTIN: Why'd you do this.

JACK: This is a very good day for us, is it?

DRE: (crosstalk) 's a rough day.

AUSTIN: (crosstalk) No. It's bad. (helplessly) I thought we would be in the heist by now. (ALI laughs) I really did, in my heart. I thought we'd be, ah, doo or whatever the music is. I don't know what the heist music is this time. But doo, doo, whatever heist music might be

JACK: I'd be prepping heist music for this episode. (crosstalk)

AUSTIN: We were supposed to have a heist!

JACK: Ya!

AUSTIN: I know the place!

JACK: Hey, anybody wanna rob a shoe shop?

(laughter)

AUSTIN: Alright, so this was, risky standard?

ALI: Oh, this was risky, wasn't it.

AUSTIN: (mumbling) It super was.

JACK: Oh, god, are you just gonna-- the ghost's just gonna arrive and go like, "(mouth click) Think I'm with those guys."

(ALI giggles)

AUSTIN: Not exactly.

ALI: No. No,

AUSTIN: So, with a three, things go badly, you suffer harm, a complication occurs, you end up in a desperate position, you lose this opportunity for action. So normally what happens when you summon a ghost, it appears, it gives you a little nod, to be like, "Oh yeah, it's me, your friend. The ghost. You summoned me here, what's up? What do you need from me?" This time, a man in a cape with kind of uh, slicked back hair, with a streak of white in it, in kind of still a ghostly form. I imagine he's like, see-through, and like-- He's see-through, normally they're like see-through and blue. Right, like "Oh, yeah, they're just ghosts. Whatever." This one's see-through and purple, with sparkles in it? And he looks way too in control. He is... No one here recognizes him, but he's Bolster Valentine?

ALI: (laughing) Okay.

AUSTIN: Who was the, one of the two leaders of the old mages tower. That stood here back before it was the Hanging Gardens of Maelgywn.

ALI: Oh lord.

AUSTIN: And he, with a single gesture, lifts you up into the air by your neck. And it's the strangest feeling, which is like-- first of all, you're being lifted by the neck, which is not where you expect people to touch. First of all, people don't touch you very often.

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: That's like-- So human touch is already a very strange thing. Two,

ALI: Can I feel it?

AUSTIN: Yeah. yeah. And you can feel him, like... I mean, so you feel like the way people feel marble. D'you know what I mean? If you picked up stone, that feeling is what you feel when he touches you. It's a very strange feeling. Also he's a ghost, so it's like extra weird. But also he's not touching with his hand, he's touching with his weird magic hand, right, like-- he doesn't have his hand around your throat. He's lifted you up with a gesture, but you can feel a hand around your throat.

ALI: Oh, so this is like a force choke situation.

AUSTIN: Yeah, you're being force choked, but like, he isn't-- There's no effort in it. It's just like, now you're taken care of, you're up and choking, but the hand is also like, squeezing, and like, "Oh, wow, this is a weird neck. This isn't the sort of neck I expected to be choking." But you're in a desperate situation now. Then, he turns, and just like, (blows) *whooh*!, does like a whoosh, and like, slides his cape off, not off but to the side, and with another gesture, magical fire sprouts in front of the Fontmen.

ALI: Oh, well, that's a solution.

AUSTIN: I mean, like, they haven't ran yet, but, you know. I'm gonna give them a mark. What're you doing, Hitchcock?

JACK: Well, I can't really get through the fire to the Fontmen, right.

AUSTIN: Sure you could! It would just be a desperate action.

JACK: Yeah, but I'm also fairly concerned about the ghost and Castiille....

AUSTIN: Yeah. Fair.

JACK: Is there any way I can harm a ghost that I know?

AUSTIN: Have you ever fought a ghost before? Oh, take one stress.

JACK: Oh, crap, yeah. Well,

AUSTIN: Cause you see a ghost. Oh, my god, you see a ghost. And he's a *weird* ghost.

(ALI laughing)

JACK: So I think what happens, is that like, there is definitely a moment where Hitchcock is fighting his resolve not to just go straight back into the shop again. (AUSTIN laughs) But he doesn't. Have I ever fought a ghost.

ALI: I just want to acknowledge very quickly that this is the second time that question has been asked on the show.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

ALI: Those exact words.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

JACK: (slowly) Have I ever fought a ghost.

(ALI laughs)

AUSTIN: Maybe to Jack, even. (background cackling) Cause I think Jack was the one who swung at the ghost first.

ALI: Yup!

JACK: What happened last time I fought a ghost?

AUSTIN: (loudly) You couldn't hit it because it was a ghost! And you don't have a magic weapon!

JACK: I mean, it sounds to me like you're saying I'm not gonna be able to hit this ghost, Austin.

AUSTIN: I-- I don't know, maybe you are. I don't know what sort of stuff you have with you.

JACK: I can always tell when someone's lying to me, and-- (crosstalk) oh, oh, oh! (indistinct word? 24:59)

AUSTIN: (crosstalk) That is definitely a ghost. Uh-huh?

JACK: I definitely have a spirit bane charm.

AUSTIN: You do! What's that do?

JACK: Well, I've definitely brought it with me.

AUSTIN: Oh. (laughter) Just in case.

JACK: I have it with me, and what I think it is is that I think it answers your question, which is that Hitchcock has never fought a ghost before. But I think that Edmund Hitchcock is terrified of them.

AUSTIN: Awh.

JACK: Is just, extremely, extremely frightened of them, mainly because Ethan has been the worst about them in the past? Just been, "Aw, a ghost, a ghost is coming for you, mate. It's gonna come and get you." So I think that Edmund carries a spiritbane charm. So I think that as soon as he sees this ghost picking up Castille, he sort of just, like, fumbles in a pocket-- He doesn't know what it does. He sort of-- He doesn't know whether or not he needs to like, wear it, or use it? So I think he fumbles and drops it and picks it up and just sort of holds towards the ghost, like a, like a cross and a vampire?

AUSTIN: (crosstalk) Like a cross and a vampire? Oh, boy.

JACK: So I'm gonna use the spiritbane charm.

AUSTIN: Um, it doesn't-- it like, starts to turn to you and it-- Well, what's the charm look like, first of all?

JACK: It is a... I think spiritbane charms in Hieron can be made? But I think they need to be made by somebody who... They're not mass produced. So I think that Hitchcock has taken a punt on a local mage to make a spiritbane charm for him? And, luckily enough, this is like, the real article. I think it is a crow's skull.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: I think it's just a crow's skull. Probably with-- Oh, I tell you what it is. It's a crow's skull with a sprig of heather or something, through one of the eyeholes.

AUSTIN: Ooh. Yeah.

JACK: Like it's like a really weird looking thing.

AUSTIN: So you, you hold it out just as this ghost turns to you, and then it sees that, and it gives you a little glare, like squints its eyes at you. And then starts sliding away in space away from you carrying Castille away with him.

JACK: So he's just-- what are the Fontmen doing?

AUSTIN: They are-- one of them has stepped through the fire, one of the ones with a hat, and he takes his hat off, and it's all burned, and he tosses it aside, and then he lights up his cane, and kind of like, dusts the soot off of his suit? The other ones are still behind the fireline. And he's like walking towards the ghost at this point. Like, very... But like, walking. You're at the end of a hall. You're at the end of a rectangle. You're on the right end of a rectangle, let's say. He is on the left end, walking towards you. The ghost is on right end, walking towards him. Carrying Castille. Castille, what are you doing? Let's jump to you for a second, as you're being choked.

ALI: Uh..... Remember when we were just talking about those bottles that like,

AUSTIN: Yeah!

ALI: I could put a ghost into?

AUSTIN: Mm-hm.

ALI: Could I try to do that?

AUSTIN: Yeah! Give that a shot, if you want. That sounds like a Compel, also. Or an Attune.

ALI: Okay, yeah. Cause her arms are free, so I think that she just kind of grabs one, out of the inside of her coat. And then as soon as it like... She like, flips it open with her thumb, it's like a vacuum effect?

AUSTIN: Yeah, that's why it's an Attune and not Hunt. Like you're not throwing it.

ALI: Right. Yeah, let's see if I get another three.

AUSTIN: Mm-hmm.

ALI: This is definitely a desperate.

AUSTIN: Oh yeah. You're being choked to death by-- yes. Yup. Go ahead and give me a roll.

(ALI laughs)

ALI: Ah-haha!

AUSTIN: Look at that six! So mark exp, so pick one of your three, Insight, Prowess, or Resolve, and increase one of those by one.

ALI: Yup.

AUSTIN: So you totally suck up the ghost into the spirit bottle. You can tell that like, the spirit bottle is not meant to hold a ghost of this caliber but it's making do. For now.

JACK: Oh, boy.

AUSTIN: You know, lemme make a, I'm gonna make a fortune die check on these jerks, to see if the other three have what they need to get through. I'm just gonna give them like a two in, like, Resolve, basically.

JACK: Are they at all perturbed by what they've seen?

AUSTIN: Uhhh... Five. Five's not bad. I think two of them leave, but the other one who was wearing a hat steps forward, and again, this (misses the hat? 29:22), and so there's two of them left. And then the fire, with the ghost captured, the fire simmers down. And the other one is like... As Castille lands on the ground, the other one has like, continued his walk towards you. So as these two close in on you, let's switch back over to the Southern Bucket really quick.

AUSTIN (as Claret Holiday): So I hear you two have been having a bit of trouble.

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): (stammering) Where've-- you heard this. Thing.

DRE (as Sige): No, yeah, it's true.

(snort)

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): Sige! (resigned) Yeah, it's true.

AUSTIN (as Claret): I have my ear to the ground. Especially where blood is concerned. I heard they came for one of your little hideaways. True?

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): Ahh..

DRE (as Sige): Yeah, it's true.

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): Yeah, yeah..

AUSTIN (as Claret): Hm. You've made a powerful enemy, and where I'm from, that's a sign that you're doing something right. So I wanna help. I could put the pressure you need on the Fontmen. Help you... win this thing.

AUSTIN: She leans back, and puts both of her arms out across the booth.

AUSTIN (as Claret): But I'll need you to get something for me first.

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): Well... what would that be?

SYLVIA: And Aubrey kinda leans back and tries to do the same thing?

(Laughter from austin and DRE)

AUSTIN: (horrified) Aww, nooo!

SYLVIA: Does not work, again. Again, two (too?) short arms.

AUSTIN: Awwh...

