

Live at the Table 39: Good Society 03- November 2020

Transcriber: vesta

[Episode begins]

[MUSIC - "[The Ball at The Pellier's](#)" starts]

[music ends]

JANINE: Welcome to—can I just do it now?—Live to Tape at the Table- the joke's happened,

AUSTIN: Yeah!

JANINE: People have heard the episode- [laughs] an actual play podcast focused on critical worldbuilding, smart characterization, and fun interaction between good friends. I'm your facilitator for today, Janine Hawkins, and I'm @bleatingheart on Twitter. And today we're going to be playing Good Society, which is a Jane Austen RPG by Hayley Gordon and Vee Hendro. Joining me today, we have Alicia Acampora.

ALI: Hi! You can find- you can find me over @ali_west on Twitter, and you can find the show over @Friends_Table.

JANINE: I keep calling you Alicia in these intros, [chuckling] because that's what you have in Roll20?

AUSTIN: Yeah, see how it goes?

ALI: Ohhh!

JANINE: And every time I say it, it sounds weird.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ALI: Maybe I should change it.

JANINE: [chuckles] I'm also joined by Austin Walker.

AUSTIN: Hi I'm eating a- like a fake stroopwafel thing.

JANINE: How's it fake?

AUSTIN: I mean it's just not like a particularly good one. It's like a mass market American stroopwafel, you know what I mean?

JANINE: Mm.

AUSTIN: It's nice, I'm trying to get in the mood.

ALI: Mmm.

JANINE: So you can find Austin @stroopwaffle on Twitter,

AUSTIN: Yeah that's right.

JANINE: @fakestroopwafel on Twitter-

AUSTIN: @fake- fakestroopwafel. [Ali chuckles]

JANINE: That's his private.

AUSTIN: It's *not* my private. [Janine and Jack laugh]

JANINE: That'd be a good- that'd be a good one-

AUSTIN: That'd be a good private though! Mhm!

JANINE: Do you want to say where you're really are and stuff?

AUSTIN: @austin_walker on Twitter.

JANINE: And Jack de Quidt.

JACK: My name's Jack, you can find me on Twitter @notquitereal and buy any of the music featured on the show at notquitereal.bandcamp.com. When my little sister had a stroopwafel for the first time, she read the package very confidently and then looked up and announced that she had a stroopwoodle? [Friends chuckle] And that is how I will always think of them.

JANINE: [laughs] It's cute.

AUSTIN: It's very good.

JANINE: So, as I mentioned, we're here to hopefully, fingers crossed, knock on wood, wrap up our game of Good Society. This is our second cycle, we're doing a two-cycle game, so we're using modified rules- I was going to say if you're following along at home, that feels like it'd be miserable,

if you were just listening people listen play a tabletop RPG with the book open in front of you just like- [Austin chuckles] flicking around for the relevant pages for what's happening- don't. No.

AUSTIN: I feel like all the listeners who used to do that to us, to tell us we were playing wrong, stopped listening. [Ali chuckles]

JANINE: Oh yeah.

AUSTIN: So fuck 'em.

JANINE: You'd have to, right? Like,

AUSTIN: Yeah. Uh huh.

JANINE: You'd have to. My goals as the facilitator here are—this is slightly modified, as I mentioned previously, version from the books—are to respect the decisions made in collaboration and foster a collaborative environment; to ask questions and build on the answers; to bring home the consequences of our character actions and our setting; to add drama and complication, but only if needed; and to be a fan of the players.

That one is not in the book, that one is- that's our thing. No one else can do that. It's only us. [chuckles] So the goals of the players, are to respect the decisions of collaboration; to take action to pursue desires; to accept and orchestrate your own misfortunes; to contribute to the story; and to support other players.

That one is in the book. It's a good book for rules in terms of stuff like that. It's very- I don't know if I mentioned this in the first- I feel like I might've. But it's worth saying again. Good Society as a book is written very much with like, I think as an experienced player, you know, it's not like, it's not too beginner-y? Like it's not like tedious to read, but also if you've never played a tabletop game before, they do a lot of work in terms of like, here is how you are a good partner in storytelling for other people. They- you know have a lot of things built in for like hey, if things kind of go off-piste, here's how you can sort of get them back on track without upsetting anyone, or like, you know.

It's really really good in that sense, and it's- it was kind of a pleasure to read, because a lot of it was stuff that like, if every tabletop game had that stuff written into it, we would have about like a third as many questions on Tips at the Table? You know. So let's go through our characters here, and maybe give a bit of a brief summary of where we're at.

I'm playing as Chatelaine Pellier, her pronouns- *Pellier*, sorry. Pronouns are she/her, she's 23. Her desire is to orchestrate at least one marriage between people of her choosing. Her relationships are, she's friends/old flames with Henrietta Sameday which is Jack's character. She's best of friends with Mint Charlise who is Ali's character. She is the heir, and she's from an old money background. She has decided to back in her scheming, to back the idea of pairing Mint and Marzy,

who is one of the connections here. So my reputation tags are- the positive ones are generous, and concerned. The negative ones are overbearing, and milquetoast romantic.

And just a brief summary of what Chatelaine's been up to, she hosted the- our first event, which was the Procession Day dinner. And in that event, sort of did the rounds, sort of tried her hand at helping some pairs meet up, and tried to make people feel at home to mixed results. And since then she has been, not meddling, because we have someone who is an actual meddler. But she's definitely trying to make things go smoothly for people and maybe she could mind her own business if she wanted to. So, who'd like to go next?

ALI: Um-

JANINE: Let's start with Ali, maybe?

ALI: Yeah, hi. Hello! Hi!

JANINE: Hi!

ALI: I'm [giggles] playing Mint Charlise, she/her. My desire is to receive proposals or make successful proposals to at least two eligible individuals. Marry one and farewell to the other. My current relationships are I am best friends with Chatelaine, who is Janine's character. And I am rivals with Diego Flint, Austin's character. My role is new arrival, my family background is foreign, my current reputation tags are, for positive, I have fascinating, forthright, and cordial. And for negative I have strange, and meek. Mint's gist is that she- what's the town name again? I keep forgetting it.

JANINE: Nievelmarch. Also sorry, you forgot your reputation condition that you have.

ALI: Oh yeah, okay. I also have one reputation condition which is that I have-

JANINE: A good one.

ALI: An unexpected connection. Which is that a famous, wealthy, aristocratic connection you made- you made abroad arrives in town. Create them as a connection. We'll get into her in a second. So [chuckles], Mint is an out-of-towner who grew up in Nievelmarch but because of strange magics, sort of weird rumours, had to leave the town. Was taken from her family to the magical woods, until she was an adult, now she's back in her first season and as you know, being presented and trying to find a partner.

She was being pushed towards the ruthless businessman James, who would be a very convenient marriage for her, but has also been finding these new affections for a young woman in town named Marzy, who is a wealthy, vivacious orphan? [laughs] And my other connection is my dear friend Hilda, who thinks I am a- her favourite. She is a wood witch, she came from the woods to kind of see what's going on in Nievelmarch, and how it pertains to the woods in this moment in history.

Because of some stuff that's going down. And she's a powerful, intense person who's good to have in Mint's corner. So I'm excited!

JANINE: Alright. Oh and it's worth mentioning that Mint is specifically Hilda's favourite at least for the duration of that condition existing [Ali laughs]. If your reputation tags fall, that favouritism evaporates.

ALI: Mmm.

JANINE: Which would be very interesting. We'll see if it actually happens.

ALI: Yeah. Oh, and I guess because I'm the first non-Janine person going, I guess it's worth saying that I'm also playing Anastasia, who is one of Jack's connections.

JANINE: Mhm.

ALI: Anastasia is a former governess who is a mentor-meddling, they are kind of Henrietta's like tutor in this moment who is currently sort of disappointed in Henrietta [chuckles] for doing bad meddling. And is giving Henrietta the silent treatment to inspire her to be better, I guess. But yeah!

AUSTIN: Should I go from there?

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I am playing Diego Flint, he/him, 23 years old. My desire is to come into substantial wealth while ensuring my reputation stays absolutely impeccable. I am rivals with Mint Charlise, and former friends with Henrietta, Jack's character. I am a dependent, and I am from a military family. I have not monologued this cycle, which is true because it's a new cycle. [Janine chuckles] But it's not really important. I have a benefactor whose name is Darling. Unfortunately they are- I guess we'll get to what my relationship with Darling is currently, in a second. I have a bunch of reputation tags. Positive I have steadfast, considerate, and intrepid. Negative I have rude, mercenary, and bra- and brash.

I also have a positive and negative condition. My negative condition is not welcome here, one of those you depend on makes it clear you are not welcome in their house, you must find somewhere else to stay until you are reconnected- or sorry, reconciled. That is very much Diego projecting a break in relationship with Darling, and having not returned to the home that he was welcomed into, they had kind of brought him in as a friend of the family, and he is now living in the woods! But he is also living anywhere else he wants to, because he has a positive reputation tag, we are a welcome guest in any household and may stay wherever you choose while this boon remains active.

The last time that we saw Diego, he was staying in the Pellier house with Chatelaine and Frances. Frances is the other character I'm playing as my connection character, who is Chatelaine's sister. Young sister who is kind of mousey, and booksmart, and like in charge of managing the finances of

the family and kind of the in-town representative- in-house representative of Chatelaine and Frances' parents.

I guess a little bit more about Diego is, the kind of arc Diego has had is, before the game started, lost his fiance who had gone out to the woods on some sort of you know, bachelor's adventure weeks before the wedding. Disappeared, perhaps has turned into an archway, perhaps absconded with a rare- or not a rare I guess, but a monument, a flower monument, along with another member of the Sameday family. I should note, that's part of why Henrietta and I are former friends, because Henrietta sent kind of, was supposed to stop Honor, her brother, from going into the woods. Failed to do so. Maybe even encouraged him to do so. Diego holds that against her.

And in the time since then, in grief and in frankly, in poverty- or not poverty but you know, in- I don't know how broke the family is, but it ain't good. In an attempt to try to get some stability back for the family, as his parents who are off in some forts have asked him to do, he has started working with an in-town businessman named James, and has established his own, Diego's own military mercenary company. First was going after the thief And kind of- I don't know how to describe the- what was the name of the- Albrecht? Albrecht Sameday?

JANINE: Albrecht Sameday.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Vandal? I don't know. I don't know how bad Albrecht actually is.

[00:15:00]

But using that as a sort of front to expand out into the woods, begin to kind of scout out places where business opportunities for other industrialists basically in Niebelmarch- Nievelmarch? Nievelmarch. Not Niebel. Nievelmarch, could expand including some sort of opportunity for James, I don't know if it was lumber or like a resort, I know it's near a lake and there are good trees there. [chuckles] That's kind of all I remember. But also has just kind of built, has built a machine for expansion. And I don't know if we're calling it colonisation because I don't know what the actual relationship is between these places and stuff?

JACK: Hm.

AUSTIN: But it's certainly colonisation adjacent, if not conquest adjacent? I don't know what it-

JACK: You made a private company to go exploit some woods!

AUSTIN: Yes, exactly. It's at the very least that stage of a 4X game where you go like, ah! Those woods! Those are my woods.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I could use those woods. You know?

JANINE: That's a polite way to frame it as-

AUSTIN: We could use- we could use those woods.

JANINE: Unwarranted encroachment or whatever like, it's-

AUSTIN: Yes. Yes. We don't have a good- all I know is that there are witches out there, but I don't know where those witches come from. Or I guess we know that some of them are related to Mint Charlise who is also from here. So I don't know what the cultural spread is? But I think at the very least it's like, environmental exploitation and disruption of natural you know, ecologies? And at the high end, it is pushing out the people who live there in order to take their resources for- not even for himself. But to help other industrialists in town do that, because that's an easy way to make money it turns out. Not a nice person sometimes, Diego. And that's me.

JANINE: Alright. Jack? Henrietta?

JACK: I am playing Henrietta Sameday. She uses she/her pronouns, she's 21 years old. Her desire is to restore her reputation and be forgiven by her former friend, which is Diego Flint, due to the situation between Henrietta and Diego and Henrietta's brother, Honor. I am also friends/old flames with Chatelaine. My role is meddler. And I come from new money, my family bought and then worked out how to mass produce at low cost something that holds horse-riding equipment onto the horse or something like that. I'm still wearing the full collection but wearing it well. I am capricious.

I have two positive reputation tags which are clever, and industrious. And I have two negative reputation tags which are vulgar, and unfocused. I also have a positive- sorry, a negative reputation condition, which is fracture, someone close to you is appalled by your behaviour and refuses to talk to you, this is Anastasia. They are- they are frankly upset that I'm not doing this better and more carefully. I- my connection is with Anastasia, who believes that I am meddling unambitiously and directionlessly, show some spine, think bigger.

And I am also playing Diego's connection, Darling, who believes that Diego is wasting his beautiful yours- beautiful youth in mourning, move on. Darling is independently wealthy and apparently married and lives in a sort of fairly comfortable mansion that Diego is always welcome in, even if he has convinced himself he is not in the face of firm but fair criticism.

What else? Anastasia- sorry, Henrietta has a cousin, a man called Albrecht Sameday, who last spring stole the Monument of Flowers and made off with it into the woods. Flushed out by Diego's sort of marshal company, he fled to the Sameday house for shelter, at which point Henrietta went oh, okay, and promptly turned him in to Diego as an attempt to kind of build some bridges there? If I remember right Austin, Diego basically said thank you very much, where's my fiance?

AUSTIN: I think it was more- I think that Diego basically says you know, this definitely goes- takes a step to prove that your family is not like, the corrupt thing that I thought it was, but no- what Diego

said was, there was a thing you could do to get forgiveness, and you've never done it. That is like the- that was the big, big thing that I said early in that letter in response.

JACK: And I- and she doesn't think will do-

JANINE [overlapping]: And also there was a degree of like- wasn't there kind of a degree of not exactly threat, but kind of threat right? About like, you know, some people are gonna think that you were harbouring this person.

AUSTIN: That was not a threat. That was like, genuinely Austin did not mean that as a threat?

JANINE: Okay, okay.

AUSTIN: That was Diego saying- you got me, I understand that this is-

JANINE: Ah, okay.

AUSTIN: That this is- that you are doing this

JANINE: More like a-

AUSTIN: As a thing for me, but keep your fucking head done. No one else- this doesn't clear your name from like other people necessarily. So not a-

JACK: People will say-

AUSTIN: Jack received that as a threat, I did not intend to- which, Henrietta could maybe have received that as a threat, I think that ambiguity there is interesting.

JACK: It might just have been that like, in the mindset of playing Henrietta,

AUSTIN: Yes.

JACK: I am ready to see threats where they might not be? [Janine chuckles]

AUSTIN: I mean there isn't- what I- what Diego did not say was, I will now help you clear your name, you know?

JACK: Oh yeah absolutely, it was a very measured letter.

AUSTIN: So he could have gone further. Yeah totally.

JACK: Also, yeah. Hilda received a letter- not Hilda I'm sorry. Henrietta recently received a letter from Hilda, the recently arrived witch who presumably over a strudel and a coffee and a newspaper

in the Glacier Cafe or whatever, had realised or had put two and two together about the disappearance of Honor several years ago, and basically wrote to Henrietta saying, like very interested to see you of the disappearance, I am at your disposal if there is anything I can help with.

JANINE [overlapping]: I think that's-

AUSTIN: There was also a character we haven't brought up yet which is Sharp Molly, who reached out-

JACK: Oh damn!

AUSTIN: Both to Henrietta and Diego asking for all correspondence with Honor Sameday to kind of unknown ends, I guess? An investigation is ongoing I believe is what kind of Sharp Molly suggested. Sharp Molly is one of the Odd Job Boys, a group of unionised, odd-job boys? In the hound?

JACK: He's like an adult though, right?

JANINE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: I was getting older teen, is Sharp Molly like an adult adult?

JANINE: Yeah- in my mind, I think it's almost important that Sharp Molly is in the same age group as pretty much everyone else right? Like early twenties, like this is- Sharp Molly is-

AUSTIN: Okay.

JANINE: Sort of within that range but also from the completely different world.

JACK: Damn.

JANINE: Where their concerns are completely different and their life is completely different.

AUSTIN: Didn't take the retirement package at fifteen? A lifer.

JANINE: So- I mean look I have [laughs] a lot of headcanons about the Odd Job Boys relief package and stuff and things that I thought true.

AUSTIN [overlapping]: It's your setting! We- we can make it canon, it doesn't have to be headcanon.

JACK: Oh yeah! No, Janine, these-! [laughs]

AUSTIN: [laughs] That's just called canon!

JANINE: Uh huh! I mean, so I- maybe I'll just say it is, cause it's all Live at the Table. I imagine my quest character is also part of this-

AUSTIN: Ahh.

JANINE: Part of that thing right? Where it's like, when you're young you do a certain tier of job, and for a lot of people it's very physically demanding and there's not much that you can do after you like ruin your joints before your 20s, you know? So in that case you're going to be taking care of, or might be like, switched on to like clerical work or whatever you know? I think it depends, it's very case-based. But also you know, I think there are things that like, if you're going to have an investigator, if you have like an Odd Job Boys who starts out as like a spunky Detective Conan-like character,

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: They're only going to get better with age, right?

JACK: What if they're just a detective?

JANINE: Yeah. What if they just grow up and become the union detective?

AUSTIN: Mhm. Cool. I like Sharp Molly, I gave Sharp Molly-

JACK: Maggie Darcy [Ali chuckles].

AUSTIN: Like, yeah. I gave Sharp Molly a note basically saying like, hey, if you can find Honor, please deliver this thing to Honor, thank you.

JACK: Oh yeah, you had a really lovely love letter, right?
[t/s note: transcribing that letter made me bawl thanks Austin]

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I guess that it's a love letter.

JACK: To, to Honor.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: Yeah.

JANINE: It's a love letter in the way something that's like, hey if you just left me for some reason and wanna come back, that's good. Oh and if you don't, I get it, kinda like?

AUSTIN: Yeah that was the gist of it for sure.

JANINE: It's a kind of love letter. I have great news, Jack.

JACK: Mm!

JANINE: I'm gonna copy this link into- not gamernation, they don't care. [Ali chuckles] Into the Patreon chat and then I'm gonna also it- whoops! In my,

ALI: Oh, look at this.

JACK: Oh, wow!

AUSTIN: Oh I love it!

JANINE: You can take your fucking pick-

JACK: This is brilliant! Janine has-

JANINE: You wanna broker terrets? Or hame tugs? How about a kidney link?

AUSTIN: Eugh.

JACK: Janine has given us a line drawing of a horse wearing a bridle and all the various attached-the horse-attachments.

JANINE: It's on the video, they can see- it's also, sorry, I didn't give this, the Fraser School of Driving gave this. [Ali laughs]

JACK: Oh thank you to the Fraser School of Driving! I think we probably manufacture the liverpool bed and rein on rough cheek? Or we manufactured the terret? But we might have just worked out how to properly secure the nose band to the brow band and rosette?

JANINE: [chuckles] That's the thing right, you can't claim to- you can't claim the rosette, cause the rosette seems like such an integral like, [Jack and Austin voice approval] someone in-

AUSTIN: That's old money.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: That's not new money, right?

JACK: That's old money, sure. They say that one was invented by a horse as well.

AUSTIN: The horse's name was Rosette. That's why we call it the rosette.

JACK: Mmm.

JANINE: Mhm.

JACK: Mhmm. So anything else we're missing? Or have we kind of got the-

JANINE: Rumours-

JACK: Oh we know that the- oh yeah! Also like, the witches potentially come-

JANINE: And Mortimer.

JACK: -from a place called the- oh! Mortimer. It is a place called Velvet Mansion, or the Velvet Mansion? It's hard to know how much of that is like, non-witches in Nievelmarch making up a place?

JANINE: Mhm.

JACK: Or whether or not that's true?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: Mortimer is a hapless horticulturalist who I am trying to set up with Chatelaine's sister Frances, with absolutely mixed success. [Janine chuckles] Oh my god, my dog is here! Hang on. I have to go-

AUSTIN: Hi!

ALI: Hello!

JANINE: Mortimer's representative has come to speak on his behalf.

JACK: [away from mic] Mortimer! Alright, I'm gonna go get rid of her, I'll be back in just a second. Hi, sorry about that.

JANINE: Welcome back! Never apologise for dogs.

JACK: No.

JANINE: That's my stance. Alright, so Rumours and Scandals. Or Rumour and Scandal, I put the 's' on there myself. We have a few of these going. It's still kind of bugs me that in a two-cycle game we only get one Rumour and Scandal cycle, but I get it.

So we have "Henrietta knows where her brother is and stands to inherit," which has been spread. We have "Diego and Mint are working closely together for expansion to the east mountains," this has also been spread. "Mortimer has discovered a rare flower whose petals are made of ice", this was not spread. "Honor isn't dead, he helped Henrietta's cousin steal the monument and abandoned his fiance," this has been spread. And "Marzy is an illegitimate child of the Pelliers," this has also been spread.

And just as a reminder, a thing being spread means that there is essentially a Resolve token attached to it. So if you want to change the world or compel another character or you know, negotiate some sort of something related to any of these rumours, you can use that token and then uncheck the box I think? And also-

AUSTIN: Didn't I- why did I believe I used one of these?

JANINE: You might have used it narratively?

AUSTIN: But not. Okay what was the thing that I did. Do you remember when I un- oh I spent, you know what it was, it was the Henrietta's negative condition.

JACK: Sure. Unfortunate connections-

JANINE: Mm.

AUSTIN: Had- unfortunate connections is what I spent, that's what I'm thinking of.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yes.

JANINE: So we do also- did we take, everyone took one Resolve token last time, right?

ALI: I believe so, yeah.

JANINE: Are we wrapped up? Okay.

AUSTIN: I must've, right?

JANINE: I'm looking mostly at Henrietta who only has one Resolve token here which is-

ALI: I have a question, Jack has two negative conditions right now. Does that list get shorter to make the fracture thing go ahead, or just unfocused have to be-

JANINE: That would be during the Reputation phase,

ALI: Ohhh.

JANINE: Presuming that nothing happens during the Novel phase that adds another negative.

ALI: Right, right right right right. Okay yeah.

JANINE: Yeah.

ALI: Okay.

JANINE: So if Henrietta keeps her nose clean during this next bit, [Ali chuckles] then things will be mended with Anastasia basically. Do you have any other questions, or? Are we good to go?

JACK: I don't think so.

AUSTIN: I think I'm good.

