

Bluff City 28: Extracurricular: Out Of Time Pt. 2

Transcriber: Kārlis (@townout on Twitter)

INTRODUCTION [00:00:00]

Austin: Champ and Grouse, one week ago, you and your crew were investigating a major burglary of ferrofluid. You tracked this big stolen shipment to a hidden industrial dock, just west of Bluff City. And what you found was a kind of massive and surprisingly well-hidden, professional import/export operation that was running in the middle of the night. Tanks of this fluid were being shipped away and in crate after crate liquor bottles were arriving.

You swung into action, you know how to be superheroes. But things went bad. Someone knocked out the lights, this was the middle of the night, again. And in the dark, you two were separated from Mr. Good and Paternoster, and things got weird! Almost dreamlike, as things are wont to do in Blough City sometimes.

There was kind of this heavy electronic reverberation sound. There was a brief glimpse of an endless tunnel with light kind of pulsing down it. Shadows danced and strange music played. There was the sound of neighing in the distance? And then there was a hard knock and then a splash. And then the two of you woke up on a strange beach in what felt like a strange time.

[Extracurricular: Out of Time by Jack de Quidt begins to play]

Austin: Caitlyn Key, you met these two when an associate of yours, a bootlegger named Mr. Lee LB, brought them to you for help. He told you that they were like you, which is to say that they had powers like you. And that he knew their work from another place and another time, and that the three of you might be able to help each other.

Until recently, your speakeasy has been under the protection of the very wealthy and very influential Whitaker family. The reason it is no longer under that protection or they're kind of holding that protection over your head, is something that happened that you read about in the papers last week.

They've a kid named Hollis Jules Whitaker. And he was caught in the middle of some sort of roadside encounter with the police and some mobsters. And three cops wound up dead. On that night, on the night of the shootout. Hollis Jules Whitaker was apparently seen in argument with someone during a party at Gale Green's massive cliffside estate.

And for both the Champ and for Grouse, that is a name you recognise. And I'd say, Grouse, maybe even at this point you know that Gale Green is the real name of the superhero Goldfinch! Who was your mentor Waxwing's erstwhile girlfriend, who left and came back to Blough City.

Austin (as **Hollis Jules Whitaker**): I was there and Horseface showed up... And said the pumps were broken. He needed help fixing the pumps. So we drove out to the thicket. I'm good with my hands. And I knew how to fix these pumps. We got 'em fixed. And on the way back I was in one car... And Horseface and his boys were in the other, on the truck with the bottles. And we ran into a cop who didn't know better. Pulled us over.

Some other cops came. I... It gets hazy. And, after that... Yeah. (sighs) Everything... When I say it gets hazy... I mean it got... It got—I can't tell you what happened. It got... (sighs) Everything got a little dark. It was already dark and it was already nighttime. I don't know if the car lights went out or what. Next thing I knew, I heard screaming. And I just—I hit the pedal. So.

As far as I know, Horseface and the boys are good. I told Horseface to go to ground. You know? So yeah. I'm not saying it was Horseface, by the way.

[the music culminates and ends]

Austin: So, it sounds like y'all are going after Horseface.

Ali: Yes.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: You're driving out to the docks. And there's no other conversation you want to have on the way or if you do, you can have it. I'm just setting one thing up, which is. Do you ever do that thing—? How many people have driven before or been on long car trips?

(standup comedian voice) How many people here have, uh—? Hey, uh, hey, h-how's everybody doing tonight? I got a quick one to open up, uh, you guys ever been on a long car trip? Anybody been on a car trip?

Art: Yeah, woo! Yeah!

Ali: Woo!

Austin: Thanks (laughs).

(clapping)

Austin: Car trips! Woo! I love cars! Um. And the thing happens where you stumble into following someone? Like, (chuckles) it's the opposite of when you get off in an exit and someone gets off behind you, is when *you* get off in an exit behind someone else? And you do that like three times and you're like, "This person thinks I'm fucking following them!" (chuckles) Like, "We're going to the same place and they're in front of me, I'm not following them, but they—it's like they're following me from the front!" That starts to happen (chuckles).

Ali: Mm...

Austin: And like ahead of you by, I don't know, 50 yards? Is another car headed the same basic direction you are. What do you do? If anything?

Ali: Can we have like seen the passengers in the car? Like—

Austin: They're a little far away. But yeah, you kind of like ease up on them. I'll say that your car is probably a little fast— Well, I don't know if it's faster than theirs, it's *smaller* than theirs. Theirs is kind of a larger black sedan, or whatever those were called at the time (chuckles). It's a heftier vehicle. And it is filled with *five* people.

They are police. Three of them in the back have uniforms on. The two of them in the front are in plain clothes. You know from the types of uniforms the one in the back are wearing that these are members of the Mysterious Phenomenon department. Often they're just called Myst or the Myst PD. They are like specifically anti-superpower people. They're supernatural cops. They...

But in two different ways. One is, they're the cops who like hunt down supernatural shit? And two is, one of the only things you can do if you have superpowers, is work for the city, hunting down people who have superpowers. And that is the type of... That is the type of cops that are in front of you. What do you do?

Ali (as **Caitlyn Key**): Which one of you is better at distractions?

Art (as **The Champ**): Really depends on how many birds are around!

Janine (as **Grouse**): (sighs and laughs) What kind of distraction are you looking for?

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): (sighs) These, uh... These cops in front of us are extra-bad cops. You definitely don't want to get messed up with them. But if we can make them think there's some shit happening, they'll get thrown off the trail.

Janine: Can I get a quick description of our immediate environment right now?

Austin: You're on a highway going— or not a highway because it's not really— we're pre- that type of highway, right? When you think of like LA highway systems like it's not that? But it is a long— It is like a highway in the sense that it's connecting kind of city centre out to the docks, in this case? It's connecting out to another kind of industrial hub. And it's, I think it's probably like, you know, driving through the countryside-type vibes, you know?

This is a version of Blough that is not as tightly packed? So you're driving past, you know, small buildings here and there but it's a lot of empty space. It's a lot of, again, the wetlands are still around at this point? And also some kind of rougher wasteland-y— not wasteland-y but like Badlands-y environments where there's like less brush and just kind of dirt and dust? Where

some of the pumping has already happened. So yeah, there would be birds around, you can have birds (chuckles).

Janine: I was wondering specifically more what kind of things I could get up to with a bird.

Austin: It's like...

Janine: I do have a *specific* kind of bird in mind (chuckles).

Austin: (chuckles) Okay.

Janine: I'm just trying to think of like, what a good thing to do with that bird would be.

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: In terms of getting cops to... to be distracted.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Art (as **The Champ**): If you don't have it, I can just start breaking things.

Janine (as **Grouse**): Uhhh, we're in the back of a moving car, that seems like a... like a rough play (chuckles).

Art (as **The Champ**): I'll jump out of the car.

Austin: Mm.

Janine (as **Grouse**): A moving car?

Art (as **The Champ**): Yeah, we have a hard job! I don't know...

(Austin, Janine, and Art laugh)

Janine: Um... I need to know how much this bird weighs. (typing)

Austin: (sighs) I love our show.

Janine: (typing stops) Oh, that's nothing. Okay. I mean, it's a lot, but it's about as much as a trumpeter swan. So, I think that—

(Art laughs)

Austin: A *trumpet*?

Janine: Trumpeter swan! Um. It's sort of— here's one of the things that's—

Austin: Okay— just pause.

Ali: It's so funny. I keep thinking you're saying, "It's the same weight as a trumpet *or* a swan," (laughing) which are not two things that, I think, weigh the same amount—

Austin: Is that *not* what she's saying?

Janine: No, no, (enunciating) a trumpeter swan.

Austin: Ohhh!

Art: A swan that plays the trumpet.

Austin: (laughs) I see, / see.

Janine: Yes.

Austin: So a swan plus a trumpet, in weight.

Janine: Mm-hmm. It's the heaviest living bird native to North America. The trumpeter swan.

Austin: 30 pounds. That's not that heavy!

Janine: Um...

Austin: We gotta get bigger birds!

(Art laughs)

Ali: Mm-hmm...

Janine: Well, I mean that's the thing I was gonna say is that, using Puppeteer for birds is actually a little busted because like, all your birds— I mean, Twin Boost—

Austin: Oh my fucking—

Janine: Twin Boost, both of your birds have to weigh 30 pounds or less, combined.

Austin: That's— big birds.

Janine: So I couldn't do— I couldn't do two California condors with that, but I do have Weight Boost, which means—

(Art laughs)

Janine: —that gives me birds up to 60 pounds? I think?

Austin: Wow! That's a lot of birds!

Janine: Or maybe more than that? That's— I mean, that's a big bird?

Austin: That's a big bird!

Art: What about Big Bird?

Austin: Big Bird's gotta be at least 100 pounds.

Janine: Big Bird is a person and therefore my telepathy does not extend to Big Bird.

Austin: Is Big Bird—

Art: Big Bird's a bird.

Austin: Big Bird's a bird. Bird's in the name—

Art: It's right there in the name.

Janine: Mm-hmm.

Art: Birds, feathers, nests...

Janine: Larry Bird feels weird about what you just said.

Austin: Larry Bird's a bird! And a person! You can be a bird and a person at the same time!

Janine: The thing I want to do is have a California condor drop some sort of dead animal on the cop car—

Austin: Ahh! (chuckles) Okay! How much can a California condor carry? (chuckles)

Janine: Well, a California condor can weigh about as much as a trumpeter swan, which is the largest whatever in whatever!

(Austin and Ali laugh)

Austin: (laughing) Okay, I see!

Janine: It's— it has a— it has a 10-foot wingspan?

Austin: Yeah, that's big.

Janine: Also, they're basically extinct now, but that didn't happen till the 80s!

Austin: There you go. Wow, really, that late? That's... depressing.

Janine: I think that there're like programmes, and it's okay. Like—

Austin: Okay.

Janine: I mean, it's not okay. But like, there are programmes.

Austin: Okay.

Janine: So not like *gone* gone.

Austin: What do they eat? What type of animal would it have?

Janine: I mean, it's a condor. So I think a lot of them eat, like, dead things.

Austin: Right—

Janine: Right? It's like a vulture kind of situation?

Austin: But like, is it picking up a rabbit or is it picking up like a sheep? Or a goat? You know what I mean? What can it lift? (chuckles)

Janine: Yeah, um... Let me see here... They eat carcasses such as deer, goats, sheep, donkeys, horses, pigs, cougars, bears or cattle.

Austin: How...

Art: Some of those are definitely not lifting up.

Austin: No... "How much can a condor..."

Janine: "They may also feed on smaller mammals such as rabbits, coyotes, aquatic mammals, such as whales, and California sea lions or salmon."

Art: (laughing) It's a fucking whale, he dropped a whale on the car. (laughs)

Austin: That would be sick.

Janine: I don't think my Weight Boost covers that...

(Ali laughs)

Austin: It would! Wouldn't it?

Janine: Uh— Where are you getting a 60-pound whale?

Art: Well, you're only controlling—

Janine: 30 pound whale, because the bird is 30 so (laughing) then you need 30 pounds for whale.

Austin: (smiling) Yeah, okay, fair.

Janine: Maybe like a... baby whale.

Austin: That's sad...

Ali: Does the car have a roof on it?