Dre (as Sige): My friend raises a good question.

AUSTIN (as Claret): Hmm. So.

AUSTIN: She says.

AUSTIN (as Claret): There is this school.

(Music begins - "The Valentine Affair")

Technically, it's called The Rector and College of the Last Living Spirits, in Memoriam, For Their Service Awarded the Grace and Wisdom of Our Proctor, Originality Alive. But most folks just call it Memoriam College.

Now, the first thing that new arrivals to Marielda learn, of course, is that everything here changes. The second thing-- well, that depends, (she says), that depends on who they are. But somewhere around thing 7 or 8, you learn: Everything in Marielda changes except for Memoriam College.

And that's made me wonder what's going on in there. And why it's protected by that man on the hill. I'm fairly sure, based on what my scouts have said, that there is a volume that I've been looking for for quite some time. The problem is that the doors to Memoriam never open. The windows won't break. There're also, let's say, rumors, about what goes on in there. Have you heard them?

DRE and SYLVIA (as Sige and Aubrey, simultaneously): No.

AUSTIN (as Claret): Well... Depends on who you talk to, but. Some people say that the school is a monument to those who were killed in the war, and other people go so far as to say it's a mausoleum. Other people say that it's where the physicians of Samoths study those who've been killed by the experimental weapons that he put on the field. The most childish rumor, of course, is that it's where the spirits of those killed by those weapons walk. But we don't believe in the undead, do we?

AUSTIN: And she gives you a little smirk.

DRE: Meanwhile, on the other side of town...

AUSTIN: Yep, yep! Smash cut to...

(Laughter)

ALI: (laughing) Choked out by a ghost.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Perfect.

AUSTIN (as Claret): So.

AUSTIN: She says.

AUSTIN (as Claret): You take this job from me. You go in, you get me this book, and you can take anything else you want from there. You have to understand: No one is allowed in there. Except, once a week, every year, there is a series of tests to see who can gain admission.

Now of course, other members of the University have priority, but this test is open to the public. And if you can pass in... maybe you can get what you need. (clak clak clak from music) What I need.

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): So... what kinda test are we talking here? Like, written exam type thing, or...

AUSTIN (as Claret): It has a lot of components, I'm not much for schools. I've never been. But that would be one way of entering. More importantly, it's the one week a year that whatever charms are on that building are off of it. You know, I tried to sneak someone in while it was on lockdown? Never heard from 'em again. Did get an urn in the mail, though.

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): Oh, that was ni--oh. That was them. They died.

AUSTIN (as Claret): Yes.

DRE (as Sige) Still pretty decent of them. Least they let you know.

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): Mm. Sige, they killed a guy.

DRE (as Sige): I mean--

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): Anyway! So, I'm assuming this is soon? This week?

AUSTIN (as Claret): Yeah. Starts on Sunday.

(pause)

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): Mm... I don't think we're really in a position to say no.

AUSTIN (as Claret): You certainly are not. And that's why I've come to you.

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): Let's do it-- we'll good!

DRE (as Sige): We'll do it.

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): yeaaaaah.

AUSTIN (as Claret): Alright.

SYLVIA: Aubrey gives a big thumbs up.

AUSTIN (as Claret): Would you two like anything else before you leave?

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): Can I get another Southern Comfort? That was really good.

DRE (as Sige): Ssshhee's fine. We should go.

AUSTIN (as Claret): Take good care of her, Sige. She's something.

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): Thanks, pretty lady.

SYLVIA: And she gets up, and tries to walk and does not do very well.

(DRE chuckling)

AUSTIN: She smiles at you, and her teeth are so clean. Which is not a thing.

SYLVIA: That- yeah.

AUSTIN: That's not-- In Marielda people don't have clean teeth.

SYLVIA (close to mic): *She's the first dentist in Marielda.*

(AUSTIN laughs)

DRE: Hey, Sylvia¹?

SYLVIA: Yeah?

DRE: Are Sige and Aubrey on a level, where if Sige saw her having trouble walking --

SYLVIA: He'd pick her up.

DRE: --just went to scoop her up, would she be okay with that?

AUSTIN: (groans)

¹ The name in the audio recording is no longer in use, hence the audio/transcript discrepancy.

SYLVIA: Yeah.

DRE: 'kay.

AUSTIN: As you leave, the second you step outside the room, you feel like your circulation starts up again. You feel like you've been-- you know like on a really cold winter night when you're like, laying in bed? Or not a winter night, a winter day and it's just like, "I don't wanna get out of bed, I can't, none of my body is where it should be right now." That's what it was like. But now you're back to being okay. Meanwhile, in the mall park... I love how we have a fucking Hanging Gardens but what we've done is (light chuckling in the bg) set it on fire and have a ghost fight in it.

DRE: And scared a nice cobbler.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: Look, a lot of people got scared today.

(ALI laughs)

AUSTIN: So what are you two doing?

JACK: I wanna try and roll Command, and the way I do that is I want to draw my sword and say,

JACK (as Hitchcock): You see that? We can do that *again*. We can do that twice.

(snorts and laughter)

JACK (as Hitchcock): We can do that all day.

ALI (as Castille): Yeah. I have another one of these.

JACK (as Hitchcock): Please don't. But we can.

AUSTIN: Are you helping, Castille? Is that what, that's what it sounds like you're doing to me, is like--

JACK (as Hitchcock): That one did fire, we can do one...

ALI (as Castille): (crosstalk) Yeah, I love it(?) (laugh)

JACK (as Hitchcock): we've got one that's... God, so big

ALI: God. I do the same trick that Aubrey did last time, which is hold up the empty bottle that I have.
(giggles)

AUSTIN: Good. Great.

(JACK tries to say something)

ALI: Hand covering it.

JACK: Yep. Oh. D'you--

ALI (as Castille?): That's my buddy.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Alright. So, are you taking a stress to help?

ALI: Yes.

AUSTIN: Okay, so take a stress.

JACK: Okay, this sounds to me like a fairly desperate position.

AUSTIN: (considering) Um. I think this is risky. I don't think this is desperate.

JACK: Risky, okay.

AUSTIN: 'Cause they're not-- it's not like they have a knife at your throat.

JACK: Oh, I have a two in Command from that extra point. Nice. Standard effect or limited effect?

AUSTIN: Yep. Uh, standard effect.

JACK: And I get one extra dice.

AUSTIN: Yeah, unless you have something else that increases this but I don't (crosstalk)

JACK: (crosstalk) I don't think I do, no. Okay, no whammies.

AUSTIN: Mm-hmm.

JACK: Five!

AUSTIN: Five ain't bad. So I think. One of them turns off his cane, and he's like,

AUSTIN (as Fontman): He's right. Let's wrap back around and hit them when they're soft.

AUSTIN: and like, steps back away, but the other one steps forward. She spits, and says,

AUSTIN (as other Fontman): They're soft right now.

AUSTIN: And she charges at both of you. What do you do?

JACK: Uh...

AUSTIN: And she like, scrapes the cane on the ground so it leaves a scar.

JACK: Could I try and disarm her?

AUSTIN: Sure. Tell me what that looks like.

JACK: So I think what this is is that, the plan, at least, is that she's gonna charge me, and with the metal guard over my sword hand I'm just gonna knock the thing out of her hand. Before she gets a chance to swing it.

AUSTIN: Give me a Skirmish.

JACK: Four!

AUSTIN: Alright, so you can totally disarm her, but in the process, you get burnt. Take 1 burnt damage, basically.

JACK: Is that like a 1 tier damage, Burned?

AUSTIN: Yes, exactly.

JACK: Okay.

AUSTIN: Or, you can try to resist that and take stress.

JACK: No, no, I'll--

AUSTIN: You'll get burned.

JACK: I'll take the burned.

AUSTIN: Okay. Alright.

ALI: Um...

AUSTIN: What do you do when she's disarmed? Cause you basically have her defeated. She's at your whim.

JACK: Uhm...

AUSTIN: You knock the, you knock her weird cane, into the man's window.

ALI: Aw..

AUSTIN: It doesn't shatter, but it does scuff it up? It does like, leave a dent, a chip in it? And he like shakes his head and his fist at you, through the window.

ALI: Awh, come on, Austin (laughing)

AUSTIN: Don't have fights! (DRE laughs)

JACK: (laughing) Don't have fights.

ALI: This is a big hallway, we could have chipped the window on the Auntie Anne's that's not open anymore. Like, c'mon.

AUSTIN: No, there's those big-- There's no windows on those. You've been to malls, (ALI laughing) it's just like a big weird drywall that has, "Coming soon: Claire's" or whatever.

ALI: (laughing) Yo, there's gonna be a Claire's down here??

AUSTIN: Yeah, there's gonna be a Claire's! They're adding a Claire's to the Hanging Gardens of Maelgwyn!

(chuckling)

JACK: Um, I think I probably cut her hand off, and send her packing.

AUSTIN: Jeez! Okay. You do. She screams, and then like, reaches back into her coat and grabs a vial, and then slams it onto her hand where it used to be a hand, and it does the fire thing that Aubrey had developed, that same thing? And just instantly cauterizes it. And like, screams, and then runs and picks up her cane, and then retreats. (JACK inhales) Now I have to write down that she's a character. Thanks.

(snorts)

AUSTIN: Rebecca.

JACK (repeating): Rebecca.

AUSTIN: the Fontman. Alright.

JACK: I don't think-- Like, duellists might let people go, I don't think scoundrel duellists let people go without--

AUSTIN: Right. I got ya. No, I'm with you.

DRE: Especially after she insulted you all.

ALI: I mean, we (laugh) we've established that at least one Hitchcock likes to remove parts of people?

(DRE cracking up)

AUSTIN: That's true. That's true.

JACK: Look, you cut off one nose, and one hand,

(ALI wheezing)

AUSTIN: (crosstalk) What else have you cut off?

DRE: Everybody starts talkin'!

(more wheezing from ALI)

AUSTIN: Alright. Let's... You can reconvene. At HQ.

JACK: I could do that.

AUSTIN: So to remind you, (reading from BitD book) "Your crew spends time planning each score. They huddle around a flickering lantern in their lair, looking at scrawled maps, whispering plots and schemes, bickering about the best approach. But you the players don't have to do that. You already have that made. You just need to decide what type of plan and then what detail you're missing. There are six different plans, each with a missing detail. They are Assault, Deception, Stealth, Occult, Social, and Transport." So you have to pick one of those and each one has a missing detail. But I'll give you a little bit first, which is like-- So I'm gonna say that you had this meeting on a Friday, and Sunday is the day that the doors open? But, you get to check it out that next morning. So at the very least, you get to see a little bit of what it looks like.