JANINE: Alright. Oh, yeah?

ALI: I think the only thing I wanna say is we haven't gone over like, appearances in a little bit? [chuckles]

JANINE: Yeah that's a good idea. [laughs]

ALI: Sure, yeah. I can go pretty quickly. Mint is a 24 year old woman, like a short bobbed-hair cut, like pale skin, dark hair. She has like, neck feathers? I didn't describe this great in the first episode, I'm not going to describe it great now. But I think that it goes down over her neck and her like clavicle area. I keep like thinking of her in like, you know the nice dress with the nice neckline, and like just from her neck down is like,

JANINE: Oh are they, so are they flat down kind of like a feathery choker, like a high fashion-?

ALI: Yeah, I think so, yeah.

JANINE: Feather-necklace kind of thing?

ALI: Yeah.

JANINE: Okay.

ALI: I think that when we've seen her upset on camera quote unquote, they've like puffed out a little bit? But I think it's like a, you know, it's like a raven-esque, I think I described it in the first episode as like someone- somebody's crow fursona?

[00:30:00]

[Janine chuckles] Keep that in your mind. But yeah, that's Mint.

AUSTIN: Diego is face-cast as the actor Jharrel Jerome. Specifically some of the looks he has in a GQ photoshoot from, I wanna say Fall 2019? Which is to say that he's like, Afro-Latino, he's- I believe Jharrel Jerome's Dominican. Lots of long coats, lots of, kind of like- I mean at this point I guess actually probably adapted back into military wear, because a lot of what he wore to begin with was kind of evoking military dress uniforms, but then kind of stepped down to be for society instead of being someone who had never served, so you couldn't really wear the uniform, but you wanted to invoke it?

And here maybe I'm going the opposite way, which is like, society clothing, nice coats like, high quality fasteners and you know, fringe work and stuff, but cut into military cut material. I think at this point I wonder if his hair has grown out a little bit, because of being out and about all the time? But on the other hand, I think if he previously wore a beard, I think that that beard is now completely gone, he's like, that's the one bit of kind of personal hygiene he emphasises out on the road? Like his hair is getting longer, and he keeps it brushed, but like he has shaved his beard away, which means that when he shows up probably back in town, there is a little bit of like a, oh, you look different. What- oh, you shaved, okay.

JACK: I wrote down for Henrietta that she is still wearing the full collection instead of the winter collection? But manages to look pretty good doing so? Like a thing that I think of her a lot is like, has the money and has the taste to pick clothes like confidently and clothes that are in fashion, but is just slightly behind the curve, I think perhaps as a result of her not being moneyed in quite the same way as the old money families? And I think also perhaps on some level she's just like, I want to look extremely good, I have more important things to worry about right now than what people are wearing in the winter collection, and those things that I have to worry about are manipulating those close to me.

She, try as I might, has just ended up looking like a sort of amalgam of all the different kind of Jane Austen Emmas, predominantly Romola Garai from the BBC adaptation of Emma, but also Cher from Clueless, which is a great adaptation of Emma. Blonde hair, a bright demeanour, always on the go, always delighted to see people in-so-far as any conversation- she perceives that any conversation can be turned to brightness and joviality and her own ends with the smallest application of effort. This has not been going well. [Ali and Janine chuckle]

I think over the course of the game she has been getting increasingly tired and increasingly sort of harassed by the nature of what has been happening, whether or not that matches or not going

well, whether or not that's the sort of fiasco with Diego becoming more and more known, her family getting called out in a full-page ad more or less. And then the arrival of her bad cousin Albrecht, which she sort of tried to deal with as quickly as possible. I feel like she's constantly having to change from one outfit to the other in terms of like, I was wearing that when I had this, and I don't want to be seen in that again, so I need to do this and fix that or whatever. [Janine and Ali laugh] So that's where Henrietta is at.

JANINE: And Chatelaine, I've described her as having dark hair and bird-like features, an alert temperament? I face-cast her as specifically very similar to Alison Brie's character in Doctor Thorne, which is a- I wanna say it's an adaptation of an Anthony Trollope book that has one of the Mr. Collinses in it, and is great honestly. She's very, you know, she is that kind of like, she looks fussy but makes it look effortless kind of person, where you know, the answer- the answer to why that all is, is like money.

Like, it's not a thing of that she knows anything more than anyone else. It is just that like, this is what her family is, this is how she was raised, this is the kind of thing she has access to. It is all just kind of in her lap in terms of being able to look put together. It's not even really a skillset at that point you know? It's just, this is the thing I almost mentioned with Henrietta is like you know, old money at this time, there is a lot of, there is a lot of like in shows and stuff, a lot of like trips to the modiste and things, when you're talking about regency women of fashion and stuff.

But if you were super rich, you also have all of the fancy-ass dresses that people wore before you, and like a whole big part of that was like, you take a fancy-ass dress, cut it to bits and repurpose it to modern fashion. And like, fashion moved a little slower so you didn't have to completely hack things apart to do that? But that's also part of why a lot of the surviving dresses are the smallest dresses. It's not that people were necessarily super small at the time, it was just that like, no one else fit that dress, so they didn't wear it and remake it and whatever, it just got kept in a trunk kind of thing?

So she's the kind of person who entirely has the benefit of that you know. And looks exactly as you would expect given that. Yeah. Is there anything else you wanna cover?

JACK: I think I'm ready to go.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I'm ready.

JANINE: Okay. So for our second cycle of play, we're jumping into a Novel phase. So we need to decide the chapter type. Event, visitation, or split. As a reminder, the time period- and I think we sort of decided that we're like, probably at the very very end of the holiday, right? Like if not on Renewal, then a day before Renewal or something like that. Like maybe that's the way to wrap this up is like, this is the very last day of Liber Clausa, and then the last Novel phase could be on Renewal.

So what do we think would be best? Because we have a few things that we need to do right? Like, Chatelaine, Mint, Marzy and Hilda have tea to attend. Oh my god there's another thing that I immediately forgot after I said all that, right. Henrietta and Hilda have sort of made contact in terms of like, is there information you want, maybe we should talk, maybe we should broker something out. I would also say that Sharp Molly has some business. Probably with Diego?

AUSTIN: Is this better than as a visitation or should there be an event that everyone can be at? What makes more- because there is a lot there.

JANINE: There is a lot there. That is why I'm wondering if people have feelings in terms of.

JACK: Mmm.

JANINE: Do we imagine this as like, a big thing that everyone is doing, or things that are happening privately and sort of on an individual basis.

ALI: It's weird because it feels like separate scenes, but it could all be in the Pellier house, right? Or like, Mint and Marzy and Chatelaine are having tea, but Diego is there meeting with people because he's staying there,

JANINE: That's true.

ALI: And technically it's an event, but if we wanted like intersection- like technically it's a visitation, but because everybody's in the same place it's like an event.

JANINE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: I mean is the difference there that what we do is we run it, we situate it all in the same place, but we run it like a visitation where we set those scenes, and we don't do the event thing where everything is open-ended and indefinite? Do you know what I mean? Like, I don't- I'm probably only going to need the one scene this chapter. So I mean, that's very self-centered for me to say it this way, but unless other people are like, well I would like to have the opening to continue to do scenes in the event style, where I'm bouncing from you know, group to group, we could just do it where yes, it's all in the same place, and we all get one scene, at which point it becomes a visitation.

JANINE: It might also have a little more like, punch if we do event for our last Novel scene, and do something like visitation for this one right? Where,

JACK: Yeah.

JANINE: It gives us more room to address our loose ends, but also doesn't make this recording like incredibly long which is a thing we're all conscious of.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: I'm of that. I'll be up for a visitation and then later some sort of big new year's event or something.

JANINE: Mmkay. I'll- how about I kick us off then. Just since Chatelaine's doing a lot of hosting.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: The tea with Mint and Hilda and Marzy. I'm going to need people to help on that front, because there is- it's a boring scene if it's me playing- a boring and confusing scene if it's me playing three characters opposite Ali. I think Chatelaine probably has a very nice tea room in her very nice house that she had very little to do with, you know. When people arrive, they are shown in, I don't think we need to belabour the introductions and stuff, but Marzy is sort of there and waiting. Which was a thing- which was a secret that Chatelaine was trying to keep anyway, because Mint had sent her a letter saying, I really don't like James, but I met Marzy and she's kinda- I don't remember if she mentioned the name? But she did say like, I met like a weird girl,

ALI: [laughs] Yes!

JANINE: And I think Chatelaine would put that together especially if she'd seen them or something like that.

ALI: Right.

JANINE: So. Man, I do, I feel like a- I feel high-key guilty about how little description there's been in this thing because it's- it's for some reason been hard for me to remember even though I'm usually a very like, keen to describe every fucking dress my character is wearing kind of thing?

AUSTIN: Mhm. When you have eighteen characters, it's hard.

JANINE: [chuckles] Yeah! Sure! [laughs]

AUSTIN: When you're on the like, and also I need to make sure this plot doesn't fall apart.

JANINE: Uh huh! So this tea room I'm imagining it, is very, I'm imagining like a dark blue trimmed with a lot of like yellow, specifically like a kind of pale yellow, that's the motif in this room. You know, I think that the holiday decorations have been taken down at this point. But there are still a few that are up that are maybe considered transitional, like little silver stars or whatever you know. Those kinds of things where it feels like there's less of a rush to take those down than like the pine bows and the, you know, all that stuff.

The tea set-up of course, immaculate. Chatelaine of course immaculate. Chatelaine is wearing a dress that matches the colours of the room, because she is the kind of hostess who is like, oh I'm not really here! You all just talk, like you know, in her head, that's a very conscious thing that she's doing.

JACK: She's disguising herself. She's camouflaged.

JANINE: Yes, absolutely. Who wants to- does anybody want to pick up Marzy and Hilda?

AUSTIN: Jack, which one are you leaning?

JACK: I will- yeah, I'll do, I'll be Hilda.

AUSTIN: Okay. I can play Marzy.

JANINE: So, Hilda and I wanna say Mint are arriving together, right?

ALI: Yeah! I believe so, I don't know if Hilda's staying in my parents' house, I guess it would make sense that she was. But either way, I think you know, meet up before hand, come together, catch up in the carriage.

JANINE: Then I imagine it's sort of, a situation where you know, Chatelaine has shown people in and probably has put Mint and Marzy beside each other at this table and herself and Hilda beside each other. Just to give them that proximity, and maybe have just been making that sort of polite introductory conversation. There's like a deck of cards out, there are like, you know, there are things- Chatelaine has made preparations for like if things need to keep moving, she can be like, hey why don't we play a game of Whist, or why don't we do this. [Ali chuckles]

AUSTIN [overlapping]: Yeah. I was gonna say that Whist is the thing we do.

JANINE: Here's- I'll bring the cookies, I'll bring the whatever. So maybe the thing to come in on is Chatelaine- Chatelaine asking Mint and Hilda about their relations- well their relation, you know. Like not so much of who are you, but like, this is a person who's been outside of society, right?

JACK: Hilda? Or-

JANINE: Yes.

JACK: Yeah I mean I that like, I think with the perspicacity of an old person, Hilda has- Hilda is draped velvet that would be monumentally expensive. [Ali chuckles]

JANINE: I thought you were going to say monumentally cursed!

JACK: I mean it might be, I don't know!

AUSTIN: Yeah, who could say?

JACK: Just gloves, like a sort of capelet over her shoulders. She's wearing pearls. She just has that- like, that height of an elderly regency like power? And I think in that way she is- she has noticed straightaway, why Marzy and Mint are here? And in much the same way as Chatelaine, is like, well, okay, how can I- how can I help here? [Janine and Ali chuckle]

But I think also especially because Ali you have kind of been taking the authorship of you know, what life in the woods is like outside here, I think when asked how two of us know each other, Hilda just sort of folds her hands in her lap and sits back and looks at Mint? [Ali laughs]

ALI: Yeah! Sure, I think just cause we've all sort of had a zoom-in here. I think Mint seems like, you know she is nice and she is agreeable, but I think she seems like a little bit out of her element, because she's surprised to see Marzy here? A thing I didn't mention in the beginning was that, the last letter I wrote was inviting Marzy on a date like, this weekend! It was like, oh I'm you know, find out and see what tea,

[00:45:00]

We should go to this cafe together, and I've been thinking of you a lot. So being put on the spot like this is- [chuckles]

AUSTIN: But now they've seen you at tea, so.

ALI: [giggles] It's a little, it's a little nerve-wracking. And I think being the one to answer, she kind of straightens up. And she says,

(as Mint): Oh! Well, Hilda took such good care of me at my- in my time outside of Nievelmarch. We became so close when I was staying at her home in the-

What would you-?

(as Mint): In my vacation, it was- it was so lovely.

AUSTIN:

(as Marzy): I have to say, Lady Hilda, your ensemble is breathtaking- you must give me the name of your velvet person.

JACK:

(as Hilda): Oh, I'm afraid that as much as I wish that I could, my velvet person passed away many years ago.

AUSTIN:

(as Marzy): Oh, I see.

JACK:

(as Hilda): These garments are heirlooms. I would be more than welcome to lend you some pieces from my collection if you feel-

AUSTIN:

(as Marzy): Oh not for me! I'm sorry, I don't- I would never be so forward. I was just thinking that your associate-

Associate's the wrong word. Your- what is Mint to this person?

JACK: She is my friend.

AUSTIN: No, but there's an age difference in a way that I think I would recog- I think, that would- there is like a- protege? Is that too strong?

JACK: Is the word a benefactor?

AUSTIN: No, cause that's too-

JANINE: Companion?

AUSTIN: Companion's too tight, right?

ALI: Yeah, what's like-?

AUSTIN: I'll just walk around it.

(as Marzy): For me, I would never be so forward or presumptuous. But knowing know your relation with Ms. Charlise, I was just thinking, the velvet would- she would make it sing. Certainly you agree, Ms. Pellier?

JANINE:

(as Chatelaine): Oh of course! Of course.

[Ali laughs]

Well, I think Mint could make anything- Mint could make a potato sack sing. Mint could- Mint is, is a unique creature in that just about anything she wears would sing on her.

ALI:

(as Mint): You are all far too kind.

JACK: Stoic nod. [Ali and Janine chuckle]

AUSTIN: I think Marzy's eyes like squint, like is, why'd you invite me if you're gonna hit on her too?
[Ali and Janine laugh, Jack chuckles]

ALI:

(as Mint): That is such a considerate thing for you all to say, I really appreciate it.

AUSTIN:

(as Marzy): Well, I have to know, Ms. Charlise and Lady Hilda, have you compared notes about our lovely little town? How are you finding it, compared to where you're from?

JACK:

(as Hilda): I'm sure that Mint would agree that there are fairly substantial differences between my home and hers. I find the company to be spectacular, and I find the food to be excellent. However, the proximity to the woods, and those who seem to be spending so much time within it, is a little disconcerting. In fact I am sure it is no surprise, I am sure it is no coincidence, that my presence here occurred so quickly after Master Flint and his company's advances into the forest.

ALI:

(as Mint): Yes, I- I found a beauty in Nievelmarch beyond what I surely could've expected. I have been overjoyed to be here, especially at this time, because of the new company I've been able to keep.

And she's mostly speaking to Marzy, this is a- romance scene in that [laughs]

AUSTIN: Uh huh. Does Marzy push on this? I have to reread Marzy's card. God I wish I knew where Marzy's money came from [Ali giggles].

JANINE: I mean, here's the thing.

ALI: Play to find out what happens!

AUSTIN: Yeah yeah yeah.

JANINE: Spend a Resolve token, you know? Like,

AUSTIN: I know, yeah.

JACK: Oh, damn!

JANINE: You can define it if you want to.

AUSTIN [overlapping]: But I don't have a- yeah. Well, the thing is like, I'm not sure I care. I don't know that I-

JANINE: Have stakes you mean?

AUSTIN: Have a good idea. No, I don't have a good idea, I don't have like a- it's one of those things where it's like, roll the dice, come up with a good idea-

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Give me a prompt, and I can play with it? But I'm not sure that I have one that I favour, or like, the thing that's interesting about this game is that like, do- who is making that decision and to what end, and to what end should I be making a self-interested decision as a Diego player, versus someone telling a story, versus- you know what I mean?

JANINE: Mhm.

JACK: Right.

AUSTIN: And it's hard to untangle some of that on the spot when I- when frankly I've not been trying to play this game like chess, you know what I mean?

JANINE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: I guess- Marzy at the very least regardless of where that money comes from, is curious because perhaps instability could potentially threaten her stability, and wherever the source of her wealth is coming from. And so I think she does push a little bit and says,

(as Marzy): Do you mean you're here on business, Lady Hilda? To stop that Flint man and like you said, the company?

JACK: I think that like, Hilda looks to Mint. Because there is some level where it's like- and you see this a lot in Austen books, where characters, a lot of the men in *Pride and Prejudice* will often completely derail a conversation about one thing to talk about like some scheme? Or like, so-and-so, and now it's suddenly a conversation about this! And I think on some level, Hilda is cautious to not- to like, Hilda wants Marzy and Mint to like leave this dinner feeling really good about each other.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: But I think also she is not prepared to compromise her feelings, and so I think to the question are you going to try to get rid of Mr. Flint and those people, she just sort of says like,

(as Hilda): Yes, of course. But tell me, Marzy. What is it that you do? How do you spend your time? You seem like such a fine and accomplished young thing. I'm very curious about how you spend your winters and indeed your springs, summers, and autumns?

AUSTIN: I want to spend a Resolve token, I know where her money comes from.

JANINE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: She says,

(as Marzy): Oh! Well, you know, little bit of this, a little bit of that. I find myself a student of our own town. I simply love to move between the little bubbles of people and ideas that pop up every season. And so, I tend to, like someone walking through a garden, take in- take myself wherever the aromas lead. The bright colours, the sound of nature, and I'm being metaphorical here of course. I'm not much actually for- I've not left the town many- in quite some time. But I'm simply, if society is a ball, then I want my dance card filled. And I am thankful to be in a position where I get to enjoy and hopefully bring small joys to everyone I interact with here in town.

She's a plant. She's an Odd Job Boy. She is the Odd Job Boy's society girl.

JANINE: Ohhh!

JACK: Just to be clear, you mean plant in a sense that she is a-

AUSTIN: Yes, like a spy.

JACK: -fake. She is not a plant?

AUSTIN: Well, it's not even a fake. Yeah she's not a vegetable, no.

JACK: In this world-!

AUSTIN: It's that in the same way- right [chuckles]. In the same way that Sharp Molly is like you know, aged up to becoming a detective, Marzy, they aged up into being hey, we could have someone, we could have a family. We could have influence in this space. We have the money for it. Let's sponsor one person and send them- and have them- what's the word when you debut? Have them debut this season.

And so there is no single benefa- no single benefactor. There benefactor is the Odd Job Boys. And so Marzy is here-

JANINE: But does she know?

AUSTIN: She was an Odd Job Boy. When she said-

JANINE: Sure, but does she know that they've given her the money?

AUSTIN: Yes. Yes. Yes. A hundred percent. I don't think it's- I think that this is a- they were training for this for years, I believe.

JANINE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: They might have changed their name.

JACK [overlapping]: Yeah, she is the society Sharp Molly.

AUSTIN: Yes. Exactly. A hundred percent. I don't think that they get here- I don't think they have the skillset to do this otherwise. They didn't just come into money, she like, learned to dance the right way.

JANINE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: And learned how to play Whist, and kept her hands clean, and all of those things that you need to do- except that like, they did say, a little bit a little of that, which is just like the old Odd Job Boy, go get it attitude?

JANINE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Boiling up for a moment, you know? So I think probably for the first you know, ten years of her life? She was just like, in the mix with the Odd Job Boys? And then, somewhere around there, is when they were like, we can start putting money aside, and then get to go to these parties and find out what's going on, and have a fixer on the inside a little bit more.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Which is fun, so. That's what I'm spending my Resolve token on. No one else knows about the benefactor. I don't know that that is something they would ever admit to, so.

ALI: Yeah.

JACK: Like a very tight smile from the witch. [Janine and Austin chuckle] Who then turns to Mint and says,

(as Hilda): Well that sounds quite fascinating, doesn't it Ms. Charlise?

ALI:

(as Mint): Why yes it does sound fascinating! What an inspiring way to live through your days. I'd love to show you outside the town one day, there is- there is beauty acres just beyond Nievelmarch.

JACK (as Hilda): And I could assure that you will travel in absolute safety.

AUSTIN (as Marzy): No need for Mr. Flint's company.

ALI (as Mint): No, no, no. Not at all.

JACK (as Hilda): No, no, no. Not at all. I don't think you will need to worry about Mr. Flint and his company at all.

AUSTIN: In the background Diego Flint walks by in bed slippers and a robe, you know?

JACK: [laughs] Oh you're right! You're staying here!

JANINE: I think the thing that actually happens is, I think as this conversation takes this turn, maybe Charlotte (Chatelaine) who is you know, used to the normal sounds of the house and what they mean coming from where, hears like movement coming vaguely from where she would expect Dieglo-

AUSTIN: Dieblo?

JANINE: Dayglow-

AUSTIN: Yeah, Dayglow Flint, you got it.

JANINE: Diego to be- and she excuses herself and sort of you know, gathers her skirts in one hand so she can walk-

AUSTIN: Oh, I'm ruining it.

JANINE: Quickly but elegantly-

AUSTIN: Can I spend my own- can I spend my own rude token to interrupt?

JACK: Oh! Can you spend your own negative?

JANINE: You can.

JACK [overlapping]: Oh damn!

AUSTIN: Oh I'm spending it! [Ali chuckles]

JANINE: I believe you can, or actually-

AUSTIN: Which is like- but is it not interfering in any- well. Here's where- I think it would go to Chatelaine.

JANINE: So. The thing is you can offer-

AUSTIN: Right, that's what I'd be offering-

JANINE: No, because this is- the thing that you would do by ruining this is to jeopardise Mint's desires.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JANINE: So you need to offer something to Mint, and Mint has to then accept what you're going to do. So I think you could use your negative for this. Also did you uncheck that Resolve token for Marzy?

AUSTIN: I did. For- for Marzy? Yeah I did.

JANINE: Okay. Okay.

AUSTIN: Yeah I think I wanna like- barging in is too strong, but it's not. But if you said he barged in, you would not be lying, do you know what I mean? Like, a very polite form of barging in, I think Diego is like,

(as Diego): Oh, we have visitors!

You know what I mean? And like, who are the people here, the people here are Mint,

JANINE: Right.