Austin: Yes...

Janine: Like a full roof or like a canvas-y...

Austin: Like a canvas-y roof!

Janine: Yeah.

Ali: Oh, okay.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: And I guess I think a dead thing would probably cut through it?

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: I was going to create a portal so that thing would fall into the car and *really* freak these guys out.

Janine: Yeah, if this thing's dropping a deer leg from a sufficient height, that'll probably do it.

Austin: That'll do it.

Janine: Right?

(Ali laughs)

Austin: Yeah...

Art: A deer's gotta be more than 30 pounds too, though, right?

Janine: Deer *leg*, not a whole deer.

Art: Mm...

Janine: Back leg of a deer is gonna be like—

Ali: You're just controlling the bird. And the bird can lift whatever it wants. So just make sure...

Janine: That's true— yeah, Capers, show me the rule where it says the thing I'm Puppeteering can't carry a 30-pound deer leg or whatever the fuck (laughs).

Ali: See, there you go, yeah...

(Austin sighs)

Art: Well, let's consult the deer— the deer appendix in the, uh...

(Austin, Ali, and Janine laugh)

Austin: God... I'm gonna let you do this because whatever, you have the Boosts. You're good. What is—how do you do it? What's the roll? Let's see. "Your target is any non-living unattended object weighing less than 30—" Okay, da da da dah, that's fine. "Power Check versus the target's *body*. Held item uses—" No, because that's... the target's body would be... I'm gonna make this— here's what I'm gonna do, I'm gonna make this about... I'm still gonna— it's power. I'm gonna make it the power— What's your Puppeteer score?

Janine: Three.

Austin: Three, so that's good because you're gonna need those points. So that's three. Plus another number. "When you need to make a Power Check, it works the same way as Trait Checks, but using your rank in the Power as your card count. Use a trait action to make a Power Check. Skills are not applied to Power Checks, but all the other ways of modifying a Trait Check apply to Power Checks. You can gain advantage or disadvantage, enjoy Boons, suffer Botches, spend Moxie to augment them and so forth.

The target score for the check is defined in the power description. Though it might require GM adjudication, you flip cards as you would for Trait Checks and can stop to take result of the last card flipped at any time." In this case, what are your Boosts for this? None of these Boosts really change...

Janine: Uh, I have Damage Boost, Range Boost—

TIMESTAMP [00:15:00]

Janine: Steal Boost, Twin Boost, and Weight Boost.

Austin: Steal Boost, Range Boost, what was the second one you said?

Janine: Damage, Range, Steal, Twin, and Weight.

Austin: Okay. Okay. Damage might— Damage is gonna, you know, is gonna come into effect—

Janine: I think Damage includes like Sharpness and stuff, so it's kinda what I'm after there...

Austin: Yeah, totally, I think this is definitely gonna help, yeah. Um... So yeah, give me then—you have three cards you can start to draw. Let me figure out the Target Score really quick (chuckles).

Janine: (chuckles) Okay?

Austin: Because that way I'm not just like, (goofy voice) "Yeah, that sounds good." (chuckles) All right, go ahead and... Go ahead and start drawing. Give me your first card. That is a Five of Diamonds.

Janine: That's a Five of Diamonds, I'm gonna keep on going.

Austin: Yep! Number two. That is—

Janine: That's a good Joker.

Austin: —the *good* Joker.

Janine: I don't know what that means!

Austin: That means—

Art: It's the Joker, but good.

Austin: That's the good Joker. Yeah, that's right.

Janine: So it's like the 90s one? 80s?

Austin: "If you flip a good Joker, you succeed at the Check and gain a Boon. Additionally, you *immediately* take another Trait Action." So you can go again, basically, before they can react.

Janine: Cool! Cool. Okay, so... (chuckles)

Austin: Here's a question, what's— okay, wait one second. Puppeteer is the name of your move, right?

Janine: Mm-hmm.

Austin: You do... Suits... Suit hits damage. I'm guessing this is sharp or otherwise dangerous, right? I feel like an object dropped at this height regardless of the situation is going to—

Janine: Yeah. It's like a deer-like so it's got like a hoof on it that's probably pretty...

Austin: Yeah, yeah, exactly.

Janine: Also bone. Broken bone...

Austin: So, the way— the way damage works— I don't know the way damage works with... How does damage work with Jokers? Let's see... Attack and damage... Ranged attacks. You know what I need is the damage table. Here we go.

So a successful— There's two types of damage in this game. There is Suit damage and Color damage. Suit damage has the potential of being *more* than Color damage, basically. Color damage is like, did you draw a red card or a black card? If it's red, it's one damage, if it's black, it's two. Whereas Suit damage is the same category or the same like system of alphabetical hierarchy as the Suits are? Clubs, diamonds, hearts, spades from one, two, three, and four damage, basically.

In this case... you drew a Joker. You drew the good Joker.

(Janine chuckles)

Austin: And that means... something... that I'm going to figure out. (chuckles)

Janine: The car explodes. (chuckles)

Austin: The car *explodes*. I did see a thing in here that was like, Jokers do good stuff on damage! "The good Joker counts as four—"

Janine: It will tell you in 100 pages!

Austin: Yeah, uh-huh, the good Joker counts as four damage. So you've done four damage to this *car* (chuckles), which seems like it might be a lot of damage to do to a card— mm, to a car.

Janine: So what else am I—?

Austin: You then get a *Boon* on top of this. I'm gonna say just you have an advantage on whatever this next thing you're going to do, which gives you an extra card.

Janine: Okay, and then—

Austin: I'm gonna say that cause it's simple and I'm still learning the system. And what Boons can be.

Janine: Okay, so it's a Boon and then like another move.

Austin: You get another move right now, yes.

Janine: Okay. Um... Do they have...?

Austin: Objects.

Janine: Do these cars have windows?

Austin: Yeah! Totally.

Janine: On the sides?

Austin: Totally. Absolutely. All right, yeah. This— it tears right through the thing and (chuckles) slams into the middle of this, this car. And the car begins to kind of swerve back and forth at this point? As they react to having a deer leg dropped into their literal laps. What do you do?

Janine: Um... Are you sure they have windows? Because our car doesn't have windows.

Austin: Oh, you're right. No, they don't.

Janine: It has like flappies.

Austin: It does have flappies, yeah.

Janine: Um... Cause I want to—

Austin: It's kind of open-air, in fact.

Janine: Yeah, I want to have like a hawk, like, sweep through and steal one of their hats.

Austin: Ooh, okay!

Janine: Cause I have that stealing, I have... I have a thing that lets me—

Austin: Yeah!

Janine: That lets whatever I'm puppeting steal shit?

Austin: Yeah, go for it.

Janine: (chuckles) Which—

Austin: Um, let me take— let me find what the *lowest* possible score you'd be against here is... All right, yep! Go ahead! Give me another Power Check. You've three again, in fact you have four because of having the Boon. The advantage on this draw.

First card is... A Jack of Clubs—

Janine: Jack of Clubs...

Austin: —which would be the mixed success, if it is a success.

Janine: Hmm...

Austin: Three more cards to draw!

Janine: I gotta keep drawing.

Austin: All right! Give me card number two. The 10 of Diamonds!

Janine: It's a 10 of Diamonds. Um... I mean I'll go with the 10 of Diamonds!

Austin: 10 of Diamonds *is* a success. And a hawk (chuckles) comes through and grabs the hat off of one of the officers in the backseat of this car. And the officer, like, reaches out for it and almost falls out of the car, the car swerves and comes to a stop, and you blow past them.

As you do, you all definitely feel the cold eyes of people watching you drive past, as if they know some shit is up. Because it is their job to know some shit is up. You can go ahead and recall those cars— or I can do it for you, boom. Recall. I'm gonna say that is a scene (chuckles).

Finally. Finally, the car takes you to the docks. And ignore everything that's on the table now because they're not there in front of you this time. I can make that all disappear! Because you beat them there.

Y'all show up, you're in the kind of North here. You pull in. There is a long dock. There's like a long single dock with a ship that has like a crane and a bunch of containers and is otherwise like covered— There's a bunch of containers there, there's some containers on the ground, there's containers everywhere. The idea of like, we just find the one with the owl on it has suddenly gotten a little more... a little less clear? Let's say? Because there's so many of them. How do you begin this search for Horseface?

Janine: Can we like check the ground for like, cigarette butts and stuff?

Austin: That's a good idea! Yeah.

Ali: Well, wait, we know the container he's in, right? Or no—

Austin: You know— you know that it a—

Janine: But there's a lot of them.

Austin: Yeah, there's a lot of containers.

Ali: Ohh, right.

Austin: You know— if you saw the one marked with the owl, you would know—

Ali: You would know, okay, yup.

Austin: —that's the one, you know?

Janine: I could also get a bird to help (chuckles), like that's—

Austin: Mm-hmm!

Janine: That also seems like, you know, birds know what owls are!

Austin: I'm gonna pull your car up a little bit here and let y'all be wherever you want to be.

Art: Do birds know what pictures are?

Austin: I don't know if birds know what pictures are, that to me is like a bird telepathy more than a bird puppeteering.

Janine: Yeah, it is bird telepathy. It would specifically be telling a bird, "Hey, can you look around and see if there's a... an owl?"

Austin: Mm-hmm. Um... What is your bird telepathy score and how does that power work? Can you read that for me?

Janine: Uhh, oh God. Um... I could! But then I blue screened and I don't have the document open anymore.

Austin: Oh (chuckles). Okay, fair. Telepathy does show up a few times. "You can read thoughts and project your own thoughts to others..." What rank are you?

Janine: One.

Austin: Okay... / think—

Janine: But I have—

Austin: You can only— so this is interesting because with one— wait, what are the boosts that you have?

Janine: So the boosts I have are Emergency Boost, Group Boost, and Range Boost. And Emergency Boost and Group Boost specifically involve using your thoughts, I think?

Austin: Mm, mm-hmm.

Janine: To others? Even though it's not a rank two thing?

Austin: Yeah...

Janine: Which seems like a—

Austin: “You mentally contact one willing target. Project a short sentence.” Okay! Yeah, I'll let you— that flies for me. I'm cool with that. Um. So... It is your Charisma and Insight score is what you'll be rolling. Or not rolling but doing. Also—

Janine: I think this might be Group Boost more than Emergency Boost.

Austin: You share— Yeah, sure. That works. I mean— I don't care because it doesn't cost you—

Janine: Yeah, yeah.

Austin: Or I guess it does, right? When you're using a boost...

Janine: Well, it's an M, so. Whatever that is...

Austin: It will cost you to *maintain* is what it will do. Because, yeah, the way that boosts are supposed to work, which we did not just make you do but you got a Joker so early that it's not a big deal? We have not used a Boost before, right? That was the first Power usage? Was the bird thing just now. Right? Other people?

Art: Yeah, I think that's right.

Austin: No one else has done Powers, no one else has done...?

Ali: Mm-mm.

Austin: Okay. So. What I should have had you do with that previous one is count up those various Boosts. Because when you use a Boost... you... reduce your card count for each Boost that you use. So you're basically trading a card for the Boost. That said, uh... “Sometimes Powers don't require actions to use them and sometimes your character uses these Powers with Boosts outside of an action sequence where there is no action to be penalised. When this happens, you can still only use a three Boost.”