JACK: Hm.

AUSTIN: Okay. So on the bottom left is like the front and rear vision of it? The front and rear as you do a lap around it. And there are three floors, from what you can see. There are pala-din outside, doing patrols, but as long as you don't cause anything they don't fuck with you. So it's three floors, and on the front it's like, three big-- er, sorry, on the front it's like a big ground floor that has a wing off to the side, on the second floor it's that again but the wing off to the side is a little bit smaller. And then there's like a top floor that has a big glass, big stained glass window.

DRE: And so all we know is that they do some sort of test? And we don't know what that test is?

SYLVIA: And then while they're doing it, the charms are down.

AUSTIN: Right. Yes.

SYLVIA: So... (overlap) that's our whole time window.

AUSTIN: You-- it is like a one week window. Yeah.

JACK: Okay, um, how do we go about gathering information? That's with Survey, right?

AUSTIN: It depends on what-- how you're gathering information. Are you Surveying? Or are you busting into a place and looking at floor plans? Are you talking to people?

JACK: Uhhh... Oh! oh man. Are any of my students planning on applying?

AUSTIN: Good question. Yes. Totally.

JACK: Who?

AUSTIN: You have a student named Carolyn Fair-play, and she is, she is like so excited to apply.

JACK: Ah, yes. The Fair-play scam.

AUSTIN: Yeah. That's, that's it, the Fair-play scam. (JACK laughs) She's been like, working on a, both a dance and a duel sequence? She is also just someone who has given you some details on what this is? According to her, there are, there's a series of tests, and after each-- not just tests, but like, a series of cuts, basically. Where it gets cut down from a huge group to a smaller group to an even smaller group. And the, the tests can range from like, "Here is a math test, do this math," to like, a talent show? To where like, you have to show that you can do extracurricular activities of various sorts? To debates, where they will ask you very difficult questions about politics and theology? To just, like, artistic shows. It's like very much like, they only want the best and brightest. Every year, they only take, she tells you, two new applicants. (JACK inhales) Into the University.

JACK: Man. Mmkay. Trying to work out how we can use this nice lady.

(ALI laughs)

AUSTIN: Wow.

SYLVIA: Well, it's in character.

AUSTIN: Yep.

ALI: What are we trying to get, again?

AUSTIN: So. [Claret] wants a book from there. But there is also the question of why does this place not get reconfigured ever. Everything else in Marielda gets reconfigured. What she wants is a specific volume that was written back during the Quiet Year. It's a book called "Mortal Liminality: On the Space Between Life And Death," and it is written by Bolster Valentine.

DRE: I have an idea.

ALI: Okay.

DRE: What if-- so, the whole city has been like, changing for better and for worse for a long time while this university, this school has just like, stayed the same.

AUSTIN: So the university in general does, but this one college on the university campus does not. Like this is a college in the Great University, you know what I mean?

DRE: Okay. Yeah yeah yeah. And it has basically remained like, mysterious and unchanged?

AUSTIN: Yep. And no one-- people go in and don't come out.

DRE: Okay. I bet there's a lot of people who are upset about this creepy college and I wanna stage like, a protest-sit-in as a distraction--

AUSTIN: Oh jeez.

DRE: for us to sneak in to get this book.

SYLVIA: Oh my *goood*.

JACK: Oh, my god.

AUSTIN: That's alright. That sounds like a Deception plan to me? Which is "lure, trick, or manipulate"?

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Alright, so that is at least one part of the Deception. Or, one part of the entry plan, is there anything else, does anybody else wanna get in in a different way?

SYLVIA: I like the idea of a distraction as a front? And then we could-- 'cause climbing gear is an inherent thing all of us have.

AUSTIN and DRE: Yeah.

SYLVIA: We could try and climb up to the second floor or something? Go onto the balconies?

AUSTIN: There is a balcony, yeahyeahyeah. The balcony on the east side, there. (indistinct) reveal where it says "Balcony" cause you got that right.

DRE: This does feel particularly heist-y.

JACK: Oh, it feels-- unbelievably heist-y.

AUSTIN: Oh, you're in a heist. This is a heist now.

ALI: Yeah! we can just go onto that balcony.

AUSTIN: Alright, so it sounds like Deception, with the detail being, "A weird sit-in," that you're trying to rile up people to sit-in about this weird school?

DRE: Mm-hmm.

AUSTIN: What's the ca-- What do the signs say, at this sit-in?

(wheezing)

SYLVIA: (laughing) Dre, this was your idea!

DRE: (strained) Oh, god! (laughing)

JACK: (laughing) Sige, Sige writes the signs!

(laughter)

DRE: I mean if Sige writes the signs, they're just gonna say "School's Not Cool!" and like,

AUSTIN: That's bad. That's not gonna do it. No one's gonna be just Sige.

SYLVIA: Just this-- big, man (DRE laughing) sitting there.

DRE: With like a little sign, that he's just holding up.

JACK: Well, I mean, it's not as if the college's name is particularly catchy. It's hard to include in slogans.

AUSTIN: (makes a sound) Memoriam. You know. The Rector and College of the Last Living Spirits, in Memoriam, For Their Service Awarded the Grace and Wisdom of Our Proctor, Originality Alive.

JACK: "What do we want!" "For it to move around a bit more!" (laughter from ALI and DRE) I mean like, let's be clear here, we're like, extremely criminals. And we've been asked to write protest signs. (DRE laughs) One just probably says, "NO!!"

(laughter, ALI sighs)

AUSTIN: Are we set-- are we sold on this, this protest idea? As we figure out that maybe it's hard to get people to protest?

(ALI giggles)

JACK: Well, yeah, I mean I guess--

AUSTIN: (crosstalk) That there is a school?

JACK: (crosstalk) Yeah, what are we protesting?

SYLVIA: (crosstalk) I think we're tryna-- tryna rile up a mob of people--

JACK: Oh, there are much easier ways to rile up a mob (crosstalk) than by making signs that say "No".

SYLVIA: Yeah, I don't think it needs to be a protest, I think it just needs to be "A big distraction outside."

(DRE hums)

ALI: I mean, would it be reasonable to assume that there are people in town who think that if this is a school of the church it should not be as barred off?

AUSTIN: Not people who are loyal to Samoth's church. I-- You could theoretically get people from the Cult of Maelgwyn? To do some shit?

ALI: Right.

JACK: We could just tell people that this is the year that they're gonna let anybody take the test.

AUSTIN: That's every year.

JACK: I mean, but, everybody who goes is gonna get allowed in.

AUSTIN: That's every year.

(ALI laughs)

JACK: No, I mean

AUSTIN: Anybody can take the test.

SYLVIA: (crosstalk) I think Jack means, like anyone who goes is gonna get past the test? Is that what you're trying to say?

AUSTIN: Oh.

JACK: yeah.

AUSTIN: (crosstalk) That's a big lie.

ALI: (crosstalk) Well, yeah, what I-- what I was gonna say is that we have people protest that more people should be let in.

JACK: Okay, that's a--

AUSTIN: (crosstalk) More than two, yeah that's--

JACK: That's a reason to protest.

AUSTIN: That's a reasonable protest, that two is not enou-- that given the resources this place has,

JACK: Two is not enough.

SYLVIA: We got our slogan! "Two is Too Few".

ALI: Yeah.

DRE: There we go.

JACK: "Two is Too Few, How About Maybe Four?"

(DRE laughs)

SYLVIA: Double it!

AUSTIN: "Should Be A Few!"

JACK: "Two is Too-- (descends into laughter)

SYLVIA: "Should Be A Few," and then in brackets, "More!"

AUSTIN: "More... People!"

(laughter from SYLVIA and austin)

DRE: "Please!"

ALI: Yeah, so this is the plan?

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Alright, I guess so. Let's-- give me an Engagement roll.

(JACK chuckles)

AUSTIN: Uh, let's figure this out.

DRE: Yeah, how's this

AUSTIN: I think that what I really want is like-- here's what-- what I really want is a fortune roll to determine how many people show up for this protest. Or some, some controlled limited, maybe controlled standard, roll, to see... Just give me a straight up-- You know what, it's gonna be a fortune roll, but we're gonna use your... We're gonna use somebody's Sway or something to figure out who-- how you got people here.

DRE: Um, I got--

AUSTIN: I think that what I really want is like-- here's what-- what I really want is a fortune roll to determine how many people show up for this protest. Or some, some controlled limited, maybe controlled standard, roll, to see... Just give me a straight up-- You know what, it's gonna be a fortune roll, but we're gonna use your... We're gonna use somebody's Sway or something to figure out who-- how you got people here.

DRE: Um, I got--

AUSTIN: Cause you're inventing-- It's Saturday, and you want a protest to happen tomorrow. (DRE laughs) That's gonna take a roll. You know what I mean?

DRE: Could we like--

AUSTIN: Like, y'all need some leaflets or something.

DRE: Could we recruit the Red Boot Irregulars (means Red Rank Irregulars) to help us gather people up?

AUSTIN: Yeah, you could totally. You could spend a coin, first of all, that would help.

DRE: Well, I'll spend a coin, 'cause it's my fault we're in this whole mess in the first place.

AUSTIN: So do a fortune roll with whatever your Sway is.

DRE: Oh, I don't have Sway.

AUSTIN: Okay.

DRE: Somebody else should be making this roll (begins to laugh)

JACK: I'm pretty good at Swaying. I could Sway. (inhales) Hitchcock's not very good at protesting.

AUSTIN: But you're not protesting. You're convincing other people to protest.

JACK: Yeah, sure.

ALI: Oh, that sounds like a thing Hitchcock can do.

DRE: Yeah. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Alright, so you do it. (overlap)

DRE: (overlap) We need all the help we can get.

AUSTIN: Just give me a Sway check, and then we'll increase the effect.

JACK: Mmmm... c'mon..

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: That's gonna be six.

DRE: Nice.

AUSTIN: It is a six. Alright. So, you manage-- what's it look like? What's he do? How does he get this audience?

JACK: I think that he pretends to be somebody that was expelled.

AUSTIN: Oooh. The first expulsion.

JACK: Yeah. The very first expulsion.

AUSTIN: of Memoriam College.