AUSTIN: Who he's worked with. And I think the specific thing he's going to do is ask about Mr. James. [Ali snorts] Immediately. And like after we visited Mr. James the other day- you know what I mean? I'm surprised to see you so soon after we were at Mr. James'- where was the name of that fucking place? Vandernoir or whatever?

JANINE: Vandernoir, yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah, uh huh. Vandernoir. [Janine chuckles] So yeah I think Diego comes in, he's not wearing a robe and slippers, as funny as that is, he's dressed- he is you know, whatever housewear is when you're visiting someone else's house. So probably better dressed up than he would be in his own tent, certainly. But probably even better than what he'd be wearing around Darling's house when he lived there. And he comes in to this little tea room, and just says like,

(as Diego): I didn't know that we had guests Ms. Pellier! And certainly not anyone as familiar to me Ms. Charlise- I haven't seen you since a week ago at Vandernoir?

JANINE: Actually, I have-

AUSTIN: Actually I'm offering this, Mint has to accept this before I do this thing-

JANINE [overlapping]: No, no no no no. I know. The thing- so, I mean, she needs to know that she's accepting. The thing I was going to say is that, I think it's actually more appropriate for you to spend considerate than rude here, because the thing that's rude is you know, from Chatelaine's perspective, the fact that she hasn't invited Diego to this. Cause he's a member of the household right now, like if you have a guest in your house, and then you have other guests over, but that guest isn't part of that-

AUSTIN: But why would I spend considerate to do that?

JANINE: Because you- it's-

AUSTIN: I don't care about being in this thing, except that it is bad for someone else in an interesting way.

JANINE: Is Diego doing it from a bad place though?

AUSTIN: Yes, Diego is putting his nose in because he's curious about who is in this room.

JANINE: What I'm saying is that from a society perspective, it's rude for him to not show up, because he's you know,

AUSTIN: No, I'm not going to spend considerate, I don't think that works for me.

JANINE: What about brash?

AUSTIN: I think it's rude to come into a place you haven't been invited!

JANINE: But he's a guest of this house.

AUSTIN: And to immediately bring business up? But then to immediately bring up her business with the other industrialist, is the thing that's rude, who is colonising-

JANINE: I guess. Yeah...

ALI: Yeah, it's also rude to like show up to a milieu you weren't invited to.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: But that's- that's my thing is that like, I don't think that like, I don't think that rudeness here would be his, I think the rudeness would be Chatelaine's as the hostess, because she has this- like think about it this way. If you are- if you are staying with me right, and then I invite my friends over for lunch,

[01:00:00]

And you're not allowed to come in for that lunch, but you're in the house? That's rude. That's a hundred percent rude.

AUSTIN: Yeah but I- I don't think that that's- does that hold for society when you have guests from a different family over and also you have to attend to a different social thing? Like if you were in a Whist group, I wouldn't be- there might not be a table space for me to be dealt in- I guess you wouldn't play Whist to make sure that doesn't happen, right?

JANINE: I mean the thing is like, that would happen, you'd probably be in that room or something until you- I mean we're talking about the time when like, an inn would have the common room where everyone sits to spend their time like it's,

AUSTIN: Yeah-

ALI: The reason-

JANINE: That's what I'm getting hung up on.

ALI: The reason why your description of that being rude and it's Chatelaine being rude, brings me back to Austin's side, because it's rude for Diego to make that appearance while people are over. Like he could go to Chatelaine after the thing-

JANINE: Mmm.

ALI: -and be like, hey, what was that about? But to like walk into the room being like, hey, Diego is here! What's up everybody? [laughs] When like somebody's [unintelligible]

JANINE [overlapping]: That's actually- yeah that's a good point is that he is specifically- he is specifically bringing up a topic that excludes Marzy and Hilda, as far as he knows right? Like he's not-

AUSTIN: Totally, and reveals to the room that I- that you had me staying here- that's why initially I was going to offer you the token, because I was revealing that I was here the whole time, and that you had been keeping me here without having any like, without having brought that up. But I do think a thing that's even worse would be, at the moment at which Marzy and Hilda have been

talking about the Diego stuff, to then implicate Mint in the known business partner of Diego, and blow up her spot with Marzy a little bit, you know?

JANINE: My problem with that is, that gets into for me a thing of like, how much does he know, versus- whatever the easiest thing here is probably just to go on rude based on the fact that it excludes Marzy and Hilda who are like people he doesn't know.

AUSTIN: Sure, yeah.

JANINE: Okay.

AUSTIN: While I'm doing this, if Mint is good with it? Or wants- or also happy to negotiate and find another angle.

JANINE: Yeah you're totally allowed to "yes, and" or "no, but"-

AUSTIN [overlapping]: Or accept or refuse, you're also allowed to say no.

ALI: Yeah yeah yeah. I'm happy with this happening, I'm wondering if I should make more of an attempt to leverage it. Because I think it makes sense for him to do that. I think it also like, [laughs] being like I haven't seen you since you walked the garden with this other guy who wants to engage you, is such like a, you know. To make a hot moment [laughs]

AUSTIN: I didn't raise the garden- I don't think he would talk about the garden. I think he being the person he is, would say since we talked about- since you know, last week when we were meeting with Mr. James at Vandernoir to talk about business. Because that's how he frames that visit,

ALI: Right, sure sure sure.

AUSTIN: You know?

ALI: Yeah. Yeah, I guess I'll just take it then.

AUSTIN: What I wouldn't wanna do- I do wanna raise Mr. James and put Mr. James in the mix, but I don't- I don't know that Diego cares who you date? [Ali laughs] Or, you know, I think we talked about this at the time a little bit, that the part of the thing that was- that Diego left with that maybe we both did was like, I can't believe this motherfucker double booked himself and like, gave me an atlas to look at while he walked away, it just seems like the sort of person who like, he's spinning his plates. And for Diego I don't think that that is like, I don't know that Diego left that being like, and obviously he's trying to court Mint. Obviously he is trying to do too many fucking things at once.

ALI: Oh, sure sure sure. I think a garden visit in society is very clear- I mean I read it that way as being like, oh, this is- yeah.

AUSTIN: That's fair.

ALI: Either way. It doesn't- I mean, it doesn't have to come up in this conversation.

AUSTIN: I mean Marzy's going to ask [Ali laughs] what you were doing at Mr. James, so that's gonna happen. But. In any case.

JANINE: If you're looking at a "yes, and" here there is also the fact that like Hilda has a vested interest in Diego not doing Diego shit, right? Like, there is an angle there as well.

ALI: Yeah, there is an opportunity for a shut down there, but I don't know- I mean, I wouldn't know like, the yes, and, but Hilda makes- I guess like makes you look small or something is like, maybe like enough of a compromise there without power gains-

AUSTIN: Yeah I don't mind that. [Ali chuckles]

ALI: Okay.

JANINE [overlapping]: I think that's an acceptable "yes, and" is like,

AUSTIN: Yeah totally.

JANINE: Diego is able to walk in, but also Hilda's gonna totally own him.

ALI: Yeah, sure.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I'm ready to be- Diego was a character I wrote already owned, so. [Ali and Janine laugh] What is the opposite- when you're already a corncob- so yeah. The thing that I said is the thing that I said, which is, comes in, says,

(as Diego): I haven't seen you since we were at Vandernoir with Mr. James during the business meeting last week. I hope you're well, I didn't know you were here,

Etc., whatever, hello- you know, hello to the rest of the room of course, etc. etc. etc.

JANINE: Chatelaine is sweating.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: I think Hilda looks up and goes,

(as Hilda): Oh, it's Mr. Flint.

AUSTIN:

(as Diego): I don't believe I have met the lady.

Covered in velvet, [Janine laughs] doing some math in his head.

JACK: Do you have something, Ali?

ALI: Oh, I was just going to say,

(as Mint): Oh, it's nice to see you Mr. Flint. Hello.

JANINE: Oh also I'll-

AUSTIN:

(as Diego): Playing Whist, are we?

JANINE: I'll take Marzy over for this by the way.

AUSTIN: Oh sure.

JANINE: I'm not gonna make you- [Ali chuckles]

AUSTIN: Oh sure. I'd like that. I can do both. I don't mind it, but. I didn't know if, yeah.

JANINE: I'm the facilitator, it's on me. Chatelaine sort of stands up and starts looking for a chair to pull up. [Austin chuckles] There's probably some around the side of- there's probably stools and stuff that's around the side of the room, but she like wants an actual chair, but a lot of the chairs are too big, she's just, you know. It's one of the things of like, some of these were probably brought in from the other room, and now she has to [chuckling] figure something out.

Marzy- I just want Marzy quietly putting a cube of sugar in her tea. Just like an extra cube, just.

JACK:

(as Hilda): Sit down Mr. Flint, I'll deal you in. Are you a betting-

JANINE:

(as Chatelaine): Take my chair while I look for another.

AUSTIN:

(as Diego): Oh, I appreciate it.

JACK (as Hilda): Are you a betting man, Mr. Flint?

AUSTIN (as Diego): Not these days.

JACK:

(as Hilda): Mm. I am. And I'm prepared to make a bet with you.

Deals the cards. Puts them down. [Austin laughs]

How many men do you have in your forest Mr. Flint?

AUSTIN:

(as Diego): Again, apologies, can someone introduce me to the lady who is dealing me in?

ALI:

(as Mint): Oh! Yes, yes, this is my- my good friend and former hostess, Hilda. I am- she took great care of me in my time outside of Nievelmarch in the hills. She is quite the powerful presence in the area and I am so honoured to call her a friend.

JACK:

(as Hilda): Thank you Ms. Charlise.

Deals the cards out, like piece by piece.

My name is Hilda. I am the executive commander of the arms and armament division of the Velvet Mansion. Mr. Flint, how many soldiers do you have in your forest?

AUSTIN:

(as Diego): In my forest?

JACK (as Hilda): It seems that you have claimed it as such, I saw the papers that you've filed. I made sure that they were double checked, double stamped, all very accurate I'm sure.

AUSTIN (as Diego): Quite like many of the other papers filed in this great town. It went through all the committees, they were approved. I wouldn't call it my forest. I would say that I have men in my forest, and I said I'm not a betting man. But even as non-bet, but even as someone who doesn't take bets these days, I know better than to show that I have.

JACK:

(as Hilda): Fair enough. I'll make my hand fairly clear.

Do you think Hilda would try and remove- or like, give Mint and Marzy an out from this? [Ali laughs] Or do you think she would like- [Janine laughs] I guess based on their previous relationship, do you think Mint would want to be involved in what is about to happen? Or do you think that like, she would appreciate an excuse.

ALI: Yeah! I don't want to think of Mint as somebody who has like a, like a weak composition? But she is cordial and meek. [Jack chuckles] And someone you knew her as a child would know that

about her? And would like, would probably pick up that like, she you know, despite having fine morals or whatever you know, who cares, like wouldn't want to be around confrontation in this way? And also, it's awkward to [laughs] be like, I'm gonna be at this date with these two young girls-

JACK: Yeah!

ALI: And I'm gonna be at this date-chaperone for a little bit, and then start fighting with this dude, and not be like [Austin laughs], do you guys wanna go for a second? Can you grab me like a coke or something? [laughs]

JACK: I'm trying to think like what's a good- what's a good- [Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: For what it's worth, I don't know that the rest of the scene needs to be very long to where you need an out?

JACK: She's going to outwardly threaten violence.

AUSTIN [overlapping]: Because you're supposed to like, dunk on him. *Oh*, I see.

JANINE [overlapping]: Sick.

JACK: I don't know whether or not- I wonder if it's like-

JANINE: What if Hilda-

JACK: Oh, you go ahead.

JANINE: I was gonna suggest that Hilda use Chatelaine to be like, you know, in that sort of like, I hear that this estate has you know,

JACK: Oh! Yeah.

JANINE: Blah blah blah feature,

JACK: That's-

JANINE: Why don't you show the young women,

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: Young women love such things, I'm a little bit too old for that but you know, etc. etc. like that kind of attitude?

JACK: It's absolutely that. And there's like a witch- there's a witch aspect of it as well, which is that almost without thinking she like, produces like a leaf from a pocket, and crumbles it between her fingers and says,

(as Hilda): I've heard this estate has a fine apple tree on the northern lawn. I think that if Ms. Pellier, Ms. Charlise, and her delightful companion were to visit it now, you would find it quite unseasonably bearing the most delicious fruit.

And like, out in the- [Ali laughs] the camera cuts to out in the garden as the apple tree just blossoms and fruits.

JANINE: Sound of groaning as the branches suddenly have to kind of shift a bit lower.

JACK: The sound of a pig breaking through the fence- [Janine laughs]

JANINE: Chatelaine standing in the doorway with a chair just like,

(as Chatelaine): Oh, of course.

ALI: Yeah I think Mint gets this gist, and has been ushered off before. Fights happened before. And is like,

(as Mint): Oh yeah, that sounds lovely. We could pick dessert.

[Austin chuckles]

JANINE: Love to used to being ushered off by witches [Ali giggles].

AUSTIN: Oh god [Jack chuckles].

JANINE: Marzy is probably less used to that, but also, Marzy's in an interesting position right,

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: Cause I bet Marzy wants to see this shit.

AUSTIN: Badly.

JANINE: For sure, like a hundo percent.

AUSTIN: Deeply curious.

JANINE: But also absolutely can't tip her own hand by standing.

JACK: There's like a romance angle too right, where it's like do I go hang out with the person-

JANINE: Oh yeah.

JACK: -who likes me very much, or do I try and like watch a witch threaten to kill a man or something? [Ali chuckles] It's honestly tough.

JANINE: So I think that's-

ALI: Yeah it's a hard choice. [laughs]

JANINE: They probably come to conclusion of like, we'll go, we'll look at the tree, we'll come back as quickly as possible. You know? We'll eat apples. They'll still be fighting. Look at these two. [Ali giggles] They're gonna- it's gonna be something. We've got time.

JACK: I think that she leans forward and she says,

(as Hilda): Mr. Flint, I am not one to play the mind games that you in this little town insist on spending so much time on, so I will clear a couple of things up for you. One, you are more than welcome to return to your benefactor's house. She misses you. Two, remove seventy five percent of your men from your forest by six p.m. this evening, or I will kill them with the trees themselves.

Deals a card.

AUSTIN:

(as Diego): You know if there was objection from your corner of this land, your protege Mint, who was there in each of my business discussions with Mr. James, could have raised one of them. Once. So, you may be able to command the trees, but it's clear you can't control people very well.

JACK:

(as Hilda): Do you accept my offer?

AUSTIN:

(as Diego): I'll be taking my leave. I'll be taking my leave. And we will see what happens with my men. And we'll see what happens if 75% of my men are killed by a witch who lives in this town currently. Who sustains her presence on the hospitality of people like Ms. Pellier. How long are you staying?

Voice wavering, trying to be a big man.

JACK: Oh I think at that point like, unless you want a scene at the house, at the apple tree, do they return?

ALI: Oh.

AUSTIN: That's what I was saying, it's very quick in my mind, like. He's not-

ALI: Yeah,

AUSTIN: We're not going to go- we're not playing chess, you know? Diego is not a gambling man at this point. He found the machine that works, he's going to run it until it makes him money.

JACK: I wanna see Mint and Marzy in the garden or something. [Ali giggles]

AUSTIN: Me too. Me too.

JANINE: Just with like their skirt apron full of apples.

ALI: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Yeah. So I'm happy to end the Diego part-

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: -of this now, right? Like I don't need- we don't need more than that. I guess the- what was the last thing I said?

JACK: How long are you staying.

AUSTIN: I said how long are you staying for? Does she respond?

JACK: The camera doesn't see it, I don't think so.

AUSTIN: Okay, well then I have one last thing. I do have like a tag on it which is like. Oh no I don't, I'm gonna let it ride, because if I wanna do that tag, I can just do the tag later, so. So yeah, the camera doesn't see it. It ends there.

ALI: Yeah, and I guess it cuts to- [giggles] everybody in the garden! I, you know. I'm sure a tree you know, spelled on by a all powerful, slightly angry witch is gorgeous and you know, it's nice to pick the apples.

JACK: It's romantic, innit? [Ali and Janine laugh]

ALI: Indeed. I don't know if there's like-

AUSTIN:

(as Marzy): What's your favourite- what's your favourite type of apple, Mint?

ALI:

(as Mint): Oh, I- there's such a range. Out in the- out in where I grew up, there was this gorgeous tree that every six seasons, it would have the most gorgeous blue apples. And that the flavour was undescrivable. But beyond that, I guess Honey Crisp?

[Friends table laugh]

AUSTIN: A good one.

JACK: It's Nievelmarch, [Ali laughs] succinctly in a sentence.

AUSTIN: Yup, a hundred percent.

[01:15:00]

(as Marzy): What makes you like Honey Crisp?

ALI:

(as Mint): Oh well you know, there- they have such an even flavour, and they are so good for baking. I-

AUSTIN (as Marzy): You bake!

ALI (as Mint): I don't- I- I- I-

AUSTIN:

(as Marzy): Oh.

Deflated.

ALI:

(as Mint): I- I thought that I should try my hand at it, because my family is so tied up in the business. But I'm not very good, I'm a bit of a hobby baker I have to say.

AUSTIN (as Marzy): Oh, can I tell you a secret, Ms. Charlise?

ALI (as Mint): Please!

AUSTIN (as Marzy): I bake. And I think it would be very easy to show you a recipe or two.

ALI (as Mint): Oh, that would be amazing! I- yes!

AUSTIN (as Marzy): I know we said that we would see each other this weekend if we hadn't seen each other for tea. But as far as my goes, it seems that our tea was interrupted. So.

ALI (as Mint): Right! Right, yes. I- yeah. I, you owe me one. [giggles]

AUSTIN (as Marzy): Happily.

JACK: [chanting] Pie day! Pie day! [Ali laughs, Janine and Austin chuckle]

ALI:

(as Mint): I- my home has a lovely kitchen if you'd rather try making treats ourselves instead of going to the Glacier Express.

AUSTIN (as Marzy): I would love to.

ALI (as Mint): Wonderful!

AUSTIN (as Marzy): I haven't seen your home, so. It will be an adventure. Another flowers.

ALI (as Mint): [laughs] Yes. Yes. I- I hope it's to your approval.

AUSTIN: I don't think I have a punchy- so you know.

(as Marzy): I can't imagine it won't be.

ALI:

(as Mint): Wonderful. Great.

AUSTIN:

(as Marzy): If it's anything like you-

[Ali laughs in delight]

(as Marzy): -I can't imagine it wouldn't be.

ALI: Apple dates! [Austin chuckles]

JACK: Apple dates! High up on the Marchmont mountain the moon sings below an archway. [Ali laughs]

JANINE: Is that it for that scene?

ALI: I think so.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: I would like to engineer an encounter with Diego in the way that, like the great, like Darcy is walking the same way and we have to walk on the narrow path together?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: What's a good mountain-?

AUSTIN: I mean we're all in town- or I'm back in town, right? So.

JACK: I meant mountain alpine kind of-

AUSTIN [overlapping]: Who is- are you doing it with Henrietta?

JACK: Yeah, I'm thinking of Henrietta.

AUSTIN: Oh. I mean Diego could just be like, after that conversation, could have immediately grabbed a coat- [Jack chuckles] doesn't need to, always wearing one. And could've just left. In fact, this is the scene where it pays off right? Where it's like I'm wearing a coat too thin to be outside this week. But it's enough to walk out the door and convince yourself you're going to be okay, then you get three blocks away and like I should've brought my real fucking coat, I've made a mistake. So I think very much could be walking somewhere around town to clear his head when Henrietta-

JACK: Yeah like walks past a shop and Henrietta just opens the door to the shop and steps out.

AUSTIN: Yes, yes. [chuckles] And then Diego is just like, you have to be kidding-

JACK: Just Mr. Flint's Very Bad No Good Day.

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

JACK: I think she says,

(as Henrietta): Diego! I'm going to walk with you for a while if that's okay.

AUSTIN:

(as Diego): Henrietta- ...fine.

JACK:

(as Henrietta): I received your letter.

AUSTIN: Walk walk walk walk walk looking forward looking forward

JACK: [chuckling] Yeah, just,

(as Henrietta): I received your letter. It gave me great joy to know that my delivery of my cousin had brought some solace to the hearts of you and to your men. Where are you going?

AUSTIN: Walk walk walk,

(as Diego): This way.

Walk walk walk,

JACK:

(as Henrietta): Oh you have no destination in mind?

AUSTIN:

(as Diego): It was- I'm going-

And just would say,

Thank you again, a pleasure running into you today Henrietta, I know it could not have come easy to do what you did. It was the right and noble thing. I do have to be on my way.

JACK:

(as Henrietta): Of course, as do I. But I would be lying if I didn't say that it brought me some warmth to be walking and talking together like this. As we used to. Why was it not last winter that we walked from here to the lake on the other end of town, and then back again? Picking up pastries at the Glacier Cafe?

AUSTIN:

(as Diego): Yes I suppose it was about a year just before Renewal. Yes. That was a nice day. Do you have something on your mind, Henrietta?

Comes to a stop at a corner where he seems- I think he recognises that no one else is on this block of town, you know? Where like, the people who are busy you know, attending to their stalls, no one is watching, has a brief moment of feeling like, okay. Let's just- if we're going to have a conversation, the easiest way to end a conversation is to have it some times?

JACK: Oh my god. Uh huh. Uh huh.

AUSTIN: You know? And, so he says, you know,

(as Diego): Is there something on your mind, Henrietta?

JACK: Henrietta thinking about- Henrietta moving through conversations with a calculated little gravity, wondering whether or not she actually feels the pull of it this time around. I think she says,

(as Henrietta): Diego, I've been trying to find the time to apologise. And I've looked for it. And I don't know what the moment looks like. So, here in the snow, I'm sorry. I am sorry for- for everything that happened between you and me and my brother. And I don't know what making it good looks like.

I hoped- and I still hoped that delivering you my foul cousin was the first step towards reconciliation. But I understand that the next step has to be us here and talking. I- I do not anticipate nor do I expect you to respond in any particular way or even in kind. But I-

AUSTIN:

(as Diego): It is all I ever wanted for you to apologise. To take, if not responsibility, some degree of- to be in this grief with me instead of to push yourself away from it. To disclaim your presence near him and what happened to him.

Because when you wouldn't apologise, when you refused to even give me this, it made me feel as if- as if I was that easy to cut away. That I was going to be part of your family, until my presence perhaps reminded you of what happened, or- and that that was enough that you couldn't even- that you couldn't even begin to try to mend it.