So like, if this is not an action sequence, and this is not, I'm not gonna... I'm actually just gonna not make you do your thing for this because yes, (smiling) if you can have the vision of birds, you should be able to find this thing. You can just use your Powers in like non-action sequences, no big deal. However many boosts you need to use, you can do up to three at a time. But in a combat sequence or an action sequence like trying to drop something on someone's head, you

have to trade a card to use one of your Boosts. Otherwise, it is just the standard effect. Just so we know, going forward.

All right, you see that is actually this bottom crate outside, and I think it is actually a combination of these things, right? It's like the birds are flying around. And it is very— it is totally, hey, (chuckles) outside of this, this southernmost crate container thing on the, uh, on the land itself. Not even on the dock, but on the, like, cement. Next to the ocean, basically, there are cigarette butts and some, you know... some marks from opening and closing the container have scraped the ground (chuckles).

And I want to say even something sillier like, a pair of shoes? Is just outside? (chuckles) A drying— it's like they got wet and now they're drying out in the sun. And inside you can hear the sound of a radio being played. What do you do?

Janine: This guy sucks at hiding (sighs).

Austin: Yeah...

Art: (chuckles) It's a good thing we got here.

Austin: Yeah!

Art: How do you get into one of these? Is there like— there's like a... There's like a door, right? There's like a hatch?

Ali: Yeah, the door just opens.

Austin: Yeah. Do you just open the door? Do you knock? What do you do?

Art: I mean, I'm curious what—? What happens when someone whose really bad at hiding, you knock on the door of their crate?

Austin: Is that what you do? You...

Ali: Um... I think we should knock—

Art: I mean, I'm advocating for that.

Austin: (chuckles) Okay. You hear the radio get turned down.

Art: And that's it (chuckles)?

Austin: And that's it.

Art: All right. Knock again.

Austin: Nothing.

Art: Um...

Janine (as **Grouse**): Candygram...

(Austin chuckles)

Janine: Look, it's an old joke, but it's an old, it's an old setting!

Austin: Uh-huh! Um...

Janine: Also I'm worried he's gonna open the thing and shoot us (laughs).

Austin: Yeah, uh-huh! Candygram... Does he respond to this? Um, he goes... "Uh— Come on in!"

Janine (as **Grouse**): That doesn't make me feel any better.

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): I'm gonna go in and if something happens, cover me.

Austin: You see a fairly small man. Thin— kind of like thin and... (chuckles) I want to use the word "bedraggled" here? And I don't even know if I know what that word really means. Yeah, no, that's right. Bedraggled man, definitely hasn't shaved in a few days. (clears throat) Has kind of like messy, brown hair in a— that's just like, it looks like he cut it himself and didn't have a mirror. You know? He's wearing a coat that's too big to fit him, and a pair of overalls over that. With like a work shirt under that.

And he is pointing a shotgun at the door as you come in. And he goes,

Austin (as **Horseface**): "You don't look like any Candygram person I've ever seen. You stay right there."

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): I don't have any candy but I'm bringing you a treat regardless.

Ali: I think she's like holding up her hands.

Art: Has he seen all of us?

Austin: No.

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): Put the gun down. Hollis sent me to speak to you.

Austin (as **Horseface**): Why would Hollis send you? Who are you? I don't know you! I don't think I know you, we didn't do a Trait Check to find out if I did.

(Ali laughs)

Austin: But I'm gonna say that he doesn't.

Austin (as **Horseface**): I don't.

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): My name is Caitlyn Key. You might know me by Verge.

Austin: Do you want to make this a Trait Check to see if he's heard of you?

Ali: Sure. (chuckles)

Austin: Okay. Give me a Charisma Check! Charisma plus something else if you got it. But I don't know what would— because kind of just like a raw, "Do you know this person?" feels like Charisma, to me. You know?

Ali: Yeah...

Art: I think Elena's gonna circle around back?

Austin: Sure.

Art: Get ready to just punch a hole in this thing.

Austin: Uh-huh, yeah, that is—

Ali: Perfect. Thank you.

Austin: Yeah. Mm-hmm. Good.

Ali: I've gotten a nine of Clubs?

Austin: You did get a nine of Clubs! Um...

Ali: Clubs is the good one or the bad one—?

Austin: Clubs is the bad one. Do you want to just draw another one! How many more do you have? What's your Charisma—?

Ali: I can ask you that, right? (laughs)

Austin: No, what's your Charisma score? Your Charisma score's two, so you only have one more draw. It's up to you.

Ali: Oh my Charisma score's— Okay.

Austin: You can keep the nine or you can roll it.

Ali: Freaking damn... Um... (chuckles) No. I'm gonna draw one more time.

Austin: Mm-hmm!

Ali: Um...

Austin: That is an eight of Clubs, that's worse!

Ali: Oh, this is eight of Clubs, perfect, good for meeee...

Austin: That's worse! That's all around worse.

Ali: Glad for meeee...

Austin: *He...* is going to pull the trigger. And shoot at you. Let's find out if he hits you. He has a— What is your... What is your...

TIMESTAMP [00:30:00]

Austin: Body score?

Ali: My Body score— Ooh, do I have a Body score—? Is nine.

Austin: Okay! Well, I get to draw a card. This is fun.

Ali: Oh wait, I have a forcefield though.

Austin: Is that a thing you would take as a reaction? What's this—

Ali: Activation: Free action?

Austin: Uh, yeah! You can activate it.

Ali: Duration: Continuous once activated—

Austin: Once activated, yeah. So you've not activated it previously. I— (sighs) I need to look up if you could activate this as a— I needed to look up if you can do this as a reaction before he—

Ali: Sure.

Austin: —before these negative consequences happen.

Ali: Right. Um... I— Mm. No, I don't want to retcon and be a jerk.

Austin: Yeah, this—

Ali: But I *do* feel like, at the point, if you've known your whole life (laughing) that you can make a forcefield, you walk into a room—

Austin: With a forcefield? Yeah.

Ali: —someone's pointing a gun at you and then you introduce yourself by your superhero name—

Austin: Does your forcefield have a— Here's a question, is like, does your forcefield look like anything? It says it's a shimmering plane of force. That's one of those things that like, do you...

Ali: Right, yeah.

Austin: Do you activate that right away? Or is that something that gives you away in a way that's like, you know, whatever? But I am gonna look up to see—

Ali: Sure.

Austin: —if you can do a free action to pull this up before he shoots.

Ali: Okay.

Austin: Uh...! "One time during your turn as a free action." I *think*... You know what I think it is? I think it is a Reaction Check on your— I think, okay. Here is the complete ridiculous, like, house rule that I'm going to make is, I think in a situation like this where you didn't have it up already, he gets to shoot, and then you get a Reaction Check to try to block it with the forcefield. Do you know what I mean?

Ali: Yeah!

Austin: And if you block it, then you're 100% safe.

Ali: Right. That seems practical, okay.

Austin: So what is your Body by default? Your Body is nine or your— is that what we decided? Is that what you told me?

Ali: It is nine, yeah.

Austin: Okay. Agility three. Which is what he's going to use to shoot at you. And a one in Gun, so he has four cards... So he has to beat a nine. Card number one! Is an Ace of Hearts (chuckles). Uh, there you go!

Now you get a Reaction Check. What are you going to use to like move this thing— because I don't think this is, I don't think this would just be use your... your score cause it's not built for that. Like that's not how that's... That's not how those cards would work? It's not a Power Check thing.

Ali: Right, um...

Austin: Um... But what stat do you think that would be, reaction-wise? Is that probably also Agility?

Ali: Oh, hmm—

Austin: Like move it quickly, like block a bullet, basically?

Ali: Yeah, I think it's probably Agility. Would I be able to take a Sense Boost there from being able to like see him—

Austin: Yeahhh.

Ali: —start to pull the trigger, yeah?

Austin: Yes.

Ali: Okay.

Austin: I'm trying to see if there is... Forcefield, like, has made this— And I'm not, this is— I'm not mad at you. I'm mad at this game for not just being like, "Take a plus one!" You know what I mean?

Ali: Right, yeah.

Austin: Because the thing that *I'm* now trying to figure out— Okay, here we go. "Sometimes your character takes actions that are directly opposed by an NPC's capabilities. When that happens, you must make a Trait Check against their Trait Defense."

This is like so perfect. This situation has been so perfectly engineered to throw a wrench into the gears? Because let's say I'd gotten a 10 or whatever, or nine and beaten your score?

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Then I had like, "Oh! Just make it so that you have— the Target Check for you— the Target Score for you for this Reaction Check is the card that he did. But he had an Ace of Hearts which is gonna make this very hard for you to dodge. And—

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: —maybe we just let it roll and that's the case that it is?

Ali: Right, yeah.

Austin: Because what it *shouldn't* be is just his Agility Score or whatever, because like, "No, he did. He got an Ace of Hearts." And if this was reversed? You would feel like *shit* if you'd played an Ace of Hearts and then I was like, "Oh no, I use your much (laughing) lower Agility Defense—"

(Ali laughs)

Austin: "—even though you just rolled an Ace of Hearts."

Ali: Yeah, yeah.

Austin: So. I'm gonna say it's the Ace of Hearts that you have to score higher than here. I also drew a little, a little thing here. And Reaction Defense, if you remember, is that you draw a single card, you add the trait to it, and any other skill that's related. So, Sense plus whatever your Agility— your Agility is, what two?

Ali: Uhhh...

Austin: Yes.

Ali: Yes.

Austin: So you're going to flip a card and add three. Two from Agility and one from Sense. And that will be your "Can you block it with your thing?"

Ali: Eight... So that goes to...

Austin: Not Ace. Eight, nine, ten, Jack.

Ali: Eleven... yeah.

Austin: (smiling) So you are going to take a shot from this shotgun. How many hits do you have?

Ali: Me? Oh, uh... 10.

Austin: Okay, this probably isn't gonna be too bad. You take Suit plus two Damage. The Suit is Hearts, Hearts is three, take *five* Damage.

Art: Oof!

Austin: So I take it back. That's kind of a lot. (chuckles) Take five hits.

Ali: Yeah, I just got *shot*!

Austin: You just got fucking *shot* by a *shotgun*.

(Ali sighs)

Austin: It goes “Chk-chk, *boom*!” And it like reverberates inside of the container. And he like (laughing) drops the gun and covers his own ears for a second, or he like lowers it and is like, “Ah!” And the bullet slams into you. It’s like a slug. It’s like a heavy slug round, not like a, not pellets. Um.

Ali: Um...

Austin: What’s everybody else do?

Art: At the sound of the gunshot, Elena punches through the...

Austin: Oh right, that’s a— that’s a Strength Fisticuffs roll if I’ve ever heard one.

Ali: Mm-hmm...

Art: And I’m using the Power “Super Strength” which is just getting Strength for—

Austin: That’s just turned on *all* the time. Yeah.

Art: And the Perk, “Penetration” to break through the thing.

Austin: Alright, so what is your Strength plus Fisticuffs?

Art: Five.

Austin: So that’s five and minus one for one Boost.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: So that is four cards you got here.

Art: And what’s... What’s the... This isn’t a static thing.

Austin: This is a, what’s that. You’re trying to punch... Yeah, I’m just gonna say the thing is trying to punch through the object and not trying— you know where he is? So it’s like, can you punch through this steel wall? You know?