JACK (as Hitchcock): You didn't see my name in the papers? Of course you didn't see my name in the papers.

AUSTIN: (laughs) Good.

JACK (as Hitchcock): They clamped down on that. (conspiratorially) And you wanna know what happens in there? You wanna know what's going on in there?

AUSTIN (as random passerby): What? What's going on?

JACK (as Hitchcock): Oh, you-- you have no, oh man. You see that window up there?

(All snickers)

JACK: He like, points at a lit window up there.

JACK (as Hitchcock): You know what's in that room? They've got a machine, ohh, they've got a machine, in there, that just, (inhales) it just takes candles and it makes them (wheezing in the bg) just, it makes more of them. (DRE and SYLVIA cracking up) Just thousands and thousand-- You see that's why they're-- that's why the Memoriam College (overlap, indistinct)

AUSTIN (as random passerby): But my father's a candlemaker!

JACK (as Hitchcock): Oh! Oh, well here's what I'm saying. Look, you come here, you sit with us, and you get your friends, and I can give you some-- I can tell you what's gonna be on the test. And not only that, if you protest with us, y'know maybe they'll let in three people next year. And then, you can go up to that room, and I tell you what you can do?

AUSTIN (as passerby): What can I do?

JACK (as Hitchcock): You can kick that machine.

AUSTIN (as passerby): Will that break it, or..?

JACK (as Hitchcock): Almost certainly.

AUSTIN (as passerby): Oh. Ok.

JACK (as Hitchcock): Well, if your father's a candlemaker, you know?

AUSTIN (as passerby): Yeah, yeah. The kicking is the point, I guess.

JACK (as Hitchcock): The kicking is-- What's important is that you tell your friends. Absolutely. And also, that you don't tell any of the management. That's also extremely important.

AUSTIN (as passerby): Of course not, why-- no. It's a surprise. It's a surprise protest.

JACK (as Hitchcock): Ah--wh-- it really is.

(AUSTIN and DRE crack up)

AUSTIN: Alright! Sounds like it's time for an engagement roll.

ALI: (under her breath) God.

AUSTIN: Alright. "Judge the vulnerability of the target by comparing the detail of the player characters' plan against the awareness and readiness of the targets versus that type of plan. Also consider the difference in Tiers. A lower Tiered target should yield an additional bonus couple of dice." I'm gonna say that you get threeee dice. No, no, I'm gonna say two. This is a strong target. And your plan isn't great, but (overlap) you did really well on that other roll. So I'm gonna give you a couple...

JACK: (overlap w AUSTIN) I don't see, I don't see any flaws in our plan.

SYLVIA: (overlap with ALI) Yeah, what's the problem.

ALI: (overlap w SYLVIA) Yeah, I have no idea what you're talking about.

AUSTIN: (strained) Okay.

DRE: Backseat heist planner over here.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Two, two-- give me two dice.

(pause for roll)

AUSTIN: Wow.

SYLVIA: Jee-sus.

JACK: Is that good?

AUSTIN: Not great. Mixed outcome. (collective hisses and sighs) "The PCs initiate their chosen plan,"

ALI: I saw six and I was so excited...

JACK: Yeah, me too.

AUSTIN: Yeah, no. "The PCs initiate their chosen plan, but an unexpected complication arises." Okay. Well then. Which is... So what is your actual plan? You have the-- so the students have gathered outside, there are, you know, fifty students marching around holding signs, shouting,

AUSTIN (as students): Two won't do! Give us a few!

(snorting)

AUSTIN: and other bad rhymes.

JACK: If it's that bad it really should be, "Two's too few (comma) Give us a few."

AUSTIN: (laughing) It is! Also, they go, uh,

AUSTIN (as students): Just a couple? Make it double!

AUSTIN: It's not even a real rhyme, it's slant rhyme,

ALI: God...

JACK: New big sign: "They've got so many candles!"

(laughter)

ALI: There's like someone who works for the school, who sees the sign, like, "How did they...? how did they know that?"

AUSTIN: "How did they know about our candle machine?"

(ALI wheezing)

SYLVIA: "We can't handle all these candles".

(someone lets out a really loud HA)

AUSTIN: It's like-- Here's the thing that's funny, it's actually really funny in comparison to what's actually in that top floor.

(JACK laughs)

SYLVIA: Oh, my god.

AUSTIN: There is a machine up there.

JACK: (uncomfortably) Mmm...

AUSTIN: In fact, that's what happens, like, someone comes over during the protest, and like,

AUSTIN (as person): How did they know about... the machine?

AUSTIN: and just walks away.

ALI: Good. Great.

AUSTIN: Other students are like, sneaking in. Not sneaking in, but like, they're going in. They're like,

AUSTIN (as student): Aw, fuck, what? I just-- I just wanna take my test.

(JACK laughs)

AUSTIN: There are four? five? There are-- (pause) oh right, and then them. Alright, so there are ten other students who go in after the protests have started. Some of them have gotten in before the protests start. There are four who arrive together, there are another few, including Caroline Fair-play. How do you get inside? Like while this is happening, what are you all doing? Cause I have to tell you what your mixed outcome is. But how do you actually get in the building?

SYLVIA: Are we gonna try and do the climbing (crosstalk) up the balcony thing?

DRE: (crosstalk) the climbing? Yeah.

AUSTIN: (audibly smiling) You could just walk inside the doors.

JACK: (overlap) Yeah, yeah that's what I'm saying

DRE: (overlap) Yeah, that's not the part.

(ALI laughing)

DRE: The whole part with the protest was that we would hopefully draw focus away so that we could have less eyes on us when we try to climb up into the balcony. (crosstalk) I thought that was the point.

AUSTIN: (crosstalk) Okay, so you are doing the balcony. That's my-- that's the question I-- I couldn't tell if all four of you were doing the balcony.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So you've all climbed up on this balcony, and you've seen that inside there are a whole bunch of people gathered in this reception hall, on the second floor of Mem-- bluhbluhbluh, Memoriam University. Memoriam College, not Memoriam University. And outside, you also notice as you get up on the balcony and see that there dozens of people inside of this big reception hall, having like, their orientation dinner?

The crowd outside that's been, what's the word I'm looking for, protesting, has gotten rowdier, as members of the Black Slacks have begun to join? To remind you, the Black Slacks are from Emberboro, which is a place where a lot of the cobbins and refugees live. They're the people who ended up doing a lot of in Iris Parish in the factories, and you might recall wear really flamboyant, bright shirts and woolen black slacks as a form of visual protest, and to announce their presence. And they have joined in these protests, and the other protests here definitely feel like things are getting a little more rowdy and a little less under their control? Right, like the other protesters here were these like, other students from the University who were demanding, oh, "Let more of us into Memoriam College." And the Black Slacks are here like, "Hey, we should all be able to attend school." And that is a much broader demand.

So, as you get your bearings on that balcony, that is-- you hear shouting and stuff from downstairs. You're on the balcony, and you turn and look left when you see a room filled with people at a long table, because this is a reception hall and all of the new students are having a very fancy welcome dinner.

There is a priest who is giving a sort of sermon. The priest is Silas, who is the priest that Castille knows. Also at the de-- at the desk-- (correcting) at the table are Lance Noble Orchid, who Sige stole his gun, but he is not wearing his lance noble outfit. He's just kind of dressed like a, kind of like middle class schoolboy, basically? Which I imagine in this world is like a short coat, or like a short jacket, and grey slacks. And his head is down in his hands and if he could be hiding under a hood or a hat, he would, but he doesn't have one. So. That's Lance Noble Orchid. There is Elias, who is the upper class apothecary that Aubrey had previously stole from. There is Carolyn Fair-play, who is Hitchcock's dancing and dueling student. And I think that's everyone you all know, and there are a bunch of other people in there too. And you can't hear what's going on because from the balcony that you're at, there's just a lot of... The door here is like, glass? There's this huge long door that-- just imagine that that is a bunch of little doors? It's like, you know, it's like a balcony, with a bunch of, like, glass doors with gold frames, or kind of bronze frames or whatever around it. What're you doing? Specifically, what are you doing on this balcony to not be seen?

(snickering)

SYLVIA: Is there anything on it?? Like..

JACK: (crosstalk) We could-- are there pillars?

AUSTIN: (overlap) There's some potted plants.

JACK: Potted plants.

ALI: Yeah. There's like flowers. Probably.

AUSTIN: And flowers. There are flowers. But it's hard to hide behind flowers frankly.

SYLVIA: I mean, I could, I dunno if Sige could.

DRE: (laughing) Yeah, I was about to say...

(laughing and humming)

AUSTIN: You can see that the priest, that Silas is like, coming to an end on his blessing--

(JACK starts to say something)

AUSTIN: Hmm?

JACK: They've all got their heads down. We've got like, six seconds or whatever.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: (groaning) Aww man.

SYLVIA: (somewhat btwn a laugh and a scoff) Trying to run in?

JACK: So I mean-- Optimistically,

AUSTIN: Uh-huh?

JACK: we did time this actually really well.

ALI: Yeah.

JACK: We picked the wrong window, but--

AUSTIN: mmyeah.

JACK: the timing... really well.

AUSTIN: Yup.

JACK: Yeah, that's an option. Could we maybe like, quickly slip in through a window while everybody's heads are down?

AUSTIN: I mean it's a--

JACK: and try and take a seat?

(all overlap at this ridiculous idea)

AUSTIN: Yeah--

ALI: Take a seat?! (giggling)

SYLVIA: (weird muffled yelling?)

AUSTIN: Yup, sounds like you wanna make a Prowl roll.

SYLVIA: Ohhh my *GOD*.

JACK: Ohhh....

SYLVIA: Okay, yes! I'm in.

(JACK making protest noises, ALI high-pitched giggling)

JACK: I didn't.. I didn't say it like that

DRE: Okay, yeah...

SYLVIA: Who's leading it?

AUSTIN: That sounds like Hitchcock is leading it to me.

JACK: (pitifully) Oh, no, I have no-- I am so stressed, Austin!

AUSTIN: (feigning surprise) Oh! I'm sorry, what's wrong. What's-- wait, what's wrong? I don't understand, you had a really good idea.

JACK: (painfully, idk they sound near tears?) I'm so stressed!

(DRE and ALI giggling, SYLVIA starts laughing)

JACK: My stupid--

AUSTIN: What's your Prowl? What's uh, what's your Prowl skill?