JACK: I think a man comes down the street carrying a basket and a key and he opens a market stall on the opposite side of the street. And opens it up, and the street begins to fill with people coming to buy I don't know- like, like roasted chestnuts or something from this guy. And I think Henrietta is really biting her tongue, because I think what she wants to say, and I think what everything in her character sort of asks that she say, is like, who are you to-

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: To talk about my grief? Like, how can you come here and say that I am not grieving properly, or that our griefs by some nature have to intersect like perfectly? But I think that she is absolutely in this moment and having summoned up the courage and the wherewithal to apologise, is so driven by her desire to restore her reputation *and* be forgiven by her former friend, that she can't bring herself to- I mean this is the silent grief that Diego has felt as well, right? Which is like, the other person isn't saying something or isn't recognising something that is very important to me, and I just have to be silent about it.

AUSTIN: I think reaches out to embrace you.

JACK: Yeah. Yeah! I think- I think it, I think-

AUSTIN: A friendly hug.

JACK: I think it's a friendly hug. I think Henrietta is probably crying. I think part of that is relief, and part of that is frustration, and I think part of that as well is like, I am sure that both of them are remembering who else they were walking with a year ago?

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

JACK: And not wanting to be the person to say,

AUSTIN: Yes, yes.

JACK: Oh but remember when Honor was here?

AUSTIN: I wish that Honor was here with us. Yeah, exactly. I think a thing that he does here, is I think he's also crying, and turns you such that his face is facing the street instead of yours. Which I don't think is a- I don't think you have to worry about showing emotion in public, I think that's a Diego rule, not a universal rule? But because that's the way he thinks of the world, in this moment-

JACK [overlapping]: It's like a kind of gallantry-

AUSTIN: Yeah, which is, you know, it is the thing it is, right? It's nice and it's also caught up in some bullshit. [chuckles with Jack] But he does that very automatically in this moment. And then pulls away and says,

(as Diego): Ms. Sameday I wish I could tell you that tonight we should walk again to the lake and come back to the Glacier Cafe and find a treat and begin to move past this last year. But I have made commitments, and so, I have work to attend to, and decisions to make.

JACK:

(as Jack): Of course,

Like curtsies,

AUSTIN:

(as Diego): But perhaps when it's behind me, I would happily, after Renewal, if you can find the time. For Honor, at least.

JACK: I think Henrietta smiles and says like, you know, I'll have to check my datebook or whatever, but so transparently-

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

JACK: Like, yeah, of course, absolutely.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: And I think- I think goes off, you know, slips slightly on the ice. I'm happy with that. Unless you have something, Janine.

JANINE: Two things. I have two things.

AUSTIN: Two things.

JACK: Two things happen at once.

JANINE: Two things happen. The one thing that happens is I'm going to spend my monologue token, because I want a little bit of Henrietta's inner monologue as she's walking away from Diego.

JACK: Hm! I mean I think I'm not going to do it directly, I think I'm going to go the high level thing. But I think it is just, she begins by saying you know, our grief looks different, who is- who is he to think of- of my grief in that way? Of talk of Honor's absence in my life in that way? What does he think that I've been doing?

But I think that's sort of like one track cross-fading into another, becomes suffused with relief, and becomes suffused with this feeling that like, you know, Diego saying that he has to go and has business to attend to, for any reason other than an excuse to remove himself from a conversation, is like music to her ears.

AUSTIN: Mm.

JACK: Because she's like, yes, that's what Diego is like. He has business to do, I enjoy spending time with him when I can, he's got to go off back to business, I don't know what it's doing, but I'm sure it's not imperialist! [Austin and Janine chuckle] And yeah, just sort of like a warmth, like a warmth begins to fill her as she makes her way back down the street.

I think she was buying something in the shop, I think she's been holding a shopping bag this whole time, in that like really awkward way you are carrying something slightly too heavy and you meet someone and you're like, I don't expect to talk for long, but it turns out that I apologise and attempt to end an old feud with one of my friends. [Austin chuckles]

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

JANINE: That second thing that happens-

AUSTIN: Second thing.

JANINE: Austin- sorry Diego, I am offering you a Resolve token to- as Diego is walking down the street, three men in dark coats sort of step out of an alley. I am offering you a Resolve token to accept an encounter with your debt collectors.

JACK: Oooh!

AUSTIN: I'm going to reject it, because I want to do the thing that I need Diego to do here.

JANINE: Okay.

AUSTIN: And this is like, it's a fun- if we were playing drama and not romcom, I would accept this.

JANINE: Alright.

AUSTIN: Because I love this? This is the you know, I would end the book after that. [Ali and Janine knowingly chuckle] That's the Austin Walker thing, right? Is like, three debt collectors come out of the alley, Diego realises what's about to happen, the end. But I'm gonna hard reject it because I have a very specific thing I need to do, and I don't think Diego can do it after whatever this looks like happens.

JANINE: I mean they're not gonna beat him up, but,

AUSTIN: Yeah. I- I think I need Diego to be- hoo... again, like this comes down to whether or not I think Diego can pull out of this? Because if this happens, it's the sort of thing that puts him on the track to where he can't go do the thing that Henrietta just inspired him to go do.

JANINE: Okay.

AUSTIN: If that makes sense.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Which will make sense when I say the thing. Which will be- can this just be my scene? I don't need a big scene here?

JANINE: Sure. Absolutely.

AUSTIN: Because I've been in both of those other scenes, unfortunately. I told you at the end of the last game, I was like, and I really don't want to play Diego at all in the next Novel scene, I want to just try and play Frances, and now I've done *three* scenes.

Diego finds a horse. His horse, not just a horse. He doesn't just steal a horse. And rides out into the woods to the nearest encampment of his men. And puts out a word to send back 80% of the people there, for the holiday. At least for now, right? That's the way he frames it? He says oh it's a holiday night, we don't all need to be out here. Everyone go home to your families. Or 80% of you go home to your families.

JACK: How many people is that?

AUSTIN: And he stays out. He is one of- he is not one of the- he does not ride back with his own people. He stays out at the front and begins to wonder, okay, what can I do, how can I play with 25% of what I have and still get some-

[01:30:00]

JACK: Some profit.

AUSTIN: If that's- that's the term I've been giving, is 25% of what I have out here already, how can I make that work for me? And the wheels start turning. I don't want to come back to it until Epistolary, probably.

JANINE: Okay.

JACK: Has that- Chatelaine has a scene.

JANINE: Chatelaine's scene was-

JACK: Oh, was the party, okay.

JANINE: The tea. Mhm.

AUSTIN: Oh so now we get Mint- do we get Mint?

JANINE: Pie day, do we get pie day?

JACK: Oh, pie date!

JANINE: Or do we get something else? [Ali chuckles]

JACK: Or something else.

ALI: Yeah! Yeah yeah yeah. That seems like the worst- not the worst- the thing worth doing right now. [laughs] Yeah, I, you know, Act I was meeting James and then having a date with James, so it makes sense that this would be similar, structure. So yeah, yeah yeah yeah. I guess I should describe Mint's house.

God it's tough describe right, cause I bet that you know, you think of a society house and you think of like a nice, a nice you know building, with big rooms and everything's decorated and looks really nice. But I think that it's like, it has a little bit of the effect of like, they're the people at the end of the block, the weird house [chuckles], right? There is a little bit of like, they don't seem to perfectly fit in,

they've certainly gotten by and they have the money to live in this neighbourhood but, there's something about this that seems off compared to the other places on the block.

I think it's like a lot of dark wood? I think that it's a lot of like, like they're proper enough and they're like, you know, they exist in the space enough to have respect. But I think it's a lot of like, you know, china sets with mismatched cups, which would usually make people kind of balk, but when you're at the Charlises' it's kind of like whatever, sort of like mismatched furniture in that way in some places too.

But I think that because [chuckling] this is specifically like a kitchen date [giggles], this actually puts Mint and- especially Mint, but also Mint and Marzy in an interesting position because it ends up being a thing where you know, Marzy comes in through the front, and the foreman is there and the butler is there, and you know, whatever. But then they end up having to go downstairs where the actual kitchen is where people from the house aren't usually in?

JANINE: Mhm.

ALI: Like it's one of those things where it's like the, I think it's an interesting thing especially it ends up being- this isn't going to be a scene, but [chuckling] I feel like it ends up being an interesting thing because it allows Marzy to see how the way that the people work- the service people in her home feel about Mint? Which is you know, a thing to learn about someone you're courting. I don't know if we should just do this scene or keep talking about it but I- it can be kind of brief,

JANINE: I was going to ask actually, you know Mint spent a lot of time kind of out in the wilderness and stuff, is that reflected at all in the house? Like are her parents you know, is that all just part of her background, or do her parents also have like a lot of, dried plants, or you know like, those like herbal brooms, like the dried brushes and stuff, or like, things like that. Or is that more- would that be theoretically more of a Mint thing?

ALI: Oh I think so! I mean they are all out-of-towners for sure, right? We haven't gotten to Mint's parents too much, but they've- they are also established outside of town in a way that it makes sense that their child was super comfortable growing up there? So yeah, I definitely think it is that thing just besides like, decoratively, there's like more. There's like strange ingredients that you know,

JANINE: What's the percentage of taxidermied decor? [Ali laughs]

ALI: God, that's- there's probably a bunch- a lot of like, framed butterflies and beetles and things of that nature-

AUSTIN: Oooh.

JANINE: Oh sure, yeah.

ALI: But also just like, bugs that Marzy can't identify. I think that it's a lot of like, in that same regard I think it's a lot of like pressed flowers and leaves in between glass and things like that on display. [giggles] I think there is- I guess there's not fridges, but there's an icebox that like Marzy opens up and there's just a bunch of marbles in there? And Mint is just like,

(as Mint): Oh please don't touch that. Please don't worry about it.

[laughs]

I can explain why it's there but you know, the cook will get very upset.

JANINE: I think Marzy is very clearly- I don't know if it's *very* clear, but Marzy looks like very mildly amused- is also maybe not the right word. But she doesn't seem off-put, you know? There is not a sense coming off of her as she sort of takes all of this in, that she's like weirded out or in any way like, thrown necessarily? She probably asks a lot of questions, as they proceed to the kitchen about like, oh where is this from? Or like, I love this! Or like, oh this, you know.

For some reason I'm picturing a lot of the dark wood as being like some of those really fragrant types of wood? So I'm kind of imagining her being like, commenting on how nice it smells or something? [Ali laughs] Like a lot of very complimentary stuff, but also complimentary in a way that demonstrates she's engaging, you know? Like she's engaged with the space, she's not just being flattering.

ALI: Yeah, I think that's like a relief for Mint and also there's like, there is like a bashfulness in her responses? But she's also like really excited to talk about it in a way that's like, oh people don't ask about this stuff a lot, or at least not in a way that's like, you know, complimentary or generous enough that makes her respond in this sort of way.

JANINE: Mhm. I wonder, did Marzy bring anything to teach Mint these things, or would they assume that Mint's kitchen would have all the stuff they would want.

ALI: [chuckles] I- yeah,

JANINE: I bet maybe, I bet maybe they brought their own rolling pin. For you know, for the crust or whatever like, I imagine they have a very particular rolling pin, or rolling pin style even that's like a little bit unfashionable? Like it's the kind that's just a thick dowel maybe? Versus the kind with like the handles. So I imagine they show up with that in like a little silk bag [Ali laughs] or something that's a little bit silly like that. And when they get downstairs, she, you know she pulls it out, and brandishes it proudly, I'll say.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Yeah.

JANINE:

(as Marzy): So we'll need this,

ALI:

(as Mint): Oh.

JANINE:

(as Marzy): First of all.

ALI:

(as Mint): Oh, perfect! Yeah, I had our chef lay out some ingredients for us,

And it's just like, that big like center counter in a kitchen that's just like different types of flours, and like a big bowl of fruit, and like a barrel of egg- not a barrel you know, a bowl of eggs just to be like, here's the things that you might need. I think Mint has also prepared like, two of the sort of crystal casings for the crystal pies that her family is known for?

JANINE: Mhm.

ALI: It's you know, basically just like a hollowed out geode with crystals on the inside, and I think Mint kind of excitedly says like,

(as Mint): Oh, I've saved this- I've had these saved since I was a child and every so often I would reuse them to make treats. So I thought it might be nice for us to try it in this tonight.

JANINE:

I bet these are held in acclaim.

[Ali laughs]

Oh well, yeah, you soak them in rosewater for a little bit, and then you have to sort of do a ritual- but it's nothing, it's fine.

[Janine chuckles] How much of this scene do we get you know? Or is this kind of like, a montage scene where you know, you see them making the- being the- so you probably made jam, right? And like going through the steps of making a filling, or going through the crust.

ALI: Yeah, I'm okay with not zooming in here, because I don't know that there's like a lot of tension between these characters worth focusing on beyond like, oh they're courting each other right? Like the thing of them like hanging out, and you know, one of them gets flour on the other one and it's funny, or like [laughs] they both reach for the same pear and their hands touch. It's like wooh!
[laughs]

JANINE: Right, this is kind the pairing who are like, you know immediately like, oh it's these two. Like these two are the ones who are supposed to get together. And it's you know, you're Jane and you're Bingley, where like from the start, it's just like, cute and fun and good and there is some stuff in the background that's threatening and worrying, but also it is those moments, right? It's those moments of them just like getting along and being sweethearts.

ALI: [giggles] Just making a pie together.

JANINE: Yeah, just making a pie together!

Is anyone else around? Like, are the staff around, is- are there any family members around? Or is it kind of- do they just have the place to themselves.

ALI: I think it's a mix because it's you know, I think the staff has kind of cleared out to give them the space to do this. Mint like you know, told them ahead of time, like oh can I use the kitchen for this, and they seem sort of, you know, fine with doing that. I mentioned in the first episode that Mint has two really young siblings? I think that they were like 9 and 12 or something? Or maybe younger than that. So maybe they come down and sort of are annoying, and Mint has to be like get out of here! I mean it! [laughs]

JANINE: I bet Marzy's amazing with them though, right?

ALI: Yeah. Yeah, from being, from her experience with the Odd Jobs.

JANINE: They know how to deal with rowdy kids, like a hundred percent! [Ali laughs]

ALI: Yeah, I think it's a thing of like, Mint sort of like nervously pushing them out, and then Marzy like engaging with them in a way that's like not annoyed. So they get to talk for a bit but then Mint is like, no really, get out of here. I'll give you some cake when we're done, but- [laughs]

JANINE: I imagine Marzy having like saltwater taffy, or some sort of relatively basic but also appealing enough candy that just like, in a pocket or something. Just ready to go to bribe kids with.

ALI: I guess the one thing that I wonder is that like, if Mint had asked Marzy more about her background, would she open about any of the Odd Job stuff? I'm curious if they'd be like open in that way.

JANINE: I bet not right? Because there is- in additional to really really liking Mint, you know, I bet if they got married or something, or got engaged, then Marzy would be open about it, or more open about it. But there is that risk when you're still very early in a relationship of like, you don't wanna just tell everyone that kind of thing because then you're basically going to fuck up the whole point of what you're doing.

ALI: Oh, sure sure sure. Yeah.

JANINE: You know, if it gets out, then you stop being effective at what you're trying to do and you know, the thing that Marzy's trying to do right now in addition to pursuing things that you know, I don't think her interest in Mint is fake or anything. But-

AUSTIN: Yeah I definitely- I want to be clear, that was not my intent when I introduced that, yes.

JANINE: Yeah. I think you know, Marzy's desire at this moment if she were a player character would be to like, climb the ladder a bit. Like they need to be established. They need to establish their name. The fact that right now they're an orphan who's just suspiciously rich is a dangerous position?

ALI: [chuckles] Sure.

JANINE: So, having a family and building into something like that is appealing and jeopardising that is a risk and,

ALI: Yeah.

JANINE: So I mean it's a thing that doesn't come yet.

ALI: I wonder if there's, if there's like an emotional moment here like, end of the night, they're eating the cake that they made and like sitting across from each other. I wonder if there's a way of speaking around it, and being like, oh you know it's been nice to be in this new place but it's weird to have all this pressure, especially when that pressure's like social and you're meeting new people. And you don't- you know, it's tough to be honest with your own compulsion versus what people expect from you. It feels like something they would both be able to speak- they would both be able to understand even if they're coming from it from opposite sides?

JANINE: Yeah. I think Marzy would also you know, answer in that vague way of just like, probably checking herself to be like, there's probably that moment of like wait, does Mint know? And being like, Mint- of course Mint doesn't know, it's fine. We're talking about Mint here, and then you know, saying those truths but directing it in such a way where it feels like she is just talking about Mint.

ALI: Sure. Sure sure sure. Cool. Fun date!

JANINE: Yeah. Honestly ideal date. [Ali chuckles]

Alright, I believe then that unless there's anything else we want take care of, that moves us into Reputation.

AUSTIN: I don't think so.

JACK: Okay.

JANINE: Okay.

JACK: I think we're doing pretty well for-

JANINE: Looking at reputation criteria- yeah!

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: That's a really good like, that's a really good sort of climax/area around the climax, you know? [agreement sounds from friends] Where it's like you can see things-

AUSTIN: We have Epistolary- and Novel?

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And then Epistolary, basically after Reputation.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Epilogue, right right right.

JANINE: It's a good thing that you can kind of see how the end is shaping up but there are still some questions.

Alright, gain a positive tag if you acted in the service of duty or morality in a way that compromised your desires. I'm going to take this for Charlotte- oh sorry, for Chatelaine- [laughs]

AUSTIN: You've said Charlotte twice now, and who the fuck is Charlotte?

JANINE [overlapping]: Who the fuck is Charlotte?

JACK: I was curious about this as well.

JANINE: God I can't believe I said Charlotte before, I'm very sorry.

AUSTIN: It's alright.

[01:45:00]

JANINE: So for Chatelaine, well, I guess not- I have to- there is the thing that I said before about not inviting Diego, was a bad move on her part? But also-

AUSTIN: I think this is stupid- I think it's a stupid rule and this is why I'm not society I guess-

JANINE: I agree, but it's you know, again, I think of those like, old-timey hotels where its like, and everyone is expected to just be in this room while they're awake I guess? Just so- play cards with a stranger, no thank you. I think this will be a case where I end up taking both. But anyway, you know. The fact that Chatelaine had to leave the room and kind of in a way like, she wanted to be there to oversee this match that she's trying to ensure, and had to be like, ah fuck, I have to- I gotta figure out a way to make this not weird with Diego, and it was all kind of out of her hands, but. I think that compromised her desires I would say.

AUSTIN: Mhm. I thought about taking this, but it's- I think I'm gonna take it on the third positive tag instead. So, my first one is act in the service of duty/morality in a way that compromises your desires. Which yes, giving- pulling back on this expansion into the woods thing is clearly me losing you know. When I left that scene before the Henrietta scene, I had planned on Diego being like in for a penny in for a pound, you're gonna kill a bunch of my people, guess what, a good advertisement in the fucking paper's gonna be is, these witches are killing the children of Nievelmarch, right?

JANINE: Mhm. [Jack chuckles]

AUSTIN: And instead of going that route which I would've done my best to play hard with reputation tags, I instead- I'm walking it back and have a different outcome in mind at this point. And so I think it's less that one though, than make a sacrifice of your own desires to preserve the dignity of yourself for others in an unbecoming situation? And I think there's like a degree of like, I can't be the commander who sends people to die or get wounded even-

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: -because it makes me money.

JACK: Right.

AUSTIN: And that is, that's just not it, you know? Does not you know, realign Diego into like, the category of like, I don't know that his worldview has changed here.

JANINE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: But sometimes people are in a better- sometimes people will ride their worldview like into the fucking ground in a way that harms others? And here, or hm. He was already presumably going to be ready to harm others, which others he was harming was the difference? But I think that's still something. And I think reputationally, you know, I think sending people home from the holidays, and also keeping them from being killed, is a plus. You know? I don't think that's a hard argument.

JANINE: So positive tag act in the service of duty/morality in a way that compromises your desires. Act in obedience to society's conversations despite considerable hardship in doing so. We also for

Henrietta and Mint. For Henrietta we have secure a personal invitation from someone of highest social status than yourself.

JACK: Nope.

JANINE: No. And for Mint, we have made a sacrifice or denied your own desires to uphold the values of your place of origin.

ALI: No I don't think so.

JACK: Do you think that making that apology in person is acting in obedience to society's conventions despite considerable hardship?

AUSTIN: I think there was personal hardship there, right? Like you-

JACK: This is something that like-

AUSTIN: You recognised that that was not something you could write in a letter and send to me because it was of such great difficulty- or such great-

JACK: Import.

AUSTIN: Import, yeah thank you.

JANINE: I think if you done that-

AUSTIN: It was definitely a difficult thing.

JANINE: Yeah, I think if you'd done that at the very start, in like turn one? I would say no?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: But the fact that Henrietta did try other avenues that were easier, quote unquote,

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: Or more acceptable, more palatable, makes the build to this feel like it's more earned.

JACK: It's one of those things where like, she clearly really wants to do, but also very deeply didn't want to have to do?

JANINE: Yeah.

JACK: And I think that like, actually being like alright, here we go, let's do this. So I'm going to take the tag- what would be a good positive tag for the meddler to get at this point? Is it something like considerate, or something like- I don't think that Henrietta is a particularly considerate person, but in this moment she showed consideration of other people's feelings, and sort of what her duty was? And I'm not sure what tag best reflects that.

JANINE: Is it maybe something more like mature, or like-

JACK: Oh, mature- [laughs] mature is good.

JANINE: Something that implies like, Anastasia's lesson is landing, right? Of like-

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah.

JANINE: Her perspective shifting a little.

JACK: Yeah. [yawns] Okay- excuse me. Positive.

JANINE: So, gain a negative tag if you acted in contravention of society's conventions.

JACK: Oh! I lose fracture right now. Like that's gone now, right? It might come back,

AUSTIN: As long as you don't get another negative- oh, you're right. Yes. Technically in this moment, right?

JANINE: Yeah, but if you gain another negative it stays intact.

JACK: Yeah. Mhm.

AUSTIN: It doesn't- cause here's an actual rules question because I'm probably in the same exact position. Does that one you have stay, or is there a world in which it shifts? Where it disappears and then comes back-

JANINE: The one you have stays.

AUSTIN: -or is it, and you can switch it? Okay.

JANINE: Mhm, it's specifically at the end of the Reputation phase, you're taking stock-

JACK: Oh!