Art: Sure. Probably not with a four of Hearts.

Austin: You know what? *Definitely* not with a four of Hearts (chuckles). Go again.

Art: There's two! Definitely not the four of Clubs!

Austin: (laughs) Well, certainly not with a four of Clubs!

Art: Okay, how about that one.

Austin: Whoo, King of Spades ain't bad! I have to find the thing because this is a static thing in the sense that this is not a... This is not a thing I come up with here. Um... Yeah, I'll say, oof. What's the— what's your Power say?

Art: Um...

Austin: Super Strength, Penetration Boost. "Punch through eight inches of concrete or thin steel plate." I'm gonna say you can do this. On a King, for sure, King of Spades and you get a Boost on this. So yeah, you punch through it.

Are you trying to hit him? Are you trying to grab him? What are you trying to do here?

Art: I mean, I can't see through the thing. I'm trying to get in there to get him, yeah, I'm coming for him.

Austin: You're coming for him. Okay. Ah— Wait are you trying to tear a hole through it? Or are you trying to—?

Art: No, I'm *punching* through it.

Austin: Yes?

Art: I guess— What does it look like when you punch through the side of a storage container?

Austin: I'm asking you! (chuckles)

Art: I'm thinking about it!

(Austin chuckles)

Art: I mean, I think the short answer— like I'm really not... What's the structural integrity of this container—?

Austin: (crosstalking) How about this. How about I give you... You got a Boon on this because you got a Spade, you're able to just rip this fucking thing wide open.

Art: Alright.

Austin: You know?

Art: Yeah, I'm— (chuckles) I guess, like, the best is just like a chunk of metal hits him and knocks him unconscious.

Austin: You know? I'll let you do— I'll let you do Suits Damage. Or not Suits, Color Damage, so two Damage. You do, you (laughing) catch him in the back of the head and he like rolls forward. And is like, completely turned around now, doesn't know what to do. Is very confused. What do you do?

Art: Um, still me?

Austin: Uh— Yeahhh, but it's the group. I guess at this point we should, we should do Initiative. Wow. (chuckles) For the first time in the history of Friends at the Table. You definitely had some— So, "At the start of an action sequence to determine order, everyone should make an Agility/Sense Reaction Check." So that's a single card that you'll draw that will be— you'll add your Agility Score and, if you have Sense, another plus one.

This character does not have Sense, you may have noticed (chuckles). He does not have much in the way of Senses but does have a good Agility. Uh... And his— Oh, and he's drawn a (laughing) two of Hearts!

Art: I've the nine of Spades and plus two is a Jack. Ali has drawn good Joker!

Ali: I've— Yeah...

Austin: Ooh! Good Joker, that's a waste of a good Joker.

Janine: Yeahhh (chuckles).

Austin: Damn. Damn. You hate to see it. Alright, so...

Janine: I drew a seven.

Austin: Horseface two! Uh...

Art: Plus your Agility.

Austin: Oh, right. plus your Agility is five, right? What is, uh, what are yours pluses. I know, at this point, obviously, it looks like Key is going— Caitlyn Key is going first, right?

Art: My plus is two.

Austin: So you're at a Jack—

Janine: Mine is also two.

Austin: And then you're on at nine, so it's going to go... Key then... Then Champ, then Grouse. So Verge, Champ, Grouse, Horseface (chuckles). Love it.

Ali: Cool!

Austin: Uh, so Verge! Caitlyn, you're up.

Ali: Oh, and I just got *shot* with a *shotgun*, huh?

Austin: You did. Probably not the first time that's happened to you. It's probably— you know, it winged you. Right?

Ali: Sure. Yeah.

Austin: In fact, the book is very— is actually very (chuckles) clear on like... "When you lose hits, make it so that you're okay until you're not." Basically. It's like, until you get to zero hits, you're not— you've, maybe you got winged. Maybe you got the wind knocked out of you, but you didn't get, like, you're not bleeding from a chest wound, you know?

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Because if the fight ended right now? You would be fine. We wouldn't go into a mode where we're like, (laughing) "Oh my God! (laughs) We need to heal you, you've been shot in the chest!"

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Austin: So...

Ali: Yeah, yeah. I want to like put something else in his hands...

Austin: Mmm!

Ali: You know what I mean? Or maybe we're past that because he's like on the floor? (laughs)

Austin: Yeah, yeah.

Ali: Hmm.

Janine: I have a question about portals!

Ali: Please.

Janine: Could you make two portals under his hands that then closed around his wrists? And like trapped his hands on the floor?

Austin: (quietly) That's a nightmare...

Janine: (laughing) These are the questions you have to ask when you're playing with portals—!

Art: To cut off his hands?

Janine: No, to just like, just like tight— just like floor handcuffs. Just the floor is your handcuffs.

Ali: No, I don't think that I can make portal— I don't think that I can make handcuff portals... I could... I could have handcuffs in *my*—

Austin: (laughing) In your dimensional pocket.

Ali: —dimensional pocket!

Austin: Yeah, you could do *that*.

Ali: That I then pull out of the pocket around his wrists.

Austin: That's kind of fun!

Ali: Yeah, I would love to do that.

Austin: Let's go for that!

(Ali laughs)

Austin: That sounds fun... It's a Free Action too so you can do something else with your turn besides that, in this case.

Ali: Sure, cool, um...

Austin: Go ahead and give me... what is this? That's like an Agility, Sleight of Hand maybe?

Ali: Yeah, I think so.

Austin: All right! Go for it.

Ali: And... perfect. And then— do I— is there's— you're just... you use a Boost. You don't get a bonus to the other thing—

Austin: You get a minus, in fact. So you get a— how many Boosts are using? One, right?

Ali: I think I only need one for this. The objects are— "The objects are objects you retrieve appear in a pocket, handbag, suitcase..." No,, wait, that's not the one. Um...

(Austin chuckles)

Ali: “Or container that you are holding, or that you are wearing or holding, or that you can see within 30 feet of you.” So.

Austin: Uhhh... I’m going to say go ahead and do Agility, whatever, minus one card because of using the Boost for this.

Ali: Okay. This is a 10 of Spades. So that becomes a...

Austin: That’s it, that’s— it’s a 10 of Spades because you’re not getting any pluses to anything.

Ali: Oh, it’s not 10 of Spades plus Agility...?

Austin: No, the Agility gives you the amount of cards. Yeah. So.

Ali: Okay.

Austin: Are you keeping the 10 of Spades?

Ali: (sighs) Sure... Yes.

Austin: Okay, that’s a hit! Which should let you know at this point that his Agility Defense is 10, for the rest of the sequence, if that’s like a problem.

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Or it’s 10 or under, at the very least. You get the cuffs around him. And he goes,

Austin (as **Horseface**): Ah, geez...

(Ali chuckles)

Austin (as **Horseface**): Oh... I fucking missed...

Austin: He thinks that you’re the police. He thinks that you’re the special— the supernatural police.

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): I introduced myself (laughs)!

Austin (as **Horseface**): You said you were Candygram. You— You ain’t no Candygram. You’re the police.

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): I—

Austin (as **Horseface**): You got handcuffs. You come in here. I shoulda shot you twice!

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): I came in here and told you exactly who I came from. *And* my criminal name!

Austin (as **Horseface**): I don't know—

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): And you *shot* me.

Austin (as **Horseface**): You got a fake name. Never heard that name in my life.

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): Well, you're gonna hear about it. After this, again, when people talk about me, but also you shot me!

Austin (as **Horseface**): I—

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): Apologise.

Austin (as **Horseface**): Absolutely not.

(Art laughs)

Austin (as **Horseface**): I was told to wait here and if anyone came, Candygram or not, I was supposed to shoot 'em.

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): Well, then how have you been getting all these dinners and cigarettes that he was telling us about?

Austin (as **Horseface**): They said there's a code. An owl comes—

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): What's the code?

(Art laughs)

Austin (as **Horseface**): An owl comes not once but twice. Isn't that nice...

Janine (as **Grouse**): That doesn't make *any* sense!

Art (as **The Champ**): (crosstalking) Don't tell us the code!

Austin (as **Horseface**): Y'all stepped on the second— Also, there's a third one you (chuckles). Hello! Um. Could I have my hands free, please? And also my shotgun back.

Janine (as **Grouse**): That seems like a thing you need to earn! I don't know...

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): No! Never.

Austin (as **Horseface**): What'll you— Um...

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): Not until we leave at the very least.

Austin (as **Horseface**): Who are you people? I know your name is Verge. That's the only one I know. And who sent you? Which— who exactly, who *exactly* sent you?

Ali: Kallis? (laughing) I fucked up this guys name—!

Austin: (sighs) Hollis. (chuckles)

(Art laughs)

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): I told you it was calling Kallis.

Austin (as **Horseface**): Hollis! (chuckles)

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): Remember Kallis?

(laughter in the background)

TIMESTAMP [00:45:00]

Ali: Wait...

Austin: Hollis!

Ali: (laughing) Can you type— can you type it in the chat?

Austin: H-O-L-L-I-S.

Ali: Holland.

Austin: Hollis.

Janine: It's like Hollister.

Austin: It's like Hollis!

Ali: Oh, okay. It's like Rollins, but Hollins.

Austin: No! There's— *No!*

Art: There's no "N" (laughs).

(Austin and Janine laugh)

Ali: (laughs) Oh my *God*.

Austin: (laughing) I need you to know, I had my hands behind my back as if they were handcuffed, and I was like, “I can’t type while I’m handcuffed!” (laughs)

(Art laughs)

Austin: H-O-L-L-I-S. Hollis.

Ali: Hollis.

Austin: Hollis. Like Queens, like Hollis, Queens. The neighbourhood that Run DMC...

Ali: Right. Right, right, right. Right. Right. Right. Right. Right.

Austin: Anyway.

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): I *told* you already, it was Hollis.

(Ali laughs)

Austin (as **Horseface**): Okay, Holli— Okay. So did y’all bring food or...? No... I’m guessing...

Art (as **The Champ**): No, we’re here to— we’re here to talk to you.

Austin (as **Horseface**): Why would—

Art (as **The Champ**): And honestly, maybe get you out of here. People are *coming*.

Austin (as **Horseface**): Who’s coming?

Art (as **The Champ**): The police.

Austin (as **Horseface**): We gotta get out of here!

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): (whispering) Oh this fucking...

Art (as **The Champ**): Let’s just take him! We can talk to him somewhere else!

Janine: What’s the name of the hotel again? Did we figure that out?

Austin: The Grand—

Ali: The Grand Canary.

Austin: The Grand Canary, yeah.

Janine: Um... Hmm...

Janine (as **Grouse**): How do you— Do you have feelings about the Grand Canary?

Ali: I run a speakeasy out of it. So, probably—

Janine: No, no, I meant him—

(Ali laughs)

Janine: I'm trying to gently gauge if that is a good or a bad prospect to him.

Austin (as **Horseface**): It's a little fancy for my blood. Little pricey.

Art (as **The Champ**): You're not paying!

Austin (as **Horseface**): Oh, then I love it! Put me up in a nice room—

Art (as **The Champ**): No, you're also not *staying* there!

Austin (as **Horseface**): What do you mean I'm not staying— where am I staying then?

Art (as **The Champ**): We'll figure that out!

Austin (as **Horseface**): Who are you? You don't look like no concierge.