JACK: Zer-- wh, zero.

AUSTIN: Oh, no.

DRE: Yup, I'm zero too.

SYLVIA: Mine is as well.

ALI: Wait--

AUSTIN: Who has any-- Who has Prowl? (incredulous) How are you thieves??

(DRE cackling)

SYLVIA: Do we not have Prowl?? I expected everyone else to have Prowl!

(lone cackle-laugh, ALI inhales)

SYLVIA: Jesus Christ!

JACK: Okay. Look.

AUSTIN: (crosstalk) I don't understand how this is even possible. (ALI laughing)

JACK: Cards-- cards on the table. Um. It's not so much Prowling as just walking, right?

(more laughter)

AUSTIN: Sure. That's true.

JACK: Just walking into a room when everybody's not looking and...

AUSTIN: Are you suggesting perhaps it's not Prowl at all. Cause you're-- are you just saying, "We wanna walk in and blend"?

JACK: (agreeing) Mmm. Yup.

AUSTIN: Are you trying to "sway them with charm, logic, deception, disguise, or bluff"?

JACK: Who-- my team? or--

(people burst into laughter again)

AUSTIN: (clarifying) The people inside.

JACK: I mean, yeah, I think we're bluffing. In a major way.

AUSTIN: (overlap) Okay, I'll give you--

JACK: (overlap) We're bluffing in a major way, which is that everybody puts their heads down to pray, and when they lift their heads up, a statue, a cobbin, (laughter from ALI and austin), a (?1:03:03 indistinct) man,

AUSTIN: This is, this is-- Listen,

JACK: and a gigantic man are here.

AUSTIN: It is open application day, right. Like this is, this is--

JACK: Sure.

DRE: Yeah.

JACK: It is open application day, yeah.

DRE: We had to come in through the back, through this balcony, 'cause there were just, there was just (crosstalk) all these protesters.

JACK: (crosstalk) No! Ssh, they don't, no, don't say about the balcony! They don't know about the balcony.

(AUSTIN hum-laughes)

JACK: They just think we've gone in there.

AUSTIN: Alright, then let's-- give me that roll, Hitchcock. I mean, give me that roll, everybody, for Sway, but

JACK: (strained) oh god. (crosstalk) What if I get Trauma'd?

AUSTIN: It sounds like Hitchcock is leading the group. Then-- we'll see what happens, won't we.

JACK: (laughing nervously) Okay.

SYLVIA: Just risky standard?

AUSTIN: Mm-hmm.

ALI: Yeah, this is probably risky.

JACK: Oh, wait a second..

SYLVIA: (strained) sorry!

AUSTIN: Mm-hmm?

(slight pause)

ALI: (overlap) Oh, look at that.

DRE: (overlap) Eyyy!

AUSTIN: Oh, and you reduce--

JACK: (overlap) Have I..?

AUSTIN: stress, Sige.

JACK: Am I doing any covert misdirection here, AUSTIN?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

(pause for roll)

JACK: (triumphant) Awh!

AUSTIN: Nice.

SYLVIA: Hey, you got-- undid the stress I caused!

(ALI laughs)

AUSTIN: So what's the-- no, because he only got one six, he has to get two sixes to reduce stress.

SYLVIA: Oh, okay.

ALI: So, everyone, it's-- Sige got a six, Hitchcock got six--

AUSTIN: (crosstalk) Sige got two sixes.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah, Castille got a five.

SYLVIA: Jee-sus.

AUSTIN: Hitchcock got a six. So the Six gets through?

JACK: So I-- do I take one stress?

AUSTIN: You take one stress.

ALI: (low) Aubrey got a three, which is why.

JACK: Is this because Aubrey, like--

SYLVIA: I tripped.

JACK: Aubrey, like, stops in the door for a second?

(wheezing, JACK says smth indistinct)

SYLVIA: You just like, nudge her.

JACK: Yeah.

JACK (as Hitchcock): Tsk, c'mon!

AUSTIN: Awh. Do you get seats near each other? Or who are you all seated near?

JACK: I don't know if there's a run of four seats. All next to each other.

AUSTIN: No, I don't think so. I think, yeah, I think you're all split up. And I'll tell you who you're seated next to. Um. God, I-- fwooa. Where do you all go to-- so like, there is, there's a seat near the head of the table, there's a seat-- you know, I'ma draw this table real quick. This is good. This is all good times. Right here.

JACK: (overlap) Friends at the Table.

DRE: (overlap) Welcome to Friends at the Table.

AUSTIN: Oh, no. There it is.

ALI: (indistinct 1:04:56)

SYLVIA: (unbelieving) We went from 0 to 60 so fast.

(ALI laughs)

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. And so there are four seats available. There is-- let's go here, there's one here, towards the top end of the table, which is where the circle I'm just drawing is? That's the priest, whose name I keep forgetting. Ali, what's the name again?

JACK: Silas.

ALI: Silas.

AUSTIN: Silas, yes. There's one kind of at the middle of the table near the door. That one, you have to like, really walk allll the way aroound for? And then I'll say that there are two across from each other at the bottom end of the table, near the southern window. So who's sitting where?

JACK: I'll take the long walk, I think.

AUSTIN: Okay. That's good.

JACK: As part of the stress, as well.

AUSTIN: That's fair.

SYLVIA: I'll take the one, then, that's like below where Hitchcock's sitting?

AUSTIN: Okay.

SYLVIA: So the left southern one. Hold on, did we put the pala-din next to the priest?

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. That's exactly what happened.

ALI: Uhhh hey wait a minute.

JACK: Ali, d'you wanna swap with me?

ALI: Yeah, probably.

JACK: But this has definitely happened, so I've taken the walk,

AUSTIN: Uh-huh?

JACK: and then we've noticed, and then I (wheeze) like make a gesture.

JACK (as Hitchcock): (whispering) Back, back. (makes tschu sounds)

(ALI laughs)

JACK: Everybody's got their head in their hands.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. And Silas is talking about the, you know, the glory of learning under blessed Samoths. And how we've all been blessed today for the opportunity. Seated next to... everyone, so on side of you, Hitchcock, is Silas, on the other side, there is a very... You look at here, and you know that she too is a dancer and a duellist, but not by trade, by social class, or social standing? She's an older woman, kind of weathered face, very light skin, and has on a kind of a-- floofy is too strong to describe her dress? But it has some floof to it. It is a very, kind of... not restrained, what's the word I'm looking for, sort of restrained, very hu- not humble, very, like, sober? Muted! Muted is what I'm looking for. A very muted pink? It's not a very bright hot pink, it's a very quiet pink. With a white blouse underneath it. And she gives you a look, and you notice that she has these very strange yellow eyes. So she's on your left.

Then to your left and right, Castille, you are stuck between young Mr. Lance Noble Orchid, to your left, and then to your right is Elias, the guy who was the apothecary that Aubrey has stolen from.

ALI: Yeah yeah.

AUSTIN: To your right, Sige, is a kind of coy looking twenty-year-old, who has very dark skin, very, very-- just like, twenty at the oldest, right? Curly hair, very tight curls, he wears a white short-sleeve dress shirt with red suspenders and brown trousers, and he just has this, very playful grin on him as the priest finishes his prayers, as if there's something of a joke quality to it. Like, he thinks this is all just hilarious. At the end of the table is another older woman who... You probabl-- maybe you recognize her. Lemme think if-- how long have you been in town, Sige?

DRE: Uhhh. I mean I was born and raised here.

AUSTIN: Okay, how old is he? Were you here pre-Marielda? Were you here when it was like The City of Light slash The Divine Protectorate(sp)?

DRE: I'm gonna say he was probably ten when the pala-din rolled through, so...

AUSTIN: Okay, so yeah. Because like, remember, Marielda is only 15 years old at this point. So he remembers the old days. Okay, so. You recognize her. No one's seen her in quite some time, she is Sabinia, who is an older woman with curly hair and dark eyes, and she's dressed in like, kind of the casual version of what the adherents of Samoths wear? You know her as Christopher's second most famous disciple. Christopher was the priest who had formerly held a high position in the Church of Samoths? But after the war, had kind of gone into seclusion because it turned out that he had been (sounds of metal dropping) the teacher of a young Samot-- Someone is dropping steel outside? I don't understand--

(DRE laughs)

SYLVIA: It's the protesters.

AUSTIN: It's the protesters. (metal sound)

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And then to... So Sabinia's at the other end of the table. It's clear that she is here as like-- She holds herself as if she is in command of this room, even though Silas is the one giving the prayer. It's like he's giving the prayer for her benefit. And in fact, I think during the prayer, he basically says, like,

AUSTIN (as Silas): I am thankful for blessed Sabinia's, great oppor--

AUSTIN: not opportunity, her,

AUSTIN (as Silas): her noble and just invitation to allow me to enter these sacred halls. It is a yearly honor that I can join in and offer a blessing over the proceedings of this great yearly event.

AUSTIN: And Sabinia is just like... She just like, has it together. She's just someone who you can tell has been through this a billion times. And it's like-- you know, Dre, you work in education, you know what it's like on the first night of orientation for new students. Where's just like, "Alright! Here we fucking go."

(DRE laughs)

AUSTIN: "Let's get this stupid... Let's get this event going, it'll be fine, let's just get there." And then, Aubrey, Sabinia is to your right also, but to your left is a kind of, very cute, kind of chubby brown-skinned girl, with her hair up in a bun. She has a pale yellow short sleeved blouse with a black vest and black skirt, and also has weird yellow eyes. So does the person to your right, Sige. And she's just kind of bubbly and she's, again, in the education analogy, she's just so excited to be at college. She's like, taking it all in, she can't keep her eyes closed during the prayer. She's just like, looking around. Like, she sees you come and sit down next to her, Aubrey, but like, doesn't say anything bad, like she just-- like, "Oh, I guess there are cobbins here!" Like she's very entranced by all this.

SYLVIA: This does answer my question, too, which is, I'm the only cobbin in here.

AUSTIN: Oh, you are the only cobbin, yes.

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So Silas finishes his prayer and... There is a real interesting range of food available here. Kind of just the best of everything you would normally have in the rest of society, like, you guys live-- Y'all live in Chrysanthemum Parish, so you already are used to a wide range of foods? But there is stuff here that you know does not grow in Marielda. There's stuff here that has to be from the mainland. Like certain fruits. Like I imagine-- what're some cooler weather fruits. Do apples grow in warm weather places?