AUSTIN: Okay.

JANINE: Of like if anything has changed, numbers-wise.

JACK: Cool.

JANINE: Acted in contravention of society's conventions. Acted on desire in a way that compromised your duty or morality.

AUSTIN: I definitely- I'm- I don't know what to say about the barging in. Is that? Does that just reinscribe rude, immediately, you know what I mean? Which we talked about before.

JANINE: I mean I still- mmm...

AUSTIN: This is where I- this is where this system is like, I'm having a hard time wrapping my head around it? Because it's like,

JANINE: But also this is-

AUSTIN: I have a hard time considering playing negative traits in a way that doesn't just them reinscribe them immediately.

JANINE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: But that might be a failure of my imagination, more than anything else, you know?

JANINE: No that's a good point. It also might be like, we are judging very harshly?

AUSTIN: Maybe. Yeah.

JANINE: Cause we're not playing a game where people are like- we're not playing a game that has rules as harsh as actual regency society is one thing.

AUSTIN: Right, there's a good point.

JANINE: Where it's a lot easier to be like, well yes, you- you sullied your family's name because you went on a walk with a boy, you know. We're not really doing that shit.

AUSTIN: Mhm. I'm also still trying to figure out a new positive one for the other thing? So don't wait on me to make a decision on this one. I'll wrap back around to it in a second.

JANINE: I actually think I'm going to reverse what I said before where because the two- the two reputation tags I could take here are like, really in conflict with each other? Like it'd be weird to take gracious hostess because she ditched the party- or she ditched the group to find a chair, but also take bad hostess because she didn't invite Diego?

AUSTIN Yeah.

JANINE: You know?

AUSTIN: I feel like that- yeah.

ALI: I think-

AUSTIN: To me does that just even out? You know?

ALI: The thing we had said last time is that like, we shouldn't double dip on the same action, or the same scene?

JANINE: Right, I think for that I meet more like, two negatives. Like if you have- if you do something that fits like, acted in contravention of society's conventions and acted on desire in a way that compromised your duty and morality-

ALI: Oh.

JANINE: Then that would be a double-dip.

ALI: Yeah, it-

JANINE: Cause otherwise it's like, how do you decide what gets negative or positive?

ALI: Right, yeah, it had come up when I was deciding if I should take a positive and negative for the same scene. So I think it's worth thinking about if you're only going to frame it the one way, what do you think is more, you know, accurate?

JANINE: Maybe the other thing is not just use gracious host. Maybe the thing here is, I need a word for like quick to consider the comfort of others? Or something like,

AUSTIN: Is that just like attentive or something?

JANINE: Oh that is attentive, yeah.

AUSTIN: Like, you know what I mean like, okay a situation has shown up,

JANINE: Attending to-

AUSTIN: Let me get- let me attend to people, you know? I'm trying to find something that's like protective, or something for- or maybe it's not, maybe that's not the thing I want to emphasise is not the protecting, it's the like, it's the opposite of brash in a way, right? It's the like, I took a breath, a cooler head prevailed, and I got the fuck out so that people wouldn't get hurt. Which is not being

protective of those people- what's like the positive spin on being gullible, but being able to be influenced by the people in your life towards a positive end?

Because that's what actually happened in that scene, right? Is, Henrietta's apology to Diego reminded him of what he cares about. More directly, more directly reminded him of Honor and did the thing that he believes Honor would have wanted him to do. Which is to protect his people, but that's not- it's not that he's protective, it's that he is like, impressionable, but in a good way? You know? But that's hard to frame as a positive because that's not how we culturally talk about impressionability.

JACK: Is it to do with like- [chuckles] just listens,

AUSTIN: Which is fucked up by the way, it's fucked up that impressionability is a thing that we, you know.

JACK: Uh huh.

AUSTIN: There has to be- there has to be a good word for us to use as well as the negative ones at least. Sorry Jack you were suggesting something.

JANINE [overlapping]: There has to be a word for counsel- counselable or something.

JACK: Responsive?

AUSTIN: Yeah, right? Responsive isn't bad.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: That's a direct-

JACK: The one that I said was, listens! Which just sounds like a school report. [Austin laughs] Diego listens when given advice. [Janine chuckles] Oh! Receptive-

AUSTIN: -no,

JANINE [overlapping]: Receptive is good.

JACK [overlapping]: I think receptive might be it, right?

AUSTIN: Okay, let's go with receptive. I almost put it in Henrietta's thing.

JACK: Henrietta is not terribly receptive.

AUSTIN: Sorry now I'm back. Oh, no. Not enough to have the trait at least.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Alright let me look at this list again.

JACK: I don't think-

JANINE: Has anyone's negative reputation triggered by the way?

AUSTIN: This would be publicly displayed strong emotions for me, for crying in the street?

JACK: Which does- right?

AUSTIN: It's like crying in the- sorry, say that again.

JACK: I feel that it does, right? You specifically staged that beat.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I specifically framed that, yeah. Yes. Exactly.

ALI: Yeah I don't think I had any of these.

JANINE: No, it doesn't seem like it.

JACK: I-

JANINE: Same for me, I don't think I shamed my family by not having a chair ready for Diego [Ali giggles] that seems a bit much.

AUSTIN: No, no that's a stretch. I'm going to think melancholy, because I think that's in line also with how he's been played the whole time?

JANINE: Mmm.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Does that make sense?

JANINE: Yeah!

AUSTIN: Like,

JACK: I'm not going to take negative for acted on desire in a way that compromised your duty or morality, because she acted on desire but in a very sort of, dutifully way I think?

JANINE: Mhm.

JACK: If she'd been like swindling someone to get back into Diego's good books, I don't know, and I don't think she acted in an uncouth, low-class, or vulgar manner?

JANINE: No, it's not like she tackled him in the street, you know?

AUSTIN: No, there's no glomp.

JANINE: Just like, grabbed his hand and dragged him into a tea shop or something like that- that would be something else. I don't wanna- just the idea of playing a regency tabletop game with glomping- [Jack laughs, Ali sighs] just makes me like- made my stomach kind of tie up a little bit in horror? [Ali laughs]

JACK: It's that bot right, that mashes two genres together?

JANINE: Mmmm... I hate it. Okay, so, to recap, I have taken attentive as my positive, and I have taken exclusionary as my negative, which I think is fair for an old money heiress who hosts a lot of parties. She probably does some bullshit like that.

For my positive reputation tag I have taken golden child, your parents, aunts and uncles believe you can do no wrong. I don't think we need to frame like a big scene around this or anything, I think this is like a letter that comes that's like, from Chatelaine's absent parents being like. We heard from Frances how wonderful the party was, all our friends said that you did a fantastic job you know, it was your first Procession Day hosting and we couldn't be prouder, etc. etc. It's that kind of thing.

At the same time for my negative reputation condition, I have taken not marriage material? And again, I don't think this needs a big scene? I think this is just the mechanical manifestation of a thing that has probably been true for a little while about Chatelaine, which is the more she does, the more the people who are around her are like, she's cool, but can you imagine living with her? [Ali chuckles]

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: Or can you imagine being married to her? Like I'm so glad we're friends, she's so, you know. She's fun or whatever, she's kind and stuff. But also she's a lot.

AUSTIN: Nice trees in the garden.

JANINE: Yeah. It's like- it's always a good time to visit Chatelaine Pellier, but you don't want to stay.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah.

JANINE: Do we have any other new conditions?

AUSTIN: Same ones over here.

JANINE: Any conditions that are leaving? Henrietta for example?

JACK: Yes, my fracture is leaving. And I have a positive condition to take. So I'm getting rid of fracture. I assume that Anastasia is like, I'm sorry, Henrietta did what? [Janine chuckles] Oh, okay. Um- and then I don't know whether or not to take-

So, on the one hand, [chuckles] god, protege is so good. But I think, I think that just in terms- so, protege is choose or create a connection to be your protege. Until you lose this condition they desperately require you to solve every problem in their lives? [Ali and Janine laugh] Which is like- it's, I love that this is a positive trait, because it just plays straight into what the meddler does best?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: That being said, in terms of just the narrative flavour, I do quite like taking master of gossip which is my other one, which is when you assure that a rumour on the public information sheet is true, they will believe you until they see strong evidence to the contrary, as a way to kind of further the plot of the Sameday family's name going through the press? Where it's like, people are feeling mixed about the Samedays,

[02:00:00]

But I think word spread just as quickly of this conversation between Henrietta and Diego? And I wonder if there is some aspect to which Henrietta is actually able to move more easily within her circle of gossip, having performed this act of reconciliation?

JANINE: Mmm.

JACK: Cause I also don't want to get like, too far into like, oh this person has renounced their gossipy ways that we are using so pejoratively. Where it's like no, Henrietta needed to apologise, and she has apologised, but she still is a gossip? [Ali chuckles]

JANINE: Mhm.

JACK: And is still going to be spending all her time doing that, and fascinated by that? So I think that at this stage in the game I'm going to pick master of gossip rather than protege.

ALI: I like that reading of it because it was a, like a apology that happened in the street, the like story of it can really blossom of being like,

AUSTIN: Yes!

ALI: Oh I was there!

JANINE: Yeah.

ALI: It was so emotional, and she really opened up and,

JACK: [chuckles] Yes!

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: She broke through to the cold Diego, they hugged! Like, [laughs]

JACK: There was a hug?

AUSTIN: And crying publicly? Yeah. Uh huh.

JACK: Yeah. Just, actually just plays right back into the hands of the gossip.

JANINE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Right, exactly.

JANINE: If that's everything? Then we are skipping past Rumour and Scandal, tragically. And going into Epistolary, where we write up to two letters from a major character or a connection. Does anyone have anything real hot and pressing that they're?

AUSTIN: Yeah. I wanna just knock this one out immediately which is, on the Renewal Day paper that's, the front page- not the front page, that would be *ridiculous*. On the op-ed, like the letters to the editor or something, maybe it's just another advertisement, I don't know.

But on the paper for that Renewal Day itself, is, I'm running a letter to the town thanking Henrietta Sameday for her contribution to bringing Albrecht, the vandal Albrecht to justice. I don't say Albrecht Sameday, I just say like, the vandal Albrecht, do you know what I mean? One of those things where like you know who the fuck I'm talking about, you know it's the Samedays. But I'm gonna do my best not to bring that association to bear in the letter itself.

And announcing I think- basically saying like, thanks to the contributions to Henrietta Sameday in bringing the vandal Albrecht to justice. I'm announcing that going into the new year, the- what's the word I'm looking for? Not the permit, but the- there's another word that rhymes with that.

JACK: Station?

AUSTIN: No no, like the- like the goal? Or the remit, is what I'm looking for. The remit of the- what was the name of the company?

JACK: They're called the Flint Regulars.

JANINE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: The Flint Regulars, is shifting, to be more individually focused? I note in the letter that I run that months ago, along with the Sameday family, we suffered a tragic loss of someone we cared deeply about in the woods. And that the Flint Regulars are committed to ensuring that no individual is harmed in a similar way, and so we are basically less a private security company, and more a personal security guard company? Where we're only- where only 25% of our current employ is going to stay employed, or out in the woods at any given time. But it's basically we're going to help escort people to-and-from the woods.

If you are rich industrialist who needs bodyguards to go check out a potential build location? We will guard you. If you are someone who wants to go collect plants so you can do some witchcraft, we will guard you as you do that. If you need to go from one town to another we will guard you. But we are not stationed in the same way. Or maybe there are a few stations here and there, but in general the move is towards that. And so it's almost like an advertisement for that service and that shift.

JANINE: Finally, profitability!

AUSTIN: Finally, profitability. Less overhead it turns out. But I am going to spend a Resolve token to pay like a severance to everyone I hired for this- you know a bonus. We got our guy.

JANINE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: And so using the having brought him in as like a,

JANINE: Was there a bounty? Like is that where the money comes from maybe?

AUSTIN: Yeah. That's exact- that makes perfect sense. Yeah I like that a lot. There was a bounty. I split the bounty among the entire company instead of, which I guess, keeping it for myself, I split it among everybody I hired for that week. And then used the rest of it as basically, do the kind of nest egg to kick off the company, the smaller version of the company and make it last for the next month or so as I try to get contracts and etc., so. That is my first letter.

JANINE: Where are Diego's personal finances at?

AUSTIN: Personal finance is bad,

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Because it's all wrapped up- but it's all wrapped up in this business in a way that's like, I'll say this. I grew up with small business parents? Everyone in my- both sides of my family tried to run a business. I've seen what it's like to like, see if you have the 20 bucks in the register to have a meal that day?

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Because all the money has to stay in the business. And that's where Diego is it, where it's like, yeah I have a place to sleep, and I have- I'll probably be able to have a meal. But like, *everything* is in the business at this point? So personal finances, bad. Will not be buying new coats, you know? Will not be hosting anything or anyone, like, cannot perform that part of being in society, which is an important part. Is not- is off the market as far as being a bachelor, or being someone who could even be a suitor at this point, I think.

Goes like, there is nothing, you know, mercenary is still there on the sheet, and I think this is- this marks a shift towards- and maybe this is a cultural shift also, or societal shift, where he's in a trade now, but still has a family name that matters? Or that used to matter enough to get invited to parties, enough to stay at people's couches, not literally couches, but I still have that bo- that positive condition. But can't continue a line at this point, you know? Cannot- the Flint family is not going to get married into in any meaningful way by someone else in society at this point, you know?

JANINE: So did you have a second letter that you wanted to do?

AUSTIN: I'm thinking on it. I'll come back around.

JANINE: Okay. I have-

AUSTIN: That was the one I wanted to get out there immediately.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So that- yeah. Really just wanted to help clear Henrietta's name and tie into that rumour spread, where like yes. This is part of that.

JANINE: I have a letter for Mint.

ALI: Oh?

JANINE: It is from James.

JACK: Mm!

JANINE: It says, more or less,

(as James): To my dearest Ms. Charlise,

I have thought of little but our visit some days ago, and though our absence has been brief- although your absence has been brief since, it has occupied me in such a way that I have had much to think about.

There's two things I wanna say here and it's a real question what he is saying first [Ali laughs]! [Jack chuckles] I think I figured it out.

I have heard from acquaintances more deeply entrenched in the city that you have as of late, come to the acquaintance of one Ms. Marzy Summerville.

Cause why not.

And though she seems like a wonderful creature, I must warn you that I have heard other things about Ms. Summerville's character and provenance,

AUSTIN: Mmm.

JANINE:

(as James): That concern me particularly in relation to you, your fortunes, and your happiness.

Fortunes he means luck, not money. [Ali chuckles] But also maybe money. But mostly luck.

Of course as your friend, I deeply wish to preserve your reputation and also the quality of your life in-

Forgot the town's name and scrolled on my notes in such a way where it's not visible.

Nievel-march.

[chuckles]

And in fact to that point, I would be honoured to make it my life's duty to preserve the calibre of life that you are not only used to, but entitled to.

To that end, Ms. Charlise, I would humbly like to request your hand in marriage.

ALI: Mhm.

JANINE:

(as James): I have sent a letter announcing my intentions along to your father as well. But I am hoping beyond hope, to hear from you first.

Yours in perpetuity,

Is that a thing people says? [Ali chuckles] I think he says,

James. Your dearest, James.

ALI: Do I have to respond to this right away? [laughs]

JANINE: You don't have to. You can sit on it. It's up to you, a hundred percent.

ALI: Yeah, we- oh boy. You have a final scene coming up, so I feel like-

JANINE: Mhm, we do! That's where this is happening right now!

ALI: Cause I, you know, I, it is based on my desire that I want to have two engagements, so this isn't- you know I think it's a very- it's a very stressing time for Mint to receive this letter. Especially when her father's name is evoked because it's like, oh, shit. Not only am I both going to have to figure out what my response to this is going to be, but also, the clock is sort of ticking for me to find my own love versus [laughs]- versus what's been laid out for me.

JANINE: Mhm.

ALI: [exhales] Oh! I don't think that she- I think that she does respond pretty quickly. We spoke about the two day mail- the two mail a day system, and I think that you know,

JANINE: Mhm.

ALI: Maybe this is- maybe the engagement letter's like a night letter, and Mint responds to it by the morning. And I think it's a lot of like, [laughs]. Okay. You know... uh huh, okay. I think it's a lot of like, you know, that I,

(as Mint): It's my deepest honour to you know, be the object of your affection, and that object of your concern. The time that we've spent together has been illuminating and a joy. But to think of our relationship as long-term and permanent is something that I take pause on at least in this moment. I understand that I- I am both flattered and I both understand the value of your affection. And I don't want to take it lightly.

But I feel for, you know [giggles], to ensure the happiness in both of our lives, if we should live them together, I should think on this offer, this opportunity, a little bit more to make sure that my decision carries the weight that your hand deserves.

Yeah, I think that's the way that I'm going to go that way for now. Just being like, I have to think about it! [giggles] Sure. Great.

JANINE: Any other letters then?

ALI: I wanted to write one to Marzy [laughs].

JANINE: Mhm?

ALI: And now that the timeline is like, a little stressful, I- I don't [laughs] I'm not going to do an engagement by letter after one date, I feel like that's.

JANINE: Oh yeah, that's a bit much.

ALI: It's- yeah.

JANINE: That's not-

ALI: That's exactly what he-

AUSTIN: That's what he just did, yeah.

JANINE: Also-

AUSTIN: Also, yeah-

JANINE: Also to be clear, it's rude that he sent a letter to you and your dad at the same time.

ALI: Yeah.

JANINE: That's not cool!

ALI: Yep. I mean a lot of people think that's fine to do, it's not fine to do, don't do that. [laughs] Yeah. I think the letter that I send to Marzy is, you know,

(as Mint): Thank you for coming to my home the other day. I hope that it wasn't any inconvenient for you to travel this way. My- you know, the presence of you brightened my home and you know, my family and my staff still speak of you highly. I-

[laughs]. Hmm. You know I think she says something like, I, you know,

Despite spending a short time in your presence, I feel so fulfilled each time that I see you that the thoughts of you filled my mind in between. I hope that it is not too forward in asking for another engagement some time soon.

I wonder if there should be a specific invitation but I don't know what we're doing next.

[02:15:00]

I don't know if she'd feel like,

JANINE: Maybe we should define that now.

AUSTIN: I was going to suggest a little bit of a time jump that we can get like, a world in which Mint and Marzy have seen each other more times, though I guess not responding to James' proposal in all that time could be a problem. But I was thinking like, what's the next big society event? What's the next holiday? What is the like, end of January equivalent, or beginning of February- do you know what I mean?

ALI [overlapping]: It's- would it- is it like the pre-book opening party?

JANINE: No that would be within that week-

AUSTIN: I think-

ALI: Oh yeah.

AUSTIN: That's like tomorrow. Yeah. That's the day the letter I wrote runs in the paper. Which could be fine, because it could be tonight's big thing. The other way we're doing it is yeah, [Ali laughs] I'll see you tonight at the thing.

JACK: Oh I kind of love that! I do really like it in stories where the like, the sort of opposite of a time jump happens, like, oh we're doing it tonight. Like the events that we saw today are going to be affecting what is going to happen next. But I think it's up to you Ali.

ALI: Yeah, I like that, again because I've spoken about the clock ticking tonight, I think you know, Mint being like, I hope to see you at whatever whatever event tonight, and if I could steal some moment of your time, yada yada. I think the way of like, bringing- bringing the like, the time thing that Austin mentioned and also just like, showing Mint's hands in terms of the timeline that she's thinking of, I think that maybe the way to do it is like, you know, I fear that there may be a reason that I might be leaving [chuckles] Nievelmarch again soon. And if I you know, I travel to the woods for a holiday at the new year's first new moon, I would love to you know, earn your companionship on that trip if you were up for it [laughs].

JANINE: Oooh!

ALI: Which I think is a shot shooting of being like, let's go on vacation if this party goes well!
[laughs] Is interesting.

JANINE: Yeah.

ALI: So yeah. I like those stakes.

JANINE: I think Marzy's a quick replier. And they get back to with, you know. I really want- I really wanted to start her letter

(as Marzy): Sweet Mint,

[Ali laughing and hitting the table/her lap], I don't know why, I just think it's cute-

JACK: So good.

ALI: She is- vivacious, fun, quirky, and bubbly [laughs].

JANINE: Yeah! So I think that's how she starts her letter. And you know I think it's like, along the lines of, you know,

(as Marzy): I confess that the feelings you're expressing are quite mutual. I have enjoyed your company with the entirety of my heart every time I've shared it. And the idea of being worthy of more of your company is paramount to my desires,

Or you know.

I would very much love to see you at the-

I'm imagining this event- we haven't had a dance?

ALI: Ohhh! Yeah!

JANINE: I feel like we need a big-

JACK: Ohhhh!

JANINE: Like a big fucking throwdown in the community hall, like, everyone fucking dancing.

AUSTIN: Yeah, that's a good idea.

JANINE: We need a big-ass dance party to cap this thing off.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: I-

(as Marzy): I look forward to filling up as much of your dance card at the Renewal Ball as is proper. And you know, beyond that, I can only hope.

With fondest regards,
Marzy Summerville

Is Mint- here's- I have a question. Is Mint at all concerned about what James intimated about Marzy?

ALI: Oh, the like, this is gonna be bad for your reputation, yada yada yada,

JANINE: Yeah the whole like, I've learned some things about this person that could impact you negatively and, does you know, does she believe that? Does she think he's just saying it, like, where do- or does she-

ALI: It's a weird thing right, where I think that she- it's not like a threat quote unquote that doesn't hit on her? I think in terms of like needing to eventually sell Marzy to her family, and perceiving James as somebody who's connected, it does give her a little pause?

But I think at the same time she knows that that's something that somebody would easily say about her? So it's not something, yeah,

JANINE: Oh sure, yeah.

ALI: It's not something that makes her drop everything. But I think it sort of, it sort of further cements the like, version of James in her head, which is this person who is like, you know, not very open-minded, kind of a jerk, kind of a- [laughs], kind of a cruel and uninteresting person. So I think there's a part of her that's like, oh yeah, he would see something wrong with this person that I think is perfect. But,

JANINE: Yeah.

ALI: I think you know, the fact that there's a clock ticking right, there's the letter traveling to her parents, and then her parents potentially being like, oh well I heard that you are with this girl who's you know, not up to snuff or whatever, is the concern there. But not so much that, oh I have to talk to James and see what the rumours are.

JANINE: Good. The other thing is like I bet even less abstractly, you know, James would say that shit behind her back. [Ali chuckles] Like James- it's not even that like, people probably talk about

her in the same way, it's that like, the second James gets tired of her, he's going to say shit like that.