Art (as **The Champ**): I'm *not* a concierge! I punch through steel!

Austin (as **Horseface**): (laughs) I saw that! You hit me in the back of the head, I did not appreciate it.

Art (as **The Champ**): You shot my friend!

Austin (as **Horseface**): She was coming at me!

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): I was introducing myself!

Janine (as **Grouse**): Mmm...

Austin (as **Horseface**): She had a forcefield.

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): I had *questions*.

Austin (as **Horseface**): I didn't—

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): And I still have them. Just come on.

Austin: Give me a Charisma Check (chuckles)!

(Ali laughs)

Austin: You have this person to—

Ali: Cause I'm being—

Austin: Uh-huh, go ahead.

Ali: Sounding so charismatic.

Austin: (laughs) People *have* been helping here so y'all can both just, you take a plus two to whatever the cards are. I'm gonna slide these over more again and stack them.

Ali: Sure! I can draw this here. I feel like Janine started the conversation, I feel a little bad about it.

Austin: Yeah! If you want to...

Ali: Janine would rather draw the...

Janine: Oh, sure! Uh...

Austin: Uh...

Janine: What is— How does my Charisma relate to this?

Austin: What is your Charisma? (laughs) Now cause you're talking to a guy.

(Janine laughs)

Ali: Oh, can you— there's like a...

Janine: I meant like number-wise.

Austin: What is your Charisma?

Janine: I have two.

Austin: You have two which means you start with two cards. Diplomacy will give you a third one and then each of those gets a plus two because of everyone helping. So add two to whatever you draw.

Janine: Okay...

Austin: First card.

Janine: Oh—

Austin: 10 of Clubs...

Janine: That's a Club...

Austin: That is a Club. I get to add a complication if it's a success.

Janine: Hmm...

Austin: You also don't know what his Charisma Defense is, but, you know.

Janine: Yeah... I'm gonna keep going.

Austin: Alright! Second card of three, right? It's a 10 of Diamonds.

Janine: Okay, yeah! I'll stand!

(Ali chuckles)

Austin: You'll stand at the 10 of Diamonds! Okay, he goes...

Austin (as **Horseface**): Grand Canary still got ice cream?

Janine (as **Grouse**): It's a hotel... I would imagine—

Austin (as **Horseface**): Yeah, but does it have ice cream?

Janine (as **Grouse**): (sighs)

Austin (as **Horseface**): Some hotels...

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): We can try to find some...

Austin (as **Horseface**): Okay, then I'm coming.

Austin: And he stands up. Stands up, comfortable with the cuffs around his arms behind his back, in the sense that like, "Yep, I've practised this. I know how to stand up. I've been arrested enough times that I'm just comfortable with my hands just in handcuffs, it's not a big deal."

(Ali laughs)

Austin: And he sees the car and is like,

Austin (as **Horseface**): Oof! That is a fancy number. Which one of you owns that car?

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): We're borrowing it...

Austin (as **Horseface**): Well how much you want for her?

(Ali chuckles)

Janine (as **Grouse**): You don't seem like you're in a position to pay what that car is worth.

Austin (as **Horseface**): My momma said, do not judge a book by its cover.

Art (as **The Champ**): You *sell* things that people lend to you??

Austin (as **Horseface**): (chuckles) Depends on how much I get.

Art (as **The Champ**): Oh my goodness.

Janine (as **Grouse**): You seem like a good friend.

Austin (as **Horseface**): I'm a hard worker.

Janine (as **Grouse**): Does someone want his shotgun?

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): Yeah, Elena, can you grab the gun? We're getting out of here.

Art (as **The Champ**): All right!

Austin: Um... As you get into your car, you hear the sound of the cop car like zooming down the highway, towards y'all. What do you do?

Janine: Cheese it.

(Austin chuckles)

Ali: Can I...

Austin: Mm-hmm?

Ali: It's a two car lane, right?

Austin: Yes. I'm going to recall cards. I think we're in a new scene now. Go ahead.

Ali: Sure. I would— Mm. Wait... Are cars six feet?

Austin: Sure!

(Ali laughs)

Austin: They're probably a little bigger than that.

Janine: These cars are probably much bigger—

Art: These cars are real long...

Ali: Yeahhh...

Austin: These cars are probably long. But they're—

Janine: They stick out in a lot of ways.

Austin: But they're six feet... They're less than six feet *wide*.

Ali: Sure. Right. So six feet in diameter a car could... drive through?

Austin: Yes. If you had like a six foot tunnel.

Ali: Yess...

Austin: Like left to right, top to bottom?

Ali: Yess...

Austin: I think one of these cars could fit in there. It would be *tight*.

Ali: Perfect. I don't care—

Art: Well if you think about it, you stand up next to a car, you're taller than it—

Austin: Yeah, you're taller than the car. Yeah.

Janine: Yeah.

Ali: Um...

Austin: You lay down next to a car you're wider— Yeah, definitely. I am.

(Ali laughs)

Art: Yeah, you lay down right in front of a car (laughs)—

Austin: Whenever I lay down in front of a car, I'm longer than the car is wide. Yeah.

(Janine laughs)

Ali: Mm-hmm. Um...

Austin: What's your portal play?

Ali: My portal play is to have them drive through the portal on one side and then appear facing the other direction on the highway.

Austin: Like driving away.

Ali: Right. And like a couple—

Austin: Okay. I thought you were do way dirtier, so that's not a big deal.

Ali: (laughs) Wait, to cops, right?

Janine: Oh yeah, you could have them drive into the water.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: That's, um...

Janine: Like that works, right? (chuckles)

Art: Or like, outer space!

(Ali laughs)

Austin: You *couldn't* do that.

Janine: Oh, that's probably— you probably need a couple Range Boosts for that or something.

Austin: Almost certainly. What the fuck is the portal power called? Dimensional Step. (laughing) Why is it not called Portals?

Ali: Dimensional Step, yeah. I know, I'm sorry...

Janine: They should use the word "Portals" in there a little more often maybe?

Austin: Uh-huh...

Ali: I know...

Austin: Six foot dimensional portal. To you it's, it's next to you and another one of the location you can see. Unless you use—

Ali: Ohh... Well, I'm on the dock.

Austin: You are on the dock. Yeah.

Ali: So I can have the one that's next to me be like off the edge of the pier.

Austin: (laughs) You could totally do that! Yeah!

Ali: And then have the one that I can see 30 feet away be...

Austin: In front of them as they're pulling up. Yeah.

Ali: Yeah.

Janine: I was gonna say like, what if the water portal gets set up now and then we drive a bit and then as we're coming up to them, pop that portal in front, they go through portal, you dismiss the portal and we keep driving—

Austin: You dismiss the portal, you keep going, right, they can't come through the portal...

Janine: Make it look like a game of chicken then boom, you're in the ocean.

Austin: Does that work? I think it's *interesting*. What are your— What are your Boosts?

Ali: My Boosts are Force plus Boost, which isn't relevant.

Austin: No. Interesting, though!

Ali: Redirect Boost, which also I don't think is relevant...

Austin: No... Though it is interesting.

Ali: And then—

Austin: The— Yeah, go ahead. (chuckles)

Ali: Slingshot Movement, which means I... it's such a stupid movement thing, but it basically means that I can make a portal, go through the portal, take an action, go back through the portal.

Austin: Riight. That's a cool move.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: But yes, I see what you're saying. Yeah, no, I *think* you have to make them... I think you have to... I think you have to be in pla— You have to open them up both at the same time. I think.

Ali: Right.

Austin: You could close them after that. But you couldn't do the thing Janine just said, which is set up one now and set the second one when you get there.

Ali: Right. But as I'm seeing them drive up?

Austin: Yeah, totally. 100%.

Ali: Okay, but if the— Yeah, if they're in motion while I'm seeing them anyway, I can just do that.

Austin: Yeah, totally. I think Janine's thing was like, "We could get in the car and drive towards them... And then pop it further away or whatever," but you have to be, you have to be... Yeah. Anyway. Go ahead and...

Ali: They're gonna be underwater *in* a car. Like... (laughs)

Austin: Yeah, if it goes right—

Janine: The car doesn't have windows though, which is like the scarier part of being underwater in a car so they'll be fine.

Austin: This is true. What a bad day these fucking cops are having. Really fucking them up.

Janine: They should try not being fucking assholes then...

Austin: They should! I agree with you. God, what is this? I think this is, I think that *they* get a reaction. They're not gonna get to draw multiple cars... Cards (chuckles).

(Janine and Austin laughs)

Austin: Um, what is your? I want to say Perception here, of like you set it up right? Do you know what I mean? More than Agility— You're not gonna be like, "I'm real quick!" (chuckles)

Ali: Yeah, I have a Perception of three. And then I also have a Sense score, which I think—

Austin: What is your Defense, your Perception Defense?

Ali: Is 10.

Austin: Is 10, okay, yeah, I'll say that that's a Jack difficulty for them so they're going to get to draw one card to defend against that using the driver's Driving— his Conveyance score. Or

his— it's gonna be his Agility, which is two, so it's gonna be one card plus two plus one for Conveyance. So whatever this card is plus three against your Jack. That is a four (chuckles). Drives *right* fucking in to the giant portal. (claps) *Splash*, into the ocean. (chuckles) The... Horseface goes like,

Austin (as **Horseface**): Um. That was a goddamn altering.

(Ali laughs)

Austin: And is like, as you're dragging him to the car, he's like looking over his shoulder at where the car splashed. And the four of you get into the car! And presumably begin to drive away, right?

Ali: Yes.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: I'm gonna leave you with like an image here, though, before you drive away which is like... You do see a creeping shadow across the surface of the ocean. Like, as if— It almost looks like something big is coming up out of the ocean? Do you know what I mean? Like if you see like a whale, like the shadow of a giant whale under there? But it's just like a free-floating shadow, and it's creepy looking and you've driven away.

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Do you want to take Horseface back to the speakeasy? Or where are you going to do this like follow up conversation? And also what time of day is it? I think it was like midday when we— when you interacted with Horseface, because in the morning, you'd gone and spoken to Hollis. And then went out into the docks that Hollis [sic] was living in (chuckles), in a container, and now you're getting back. So I would say like it's getting towards the end of day? I think it's probably still pre-open speakeasy hours time? Or maybe it's like early enough that there's only a few people around. But you tell me where you're taking this guy and what you're getting up to.

Ali: (chuckles) Yeah, I don't know, there's something about... especially being midday, that it would be really easy to take him to like the bar and it's closed. And we talked to him in there. Or like an empty stock room or something, right?

Austin: Yeah! Yeah.

Ali: I think that there's still probably the... We went to go talk to him out of some sort of weird fake alignment with (laughing) the rich dude that we're helping. So like, keeping him in a different safe place probably works? So I was thinking like, if there's an unused hotel room or something, right?

Austin: Yeah, yeah.

Ali: Just so it's like, "You can stay here. We're gonna talk to you and then you can stay here instead of being in a big container." (chuckles)

Austin: So you *are* going to give him a room at the hotel? Or are you just leaving him in like a stock room or something?

Ali: Um, we should maybe question him first.

Austin: That's fair. (chuckles)

(Ali laughs)

Austin: Before you start giving him things? Yeah.

Ali: That's *my* instinct. Um, but... yeah.