(ALI makes a considering noise)

AUSTIN: I feel like they don't, necessarily.

DRE: Berries are cooler weather, right?

AUSTIN: Yeaah. That's a-- yes, there are some-- you know what it is? It's like, there is like a turkey dish that has a berry garnish that is very clearly not from around here. In fact, Hitchcock, you recognize it as being something that would've come from Rosemerrow? Late... Or-- it's not called Rosemerrow, right now. It's just like

JACK: Right.

AUSTIN: the area that was To The East of Nacre, where the halflings live. That is the sort of food it is. And you are pretty sure that there must've been a successful battle there recently or something for them to have access to this. And then Silas sits down, and everyone starts digging in. What do you all do?

(SYLVIA laughs)

JACK: I guess, like, load up a plate?

(laughter)

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah, okay.

ALI: I don't eat food, so.

AUSTIN: It's a-- oh, yeah, like what're you doing?? (ALI laughs) Are you just like-- head completely down?

ALI: (higher volume) Um, I think--

AUSTIN: I'm gonna trust your previous five here, like i'm gonna move that forward, which is to say like, I'm not gonna make you re-roll to be sneaky here.

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: But like, what's that look like?

ALI: I feel like Castille has gotten very good at like, hanging out with people and appearing human? Cause she-- that's how she wants to present herself?

AUSTIN: Yeah. But like, is she made up, or something? Like wh-- It is a bright room.

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: Like this isn't a d-- or maybe it isn't that bright. Maybe that's-- maybe we actually get to go that way. Maybe it's like, actually candle-lit? And instead of-- I was imagining it as kind of a big bright banquet hall? But now that I start thinking about it, I kind of like it in an almost dimly light... god, there's a Kubrick movie, that has this sort of-- there it is. Is that what it is? (crosstalk) Is that what I'm thinking of?

JACK: (crosstalk) What's the, the period piece?

AUSTIN: That's, yeah, it's Barry Lyndon. It's absolutely Barry Lyndon. Lit like Barry Lyndon. Look up any shot of Barry Lyndon and (crosstalk) it's exactly what I'm--

JACK: (crosstalk) Don't the windows have curtains then?

AUSTIN: The windows still do not have curtains. There are no curtains on the Church of Samothres.

JACK: So it's just like, dark outside?

AUSTIN: It is dark outside. Yo, it's evening. It's dinner. Y'know.

JACK: Ah, okay.

AUSTIN: Yeah. So yeah, maybe that's how it's shot. That means that you get to wear your hat inside, and (ALI giggles) hide under it a little bit. I think, once people start eating, the woman to your left, Aubrey, she kind of leans over, and is like,

AUSTIN (as yellow girl): So, I hope you don't mind, but, what do you, what do you eat?

AUSTIN: And she's like eating a piece of turkey while she says that.

SYLVIA: (laughing) I, jus-- Aubrey just sort of like, gives her a Look that's clearly kind of insulted? And then picks up a piece of turkey herself and slowly bites into it while looking at her.

AUSTIN: She like, completely misunderstands your point, and is like,

AUSTIN (as Miss Salary): Oh, I'msosorry, I'msosorry, I'msosorry. I'm Miss Salary.

AUSTIN: And she reaches out a hand to shake Aubrey's.

SYLVIA: Aubrey begrudgingly shakes it.

AUSTIN (as Miss Salary): (a little patronizing?) It's so nice to meet you.

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): Ni-nice to meet you too. I'm... Aubrey.

SYLVIA: She can't think of fake names. She doesn't do that very well. We've learned that.

AUSTIN: Did you still-- did you say 'Aubrey', you didn't say 'Audrey' this time?

SYLVIA: Uhh... (ALI laughs) I think it'd be funnier if I said 'Audrey' again, actually.

AUSTIN: Okay. Yeah, 'Audrey' is just your...

AUSTIN (as Miss Salary): That's such a pretty name! I didn't know you people had names like that!

DRE: ooh.

AUSTIN (as Miss Salary): Anyway. I'm so excited to meet you,

AUSTIN: and then she says,

AUSTIN (as Miss Salary): Oh! oh! One second--

AUSTIN: and she reaches down into a, kind of a, she has a belt with a little pocket on the... Like a little pocket pouch on the side? And she reaches in and pulls out a card and gives it to you? And it is a brown card with a yellow triangle pointed upwards on the front? And on the backside there is an address, and underneath that there is a strange script, that you... I don't know if you recognize it or not. It is a strange script that is not in the common tongue.

SYLVIA: I don't recognize the symbol on it either?

AUSTIN: Mmm...

SYLVIA: Said there was like a yellow triangle?

AUSTIN: I think you can give me rolls to figure out either of those things.

SYLVIA: Okay. Would that be Study, or...?

AUSTIN: I think Study would be to read the script.

SYLVIA: Okay.

AUSTIN: I feel like maybe Consort to know--

SYLVIA: Oh, dope, I got (crosstalk) two in both of those.

AUSTIN: (crosstalk) to do-- So, yeah, pick one or both of those and (crosstalk)

SYLVIA: (crosstalk) Okay, I'll start with reading the script, would this be risky...?

AUSTIN: There's not risk-- this'll just be, do you succeed or not and to what degree.

SYLVIA: Okay.

AUSTIN: So wait, which are you doing first?

SYLVIA: Study, to read the script.

AUSTIN: Okay.

SYLVIA: Got a five.

AUSTIN: Five is mostly a success. So you know-- here's what you know about it, is that it is in a language that is-- that predates the common tongue? And like, there's a kind of... You kind of recognize the basic grammatical components, and like, "Oh yeah, I can see that this word basically means, like, 'game', and this one means, 'dark', and this one means, 'heat'," but you can't quite put together an entire sentence around it. But it's something about playing, or like, games, and then like, the dark and the heat.

SYLVIA: Okay.

AUSTIN: So then give me a Consort to see if you know-- if you connect to who these people are. (pause for roll) Alright. So you know that there is another... Trying to think what would you know on a four. I think you just say it out loud, maybe? Like that's the twist on this, that's the complication

SYLVIA: Okay.

AUSTIN: as you see it, and you just say,

AUSTIN (as Aubrey): The Yellow House?

AUSTIN: And she smiles and goes,

AUSTIN (as Miss Salary): You *have* heard of us!

AUSTIN: And you have, of course, this is... In some ways these are your rivals in the knowledge game. They're an underground school of magic that predates you by about fifteen years. They were founded during the Quiet Year, and have managed to go, have managed to succeed and stay underground? Through very careful manipulation of local politics, through remaining kind of small? You know, they're larger than you by a bit, but they aren't-- They smartly did not try to size up and take territory? They're still quite a bit bigger than you, but still.

SYLVIA: Oh, boy.

AUSTIN: And it's clear she doesn't know who you are?

JACK: (overlap) That's good.

AUSTIN: Like, she doesn't know who the Six are? But you know-- you know that the Yellow House know who you are. So other people in Yellow House might know who you are.

SYLVIA: Okay. 'Cause I was gonna say, we do have a reputation with them.

AUSTIN: Mm-hmm. Miss Salary's not necessarily-- caught up on the inter-faction politics? The older woman who has the yellow eyes, though, is. And she starts giving you a death glare, Castille. She's right across from you. Her name is Mrs. Manufactory. (ALI laughs) And she is, like... She's doing the thing where she runs her tongue, like down-- like, across her lower gum, do you know what I mean? Like, "Mm-hmm. I see you right there." Looking right at you. She says,

AUSTIN (as Mrs. Manufactory): Ah! Castille. A joy to see you here. Heard about your exploits recently, I'm surprised you're not-- busier, what with the Fontmen and all.

ALI (as Castille): (ALI inhales) Uhem.

AUSTIN: Lance Noble Orchid is like, just poking at his food with a fork, not-- not really interested in eating but then like, hears Mrs. Manufactory mention the Fontmen and raises his eyebrows.

ALI: I think Castille, like, avoids making eye contact with her, as if that will help? (laughs)

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. Good. (DRE laughs)

ALI: And is like,

ALI (as Castille): I don't... know what you're talking about. My name is Sarah.

AUSTIN: (whispered) *oh my god*. (normal volume) I can't believe you thieves. (ALI cackles) Down the other end of the table, the boy to your right, Sige, is just like going in on his food. Like he is just, devouring it. He finishes a first plate, before anybody else finishes the first third of theirs? And he's licking his fingers to clean them, even though he definitely has a really nice cloth napkin? And he goes like,

AUSTIN (as food boy): Aah. (exhales satisfactorily?) The joys of being a student. (DRE laughs) Aren't you a little old to be here?

DRE (as Sige): Ah, you know, I believe in being a lifelong learner.

AUSTIN (as food boy): Oh, Isee, Isee, Isee.

DRE (as Sige): Hey, I mean, I'm not gonna finish this turkey, do you want some?

AUSTIN (as food boy): Oh, that would be great.

DRE (as Sige): Yeah, go for it!

AUSTIN: And he just like, takes it from your hand and bites into it.

AUSTIN (as Master Latitude): (makes loud nasty food foley) My name is-- Latitude. Master Latitude. It is a joy to meet you. Sige.

AUSTIN: And he smiles that big smile, with his yellow eyes.

DRE: Okay. (laughs)

DRE (as Sige): Nice to meet you too, but it seems like you have me at a bit of a disadvantage.

AUSTIN (as Latitude): Yes. The way I like to play the game.

DRE (as Sige): Fair.

AUSTIN: And he pours himself some wine.

DRE (as Sige): Fair enough.

AUSTIN: He pours himself some wine until Mrs. Manufactory like, leans across the table and shoots him a look. And then he just gives you the wine.

DRE (as Sige): Here, I'm gonna-- I'm gonna pour this in my cup, but I'll save it for you.

AUSTIN (as Latitude) Ah. Good to have a friend on the inside.

AUSTIN: Sabinia--

SYLVIA: Aubrey is also eyeing the wine.

(laughter)

AUSTIN: Oh god, no!

DRE: Sige gives you a Look.

AUSTIN: Bad, don't get drunk! Please...

SYLVIA: She backs off the second Sige looks at her.

(DRE cracks up)

AUSTIN (as Silas): So.

AUSTIN: says Silas to Hitchcock.

AUSTIN (as Silas): What did you think of my blessing?

JACK (as Hitchcock): I swear, sir, it gets better every year.

AUSTIN (as Silas): Oh, you've been here before!