ALI: Oh yeah, James has definitely been neggy to her face. I- I don't think that it came up a ton in the Diego/Mint/James scene that much, because I think Diego sort of deflected it? But it's a lot of like, oh my charming little bird, in the business meeting that's actually important.

JANINE: Oh yeah. Yeah.

ALI: So yeah.

JANINE: James is almost like from a different game of this, right? Like he's almost-

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: He's from a much more traditional setting of this where like, I bet most of our characters would find him appalling and completely unacceptable on a social level. Any other- Henrietta, what are you up to?

JACK: Yeah. I would like to write a letter- we have one more Epistolary phase, right?

JANINE: Yes, but it's like an epilogue.

AUSTIN: Epilogue, which is only- and it's only one letter, I believe.

JACK: Oh, damn. Okay. In that case I would like to write a letter from Darling to Diego.

AUSTIN: Oh, beat me to it.

JACK: Oh were you going to request a?

AUSTIN: I was. No no no, I was going to write to Darling. That was my other letter.

JACK: Ohh!

AUSTIN: But I'm happy to have her write first. That's fine.

JACK: Mmm! It might be more interesting if you write first, actually. I feel like that communicates more about Diego right now.

AUSTIN: Well the thing is we can't undo not welcome,

JANINE: Yeah. I was gonna say that feels-

AUSTIN [overlapping]: Which means-

JACK: Mmm.

AUSTIN: Yes.

JANINE: Because we've established that that not welcome here is on Diego- more in Diego's head,

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: It's tricky if he's the one who instigates that.

AUSTIN: Yeah if they message- message me, jesus christ. [Ali laughs, Janine and Jack chuckle]
Hmm!

JANINE: If this old Victorian matron emails me,

AUSTIN [overlapping]: I don't- looking for messages- emails, right.

ALI: Elegant mails, that's right.

JACK: Mm! Mhm! [Janine and Austin laugh]

AUSTIN: What was that? Was that what- the Bluff City run? [Ali chuckles] This close, yeah. Oh, so good. If she sends a letter to me, then it's like, Diego would have to be really head up his ass-

JACK: Yeah. Yeah you're right.

AUSTIN: To not understand that they've welcomed him back in, right? So the letter that I think I wanted to send to them was like, you know, a very professional, and polite, and gracious, saying, you know, what if we just-

(as Diego): Darling,

I hate it. I hate that there's no title, because it makes it sound like I'm calling you my darling, that's not what I'm doing.

JANINE: Darling Darling.

AUSTIN: So maybe it's just like,

(as Diego): To my benefactor,

JACK: Mmm! Mhm.

AUSTIN: Something like that.

(as Diego): I'm writing to give you a brief update on the events of this week and to once again thank you for the time you hosted me in your home. It was only because of your graciousness and support that I was able to move forward in life.

As you may know, I have redirected the efforts of the Flint Regular Company to new ends that I hope will see prosperity in the coming year. Any prosperity I earn is due at least in part to the wisdom you offered me while I was in your care. I will never forget this great service you provided to me, and though I leave your home now, and will send for any remaining things in the coming days, I hope you know that I do so with love and with a great deal of affection.

If I am ever in the position to aid you in anything, simply let me know, and I and the Flint Regular Company will be there to ease your way.

Diego Flint.

JACK: I think the reply comes in the same day again- I think people at this time of year are very prompt, although I suppose it's also a lot of heightened emotional situations and people are wanting to write back quickly.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK:

(as Darling): Mr. Flint,

Thank you for your very kind letter dated-

And then today's date.

Dated morning of,

And then the date.

Your warm words meant a great deal, and I cannot-

Mmm... mmm yeah I think I can say this without breaking the thing. I think they say,

And I cannot wait until we are able to spend time and reminisce together once again. I have sent Jenkins with the remains of what was left in your room. You may keep the key.

Until we see each other again,

Your benefactor.

AUSTIN: Which of course Diego interprets only in the matter of politeness-

JACK: Mhm! They can't really mean it, you know?

AUSTIN: No, of course not, why would they- if they meant it, they would say it that way, this is clearly a safety precaution, what happens if they got locked out of the house,

JACK: Uh huh, right.

AUSTIN: I'll helpfully hold on to a key, [laughs] they and all of their servants!

JACK: The flip-side of you know, when someone says, or when you say, yeah we should definitely have coffee and neither of you intend [Ali chuckles] to absolutely have that coffee ever? But in this case, Diego is saying,

AUSTIN: Well look here's the-

JACK: I'm looking forward to meeting you again,

AUSTIN: Yes.

JACK: And they actually mean it. They are actually looking to a-

AUSTIN: Right, right! I'm definitely looking forward to meeting again, I'm just- I know I'm not going- I'm not welcome- I believe I'm not welcome in your house, right? It feels like I'm out on my ass even though I believe that if we saw each other at a party we would be-

JACK: And who knows? We will probably see him at a party.

AUSTIN: Totally. Those are my two.

JACK: Letter one is to Anastasia. Who is- I don't know what I pictured them- whenever I picture them, they're doing the like slightly older version of Henrietta doing something slightly cooler? Or like more relaxed? [Ali and Janine chuckle] So like, I wonder if they're like, we might just see a montage.

Like they're riding, they're playing billiards, they are like successfully setting up- we get like a quick montage of them introducing people- the people at a great party, and then one of them kneeling in front of the other one. Like more than Henrietta has ever managed. And I think as they read the letter, it's just from Henrietta, who begins by explaining that she has apologised to Diego, and how she had always felt that the act of this apology was very important, and in doing it, and in making that apology, the importance has only grown.

I think she's making a kind of ham-fisted and slightly like poorly written plea to get back into Henrietta's good books? To be like, this shows how I have grown as a person, this shows that I'm capable of this kind of sincere and unartificial interaction.

But then because she's Henrietta, and because she knows what Anastasia is also interested in, she sort of does like a bulletin update of [Ali laughs] all the meddling she's been doing as well? So she like begins with Chapter 1: I have apologised sincerely and deeply to a great friend of mine. And Chapter 2 is like, I engineered it so that somebody dropped off a packet of flowers at somebody's house thinking it was for somebody else, or like you know. Just a load of- just a lot of classic meddling!

And I don't know how Anastasia responds, but I know they are not going to- are they going to fix the fracture? Yes! They are go- yes, the fracture is remedied.

ALI: Yeah! In that case I think that you, you get a response- I think it's like, it's not an evening afternoon response, it's maybe the next day, you know? Like the day out- like a full business day passes before you get a response.

But I think that it's, [breathes] they're being genuine, and they're being like affectionate in a way that seems sincere, and in a way that like, I don't think Anastasia apologises for their behaviour or for cutting you off or whatever. But does write about you know, I'm glad that you've, you know, I'm glad to see that you've mended your relationship with Diego, I'm glad to see that you've spent this time productively. And that you've learned a lot from the situation that you're in.

[02:30:00]

And I think that they specifically say something along the lines of like, you know, in the- [giggles] how would they phrase this? I think it's you know,

(as Anastasia): In the business of arranging the lives of the people around you, it's important to understand the effects of your actions by feeling the cut of your blade. Or to look into somebody else's eyes and see how what you've done has affected them so. I know that this is an uncomfortable and uneasy lesson to learn, but is I hope a turning point in your life regardless.

I miss you, you should come over for tea soon. I am delighted to hear that you've been keeping busy.

With love,
Anastasia.

[chuckles]

JACK: Amazing. Real um- was it Mrs. Gardiner in Pride and Prejudice? I don't think of her as a meddler, but I do think of Mrs. Gardiner as the sort of like, fairly stable like mentor character who shows up and is like, oh, [Ali laughs] what's going on here? Let me help these people out!

JANINE: She is a bit of a meddler too though, right? Like she's like, oh we're just going to go to Pemberley, it's fine, it'll be fine, what's the problem?

JACK: Oh yeah! Also isn't she- her and her husband one of the first two to *really* begin to intuit that something's going on between Elizabeth and Darcy right?

JANINE: Yeah. Yeah, they have a lot of- I don't remember how much of that comes in an adaptation and how much of that is in the book itself, but in all of the adaptations pretty much there are like some knowing looks, especially for Mrs. Gardiner of just like, oh okay, I see how it- I mean yes, also Mr. Gardiner and the whole thing with Lydia. That probably is a pretty big-

JACK: Oh sure, yeah.

JANINE: Tip off to him that there is something going on. Yeah.

JACK: Also, good book! I recommend it.

JANINE: It's a good book. It's really good.

JACK: Pride and Prejudice. It's an underrated- [Ali chuckles] little,

AUSTIN [overlapping]: Yeah, people are-

JANINE: Gem. A hidden gem.

JACK: A hidden gem. Excited for the sequel. [Janine laughs]

JANINE: There are sequels if you want them, trust me. There's a lot of them. There's a lot of them about Mary in particular which- she is not the one I would pick to write a sequel about, but-

JACK [overlapping]: Oh! Oh, wait! I mean, more people to Mary but, I think my second letter is to Diego?

AUSTIN: Wow.

JACK: And I think it is just like, I think it is written in the Perfect Society voice. It is the adopted tone of somebody writing a society letter to an acquaintance or a friend, but wanting to be extremely like polite, and by the book, and measured.

And I think the fact that this is coming from Henrietta, reveals that it is absolutely a joke. Like this is- this isn't even Henrietta trying to be polite, I think if Henrietta was trying to be polite she couldn't resist and there would be some- there'd be some joke or something. But this is just so pitch perfectly like, somebody pretending to be society, that it can only be read as like a gag?

And it is just Henrietta asking if you know,

(as Henrietta): This winter being what it is, and myself, me finding- one finding oneself without-

Friendship or companionship, she's basically like asking for a platonic date to the function-

AUSTIN: Oh yeah yeah yeah.

JACK: Like oh please come and pick me up for this something or another.

AUSTIN: Uh huh. I think you get a response. I think the response that you get is twofold. It is a similarly dressed up- like maybe, was this a game we played? The sort of like, poking fun at all of the pomp of this style of letter writing, right? So I think it's a letter in response similar to that.

But then, the letter comes not in an envelope- I assume that there would be an envelope, I don't know how letters were delivered in this world, but. Not in a letter envelope, but like a parcel. And there's a letter like attached to the outside of the parcel so you read that first. And then underneath the letter, there is a charcoal drawing? It's not very good. Diego was not lying when he said that he picks up you know, a pen, or a pencil or a brush, but is not particularly good at capturing likenesses or landscapes.

But it is a sketch of an archway. And inside is- of the parcel, is the jacket of Honor. Which, there is no note about where that came from, or how it was found. But I'm spending a resolve token to have found the body of Honor.

JACK: Woah!

AUSTIN: And to have sent you back his jacket.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And I mean, I don't know that- I don't wanna linger on finding a corpse in this game? But yeah, there is an archway, and he tripped near it. Like, you know, sometimes people fall into crevices and get lost in the woods, and we don't need to zero-in any more closely on that. But like, you know, one of Diego's men came and found him and said, you have to come see this sir, you know? It's one of those things.

And so, and so you get back your letter that is like. Absolutely! Thumbs up, you know, it would be my ho- it would be my honour to attend this as escort, to tonight's festivities. Blah blah blah blah blah blah, no mention of the rest of what this package is, right?

JACK: Yeah. And it's just-

AUSTIN: No, not even a blink of it-

JACK: You know. Again, it's not something I want to linger on, but I also don't want to sugarcoat it, this just devastates Henrietta. Like this is just,

JANINE: I actually-

AUSTIN: Mhm?

JANINE: Sorry, I'm a little hesitant on this because we're specifically in a rom-com setting?

AUSTIN: Mmm.

JANINE: And I'm wondering if having this is going to- is going to-

AUSTIN [overlapping]: Yeah we can X-card it. Let's just not do it then.

JANINE: Is going to be a problem with that tone. But that- I mean the thing is, the thing I wanna do is- I want to offer you an alternative.

AUSTIN: Sure.

JANINE: Is I want him to have found that coat. I want him to have found-

AUSTIN: I don't want there to be any possibility that Honor comes back.

JANINE: Okay.

AUSTIN: I don't want there to be an open door.

JANINE: Okay.

AUSTIN: It can't be- I don't want anyone coming through the doorway.

JANINE: Alright.

AUSTIN: Which means it's fine to- how about then we just find the archway? And it's confirm- I'm fine with it not being- this is a story about grief, for me?

JANINE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: And it can't be a story in which- you should be able to tell a rom-com in which a character loses someone they love, and the door closes on them for real.

JANINE: Sure. I think for me the part where it's a little bit rough is when it's like, oh, and I saw the body.

AUSTIN: Well maybe that's why I said okay, maybe his men brought him the jacket, right? And confirmed it. But again, if you want to pull the veil or pull an X-card on this, let me think about another way to arrive here? But, the closure that I need for this is about- is about death, and is not about like, just moving on to the- because sometimes you lose people in your life for unknown reasons? It's about sharing the knowledge that someone you loved together died.

JANINE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: And so, again maybe is there a world in which it's, it's- is it just the sketch, maybe? That communicates to Henrietta that there is-

JANINE: That is part of the thing right, like, wasn't it just kind of this weird story that happened where it was like,

AUSTIN: Yes.

JANINE: People say he got turned into an archway, but like what? And then just finding an archway that's somewhere it's not supposed to be, or there's kind of, no-one knows what this archway is, like people who- I mean even, maybe you know, maybe it gets found while escorting a group of witches or something and they're like, yeah we don't know what that is.

AUSTIN: Totally. Yeah. The thing that I need to underscore is like, I don't want anyone introducing Honor in any future scenes.

JANINE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: So as long as we can agree to that as a table,

JACK: Yeah, totally.

AUSTIN: Like, that has been-

JANINE: Yeah, totally.

AUSTIN: -hanging over my head this whole game, is like, please no one do that? [Jack and Janine chuckle] Which I should've done- I should've just set that up to begin with?

JANINE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: But, yeah.

JACK: I mean that I think that it is still- it is a still mode of grief for Henrietta to receive this kind of acknowledgement of the relationships that the three of them shared.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: But I think it'll be very different had they not spoken yesterday.

AUSTIN: Oh, yeah this would not have come if not for that conversation.

JACK: In the event that it had somehow, the message that Henrietta would take from it would be an utterly different one,

AUSTIN: Totally.

JACK: Than that she's able to find now. Which I think is a measure of relief. And those are my two letters.

ALI: Cool. [chuckles] Okay!

JANINE: Do you have any other ones?

ALI: Yeah. Tough to follow that one, but, [laughs]

JANINE: Mhm.

ALI: I've decided that the thing that I should do if I have an extremely powerful connection is use it? [laughs] I'm going to-

JANINE: Yeah!

ALI: Write a letter to Hilda, asking for advice. And you know, I think Mint is really out with it, I think that she you know, despite being far-away, I think that she has a close, cloaked-ish relationship with her parents? So she thinks of Hilda as more of like an aunt? But certainly Hilda had enough of a hand in raising her that like, Mint would be really open and be like, you know,

(as Mint): My return to Nievelmarch has been wonderful and you know, the joys that I have had here have been beyond compare. Meeting new friends, and meeting new people. But

there has been a shadow over it this entire time, and I feel that I have been backed into a corner I cannot get out of.

I came here and I met the man that my family recommended to me, and only found him to be as-

[Austin chuckles]

You know, [giggles]

-uncouth, just like, increasingly disagreeable each time that I met him. James treats me like a pen on his desk, both for decoration and for his business partner, and as something to sign his letterbooks.

I- I fear the potential of his influence over me. And I, it brings me to tears thinking that I may have to choose between the security of my family versus the comfort for the rest of my life.

I think that she's open about the stuff Diego mentioned too? That hasn't come up on screen, but was a pretty significant call-out and like, being able to get ahead of it before Hilda's like what was up with that? Is like, you know, I don't think that my- my parents understand the full reach of his greed and if they do, they're acting outside of their own interest as well, yada yada yada. Please help me with this Aunt Hilda! [laughs] But yeah that's my second letter.

JANINE: Hilda replies not with a letter mail. [Ali laughs] Hilda's reply comes at a time that is bizarre and confusing.

AUSTIN: Classic.

JANINE: Because there is no mail-person? You know, maybe the mail even already came and there was a moment of like, I guess she didn't reply? But then it's just there. And her response is, you know, the very modern just like.

(as Hilda): Mint,

You are a good and faithful daughter to be concerned about your parents' opinions. However you needn't fear them. Whatever they do not understand now, they may come to understand. And the only question is the interval. Should it be a long interval, you'll be taken care of. Should it be a short interval,

[Ali laughs]

Should it be a short interval, you will have nothing- you will have no concerns. You know, you can trust that I will do everything in my power to ensure that you and James only deal with each other to the degree that you are comfortable. And if that degree is zero, then so be it.

Your parents are not without power and influence. But, even they have their superiors and their betters. Your path is your own to choose, you are a grown woman who will undoubtedly come to the correct conclusion.

With deepest regards,
Hilda

ALI: [dreamily] Cool.

JANINE: I have one more letter. And I'm going to preface this letter by saying that I am respecting the token that Diego refused in terms of debt collectors? But this is a consequence that I've had in mind since Henrietta put that ad out in the paper saying I support all of the- all of the stuff in that thing! In that thing right there over on the other page? I support it. And the letter thanking the Sameday family was a further hammer in this. Hammer on this nail.

If you accept it- I'm spending a Resolve token for this, Henrietta? There is a letter that arrives where it is basically a bank is seeking some proof of collateral. They essentially want you to vouch for Diego Flint since it seems like the families are deeply connected and there is some connection there. You know, no one is collecting on Diego right now, but it is the thing where they would like to have a Plan B in their books.

[02:45:00]

And they're asking you to be that Plan B. You can also refuse this, or you can "yes, and" it, of course.

JACK: So the terms that are being offered to me are- sorry could you recap the?

JANINE: Yes. They basically based on the ad that you took out in the paper saying we support you know, the Sameday family supports Diego Flint and the Flint Regulars' excursion into the mountains, to locate the fugitive Albrecht Sameday, we support them entirely. [Jack chuckles] There was quite a long, quite devoted sort of-

JACK: Mhm!

JANINE: And then it was followed up by Diego saying in the paper also, very publicly, couldn't have done it without the Samedays! They're real great-

JACK: Ohh...

JANINE: Looking forward to a lot of cooperation.

JACK: Alright,

JANINE: Etc.

JACK: So they're basically saying if we can't come for him,

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: They're basically saying, "sounds kind of like you're in business together to me!"

AUSTIN [overlapping]: You're cosigning my love. Yeah. Yeah.

JANINE: No one's putting in ads shouting about James, you know?

JACK: Okay, this is not something I have to- I mean I suppose I could- wooh...

JANINE: I'm offering a token because this could potentially be a threat to your reputation. It's an event happening in the world that like,

JACK: Yeah.

JANINE: Does in a sideways way, threaten your desire. But it is also, I'll acknowledge like, very narrative. It's not, you know. No one is saying you, Henrietta Sameday are a scoundrel. They're just saying,

JACK: I mean,

JANINE: You vouching for this guy?

JACK: I'm gonna write back. And I'm gonna say- [laughs] oh boy.

(as Henrietta): To Messrs. So-and-so, so-and-so, so-and-so, and so-and-so of the Legal firm
So-and-so and So-and-so,

Please forward any further correspond to Caroline and Arthur Sameday of the Sameday
Manufacturing Plant, who like me, hold Mr. Flint in the highest of regards. While I am sure
that they will be able to set any matter between you and Mr. Flint to rest, these are the
concerns of the Sameday business of which I am no part, being a- a Nievelmarch socialite of
but 23 years-

Or 21 years? [Janine chuckles] I don't know. 21.

Of but 21 years.

With my kindest regards that this brings an end to our correspondence,

Ms. Henrietta June Sameday.

And then like a full, formal signature underneath? Well I think she's being very legit in- she means what she says about Diego, and I think that Henrietta truly believes that- she's not passing this off to her parents for them to bury somewhere, but she's just like, uh what? You're trying to come at *me* for money? [Ali laughs] What? [Janine laughs]

JANINE: You've been seen around, you know.

JACK: I'm- I don't run the factory!

JANINE: We actually- [chuckles] we haven't talked about how your parents feel about Diego, have we?

JACK: No, we have not. Caroline and-

JANINE: What's that relationship like?

JACK: I think a lot of it would probably be dictated by Diego right? I imagine that they were very excited for Honor and Diego's nuptials, and they were heartbroken twice fold when Honor disappeared. Not just that you know, that their son had gone, but also that you know, that it had broken up this marriage.

And I think that you know, parents seeing their children get married to someone that they like, they probably thought very highly of Diego? But I think being that older generation and probably being more respectful of society's norms than their daughter, they probably trusted Diego when Diego was like, I have had it with you lot for the time being.

I imagine that they're in their fifties, their late fifties. And I think they probably watched Diego's prospects with interest and sympathy? But sort of kept the distance from him that they felt was socially sort of their part of the bargain.

JANINE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Yeah I think that that lines up to where I think about it. Which is like, this was a love match, and they were happy to see Honor in love. But it would never be- it would not have been a match for any other reason than that?

JACK: Right.

AUSTIN: And so to some degree I imagine- it may be if Diego had come you know, hand over heart, you know, asking for help, they would have responded in some way like that. But I think that he felt like, without Honor there to bridge the two families there,

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: There was no way to bridge that. I don't think they felt compelled to do that either, you know? Especially- it's only been a few months as far as we can tell, and they are certainly grieving as much as anyone. So. It is not fun to bury a child, so. Or, not even bury, right?

JANINE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: To learn that your child has disappeared into the woods. And so, I think that there is a degree of which- a degree to which there is distance, but not, you know. Not distance with meaning in that way. You know.

JANINE: Yeah. Is that that for our last Epistolary phase- not last in general, but-

JACK: I think so, right?

ALI: Yeah, okay.

AUSTIN: I think that's everybody.

ALI: So what we're doing- we're doing one more chapter?

JANINE: One more Novel phase-

ALI: And one more letter-

JANINE: Yeah, and then it's a letter that's like, everyone gets one, and it functions as an epilogue, sort of. So I don't even know that it's really a letter, but you're kind of just doing like, here's what happens.

ALI: Oh okay that's fun. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Mhm. It says each person writes one letter from their major character, set some years after the events of the final Novel chapter.

ALI: Oh, yes!