Austin: All right! So where is it? Give me— paint me the picture. This is your space. This is more than mine. You tell me what the space is that you bring him to and what it looks like.

Ali: Um, sure! Yeah, I think that... It's tough because it's like a hidden place to begin with?

Austin: Mm-hmm...

Ali: So I don't know if it should be one of those things where it feels like this space isn't being used the way that it was intended to?

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Ali: But that it's been running long enough that it like seems like it's working? The thing that I'm thinking of right now... is like when you work at like a department store or a public space or whatever, there tends to be like sort of hallways in the back that the public doesn't have access to, but for the employees to like, move easily between spaces.

Austin: Sure.

Ali: So it would maybe be something like that? Like an old, like... I don't know. Hotels... Oh! (laughing) Sorry. Hotels typically have those like big garages with those like huge laundry baskets and stuff like that?

Austin: Yeah, yeah.

Ali: Like when you... that one space in the hotel that like smells like chlorine, even though it's farther from the pool.

Austin: Uh-huh.

Ali: And is always like warmer because that's where all the laundry is done?

Austin: Mm-hmm...

Ali: I feel like it's one of *those*. Where it's just like this big, wide, open space that they've taken all the machines out and instead there's like, booths and a bar and stuff like that.

Art: This hotel's got a pool?

Ali: Maybe it did. (laughs)

Art: That's great!

Austin: It's up to you! Yeah.

Ali: Yeah. I mean if Blough is supposed to be like bizarro Los Angeles, um... I could definitely buy that there would be like a cool rooftop pool that's like, very nice, but everyone in the city sucks. So who cares?

(Ali and Austin laugh)

Austin: God...

Ali: But yeah! And then the storeroom would just be like a storeroom! There's, you know, boxes of cocktail napkins and the little crackers that— (laughs)

Austin: That you get— Yeah. Uh-huh!

Ali: And just like cans and nonsense and shit. Yeah!

Austin (as **Horseface**): Can I get some crackers? Or... Are these— Can I eat these?

Art (as **The Champ**): Yeah, go ahead—

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): When we're finished.

Art (as **The Champ**): Oh.

(Ali laughs)

Austin (as **Horseface**): I got two answers— which answer should I... It's your hotel—

Art (as **The Champ**): It's not my hotel. But I think— I mean, they're complimentary!

TIMESTAMP [01:00:00]

Austin (as **Horseface**): Whose hotel *is* it?

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): It's mine.

Austin (as **Horseface**): Hoof! Fancy! You just got extra crackers lying around...

(Ali laughs quietly)

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): They're for guests and I haven't decided—

Austin (as **Horseface**): Anyway, I, uhh. Told you everything I need— everything I know. I don't know what else you need.

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): (sighs) Well, we have to assure that you're not seen by the public. And we have to assure that you've really been honest with us!

Austin (as **Horseface**): W-what would I not have been honest about?

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): Hmm...

Janine (as **Grouse**): Well, you know, sometimes it's not about honesty. Sometimes it's about... Sometimes it's about answering the right questions. And I don't know that we have the right questions yet? But we might have the right questions, and... There's a good chance there are people who don't want you answering *any* questions. So it might be best for you to stick around. (chuckles)

Austin (as **Horseface**): I got no problem sticking around. I was sticking around in a, in a container, I'll stick around in a storehouse!

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): Well, the cops were following us to that container so it was not doing you much well being there. And to that effect, we still need more information about what happened with you and Hollis... that would cause you to be stuck in a container for weeks.

Austin (as **Horseface**): I don't know. I... The police got involved. And then there was a loud noise. And then we got out of there. That's all. There wasn't anything else. Now, Hollis's parents are gonna try to pin this on me so their precious baby boy can go around, you know, what? With movie stars and starlets and radio actresses. I know his type. I know *their* type. But I didn't... (chuckles) I'm a mean customer, but I didn't fight any police!

Art (as **The Champ**): You're absolutely right, that *is* what's going to happen to you.

Austin (as **Horseface**): Look, wait—!

Art (as **The Champ**): We're not gonna do it but that's the— that is definitely their plan.

Austin (as **Horseface**): How do we make them *not* do that?

Art: (British accent) Look, Sir— (laughs)

(Ali laughs)

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): By getting to the bottom of this. In your recollection, what was happening to the water pump that night?

Austin (as **Horseface**): It was just... all backed up. I... I don't— I'm not a mechanist. I don't know from machines. I mean, I can fix a car. I can fix a bicycle, which is sort of a machine but these days... I can't pick— I can't fix a water pump! He said it was all backed up. He got it fixed.

We got the shipment. The shipment was overdue. We got in the truck. He got on his little coop. He followed us down the road. Police sirens, in the distance. We pulled over! Whitaker says— ...the client says that we should pull over and answer any questions the police have! We're not carrying any contraband. It's not illegal to move water around. No prohibition on water, people would die!

So... we did! Officer called in backup. A second car came. And that's when it got dark. And when the police yelled. And when Hollis said to run, then I did. We all did.

Then I read in the paper the next day, oh, "Police Shot in Shooting" or whatever the headline was. And then—

Art (as **The Champ**): It was "Police Shot in Shooting", yeah. That's it.

(Ali laughs)

Austin (as **Horseface**): And then Hollis told me to go hide. He told me to go down to the docks and get in one of them containers. And that he'd make sure I had food. He's better than his parents. Not by much, but. He knows I'm innocent.

Art: Do we know— Do we know *why* they were moving water around? Do we have that?

Austin: Not clear! Based on the bottling, the thing that you know is that some of it was going to Bluff City. Based on the bottling that you saw at the other harbour that you were at when you got knocked out and wound up washed ashore here.

Art: Sure.

Art (as **The Champ**): What was the water for?

Austin (as **Horseface**): I don't know what the— The client says... they need us to protect his water facility. So we do. And we ship out, you know, a couple of hundred gallons a day. And—

Art (as **The Champ**): A couple hundred gallons a day! That's not weird to you? Just—

Austin (as **Horseface**): A lot of things we do is weird!

Art (as **The Champ**): Just, taking water, putting it in bottles?

Austin (as **Horseface**): Yeah, I don't— I don't know what it's for! (chuckles) I got water in the tap. It works fine. I had a little pump when I was growing up outside. You just pump it up then you fill it in a bucket. Water for the day! These days, I don't know—

Art (as **The Champ**): You had a *well*? (chuckles)

Austin (as **Horseface**): Yeah we had a well!

Art (as **The Champ**): Where'd you grow up?

Austin (as **Horseface**): North! Just a little bit out of town.

Art (as **The Champ**): Where they got— they got wells.

Austin (as **Horseface**): Yeah, they got wells! You city folk, I don't know. Never lived off a well...

Art (as **The Champ**): It's not city folk, what even *year* is it here?

(Ali laughs)

Austin (as **Horseface**): What year, what do you mean what— It's the year!

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): Let's focus.

Art (as **The Champ**): Yeah, I know. I know it's the— I know it's the year.

(Ali laughs)

Austin (as **Horseface**): It's the year that it is!

Art (as **The Champ**): Um, yeah, uh-huh!

Austin (as **Horseface**): After the war you couldn't— ugh.

Art (as **The Champ**): And you got wells! And radio plays and movies. *Radios* and movies.

Austin (as **Horseface**): Radios and movies!

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): We enjoy radios!

Austin (as **Horseface**): The *latest* in entertainment! What more could you ask for?

Art (as **The Champ**): Oh my God. If my phone hadn't died a month ago...

(Austin laughs)

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): Excuse me, they're from out of town. I've been trying—

Austin (as **Horseface**): A living phone! (chuckles)

Ali: (laughs) I've been trying to remember how Hollis described like a weird thing happening?

Austin: An Altering. Yeah, an Altering. There was definitely an Altering. Yes.

Ali: Right.

Austin: He isn't sure about specifics. He's not an expert in these things.

Ali: Okay, yeah.

Austin: But it felt like there was an Altering.

Ali: Okay. Yeah. Yeah, those were the words I use, I was trying to figure out how he described it so I could— (laughs)

Austin: Oh, yeah. I mean, your word is now the word (chuckles).

Ali: Right. Yeah, sure.

Austin: I don't remember the specifics. It was some bullshit that I said off the top of my head. I didn't— there's not a secret code in what happened outside of—

Ali: Yup, yup, yup.

Austin: Right. The stuff that I'm saying— The thing is, everything got dark. There was lots of noise. People were yelling.

Ali: Okay, yeah.

Janine (as **Grouse**): And you don't think it's weird that a fancy... that a fancy boy like Hollis knows how to fix a water pump?

Austin (as **Horseface**): Well, he had said that... Um. He had said that a friend of his family had taught him.

Austin: Oh! Another thing, I remembered, that actually happened. Remember, Hollis *did* describe having seen someone with a weird mask on. A weird (chuckles) hermit crab mask—not a hermit crab. (laughing) That would be a very small mask! A... Why have I forgotten the name?

Art: A horseshoe crab.

Austin: A horseshoe crab! Mask on. So, so yeah. So... Horseface says... Which is not his real name! By the way.

Austin (as **Horseface**): He said he got taught! Someone... Someone taught him how to work on those, out of town.

Janine (as **Grouse**): Why'd he listen?

Austin (as **Horseface**): Why'd he listen? To what?

Janine (as **Grouse**): He just doesn't seem like the type, you know? Something about it seems weird.

Austin (as **Horseface**): Tells me there must have been a lot of money in it. Or some other play? I don't know. Long term. People like that, they think about things in long term, even when they're living wild lives. They got the, what do you call— the luxury to think about the long term. I'm just trying to eat these crackers. I'm sorry, I can't break this thing open for you. But, uh. (chuckles) There are limits.

Janine (as **Grouse**): You just have to tear the top.

Austin (as **Horseface**): What?

Art (as **The Champ**): What?

Janine (as **Grouse**): (chuckles) The crackers!

Austin (as **Horseface**): Oh! Yeah, but... The hotel owner here said I couldn't. I'm already in so much trouble, I don't want to get into worse. I don't know how much these crackers cost, I don't know what I'd owe you. I could open these crackers and you could say, "That's it! You gotta work in the washroom for the next month." Which if it came with more crackers and maybe some... a room? Maybe we could work something out.

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): (chuckles) (sighs) Well they certainly aren't worth a month's salary. I can offer you a hot meal. I'm sure you'd like to see a bed after being in a container for a week.

Austin (as **Horseface**): I mean, I had a cot in there, but yes, I would. (chuckles)

(Ali chuckles)

Austin (as **Horseface**): Very much so.

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): Well, you're welcome.

Austin (as **Horseface**): Um, we need to come up with a new name for me. Because if I sign the guest registry with my real name, people are going to know that I am here.

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): Oh, is Horseface not working for you anymore?

Austin (as **Horseface**): Horseface is... is a *nom de guerre*!

(Ali laughs)

Janine (as **Grouse**): Bad one.

Austin (as **Horseface**): It's not... I didn't give it to myself! Some folks who are unkind about my own alterations gave it to me.

Janine (as **Grouse**): Okay, well, what characteristics do you like about yourself?

Austin (as **Horseface**): My charm.

Janine (as **Grouse**): Physical characteristics—

Art (as **The Champ**): Well, Charmface is a terrible name!