JACK (as Hitchcock): Yes, sir, I'm a member of the faculty.

AUSTIN (as Silas): (AUSTIN chuckling) Oh, I see, I see. That's a shame we haven't met before, I... What is it that you teach?

JACK (as Hitchcock): I teach dissection, sir.

AUSTIN (as Silas): (hushed tone) Oh, very good, very good. We should be quiet about that though, shouldn't we.

JACK (as Hitchcock): Of course, of course.

AUSTIN (as Silas): But I would like to see, if you... wouldn't take me to the operating room later, perhaps? And-- (JACK exhales) Just a little curiosity. You understand.

JACK (as Hitchcock): Well, er, you know, sir, (chuckles) in this place, as in all others in the city, curiosity is a very dangerous thing, but you know? I think I could make an exception.

AUSTIN (as Silas): If we-- Could we..? If we snuck away right now no one would notice.

JACK (as Hitchcock): With all due respect, sir, you're at the head of the table.

AUSTIN (as Silas): Yes, but this is Sabinia's room. She has all the attention.

JACK: Is he telling the truth?

AUSTIN: Yeah. Basically. You know, he's given his bit, and understands that Sabinia at the other end of the table is the person who is in charge of the school, and... In fact, he probably calls her "Rector Sabinia."

JACK: (inhales) So I'm gonna like-- Can I make eye contact with Castille?

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally.

JACK: I'm just gonna sort of like-- look at Castille and be like,

JACK (as Hitchcock): (whispering) O-okay? (makes quiet noises)

JACK: Should I go for this?

(ALL giggles)

ALI: Um, she--

JACK: Oh, is Mrs. Manufactory watching Castille at this point?

AUSTIN: Oh, yeah. Abs-oh-lutely

ALI: (snickers) She nods, nonetheless. She's-- I'm not gonna go with you.

(JACK and ALI laugh)

JACK: No, no, I--

JACK (as Hitchcock): Okay, sir, I think we should-- we should probably make a move. Er, right this way.

AUSTIN: He just like, nods, and does a little wave to the table, as if like, "Oh, right, I have to go with this guy. Of course. Of course I have to." And the two of you are able to leave the room. So outside that room, you kind of step through these big doors right behind-- You walk right past Lance Noble Orchid, and right past Castille and out the door, and you see that there-- You're kind of like in a long hallway, that.. There are kind of religious icons lining this wall? Like little statues inlaid across this long wall to your left, and as you turn the corner you see that there are a pair of stairs. That go down a level, here, also. And there are also these other three rooms, that go north off the side of the building? All of those have locked doors. Or-- I guess you don't know that they're locked right now, but they're locked. And he kind of just looks at you, like, "Alright, let's go."

(JACK chuckles)

JACK (as Hitchcock): Oh, it's a beautiful building, isn't it.

AUSTIN: Oh yeah. It's gorgeous.

JACK (as Hitchcock): Are you in here often?

AUSTIN: Oh that was in-- that was-- you were-- hehe, sorry.

AUSTIN (as Silas): Oh, it's gorgeous. (ALI giggles) Ah, not often enough, only this-- only during orientation, sadly.

JACK (as Hitchcock): Oh, once a year. It's a rough week for us all, you know.

AUSTIN (as Silas): I imagine so, I (stammering) If I haven't seen you before, it must be because you've been so busy.

JACK (as Hitchcock): Well, you know how it is in Memoriam. Right this way, please.

JACK: And I'm just gonna sort of... I'm gonna (laughing) wait a second, so there's three locked doors.

AUSTIN: To your north, yeah. So there's kind of an upside down U-shape hallway here, right? With a big room in the middle. And then there's like a pair of stairwells that go down a floor. And then there's the other side that you haven't gone to. So you just put yourself on this map where you wanna be. 'Cause there's-- it's deserted in here right now.

JACK: Mmkay. Do I know that this guy's called Silas?

AUSTIN: Yeah. I guess. Castille, have you talked about this guy?

ALI: Probably.

AUSTIN: I can also imagine someone in that scene had said Father Silas, you know? Or Brother Silas, probably.

JACK (as Hitchcock): Brother Silas, if it wouldn't inconvenience you too dramatically, I just need to make a quick stop before we go to the operating theatre.

AUSTIN (as Silas): Of course, of course.

JACK (as Hitchcock): You're more than welcome to accompany me, of course, but it's a minor detour.

AUSTIN (as Silas): Ooh, I hope it's nothing too... important, if you have to do work, I understand.

JACK (as Hitchcock): (laughs) It would be a fool to schedule work on our orientation night, sir.

AUSTIN (as Silas): Of course.

JACK: And I'm gonna try this door.

AUSTIN: Huh, that's a good one. The door is locked. (pause) And he is standing there with you. When you... You notice that the door is of a higher quality than the other two doors, to your left and to your right? This door... Again, for the people listening at home, there's kind of like, three rooms jutting off the side of the second floor of this building, this kind of church-meets-university-hall, and this is the middle [door]. And there's a big window separating the middle one from the left one and the right one. And this door's a little bit finer in terms of quality. But it does seem to be locked. What do you do?

JACK: What skill are burglary tools associated with?

AUSTIN: Definitely Tinker.

JACK: Okay. No, in that case I'm just going to, like, turn to Silas and say,

JACK (as Hitchcock): Ah, it's locked.

JACK: and knock gently on the door.

AUSTIN: Huh. How lucky do you think you are?

Sylvia: Oh-hohoh.

JACK: (laughs) Are you asking me, or (crosstalk) are you asking Hitchcock?

SYLVIA: (crosstalk) That's such a-- ogh.

AUSTIN: Mm-hm. (someone snorts) I'm asking you. This is either a Fortune die, or you tell me why this door's gonna open.

JACK: I can't use my "Have Somebody On The Inside," cause Fair-play is in the reception.

AUSTIN: She is. My suggestion here is probably Fortune dice, which is just like, we roll a number of d6 based on how likely it is that I think that someone else is in this dorm. Or you can tell me your reason why there is somebody else in this dorm. Either through a flashback or something else. Sorry, it's a dorm, by the way. That's what's on the other side of this door.

JACK: Is it a student dorm?

AUSTIN: It is not.

JACK: Okay. I think I'll take a Fortune dice,

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: 'cause I'm so stressed, and I (stammering)

AUSTIN: Here's what I'll do. I'll roll 3d6 on the chance that there could be someone in there. Take the highest number here.

JACK: Okay.

AUSTIN: A five. Five isn't bad.

JACK: Aww!

AUSTIN: So the door-- hm... I need to look at your sheet really quick.

JACK: Of course.

AUSTIN: (overlap) It's always good to kinda...

JACK: (overlap) Silas-- Silas is okay with me knocking on this door, right?

AUSTIN: Oh, yeah. Definitely. He's like,

AUSTIN (as Silas): Oh. Happens all the time, of course, in my parish.

JACK (as Hitchcock): (sympathetically) Oh. Parishioners

AUSTIN: The door opens, and there is a, a kind of grumbly looking fifty year old man with a pair of spectacles on his eyes, kind of just like pince-nez snapped on his nose. And like, gives you a look? And says,

AUSTIN (as man): What is it?

JACK: I don't kn-- I don't recognize this man at all, do I?

AUSTIN: Not at all. He's in his like, nightclothes. He goes,

AUSTIN (as man): I told them I wouldn't make it to dinner! Not feeling very well.

(ALL awws)

JACK (as Hitchcock): Oh, my goodness, did I wake you up?

AUSTIN (as man): You're damn right!

AUSTIN: And he sees the priest, and is like,

JACK: Oh!

AUSTIN (as man): I-- You're-- ver-- you are correct.

JACK (as Hitchcock): (making shushing sounds)

(DRE laughs)

JACK (as Hitchcock): I'm so sorry. Look, ah,

AUSTIN: Silas is like, moving around you, trying to peek in past you. (JACK laughs) Just like, trying to look in what the room is.

JACK (as Hitchcock): Ah! Look, I'm so sorry. Have we met before?

AUSTIN: He gives you a look.

AUSTIN (as man): Hmmm. You one of the new ones?

JACK (as Hitchcock): My name's Professor Hectares, I teach dissection.

AUSTIN (as man): Hec-tez, Hec-tez. Uh...

AUSTIN: Give me a Sway. A standard, er, risky standard.

JACK: Okay, fingers crossed. Here. (roll) That'ssss a six.

AUSTIN: Boom. In fact, (crosstalk) it's a double six, reduce a stress.

JACK: (crosstalk) Oh, I rolled two sixes, hahah. Oh, boy. (exhaling)

AUSTIN: Did you get the name Hec-tez-- did Hitchcock get the name Hec-tez from somewhere?

JACK: It's Hectares, like the dist-- like the measurement?

AUSTIN: Oh, ok, gotcha. But is that like-- is there a real professor named that?

JACK: Um... I think that Hitchcock has heard from Fair-play's research that there is essentially a student urban legend about Professor Hectares inside of Memoriam College.

AUSTIN: What's the, what's the legend?

JACK: That he never appears on any timetables, you're never told that you're gonna be taught by him, and dissection never appears on any timetables. And the legend is that some nights, almost like-- like a Marielda-style secret society or something,

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: You'll be woken and led to a class led by this professor.

AUSTIN: Gotcha. So this guy gives you another squint, and he goes,

AUSTIN (as man): Hectares... Ah! (laughing) Oh, come in.

AUSTIN: He reaches out to shake your hand.

JACK (as Hitchcock): You've met Brother Silas?

AUSTIN (as man?): I have,--

JACK (as Hitchcock): Oh, sorry, should I-- should I be shaking that if you're not well? I--

AUSTIN (as man): Oh-- If you-- that's fair, that's fair.

JACK (as Hitchcock): This is Brother Silas, he gave the toast tonight. It was beautiful. You missed out.

AUSTIN (as man): It's a pleasure to meet you. It's a shame I missed the occasion, I'm sure it was a beautiful sermon. Come in, come in.

AUSTIN: And inside are a series of six beds that-- It's just basically a big dorm room for the people who will be proctoring the tests? This isn't-- you can tell this isn't permanent residency? This isn't like,

where people normally live, because there's no personal effects. And this dude feels like he's someone with personal effects. You know what I mean, like this guy doesn't-- He has a, even just looking at his-- where he goes back to his bed to sit down, he has like a little trunk there, and one shoe that's missing another shoe. And he probably left it where he really stays.