AUSTIN: During the letter the characters comment on the progression of their lives since the event of the final chapter came to a close.

ALI: Cool! I'm excited, okay cool, I'm ready.

JACK: Let's do it!

JANINE: Alright. Big dance party. So.

This is I imagine, you know, we're at Renewal Day now. We're at our sort of the end of the- it's probably a week and change, honestly, but the end of the week-ish. The sort of day celebrating when the bookkeepers have spent their full day back at work, and everyone's opened up their books for the year, basically.

And this is a sort of event that's held at the sort of big public ballroom/hall? There's like a famous one of these in Bath that I forget the name of, that was like The One in Jane Austen times? And you could rent it out for events, but also I think every night, people would go there and stuff like that.

So it's an event, sort of, it's a space kind of like that. It's like a very tall, big, open rectangular space where you know, there is probably like a live, like a string ensemble playing. Everyone is in their nicest shit, even though it's the end of a work day. Like this is very much a thing where like, people have to go home from work to change, and you also can't really skip the first day of work? So it is really that everyone had to go home from work to change [Ali chuckles] if they're working. Again, this is a set of people who are orphans, careerists, and things like that. But, you know. Does that have day jobs have had to redirect you know. And those that don't probably had a lot more time to get spiffed up.

Chatelaine Pellier of course being among the people that had all fucking day to get ready for this thing. So she's got the really tight like, perfect curls, like, lots of jeweled cones and stuff going on her hair, like. Everything is exactly where it should be. There is not a single crease or like, cuff that is turned the wrong way. Yes, Jack, perfect, that's exactly what I meant. Hang on I'll open this in my browser. [Ali chuckles] So it's visible on the video here.

The Assembly Rooms at Bath. So this is you know, this is like a room with multiple chandeliers, it's that kind of setup. Lots of pillars, lots of- there's a whole second storey here. God, the idea of a big ballroom with multiple fireplaces is also just very charming.

JACK: Oh yeah! I noticed the multiple fireplaces. Meet me by the fireplace, not that one.

JANINE: Yeah, gotta keep it warm [Ali chuckles]. By fireplace number 2.

ALI: James is near that fireplace.

JACK: Oh yeah, fuck that guy! [Ali laughs]

JANINE: Oh yeah. Oh yeah. That's just where he hangs out. That's just his, no one else allowed to go there and they know it.

So yeah this party probably starts I wanna say around 8pm or something like that. I think by the time the camera is there, it's sort of in full swing. There is like the group of people doing country

dances in the middle, there are people around sort of the fringes chatting and like you know, clutching crystal glasses full of various shit? I wonder what a good drink for this would be. You'd probably not wanting spiced wines or anything at this point, like, cause it's been like, a week and change or so since Christmas like,

AUSTIN: You don't, your festive drinks-

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Like is there some sort of drink that like,

JANINE: But it's still cold, right? So you want something, one of those things that they put the hot poker in?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: To warm it up?

ALI: I can imagine like a cider, something a little-

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: Yeah.

ALI: Acidic, so it's not as like, heavy as a spiced wine would be, but. Yeah.

JANINE: Mmm, yeah. So what's our first, what's our first scene at this event, you think?

AUSTIN: Oh, I have something, I want to spend a Resolve token.

JANINE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Frances is showing up wearing on the collar of her suit a rare flower whose petal is like, [Ali makes a knowing sound and then laughs] whose petals are made of ice. [Jack and Janine laugh] I don't know what happened off-screen, we didn't zoom in on what happened with Frances and Mortimer, but the two of them show up and she's wearing the flower and I think- I actually think I do know, this is to borrow you, Janine. I have a headcanon with them?

JANINE: Mm.

AUSTIN: Which is that, Frances became taken by him outside of the realm of society parties? Like, going to see someone's place of business and like, see the work that he puts in to his, to his- what do we call it? It's not just a garden right, it's like a whole-

JACK [overlapping]: Like a greenhouse? Or a-

AUSTIN: Not an arboretum, but you know, his whole- yeah, his greenhouse.

JANINE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: And hearing him in that different context I think swayed her, if not romantically, all the way, at least in terms of admiration?

JANINE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: And suddenly, I think what Frances saw in him was a match of like, not intellect, but of interest and like oh, this is someone whose mind works a lot like mine, and who is interested with a degree of specificity that can charm me when I give it its proper place in my life.

JANINE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: And I think she wears all of that underneath a smile that we've not seen from her until now. And so,

JANINE: Love it.

AUSTIN: Mhm. I don't know if that Resolve token goes to you as the facilitator? [Ali chuckles] Or to Mortimer? But, you know.

JANINE: So, yeah I'm almost wondering like, does this even require a Resolve token because Frances is a character you control?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: And her courting Mortimer has- was a thing that Chatelaine wanted to set up?

AUSTIN: Right, right.

JANINE: So it doesn't seem like it con-

AUSTIN: Yeah okay.

JANINE: It doesn't seem like you need to bargain with anyone, it doesn't seem like you're compelling anyone necessarily.

AUSTIN: The only thing I was- the thing I was spending it for was genuinely making the [Jack chuckles] rare flower whose petals are made of ice a true thing. But I think this is-

JANINE: I don't know if that works, is-

AUSTIN: Yeah me neither.

JANINE: I guess you're changing-

AUSTIN: It's a plot thing, I guess! But not really.

JANINE: Mmm...

AUSTIN: It's fine. I won't spend it.

JANINE: I think you can just do that is the thing,

AUSTIN: Yeah, the reason-

JANINE: Especially right now at the end of the story.

AUSTIN: Yeah, the thing the fictional reason why it didn't spread is because people went to go see it, and he's like I don't know what you're talking about because it had already been given to Frances.

JANINE: Aww.

AUSTIN: And Frances had kept it hidden, you know?

JANINE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: So.

JANINE: Or the other side of it is that like, maybe it doesn't spread because everyone's like yeah probably. He's probably doing something like that, I don't know, I don't want to talk to him about it, so.

AUSTIN: Mhm. He's annoying, so,

JANINE: I asked him but he's just gonna fucking talk about whatever [Austin laughs] for an hour, like no, who cares, bye!

I think that Chatelaine is doing the thing that you do at this party, at this kind of party, which is she is- again we don't need a scene for this. But I think Chatelaine is doing the thing at this party where she has her dance card, and everyone is asking for one dance and then it's fine, and they move on, and she moves on, and like you know, and the country dances where you sort of change partners pretty often. Chatelaine probably dances with everyone at this party.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: And there is no particular favourite, there is no particular conversation that's like, compelling, it is all very much just like, how's the weather, how's the family, oh my god your sister with that flower, isn't that sweet, aren't you happy? Like, lot's of, there is a lot of stuff like that? But, you know.

She's having fun. She's having a good time. No one's like mad at her or anything. But it is that like, not marriage material thing that's sort of coming in where it's like, she-

AUSTIN: Can I spend my monologue token on this?

JANINE: Yeah!

AUSTIN: And specifically ask- because one of the ways- I don't know that we've used- we've kind of just said like, monologue for me a little bit please! But if I remember right, the way that it works is that you can even ask a specific question, right?

JANINE: Yeah, you can say either I want to hear what you're thinking right now, or what do you think about 'X'?

AUSTIN: I wanna know what Chatelaine thinks her life will be like in 20 years. Like I wanna know what Chatelaine thinks about the future of her life, in this moment, having realised the dance card thing that you just set up.

JANINE: I mean. I think they're probably two facets to it. And we keep mentioning Emma here but it's very relevant.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: You know, Emma's stance at the beginning of that book is that she's never going to get married. And she says that she's cool with that?

[03:00:00]

Because she's rich? So it'll be fine. Which she's not really wrong about. Like, a pitiable single woman in that society, is one who is not married, has no kids, and also is poor. But a woman who's wealthy and single, she can get- she can just kind of be an eccentric. You know she can exist in that society.

Like, Chatelaine is, no matter what, she is the heir. She is not in a situation where she's going to lose an entailed house. She's not in a situation where if she doesn't produce a male heir she's going to- she's going to you know, not inherit or whatever.

So, a lot of her concerns here are not necessarily concerns of survival, right? Which changes the tone of it. It is a thing of like, what do you want for yourself, personally. And for her, her priority is more other people. Like,

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: She wants to see Mint and Marzy married off. She wanted to see Frances and Mortimer together. She's probably not been in this situation long enough to be tired of it? She's probably at this stage where you know, in the description of the heir it says, plagued with financially-motivated suitors, weighed down by family pressure and obligation, the beneficiary of nepotism, that stuff. She is probably still close enough to the stuff being new where it's like, it's really nice that Peter Moneyhands- [Ali laughs] that's a terrible name [laughs].

AUSTIN: Mhm! Peter Moneyhands.

JANINE: It's great that so-and-so's not sending me letters every day anymore, that was so exhausting, I hated him. I'm really glad he's laid off. You know? She's probably in that stage- she's probably in that stage where she thinks it's maybe novel and fun to be single forever.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: And in those moments where she says like, she asks herself, is it actually? Novel? Is that actually what I want? Then she can probably still tell herself like, this is probably temporary. Eventually people will- will age up, and like, someone will be desperate to get married, and he'll have like cut off his prospects too long or something, and something will happen or whatever, like, you know. I'm 23.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: I'm not- [Ali chuckles] I'm not 78.

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

JANINE: So I think she has a good, pragmatic kind of outlook at it?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: And you know, we also haven't established her as having any favourites. She's probably perfectly happy to just dance with different people and spend time with different people and like, you know, experience their personalities a little bit, and then move on.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: I think Henrietta is stuck talking to James. [Ali and Janine chuckle] Speaking of experiencing people's personalities and then moving on. I think Henrietta made the mistake of lingering too long at the fire, and she is clearly trying to roll like successful Dungeon World rolls to get away from him, and is rolling 7-9s [Austin chuckles] every time?

AUSTIN: Oh yeah!

JACK: But I think at some point she manages to perform some slight and slip away. I think that- I think that I would like a scene with Chatelaine. I think Henrietta approaches Chatelaine, who is you know, I think that they dance together as they cross paths in the dance, there's like a shared moment. But then I think she approaches her later, and is like,

(as Henrietta): Well you've thrown another wonderful party. I did get stuck with that horrible man for forty minutes. But outside of that [Janine chuckles] it was really wonderful, I'm not saying this back-handedly. He's just awful.

JANINE:

(as Chatelaine): I can't not invite him is the thing. I was hoping- I foolishly had kind of hoped that Mint might mellow him out, but that was a terrible idea. That was not- that was not smart.

JACK (as Henrietta): No, I don't think-

JANINE (as Chatelaine): I think it did the opposite if anything.

JACK (as Henrietta): Maybe-

JANINE (as Chatelaine): I have to invite him though, he's-

JACK (as Henrietta): No, I mean I'm sure you do. I'm sure you have to invite him. But you know, what's to say that an invitation doesn't get lost or something? He finds his way to the door and nobody lets him in- who would recognise him? He's like a suit.

JANINE (as Chatelaine): I don't need the Odd Job Boys suing me for libel and slander.

JACK (as Henrietta): I mean fair enough.

JANINE (as Chatelaine): If I start accusing them of losing the mail-

JACK (as Henrietta): That's- that's fair enough.

JANINE (as Chatelaine): I don't know.

JACK (as Henrietta): It's been a year, this time around. I don't know if you've been keeping up with the paper, but my family's been through it, again.

JANINE (as Chatelaine): Yeah I- I tried to do what I could there. It's a little- [sighs] It's, unfortunate but, I do hope it'll blow over.

JACK (as Henrietta): Thank you for you know, sort of, beginning to lay the groundwork for my conversation with Diego. I really appreciate it. I- I don't know what you wrote to him, and in typical Diego-style, he did not respond particularly promptly or warmly to me subsequent to that. But I don't think I could've gotten where- I don't think I could've gotten where I am without what you did.

JANINE (as Chatelaine): I think you could've.

JACK: I think Henrietta doesn't quite know what to say to that. I think that she's like a little overwhelmed. I don't know who broke up with whom, but like,

JANINE: Mhm. I think Chatelaine very much in that moment is, saying I think you could, or I think you could've, is very much like, you're not giving yourself enough credit right now.

JACK: Henrietta loves to give herself credit though. I think she is just- [Ali chuckles] she is just caught- I think she like blushes, I don't think that she expected something like that coming from Chatelaine. I don't know how long ago we had a fling, but I imagine it was far enough away that it feels like some- like there is some genuine distance between all this business with Honor and Diego and events of the last year or whatever.

I think Henrietta you know- oh! Oh I know what Henrietta says.

(as Henrietta): Do you see, what your sister is wearing?

JANINE:

(as Chatelaine): I did.

JACK: Beat.

(as Henrietta): I did that.

[Janine laughs, Austin chuckles]

JANINE:

(as Chatelaine): You did.

JACK: Just like a polite curtsy, picks up a thing with spiced wine or something from the waiter going by, and says,

(as Henrietta): Well I'm going to go and try avoid James for another bit if that sounds okay?

JANINE:

(as Chatelaine): If he starts bothering again just talk about donating to charity.

JACK:

(as Henrietta): I love donating to charity!

And then, and off she goes!

AUSTIN: The charity is called Diego Flint- is called-

JACK [overlapping]: My family donating to the-

AUSTIN: The Flint Regular Company. Uh huh.

ALI: Um, okay. I have two things before we get the camera on Mint proper here. The first thing is controlling Anastasia, I just want to say that the scene that we see of them at the party is, they're like, dancing in the background, and they do an incredibly, just like, if you blink you miss it, smooth situation of like, dancing with one person, and then moving and handing their partner off to somebody else, and they both sort of like blink and smile at each other? [Janine chuckles]

And then my second thing is that, I- I have like a pile of Resolve tokens here? And I figure that this is- cause this is the last scene. I should swing for the fences here, and have Hilda turn James into like a hamster or something? [laughs] [Janine laughs] I don't know if it would ruin this party to have a sudden conflict for a person in this-

JACK: It's a rom-com! I feel like we've got to, right?

ALI: [laughs] Yes!

JANINE: I- I have a way I think to frame this if you want it. Or at least a way to make it fit a little bit, which is probably not like in the middle of a dance [Ali chuckles], turning James into a hamster. I imagine may- by- you can refuse this totally, this is just an idea. If Hilda you know steps up to that fireplace, and James is there, and it's not so much an accident with her because she knows- she's heard about James, you know? Where-

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ALI: I do think that's definitely part a bit of it, is like, if she came here to investigate Diego being like oh, what's up with this Diego guy walking around in my forest and sending soldiers out there to be like, oh the reason he was doing that, is so that James could get water from the lakes

JANINE: Yeah.

ALI: To like mix into fucking, snow globes for department stores? Like the real, she's figured out who she has to take down in this moment.

JANINE: I could see it so much as like a, give me an excuse, kind of interaction, where she's walking up to him with guns loaded, you know? Just like waiting for him to say some shit, and she an excuse for her to be able to like, be like, hey why don't we go for a walk outside?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: And he's just never fucking heard from again or something like that, right?

JACK: Makes meaningful eye contact with Diego as she leaves to be like, look. Look, you're on fucking thin ice mate. [Ali and Janine chuckle]

AUSTIN: Uh huh!

ALI: Yeah, I love that. I love the idea of being like- I was gonna say like a frog or something, but I think like, something like a hamster, or something like that, is more a more vulnerable rodent, then I think it's funnier? [laughs] So.

JACK: Just like, yeah, like some small, some small furry thing. Is it like very much like classic witch transformation? Like, almost without the puff of smoke or whatever of just like, there's a person, and then,

AUSTIN: So you go around the corner, and then, ah, [Ali laughs] a rat that hops out, you know that?

JACK: Just a pile of clothes that an animal pops out off.

JANINE: Yeah, I kinda like, I love the idea of it being like a rabbit or something, something that's kind of like, alpine? That kind of fits in that something of just like, you- [Ali and Austin chuckle] you're so interested in the mountains, huh? You're that interested? Well,

JACK: Just fucking nothing for her.

JANINE: You're a snowshoe hare, or something.

JACK: Again, they didn't even send a diplomat. She's like a commander. [Janine chuckles] She like, works for them, like army or something.

ALI: She's a type of diplomat in the way that like,

JACK: Sometimes.

ALI: Jedi are diplomats [laugh].

JACK: Uh huh! Yeah! Uh huh!

AUSTIN: Uh huh, yeah. What would aggressive negotiations-

JACK [overlapping]: Exactly!

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

ALI: Wonderful. Cool. Okay. Sorry James, goodbye James [laughs].

JACK: You're a rabbit now. You're a hamster or something.

ALI: You've reaped, and you've sown. Congratulations.

But yeah, Mint is at this party! I think that Mint is- I think that Mint in fact borrowed the velvet capelet that Hilda was wearing in the other scene? And then it's like this black thing that like matches her like neck feathers, and I think that like, when she laughs and her feathers puff up, the velvet does too, or like when her- [laughs] it takes on the like, iridescent quality that her neck has even though it seems like it should just be normal velvet. And is wearing like this white dress with really heavy embroidery so it looks like its also- it looks like the fabric is also blooming but it isn't.

And I think that this is gonna be the Mint and Marzy scene, huh? Yeah, I think that initially Marzy- or, sorry, Mint asks for Marzy's to dance? And,

JANINE: I think Marzy agrees of course. Marzy is wearing- I wanna say like a really pale yellow silk? Like a sort of butter-colour? It's like very- it's like extremely kind of glossy with like- I wanna say lavender trim and that sounds very tacky, but it's- it'd be like very thin trim, very like, in a certain lighting it looks just white. It's actually like a very springy, summery kind of dress, except for like you know, the sleeves are probably long, it's probably like, more suitable for the cold.

I think she's like very clearly been waiting for that invitation. [Ali chuckles] Like there's been some meaningful eye contact, there's been like some fussing and like fiddling? Waiting for like an appropriate moment.

ALI: [giggles] Yeah. I think that you know, as they're dancing together, Mint starts talking about how like,

(as Mint): It's kind of strange but exhilarating to be able to like, really bookend the time that they've known each other? That basically like throughout this whole holiday, you've been- you've been a person that I've thought of, and now the books are reopening. Which isn't like super romantic [laughs] but it's like! Well we've known each other for two weeks, now here we are

JANINE: I think Marzy- you know, I think Marzy is quick to defend the idea and say,

(as Marzy): No, I think it's very romantic. I think it's a fresh start. It's, whatever's written before doesn't matter. It's all what gets written from here on out.

Yes, I- I completely agree. It's been wonderful to start a new chapter in my life and I hope that the rest of my book is filled with moments with you.

JANINE: I think Marzy just like laughs, and says,

(as Marzy): And that all of those moments stay in the black.

AUSTIN: Mmmm. [Ali laughs]

JANINE: Since we are talking about debt collectors.

JACK [overlapping]: Oh, I love a romantic debt metaphor. [Janine laughs] Kentucky Route Zero shit. [Ali laughs more]

ALI: I think Mint thinks that that's funny despite all- despite it all. [chuckles] And, yeah. I guess the most honest, sort of the most appropriate I guess, step-up for them- cause I don't know, I don't know if Mint should like, fully be like, yes I'd like to be engaged to you. [laughs] But I do think being like,

[03:15:00]

Oh have you thought about my invitation, I'd like to invite you to my family and show you some beautiful sights I've spoken of or whatever, is maybe the like, hey let's hang out!

JANINE: Yeah that's like a very official instigation of the courtship, right? It's no longer just like, hey, we're all considering our options here. It's very much just like, I want to consider you. And I want you to consider me.

ALI: Yeah. Let's spend three weeks together-

JANINE: Yeah!

ALI: Somewhere else.

AUSTIN: In the woods, [Ali laughs]

JANINE: In the woods, which I've heard are much safer now.

AUSTIN: With my family, uh huh.

ALI: [chuckles] It's a big house, so it's all fine. [Janine chuckles] We're all in our family's houses. But yeah, I think Mint does make that offer and be like, you know I-

(as Mint): When I imagine the joy that I could have when I leave Nievelmarch again, I- the thought of your company brightens that possibility- [chuckles] that imagination.

JANINE: I think yeah, just plainly, Marzy accepts. Like, Marzy obviously has her own agenda, but it's not- you know it's the kind of agenda that has to allow for stuff like this, right? Because you're not going to be a convincing member of society if you don't do things like this. If you don't engage in a courtship that is maybe going to take out of town for a little bit. I think she has that freedom and exercises it. Especially to spend time with someone that she- you know, she wants to spend time with again. This is not- this much is not strategic for Marzy. This is a genuine pursuit.

ALI: Yay! [giggles]

JANINE: How good at country dancing are they?

ALI: Oh! They're both probably average, right? [laughs] Like, Mint knows enough, but like, not, you know, isn't from around here. And Marzy is probably you know, been trained at it but prefers other type of dancing.

JANINE: Yeah Marzy got lessons, so she's probably like, technically, she probably has like her technique down, but it's not as like, maybe there's not a natural- a natural flow to it as much, yeah.

ALI [overlapping]: Right, it's not her- it's not her *dancing* dancing, yeah. Yeah yeah yeah. Her dancing when she's like listening to a song that she actually wants to listen to is probably, much more-

JANINE: She wants something stompier probably.

ALI: Yeah! [laughs]

JANINE: She wants to do the Titanic lower-deck dancing.

ALI: Yeah! Yeah yeah yeah. I don't- do you kiss on a dance floor in a society? I feel like you do that-

JANINE: Uhhhh-

AUSTIN: You do like hand dances, or the hand- the fact that you're touching hands, is like the horniest thing that's ever happened to you, and it's great.

JANINE: Yeah [Ali laughs]- I mean that's the thing right, is like, that's what dancing was, it was like one an excuse to vaguely touch people you were interested in, two an excuse to talk to them not at a table with five other people,

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Yeah.

JANINE: Our you know, our roles are a little bent here, I don't know that they kiss but-

AUSTIN: I can imagine this is like- this isn't a dark prom dance right, like this is a bright room, presumably.

ALI: Oh yeah.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: There's not like that sort of-

JANINE [overlapping]: This is like, everyone's like standing in lines and spinning around and, [Ali chuckles] chill like that.

ALI: Well. It's still going well for them, which is-

JANINE: Yeah!

ALI: Which is great to see [chuckles]. The deal is sealed.

JANINE: Honestly that's as good as an engagement to me. [Austin chuckles, Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: There's still Epilogue, right?

JANINE: That's true.

ALI: Yeah.

JANINE: There is.

AUSTIN: I would like a scene with Henrietta,

JACK: Yeah!