(Janine laughs)

Austin: (laughing) Charmface...

Austin (as **Horseface**): Oh, um... (sighs) I get places real quick. I suggested "The Quickster". But they said no.

Janine (as **Grouse**): What about Horselegs?

Austin (as **Horseface**): That sounds like a— Come on, miss! (chuckles)

(Art laughs)

Austin (as **Horseface**): I don't like it very much.

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): You can sign the books as Quickster. No one will ask any questions.

Janine (as **Grouse**): Oh, I hate that. Ew!

Art (as **The Champ**): (laughing) No one will ask any questions about— someone signed the book as Quickster?!

(Ali laughs)

Art (as **The Champ**): At least makes him like James Quickster or something!

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): Well, like fucking superheroes coming out of here all the time! I call myself Verge! It's all fine—

Art (as **The Champ**): You sign things as Verge?!

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): Well...

Austin (as **Horseface**): All right, I'm gonna go find that guest registry.

Janine (as **Grouse**): Quickster, ugh...

Ali: I think Caitlyn— (laughs) I think Caitlyn just pulls a key from her pocket?

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Ali: Cause he shouldn't be signing books anyway? (laughing) Like, what is he talking about? (laughs)

Austin: Yeah, uh-huh!

Ali: And just says,

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): It's room... f...

Ali: Why is this hard? (laughs)

(Austin laughs)

Ali: I was like, I was gonna say like "42" and then I was like, "That's a high number" but that makes sense.

Austin: Yeah, that's high— is it, how many floors is it? Yeah!

Ali: And then I was like, “Is there a letter?”

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): You can find your way to room 47B.

Austin (as **Horseface**): I will do that.

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): You can skip the login.

Austin (as **Horseface**): (sighs) I like to do things by the book but okay.

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): (laughs) Yes. *Horseface* loves to do things by the book—

Austin (as **Harry**): My name is Harry! You call me Harry. We’re close now.

Art (as **The Champ**): I’m gonna side on James Quickster. (chuckles)

(Austin chuckles)

Austin (as **Harry**): My name is Harry and you are my friends now, and so you can call me Harry.

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): It’s been a pleasure, Harry.

Austin (as **Harry**): The pleasure is mine. And also these crackers.

Austin: I think takes one little thing of crackers? One little packet of crackers which are probably not wrapped in plastic, right? This is pre-plastic. Crackers—

Janine: Probably be paper, right?

Austin: Yeah, they’re paper-wrapped crackers, and heads out. And like— just like comically looks left and right like trying to figure out where he goes, big *wide* gait. You know? (chuckles) Don’t ever hear him— Don’t ever say gait in front of him while describing the way he walks (chuckles). It’s rude. (chuckles)

Janine: Horselegs, like I said!

Austin: Uh-huh!

Art: It just sounds like you’re saying he has a big ass

(Janine and Austin laugh)

Ali: Is that what horses are known for?

Janine: I don’t... think so...

Art: Horses have giant asses!

(Ali laughs and Austin chuckles)

Janine: Yeah, but when you say—

Austin: (smiling) I think you're thinking of asses.

Janine: When you say "horse legs," you think like *long* legs, not like...

Ali: Mmm... They're fast.

Janine: "Those legs lead to a big ass."

Ali: Yeah. (laughs)

Austin: (chuckles) "Damnnn, he got them horse legs!" (laughs)

Janine: If it was a comment on his ass, we'd call him (laughs) Horseass! So... (laughs)

Art: (laughing) Well, that's rude!

Ali: Yeah! It's already there! A horse's ass is right there—

Austin: (laughing) "What you doing on a Wednesday afternoon all horselegged up?"

(all laugh)

(Ali sighs)

Austin: Um... Alright! He's out of your hair for now. Um, what do you... what do you do?

Ali: Um... I thought it would be later in the day because I thought the characters would like be able to take a break now.

Austin: It could— you totally could! 100%. Again, I think that like you were— it was late afternoon by the time you talked to him *there*. And then by the time you drove back in the slow-ass cars and got to the hotel and got settled, I think it's probably fair now to be like, 7pm, you know?

Ali: Right, yeah.

Austin: If y'all want to go get dinner, if you want to go out in the town, if you want to head into the speakeasy and, you know, listen to some music. Like whatever you do, you do. There are leads to follow, but I'm also happy to have the like... You know, put it in your hands to kind of decide what you want to do.

Ali: Yeah, I definitely don't want to like write myself out of any scenes? But I think that there's like, as they leave this store room, there's like people coming into the space to start making it run. Right?

Austin: Right. Sure.

Ali: And asking Caitlyn questions, and like needing her to look at stuff.

Austin: Mm-hmm. Caitlyn's on duty now in a sense.

Ali: Right, right. And then also I just wanted the side thing of being a Friends at the Table fan and like wanting to (laughing) see the Champ and whoever, just get up to some shit.

Austin: Yeah, that's fair! Y'all are in a city. It's nightlife time. What do you—

Ali: Yeah...

Austin: What do you— What *have* the two of you been doing lately and what are you getting up to tonight, Champ and Grouse?

Janine: I think for Grouse like... her priority in this situation would probably be really clear, right? Which is like, she is probably kind of elbowing her way into...

TIMESTAMP [01:15:00]

Janine: Into... I don't want to say parties necessarily, I don't know, like— But you know, things like the speakeasy itself or, you know, gatherings of people who are having a good time. And she is sort of doing the... She's doing the like, "Who's Gatsby" situation—

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: —but for Goldfinch.

Austin: Right.

Janine: Because there's definitely like... (chuckles) One, there's an obvious interest there in terms of what they're actually looking into. But two, like, how could she possibly go back to Bluff and go back to Waxwing and be like, "Yeah, I didn't actually look at— yeah, your ex? I didn't look into her."

(Austin chuckles)

Janine: "Seemed like she was having fun! Without you."

Austin: Yeah, having a great time! Uh-huh!

(Janine chuckles)

Austin: Um, I would— I'm willing to even handwave the bit where you really have to do legwork to find your way into one of these parties. In the sense that, when I think about the comic book version of this, what happens is you say— like I was gonna say "You produce two tickets," but it's not tickets, the party isn't ticketed.

(Art laughs)

Austin: But like off-panel you had already done the legwork to have found out when the next Gale Green party would be. And have lined up, uh... you know. Maybe you haven't lined up an entry but you know where it is and when it is, and maybe you could bluff your way in? You know what I mean? But if you want to like try to line up a plus one, that may be requires a little bit more. Like a plus one who will bring you in.

Art: I think we just bluff our way in. If that fails, Bluff City our way in, if you know what I mean!

Austin: *POW!*

Art: Pow.

Janine: (chuckles) That seems fun. Hmm, yeah.

Austin: Okay!

Janine: You said "plus one your way in" and I thought you might like do a thing that would give you a plus one, and that appealed to me—

Austin: Oh!

(Ali laughs)

Janine: —but like finding another person? To tag along? I don't— I mean, that could—

Austin: No...

Janine: —be fun too, but... That's...

Austin: (laughs) No, I just meant... I just meant if you like had someone who *you* could be the pus— you know what I mean? Someone who already had a way in, etc.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: But I, no, if you want to just roll up in a fancy dress, that's a thing you can try to do right now. I'm not gonna— I'm not taking that away from you as a possibility. Never.

Janine: Hmm...

Austin: But also— And also, Caitlyn, if you wanted to be part of that, and also as a trio, that's totally fine. But also I do... I, again, it's up to y'all, the scenes you want to frame here.

Ali: Yeah. I mean, I can definitely be the access into that space, if that's what these characters need, right?

Austin: Oh, yeah! Yeah, totally.

Ali: But...

Austin: Then, if *that's* the case, then I would like— I'd *love* to hear... I would love to hear Chantelle bring it up in that way and say like, "Hey—" Or Chanti, not Chantelle. Chanti bring it up. And basically asked if, if— you know, "Hey, this is what we want to do," I'd love to hear how that conversation goes. Because, as far as I know, Caitlyn, you don't know of any connection between them and Gale Green, right?

Ali: Nooo...

Janine: Um... So yeah, I think it makes sense for Chanti to approach Caitlyn kind of like... Um...

Janine (as **Grouse**): Do you know anyone... who might be... a regular at Gale Green's, kind of... events? And who might be looking for some... uh... you know! Company? Someone on their arm?

(Ali chuckles)

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): Um... Well, it depends on... what you're going there for, but I could probably do better than arm candy. I mean, who doesn't go to those parties... But I know someone who is a caterer there!

(Austin chuckles quietly)

Janine (as **Grouse**): That's *better* than arm candy??

(Art and Austin laugh)

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): Well...

Art (as **The Champ**): Well you get tips!

(Ali and Austin laugh)

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): Well, he would have a certain access to... locations and information. But if you just want to go to a party, I could certainly arrange that.

Janine (as **Grouse**): I mean, is Gale Greene going to talk to someone in a caterer's outfit?

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): Maybe. She hires caterers, doesn't she?

(Art and Austin trying to suppress their laughter and failing)

Austin: Great!

Art (as **The Champ**): So you're the caterer. And you're *mad*, you haven't been paid!
(laughs)

(Austin and Ali laughs)

Art (as **The Champ**): You're like, "Hey! This invoice is overdue!" Just right in the middle of the party. It's gonna be great.

Janine (as **Grouse**): Uhhh... I don't—

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): Well, I didn't think you were... going there to argue with her. Um...

Janine (as **Grouse**): No... Uh, I think it would be... Mmm... I would like to set up as positive a potential interaction as possible.

(Austin laughing in the background)

Janine (as **Grouse**): I'm a little concerned if I lie about being a caterer and then have to talk to her and then say certain things? That that will reflect poorly on myself and others.

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): That's—

Janine: This is Grouse fully being like...

(Ali laughs)

Janine: "If I go to Gale's house pretending to be a caterer, and then manage to have a conversation with Gale where it comes out that I'm Waxwing's sidekick, protege, whatever. That's creepy! (chuckles)"

(Ali laughs and Austin chuckles)

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): That's very forward thinking. Can I ask what you—

Austin: Wait, pause really quick again. Do you know who *Waxwing* is? Like what's the— I just want to make sure... If you are going to tell Caitlyn that Gale is connected to a superhero from your world—

Janine: Oh no, that was an aside, that was like for us at the table.

Austin: Okay. That was for us.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: Okay.

Janine: Chanti's position otherwise is that like, is just in general like,

Janine (as **Grouse**): I would like to have this be as not awkward as possible.

Austin: Mm.

Ali: Yeah.

Janine (as **Grouse**): And like being a party guest is probably that. *Or* if you know like a pianist? That would be fun?

(Ali laughs)

Janine (as **Grouse**): Like a dancer, singer? (chuckles)

Ali: No, we're good. I was saying something before Austin so we could get there.

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): That's very forward thinking but can I ask why you want to speak to her? If that's the case.

Janine (as **Grouse**): I think she might know something that's important to... what we're investigating now. And some general questions that I have!

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): (sighs) Well, there's lots of people who want to interact with her, but I can certainly try to arrange that. Go get dressed up!

(chuckling)

Janine (as **Grouse**): You don't have to say that like you don't believe I can!

(Austin and Art laugh)

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): I did not!

(Janine laughs)

Austin: Mm... (chuckles) Elena, do you also go get dressed up?