JACK: Is he wearing like, a nightcap?

AUSTIN: He's wearing a nightcap, he's wearing a nightgown, he's... There's a candle by his bed with a book next to it, and he says,

AUSTIN (as man): So Hectares. Are you invigilating (#?) this season? People have been wondering if you would ever come and administer the test.

JACK (as Hitchcock): (sighs) Well, you know, sir, there are some times, when despite everything, a teacher has to do their duty. I think that this might be the year.

AUSTIN (as Gentle): It's good to have you onboard. I'm Gentle, by the way.

JACK (as Hitchcock): Gentle, it's a pleasure to meet you.

AUSTIN: One second. I need to remember his full name. I remembered his first name was Gentle. It's Gentle The-Night-You-Were-Born, is his name.

ALI: (overlap) Austin,

SYLVIA: (overlap, muttering) that's such a good name.

JACK: He's a sleepy--

AUSTIN: It's like, a real name. There are people who had names like this, for real, for like, years. And I don't understand how it happened, but I'm not gonna not steal those names. So what are you doing in this dorm? Silas is like, going from bed to bed, and investigating it.

JACK (as Hitchcock): Gentle, look. Can you help me out?

AUSTIN (as Gentle): Of course.

JACK (as Hitchcock): Ah--

AUSTIN (as Gentle): You'll remember me when tenure talks come though, hehe.

JACK (as Hitchcock): (laughs) Oh, you.. you.. You know I will. Um, look. My companion here, he's having a little digestive problems following the dinner, and er-- I'm wondering if you have any of those, do you have a map of the campus or something? I want to point out to him where the bathrooms are.

AUSTIN (as Gentle): Of course, of course. You know, the husband packs one for me every year when I have to do these trips (crosstalk) because he doesn't trust me to--

JACK (as Hitchcock): (crosstalk) It's a hard place to get around.

AUSTIN (as Gentle): It's very strange.

AUSTIN: And he like, goes in and,

AUSTIN (as Gentle): But I need it. Bring it back, otherwise I'll get lost downstairs.

JACK (as Hitchcock): Of course, of course, I-- er, it'll work for the moment (?).

AUSTIN (as Gentle): Of course.

AUSTIN: And he hands you a little paper map.

JACK: (laughs) Okay. Can I see the operating theatre in it?

AUSTIN: There it is. It's on the first floor to the west. I'm just gonna start-- Listen, if you, you have this map now, so I can reveal the names of these rooms for you. Alright. Um. Cool. So you have this and you internalize where things are, you know. You're a heistman. You know how to do that.

JACK: Mm-hmm.

AUSTIN: So you give him... do you, do you-- how do you slide this back to this guy without him being confused?

JACK: (laughs) I think I go over to Silas, and I say in really low voice,

JACK (as Hitchcock): They just got these printed. Magnificent, isn't it?

AUSTIN: (chuckles) Good.

JACK: And then I go back, and I give it back to the guy, and I say,

JACK (as Hitchcock): Thank you, thank you so much. Don't mention it to him, he'll-- you know, get embarrassed.

AUSTIN (as Gentle): Ah, of course.

(SYLVIA chuckling)

JACK (as Hitchcock): Good luck not getting lost!

AUSTIN (as Gentle): Every year. (laughs)

JACK (as Hitchcock): Every year, every year.

(DRE laughs)

AUSTIN: So Sabinia leans over to you, Aubrey.

SYLVIA: (indistinct 1:36:42 #) better than the first conversation.

AUSTIN: She says... she puts a hand on yours, and says,

AUSTIN (as Sabinia): Listen to me. You are blessed by Samoths. Do not let these other ones distract from your brilliance.

AUSTIN: And she squeezes it for a second and it feels warm through your gloves. And she lets go.

SYLVIA: I think Aubrey just kind of looks at her, like really shocked that someone in this situation is being so nice to her? And is like,

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): Thank- thank you.

AUSTIN: Remove one stress. There is something in her eyes. She is very sad. She's like, deeply sad, but in a way that makes you feel grateful to not be carrying whatever weight she is. Castille. Elias, who again is kind of an older dude. He's dressed in fineries, a deep red smoking jacket, again, kind of grey pants. He notices that you're not eating any food.

AUSTIN (as Elias): What's the matter, miss? The food not to your liking?

ALI (as Castille): Oh, no, I um. I just ate before I came, I was so nervous.

AUSTIN (as Elias): Hmmm.

AUSTIN: He like, ducks his head a little bit to try to go look at your face?

AUSTIN (as Elias): Who is the cook around here? I suppose you have not made the food good enough for our guest, the lady.

ALI (as Castille): Oh, that's-- that's not... necessary, that's... Really rude of you.

AUSTIN (as Elias) Garçon?

AUSTIN: He's like--

(ALI laughs)

AUSTIN (as Elias): (reassuringly) I just want you to have a good time.

ALI (as Castille): I'm, I'm having a wonderful time.

AUSTIN (as Elias): Then why aren't you eating your food?

ALI (as Castille): I-- I told--

AUSTIN (as Elias): It's very important for a lady's constitution that she eat nightly.

ALI (as Castille): (makes a taken aback noise)

SYLVIA (as Aubrey): Eugh.

(laughs)

SYLVIA: That was in character. (ALI laughs)

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. Good. Yes.

ALI (as Castile): That's-- very nice of you to say, and like I said, I've already eaten...

AUSTIN (as Elias): What did you have for dinner?

(ALI and JACK laugh)

AUSTIN (as Elias): Or was it a supper that you had?

ALI (as Castille): It was-- It was definitely a supper

AUSTIN (as Elias): Well, there's your problem. You have too many suppers, you'll have a skin like a kobold.

ALI (as Castille): That's... what they say. You're-- you're right-- What's your name? My name is Sarah. It's so nice to meet you.

AUSTIN (as Elias): Ah.

AUSTIN: He like, pushes himself up and stands up at the table, and does a little bow.

ALI (as Castille). oh.

AUSTIN (as Elias): I am Master Elias. Chief Alchemist of Marielda.

ALI (as Castille): *Chief* Alchemist? What do you have to do to be a Chief?

AUSTIN (as Elias): (smugly) You have to be very good at your job. (laughs)

(giggles and laughter)

AUSTIN: And like, he's still standing and waiting for you to like.. just. Still standing. (ALI laughs) And then sits down when he notices you're not like, going to take his hand or something. (ALI laughs, Austin makes a sound that doesn't sound like a word) The boy to your right, Sige, has like, finally finished eating, and he's like,

AUSTIN (as Latitude): (satisfied) Ahh.

AUSTIN: and he snaps his suspenders. Does a little crack of his neck. And you hear the man to his right chide him. He says,

AUSTIN (as other man): If you keep eating every meal like it's your last, one of them will be.

AUSTIN: And the boy, Master Latitude, says,

AUSTIN (as Latitude): Calendar, Calendar. Everything's so serious with you.

AUSTIN: I think the dinner is starting to come to an end at this point? I guess maybe not. It still feels like it's only been a little bit. Let's jump back to... Where are you going with Silas?

JACK: Um, I think probably to the operating theatre.

AUSTIN: Okay. You again get there and the door is again, locked. (JACK exhale/laughs) Yeah, you walk down this hallway. You pass the kind of, there's kind of a pala-din storage place to your right, which is like a heavy-- just like a very heavy, iron or steel door that separates that from that main hallway and you walk past these kind of classrooms, and you get to the operating theatre room, and it is Lock-ed.

JACK (as Hitchcock): Would you credit it, sir? It's locked.

AUSTIN (as Silas): Certainly they know you'd have guests.

JACK (as Hitchcock): You'd think so, wouldn't you? But, ah.. It's very difficult here sometimes.

AUSTIN (as Silas): Well-- (frustrated) At least, tell me something about it. Tell me about the craft.

JACK (as Hitchcock): Well... It's hard work.

AUSTIN (as Silas): Do you do it to living things as well?

JACK (as Hitchcock): I'm not quite sure what you mean by that question, sir.

AUSTIN (as Silas): There are rumors about this place.

JACK (as Hitchcock): Oh, there are rumors about every college.

AUSTIN (as Silas): Yes, but this one especially. It's all the secrecy. The doors only open once a year. Hectares yourself, you are a legend.

JACK (as Hitchcock): (laughs quietly) It's very kind of you to say, but, ah... Sir, would you permit me to, ah... Would you permit me to do something somewhat strange?

AUSTIN: He does a little deep breath.

AUSTIN (as Silas): Like what?

JACK (as Hitchcock): (starts to say something, stops) Look, um. What with the cleaning staff and the (lowers voice) pala-dins' tendency to, you know, close the doors to the classrooms and things a little early... Us higher-ups, we're sometimes authorized to use lockpicks. You wouldn't mind if I just-- I know it's not exactly... tip-top, but, er, wouldn't you like to see inside?

AUSTIN (as Silas): Well you are a... You are a a faculty member, of course, and... I know that people will... in the day to day life, you have to learn how to move through places, sometimes.

JACK (as Hitchcock): You have to--(crosstalk) you have to

AUSTIN (as Silas): (crosstalk) Fine by me.

JACK (as Hitchcock): Look, you just turn around, and you'll just hear the sound of me using my key? You know what I mean, Brother Silas?

AUSTIN (as Silas): Of course, of course.

JACK: Okay, I wanna pick the lock. (laughs)

AUSTIN: (far away) Good. (closer) Give me a Tinker.

JACK: Okay, that's gonna be.. Uh, can I take a stress dice with that?

AUSTIN: You totally can. You abs-oh-lutely can.

JACK: So that gives me one dice.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

JACK: That's Risky-- oh, it's Controlled, right, cause like, I've gotten.. his--

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeahyeah, this is Controlled. This is Controlled.

JACK: Fingers crossed...

(roll)

(hissing)

JACK: Well.

AUSTIN: Oh, my friend.

(JACK laughs)

(Marielda theme starts)

AUSTIN: You rolled a one. The door opens wide,

JACK: (whispered) Oh my god.

AUSTIN: and there's an operating theatre.

JACK: So I've successfully picked it?

AUSTIN: You've successfully picked it. You go inside, there is a clean steel table in the middle, you can look up and see that there is an observation room above, which is empty. And once you're both inside the room, Silas closes the door behind him, and swings his cane at your head.

(clarinets ensue)

(theme ends)