AUSTIN: If possible. I think Diego is like, not winded, but like, has been dancing with people who are not suitors. But are people who want to dance with-

JACK: Uh huh.

AUSTIN: The guy who went out in the woods and has a nice jacket.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Do you know what I mean? And I think that like, Diego sits down quickly. Or I guess- I don't know, where are you, where are you at this point?

JACK: I think you know, in some seating area, some sort of, yeah. Like, slightly aside from the main- aren't there chairs around the edge of the room, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah, I've seen that.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN [overlappings]: That's a thing that happens, right?

JACK: So people are sitting next to each other rather than opposite of each other which I think is really good?

AUSTIN: Mhm. So I think Diego sits down with a little bit of a huff and puff, you know, a little bit of like a-

(as Diego): Whoof! I did not expect requests that numbered this many. I thought one or two as a novelty. But. It's fine. How are you doing, Henrietta?

JACK:

(as Henrietta): It's fine! It's okay, it's good to be at a party. I got stuck with James for a bit, who I understand you-

AUSTIN:

(as Diego): I was looking for him but I haven't seen him in a moment-

JACK: (as Henrietta): What were you- what were you doing with him? I understand that you were involved in some respect, but it can't have been profitable.

AUSTIN (as Diego): Oh if it was profitable you would have heard about it. It was, and maybe in a different world it would've been profitable. But that woman from the manor arrived, what was her name? Lady Hilda. And really, just. [grasping for words] We shouldn't speak about business. In fact it's better that James is gone so that I don't get dragged back down into ink, the colour of ink in a ledger on a night like tonight.

JACK: I think that when-

AUSTIN:

(as Diego): Have you found time to-?

Go ahead.

JACK [overlapping]: I think that when you mention the- the witch coming, there is a frostiness in Henrietta as well, because like, we both have this fear of the Velvet Mansion- I don't think we've seen Henrietta and Hilda in the same place at all, other than presumably here.

JANINE: There was a letter exchange about it I think.

JACK: Oh yeah yeah yeah! Yes.

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: Which Henrietta didn't really follow-up on. Perhaps out of fear or concern. What were you gonna say?

JANINE: Sometimes if a witch offers you information you don't necessarily want to know it.

AUSTIN: Yeah. I think Diego's gonna say,

(as Diego): Have you had the chance to take to the floor tonight, move with any particular suitors, or-?

JACK

(as Henrietta): I spent a little time with Ms. Pellier earlier, which was very enjoyable. I don't want to read anything into it. I'm sure Anastasia-

On the other side of the room, we look over at Anastasia who is just like- I don't know, she's surrounded by people and is like a very clear delineation of who she wants to talk to

I'm sure Anastasia had something to do with that. I want to make it very clear that I'm having none of it. I am my own woman this season, mm?

AUSTIN:

(as Diego): Why? Why? Why have none of it?

JACK: (as Henrietta): Well, because of the kind of year it's been? Because of the kind of winter it's been, there's- I have been much more interested in other people than in myself. Besides- what?

AUSTIN (as Diego): Did you know a thing that when Honor and I used to come to events like this, one of the things that brought us together was the realisation that an interest in the foibles of other people made for good conversation. You can be interested in what other people get up to at events like this, and do that with someone else. And I know what type of year it has been, Henrietta. I would be wary on counting on the next year to be better, or different. Or that there will be some other better time.

So, consider what you would do if you knew that a door could close, or that time would bring you apart more quickly than you might imagine. An advice from a would-have-been brother-in-law.

JACK: I think that Henrietta you know, takes a handkerchief from her- pocket-sleeve? I feel like there are pockets in this world? We can- we can add pockets into this world.

AUSTIN: There are pockets in this world. Everybody gets pockets in this world. Uh huh.

JACK: And says,

JANINE: There was no anti-suffragette sentiment in this world, so pockets were never phased out.

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

JACK: And says,

(as Henrietta): Oh come on, you're making me sad! Let's dance!

And stands up, and like pulls him to his feet, and says,

Trade me off to Chatelaine in the middle of Roger de Coverley-

[chuckles] And then like- [Austin and Ali laugh] pulls you into the dance floor.

AUSTIN: I think Diego does a little fake military salute and follows you out on to the dance floor. I think that's that scene. And does the thing- does trade you off to Chatelaine when the opportunity happens.

JACK: I'm tryna think- what else do I- what else do we want to hit before we go? Does Hilda return, or is the last image we see of her, her departing back to you know. She leaves, turns James into a rabbit or something, and then we do not see her again in this story? Or does she come back to the party?

JANINE: It's a good question and I'd love to know what Ali thinks.

ALI: Um. Yeah, that's tough- it's so funny to think of Hilda returning to the party though, right? Like, just [laughs]

JANINE: Yeah.

ALI: Not missing a beat after- after like, both expending that power and-

JANINE: Treating it like she just went outside for a smoke.

ALI: Right! Yeah, [laughs] exactly! Just, just seeing her walk back into the room and like, a waiter being like, oh do you want a drink miss? And her being like yeah, that'd be great, is a joy to me. [laughs]

JACK: Oh!

JANINE: Yeah, is there anything else we need?

JACK: I think that, like, from-

JANINE: Mhm?

JACK: From over the- you know, as Diego finishes dancing with Hilda, and goes to sit back down again, because he was- I was resting,

AUSTIN: Wait, I was-

JACK: Sorry!

AUSTIN: With Hilda?

JACK: With Henrietta! [friends break out laughing] Diego dancing with Hilda-

AUSTIN [overlapping]: Absolutely would not. He'd be far away-

JACK [overlapping]: Catch a business- it's so weird! I was dancing with-

AUSTIN: Dancing with a tornado.

JACK: I was dancing with that man and he just caught alight halfway through! It's so strange and not in a romantic way, he died! [friends chuckling]

No, I think that you know, Darling is in a chair, in a more comfortable chair to suit her age and station. And is you know, is holding court about like the best time to plant gooseberries. And the

best time to harvest gooseberries. Because people think you should do it one way, but you should actually do it- whatever. And they see Diego and they say,

(as Darling): Mr. Flint! If it- a moment of your time, please.

AUSTIN:

(as Diego): Oh, excuse me, yes?

JACK

(as Darling): Now how are you doing, Diego?

AUSTIN (as Diego): G- as well as, as well as can be expected. Very busy week for me, you understand.

JACK (as Darling): Very- very busy. Congratulations on the establishment of your new venture. I'm sure that it is more to my taste than your previous activities in the forest. Tell me, where are you staying tonight?

AUSTIN (as Diego): Um, likely with the Pelliers. Though, I will of course be walking Henrietta Sameday back to the estate. So perhaps there, we'll see where the night- where the night leads us.

JACK (as Darling): Diego, do you-

AUSTIN: That sounds way worse than I intended. [Jack laughs] You know, I would've said something about- about how I have open invitations to you know, whatever. Etc. etc. Something that sounds less, like less generally horny.

JACK:

(as Darling): Diego. Do you think that I can't see what is going on? Or are you just hoping that I will ignore it?

AUSTIN (as Diego): If I have upset you in some way, beyond as I'm aware of, I apologise.

JACK (as Darling): There is nothing for you to apologise for, other than an ill-conceived venture that I found personally tasteless. Why do you no longer think you are welcome at my house?

AUSTIN: We can't do this, I still have the condition, Jack. We can't undo it.

JACK: Ah! Man, you're- I mean it's interesting to have Diego answer this question, actually-

AUSTIN: I can't. I know, but- there's only- there's a breaking point, right?

JACK: There's a point at which basically-

JANINE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Which is, I'm going to say a thing, and Darling's going to say no that's not true, and then, then I *have* to play Diego as doubting the truth of the situation,

JACK: Right, because I feel like-

AUSTIN: You know what I mean? Or doubt like-

JACK: What we have learned about Diego is that-

AUSTIN: Or else, concocting a new reason, right,

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: You know?

JACK: Yeah, you're right. Um,

JANINE: Although, I do wonder- I do wonder there if that could also go in the direction of Darling saying you know, why do you think you're not welcome at my house, and him offering his explanation, and their response being like, huh, okay.

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: And then the takeaway from that is, oh, I said the wrong explanation, there's another reason I'm not welcome.

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

JANINE: Which is at that point, comedy of errors, but,

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Which is like this sort of miscommunication stuff I don't like that much?

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: But it's probably better than tossing the whole scene, so yeah. Diego then at that point would say,

(as Diego): You offered me a great deal of hospitality. And a great deal of support in trying to restore the, the strength of my family's name and holdings. And I made choices based on the confidence that that support would not waver. That only put-

[03:30:00]

-both our relationship and the chance that I would recover what my family had lost under greater strain and indeed, under greater risk. It was a deeply immature thing.

And at no point was I under the impression, that your patronage was meant to be from one- that was meant to be about- I was never your ward. I was only ever meant to be someone whom you guided onto the next path. And as I was not a ward but a grown man, I think any instance of immaturity is well and perfectly understood as an indictment on my character. And for this I apologise.

JACK: Damn. [chuckling] I'm try- I don't think that Darling responds with the gravity that you have brought. Which I think is perhaps part of the reason you don't necessarily buy their response.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: I think Darling is flustered by your sincerity, coming from somebody that she cares about very much. And I think that you know, as someone who has been on the periphery of a lot of the maneuverings of this week, she is surprised to find it you know, returned to her more intensely.

And I think she just sort of, I think she's thrown for a loop! She looks into her glass, and she sort of says,

(as Darling): Well, well that's, that's nonsense Mr. Flint. There is- there is no immaturity that I have felt, and certainly none that I would consider to be such a slight as to bar you from my house. I do not think of you as a- as somebody to be babied. I am frank with you when I feel you have misstepped, as I am sure you are frank with me when you feel that I have misstepped.

But I am not the kind of person to believe in such a stuffy and closed society that one act of immaturity from a grown person should bar them from the company of those they care about forever.

And we look over and like Marzy is performing some kind of ridiculous Marzy party game? [Austin chuckles] With Mint, or whatever. But I think she's touched. I think she says,

So- it's quite alright. It's quite alright, you're always welcome Diego. Always welcome.

And turns back to her people-

Now what you need to do is consider that when they come through the soil, first of all-

[Austin chuckles]

AUSTIN: And so on, yeah.

JACK: They're good sorts! I mean, they suck, most of them, but like, you can say the same about most of Austen's-

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: Is that for our novel chapter?

JACK: People leaving in carriages at the end of the day, the end of the party.

JANINE: Mhm. I kind of imagine just, a loose rabbit running around [Jack chuckles], runs around a corner [Ali laughs], runs into a bag that the camera then pans up and you see it's Sharp Molly. It's one of those leather doctor's bags or something [Ali chuckles]. And they just like snap it shut, and disappear back into the alley.

JACK: Oh! Yeah, I'm up for letters.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: Alright, so. Last cycle, everyone gets their sort of, their epilogue- it's weird to call it a letter, cause I don't know how you write a letter that's like, here are the last few years of my life.

AUSTIN: Oh I can- I have a- if-

ALI: Yeah!

AUSTIN: I could kick that off, or yeah, if Ali, if you have one.

ALI: I mean I don't have to go first, but I can imagine being able to write a letter that's like, here's the gist!

JANINE: Go for it.

ALI: If we want to use that-

JANINE: Yeah.

ALI: That framing. I- sure! Yeah, [laughs] okay. I think that Mint writes a letter to Chatelaine. I- this is a few years later, but I think- oh I'll get into it. [chuckles] I think that it's like, you know,

(as Mint): Dear treasured Chatelaine,

I, [searching sounds], I'm excited to see you again soon. I can't believe that another Procession Day is upon us and I am so looking forward to walking down the tree-lined streets-

[Ali makes a garbling sound] I guess, I don't wanna be like, Chatelaine still definitely still lives in her house, but-

JANINE: She still definitely lives in her house.

ALI: Okay! Then this is it- [laughs], then, you know,

(as Mint): I can't wait to march down the tree-lined streets to your lovely estate and enjoy my time there once more.

As you know, Marzy and I will be returning back from our trip from the hills soon, but we've- I've brought back a gift for you and I'm so excited to present it to you during your gorgeous holiday party. [giggles] Even still with so much time that has passed, I feel that I am in your debts, and I think upon the first Procession Day that I shared with you with such fondness.

If, you know, if not for your kind support, I might not know the joy that I know today, so, of course I accept your dear invitation to celebrate that holiday with you once more.

I guess that's it, sort of short and sweet [laughs].

JANINE: Just to clarify, this is a separate holiday with Marzy right? They haven't been on holiday in the mountains for like three years?

ALI: Oh, nonononono! This is just like, oh we're still together-

JANINE: Okay, okay [chuckles]

ALI [overlapping]: And we'll see you. Yeah, nononono. [laughs]

JANINE: [chuckling] I figured that was the case but I did want to double check.

ALI: [laughing] No no no. No, just establishing they're still traveling together, they're still you know, yeah.

AUSTIN: Um, I have a letter-

JANINE [overlapping]: Are they married? I wanna-

AUSTIN: Go ahead.

JANINE: Sorry I just wanna. Because was there a marriage, was there a wedding, was there a-

ALI: Oh yeah! I di- [laughs] I didn't wanna be like, oh, I mean I, yeah, the second draft of that letter is definitely like,

(as Mint): Oh I wouldn't have met my wife if not for you,

But I guess I was being more vague than that because I didn't want to say for sure if like, you know, they're still- they've still just been dating for a long time.

JANINE: You've got three Resolve tokens, you can make Marzy grow wings if you want.

ALI: [internally squeals], [Austin chuckles], [Ali laughs] Yeah! I mean I guess that's the other part of this is that it could be, you know,

(as Mint): I'm excited to spend Procession Day with you, it was great to see you at our wedding last month. Thank you for the beautiful cherry-lined bowl.

[laughs]

I can't wait to, you know, I can't wait until the you know, I'm able to throw my own events to impress my guests with this beautiful gift that you've gotten for us. I'm excited to see you again as a married woman and to reach this new chapter of our friendship.

Yada yada.

JANINE: Love it. [Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: I have a letter for Henrietta. Which arrives a week, let's say, before the festivities of Procession Day and everything else begin. And it says,

(as Diego): To my friend, Henrietta-

To my lifelong friend, Henrietta,

Though I know this letter comes only days before our annual trip to the lake, and then to the Glacier Cafe, and that I ought hold my tongue until I see you soon, I thought it was best given my knowledge of the- of what is surely a busy social calendar for you during the week of

Libra Clausa, that I extend an invitation to my family's humble home, where we would be delighted to have you for a lunch, brief and- brief as needs fit your schedule.

The house is beautiful, it is- though it would be dwarfed by the home that Honor once sketched with me, its proximity to those same grounds has proven to be a boon in the years- in these trying years.

It is good to once again have my parents here with me. Would you believe that the fort was gracious enough to give them- to move them on to half-pay?

Which is sort of like, half-pay is a thing that happened where like, you could decide- if you were rich and bought your commission, you could decide to be paid only half of what you would do, and no go fight a war? So you didn't die? Or if you were like, shitty at your job, you could be put on half-pay so that you would stop fucking things up for people, and they would pay you to just go home.

JACK: God, the dream!

AUSTIN: At only half of your normal pay. Uh huh! [Ali chuckles]

(as Diego): So, my parents have been put on half-pay, which combined with the-

What's the word for like, you know, just- just making it. Just on the other side. You know,

Combined with the hard-won profits of the Flint Regulars company, we've been able to achieve a dream that just years ago after the- during that trying winter I thought was foreclosed for the future. I do not know how many of this year's society events you will see me at, and so, and I know this is forward, I truly would hope that you would be able to visit me and visit my family during this season, as I know that my parents would, would love to see you once again.

Yours always,
Diego Flint.

And again, a sketch of this house, which is in the same basic place that the manor was going to be, the old family manor would be? But I think most of that land has been sold off, and so it's kind of off in the corner a little bit? Like or maybe even, it's been- it's like a converted you know, guest house, basically, has become the main house for the family at this point.

And it's like nice, it's like,

JACK [overlapping]: We'd be like, oh that house is *huge*!

AUSTIN: Any one of us would love to live in this house- right, but this is- this is a serious and permanent downgrade at this point for the Flint family. But Diego seems proud of what he's been able to provide along with the half-pays of his parents [chuckling] for his family and yeah, it's an invitation to come visit because he does not know- he does not know at the end of Procession's he'll be allowed in this year, if that makes sense.

JACK: I think my letter is to Honor. I think it is written but not sent. Because I think that, yeah. I think that Henrietta sort of knows that it's not going to be received in anything other than, than the way in which writing a letter that you don't send is received. And, I think she says,

(as Henrietta): Honor,

I have become a terrible meddler.

[Austin chuckles]

Perhaps you anticipated this on the afternoon when you introduced me to Chatelaine all those years ago. And perhaps you saw me grow further into it in the evening when I introduced you to Diego. But I am here to tell you that I have only grown worse and more insincere in my old age.

I am twenty six now, and have spent the last three years traveling as well as becoming more invested in the family's business in Nievelmarch. I have learned to ride. I can identify which aspects of the bridle are constructed enough in our factories, and which we have yet to steal from our competitors.

[Janine laughs]

I do not know where you are, or if you are living. The time that we spent together was some of the happiest in my life. And I will forever look to you as an example of a brother, and a fellow human being. You made Diego and myself tremendously happy. And you are a far better artist than either of us.

I hope to see you again one day. And I grow increasingly sure that I will. I miss you.

With love,
Your sister Henrietta.

And then a BIG signature. Like a play-acting signature. Like you would write- like kids playing writing letters to each other would write.

And I think she just folds it and puts it in her nightstand. And knows that she wrote it. And that's probably enough.

JANINE: Our last letter then is from Chatelaine. I think it is to her sister, Frances. I think it is- they see each other often. That hasn't changed. This letter though is, is a breaking point I guess.

(as Chatelaine): Dear Frances,

I am writing to let you know how disappointed the family has been in your increasing truancy from your responsibilities with the Pellier family affairs. Every time I seek you, I am unable to find you. You only seem to appear when it is most convenient for yourself.

I- I am at a loss in matters without your assistance frequently. I have struggled to fulfil both of our duties as Pellier daughters due to your constant dereliction at the horticulturalist greenhouse.

[03:45:00]

I do not approve of the way I am turned away at the door.

AUSTIN: Mm.

JANINE:

(as Chatelaine): When I seek you out. I do not approve of the way that the humidity damages your clothing that is, might I remind you, also property of the family.

AUSTIN: Damn I thought Diego sucked.

JANINE: [laughs]

(as Chatelaine): I find it greatly distressing that my sister should leave me so pressed, especially at this time of year when I have so many other things to attend to. And above all else, believed that you could be relied upon to- to manage the books during Libra Clausa,

That statement is not given with any kind of irony when she writes it.

JACK: Ha!

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: It's just a thing that she believes that, she has just always taken it for granted that Frances should be doing these things, and now Frances has a life of her own.

(as Chatelaine): I trust that in the new year, we will see return to order, in particular as- we as a family, collectively, work into planning your marriage.

Yours etc.,

Chatelaine.

JACK: Damn! Oh, stop enjoying the garden! [Austin and Janine chuckle]

JANINE: You're not the one who's supposed to be having fun. [Ali chuckles]

Alright. If there is any last stuff, now is the time. But otherwise, I think that's our game.

JACK [overlapping]: I think that's our game!

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: Seasonal revisit.

JANINE: Alright. A seasonal revisit to a town that will change names forever, [chuckles, Jack chuckles] presumably. Every year it's a new-

AUSTIN [overlapping]: Everyone votes on it at the end of- year.

JANINE: Yeah, the end of Chatelaine's letter is like, the town of, Nievel- Nievelton needs you-

JACK: The town names are being cursed.

JANINE: -more than ever. [chuckles]

AUSTIN: Yeah, that's what Hilda's real purpose was.

ALI: Damn.

JANINE: She shows up every year fucking up the books.

AUSTIN [overlapping]: Will make all your books- yes! So much work [laughs]

JACK: I mean, that's clearly like a Velvet Mansion thing of like, this town is fucking obsessed with the books. I'm gonna go mess them up!

JANINE: While the books are closed, do you just put your hand over them, all the writing inside changes. People think it's a new book? [Ali chuckles] They don't question it, it works out well.

So thank you for joining for this game of Good Society. This is again a game by Hayley Gordon and Vee Hendro. There's a lot of like really cool expansions to this game, so if, you know, if you are interested in the system but you're a little bit frustrated by the setting, or by you know. It's a very particular kind of society. There are expansions for games with the sort of serving classes that people who are helping in the houses of these people?

AUSTIN: Like the Downstairs, versus the Upstairs?

JANINE: Yeah it's a very upstairs-downstairs thing? There are also expansions for if you want magic, or sword fighting? Or all kinds of things. There's also like a one-shot thing about like a woman and her sisters who are like, who have all this dirt on the community, like spreading it around and stuff like that.

So yeah there's, if it's a thing that piques you, it's definitely a thing to look into. There's also that gothic hack-

JACK: Oh yeah!

JANINE: Of it.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: Gothic Society?

AUSTIN: Gothic Society.

ALI: Oh, Gothic Society, yeah.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: There's also apparently inside- so there's like, on itch.io, there is the base game, and then there's also a bundle of all of the expansion- there's four expansions, two mini-expansions-

JANINE: Expanded Acquaintance.

AUSTIN: And a guide to hacks.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Is that what it's called, that's what the whole collection is?

JANINE: I think so.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: And that also seems to include a Fae Courts mini-expansion, and a-

JANINE: Oh yeah yeah!

AUSTIN: And a murder-mystery mini expansion,

JANINE: Uh huh!

AUSTIN: Which is great.

JANINE: They've had a lot of fun with it.

AUSTIN: Mhm. [Ali chuckles]

JANINE: I highly encourage people to check it out.

ALI: Yeah, this book is wonderful, just while we're on it. And I wanna compliment Raven Warner again,

JANINE: Mhm.

ALI: Who did all the illustrations for it in there. So gorgeous! You can- I think you can find Raven Warner on Twitter @ravenwarner or her website is the same I think. So, check her art out, because it's very good.

JANINE: Yeah. Okay then.

I guess that'll do for our game of Good Society. Thanks so much for joining us. This was our November Live at the Table. So expect some more stuff coming up soon while we catch up. And, yeah. Have a good weekend everyone and take care!

[MUSIC - "[*The Ball at The Pellier's*](#)" starts]

[music ends]