Art: Of course. Yeah, I'm not missing this for anything.

(Ali laughs)

Austin: Alright, I need to know what fancy dress looks like as we hard cut probably to, again, driving up there— or being driven up there? You probably don't drive your own car there, do you? What's the— what's the socially cool thing to do?

Art: Oh, it's *never* cool to drive your own car!

Austin: Mm...

Ali: But I think it might be cool, if you're a rich person throwing a big party and people drive there, and then you have like your own valet. Right? That feels like the Gatsby thing. Do they drive there in that book?

Art: Wait, *you* drive and then someone *you* bring parks *your* own car? (chuckles)

Ali: No, no, no, no.

(Austin laughs)

Ali: You drive— (laughs) You drive up to a big, rich, fancy house with a big entranceway. You arrive at the— you drive up to the front of the house where someone in a tuxedo is in front of their private residence and is like, "Hey, I'll go park your car for you, enjoy the party!"

Art: Oh, yeah, yeah, the *party* has the valet, not the—

Ali: Yes.

Art: Yeah, got it.

(Ali laughs)

Art: Uh-huh. I'm all the way with you. Sorry for the confusion!

Ali: It's all good! (laughs)

Art: We're back.

Austin: God...

Janine: I know what Chanti's wearing.

Austin: Okay.

Janine: Um, I did a search for "1920s fashion formal," which is a lot of tux— more tuxedos than I wanted. But a lot of *very* good dresses. Also a lot of good, proper drop-waisted stuff, a lot of tassels.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Janine: But there's one in particular that I found that is like, has the gold sort of fringe? But also has this like laurel leaf motif that's really cool? It's like sequinned leaves and stuff, and I'm going to paste it into our chat.

Austin: Oh! Good. Good dress.

Janine: So I think she's wearing that with a little fascinator that has like a gold bird in it.

Austin: Oh. Yeah, of course! Good. What are the other formal looks, as you pull into the like, the circle. The kind of like driveway in front of Gale Green's massive cliffside estate.

Art: I just need a second, my page is loading.

Austin: Good.

(Ali chuckles)

Art: I have like the image but—

Austin: Music is playing, every— you know, it's hard to see your outfit anyway. It's dark outside, everyone's distracted. Someone sets off fireworks in the distance, not a lot of them, not like a string of them, just like a single firework goes out and you hear people laugh and clap. Also, it's too early for fireworks, so it kind of blends in the sky, which isn't quite dark yet.

Ali: Oh, Art sent a picture.

Austin: Oh, Art sent a picture—

Art: I did.

Austin: I see. Can you describe the picture for the people on our audio podcast?

(Ali laughs)

Art: Yeah! And I want you to know that I got this backwards the first time I saw this (laughs).

Austin: What?!

Art: I mistook... Well, cause it's a dress and a coat, right?

Austin: Yeah?

Art: *What* if you saw it for the first time? And like flipped the negative space and thought that the white—

Austin: (laughing) I'm trying really hard to do that but I cannot!

Ali: Let him finish...

Art: (laughing) It's like a scarf instead of a coat!

Janine: *OHHH*, I see! Right!

Ali: Oh, the fur part?

Art: Uh-huh, I just got it backwards! I understand it now.

Janine: So like the, the black is like a very big shawl that she's got draped over her hands and it's trailing to the floor?

(Austin laughs)

Art: Yes.

Ali: Oh...

Austin: No! I can't see it. I'm *looking* for it. I can get as far as, "What if the fut was a scarf?" *That* I can—

Ali: Right... I was thinking the fur was attached to the dress and not the coat.

Austin: Yeah, that I can see!

Art: It's a two-tone fur coat, right?

Austin: The fur is a different tone than the white. Yes.

Art: But the white's also fur, right?

Ali: Oh, I didn't notice that.

Austin: Oh, sure. Yes.

Ali: But yeah.

Austin: I just want people to know Art sent us *the* smallest image (laughing) known to man.

(Ali laughs)

Art: That's how big the image is!

Janine: Also—

Austin: And thought you'd written "That's how big the dress is," (laughs) I swear to God I did. I found a bigger version of it. Here it is.

Art: I don't think you did. I think that's the image?

Austin: Ohhh, but is it just blown up? I found a blown up version of it. It's fine. (chuckles) Yeah.

Janine: Art's dress is also making me reconsider *my* dress because it feels like we're dressed for two very different kinds of party (chuckles).

Austin: Yeah, you're—

Art: I think that neither of us knows what the kind of party is—

Austin: That's true! That's accurate—

Janine: Ehhh—

Art: —I think we both just took a stab.

Austin: I think this is funnier! I think it's funnier if Art shows up with a long, (chuckles) slender—

Art: Evening gown.

Austin: —evening gown with a big, white fur coat. And you show up as like an it girl. (laughs)

Art: And I think it kind of fits the narrative almost, that like, you know, what do we both reach for when we go for like a party? And it's like... I'm in the 1920s, I'm gonna wear the fanciest thing I could find!

Austin: Mm-hmm!

(Ali laughs)

Ali: I'm having a hard time deciding because I really wrote myself into a corner with Caitlyn's outfits being very aesthetically pleasing but revolting? (laughs)

Austin: Wait, why are they revolting? I miss— maybe I missed the revolting part!

Ali: I think— Well, it's supposed to be like offensive to society people because it was like—§

Austin: I see.

Ali: —a really well-tailored coat with a bunch of different patterns. But like when you look at it, you're like, "Oh, those fabrics all match."

Austin: Right.

Ali: "I feel aesthetically pleased by this, but I also *hate* it because it looks wrong to me."

Janine: I actually have something that works for this that I've been looking at.

(Ali laughs)

Janine: I like— I've been looking at this compilation of three dresses because I really like the middle one. But the one on the far right is *exactly, exactly* how I would picture what you just described? Because it's like, "Okay, this is a dress—"

Austin: Oh wow.

Janine: "—This is the correct lines. This is the same fabric *or* different fabric? But it's all in pieces and it's all it's beautiful but it's also like, what the fuck?

Ali: Oh, sureee...

Austin: It makes you look like a beetle! Or like a butterfly? But like a taut butterfly (smiles).

Ali: Yeah, this is *amazing*. So what it is, I'm gonna—

Austin: Yeah, please explain.

Ali: —really do my best here.

Austin: Thank you!

Ali: But it's like— (laughs) A long s—

Janine: "1920 dresses by Vionnet" from the Met Museum collection, seems to be.

Ali: Yeah. Um, it's like a long, um... Just kind of plain evening-wear dress, but what it is, is that the fabric is in a bunch of panels? So one of those panels is all like the left shoulder, left boob down to the waist (laughs).

(Janine chuckles)

Ali: The other one is like the rest of the torso. And then from the hip down, there's also just like a bunch of other— like where you would expect a dress to just be like, “Here's the dress now! The fabric is just gonna keep going!” It's like cut into a bunch of, like, pizza-slice shapes? (laughs)

Austin: Which is *incredible*.

Janine: It's like if you combined a gymnast leotard with like a wraparound sweater with an evening gown with a cartoon parachute.

Ali: (laughs) Yes, yeah. Yeah, I love it. It looks amazing. It looks really good. Perfect. And I think she's wearing that with like one of those jewelled headbands that people in the 20s wear? Those are always fun.

Austin: Perfect.

Ali: I think that I have like a... like a sheer capelet on.

Austin: Ooh!

TIMESTAMP [01:30:00]

Janine: I don't know why I was expecting you to say like, “Tiger.”

(Ali laughs)

Austin: “I have a tiger.”

Ali: Um. Yeah.

Art: Please, Austin, a sheer tiger.

(Janine laughs)

Austin: A *sheer* tiger. Apologies.

Ali: It is a tiger fur...

Janine: Ew...

Ali: No. Yeah, that would be awful. (laughs) No, it's just a nice little cape that looks weird.

Austin: Give me one second... Shout outs, real quick, to... Katie Turman from the dungenie.com forums? For providing us with this DND palace that I'm using as a mansion map.

It's very good, once it finishes loading. I did not expect us to go to this mansion, I would have had a mansion prepared otherwise, I apologise.

Janine: I'm sorry, you put a party mansion run by my mentor's ex on the map and you were like, "Nah, we won't go there." (chuckles)

Austin: Eh! I thought—

Janine: "Who wants to go to a party mansion!"

Austin: There are other places you could have bumped into her (chuckles). I had to find one that didn't have like a big... like, dinosaur skull in one of the rooms (chuckles).

Janine: (outraged) She could have a dinosaur!

Ali: Yeah...

Austin: Well, like a magic dinosaur. The one I had was very clearly, like... You had like a, like a hunting party, made up of like monster hunters. It was not right. Anyway, it doesn't matter.

(Janine chuckles)

Art: Rich people hoarding dinosaur bones is very much a 20th century point—

(Janine laughs)

Austin: Uh-huh! If I showed you the— I'm going to show you the room that I was looking at and you'll see why I said, "Hey, this doesn't look right." (chuckles) There's like angel wings (laughing) on one of the walls? (laughing) There's some sort of *headcrab*, just some loose batwings?

(Ali laughs)

Janine: That's a *dragon* head.

Ali and **Art:** Mm...

Austin: I had to zoom in to see the difference, okay?

Janine: That's definitely...

Austin: This is what I'm saying. The alchemy room—

Art: This does have a certain vibe...

Austin: (laughs) Yes. See? (laughs) There's an alchemy room across the hall. That was not gonna be right.

Janine: It's like that Dragon Age multiplayer map where there's like a fucking Krogan head on the wall of a tavern or whatever.

Austin: Yes, yes. I almost said a Krogan hunting party because of that, like crossed wire in my head? But I was like, "That's the wrong series. Why am I thinking about that?" But that is why I was thinking about that.

Janine: Mm-hmm.

Austin: All right. So! You all pull up into the front yard or not the front yard (chuckles), but like the front driveway. You get out in your fancy dresses. The party's already starting. How do you... are you... I think immediately some of the front, like, the doormen kind of spot you walking up, Caitlyn? And are very much like, "(sighs) Caitlyn Key is here."

Ali: (sad voice) Aww!

Austin: Listen.

Ali: I'm well liked! (laughs)

Austin: You're well liked among a certain class! You know? I have to refresh Roll20, it's being bad. What do you— what— (laughs) How do you get into this party? What is your way in?

Ali: Through the door!

Austin: (sighs) Uh.

(Ali laughs)

Austin: So one of the— one of the... These doormen or these doormen have on a kind of more reserved looks than the kind of super fancy butler that we met with... at Hollis's place? They're younger, but that also suggests that they're both... they're both supposed to be like doormen and and, you know, butlers, but also security to some degree?

I think that kind of just have on long, like— you know, a black jacket with a vest and a tie? But not like the tails. Not like, in fact their pants might not even be from the same, like, suit cut as the top?

I think they're mostly like imposing figures more than they are necessarily figures who command a degree of authority through their sense of like, "*I'm* the one who understands this social space."

And one of them says,

Austin (as a **doorman**): (sighs) Miss Key. I didn't know we were supposed to expect you tonight.

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): Well, I heard there was a party and, um... I thought I might have some fun! Say hello to a few friends. How are you doing?

Austin (as a **doorman**): (sighs) I'm great. Are your friends also expected?

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): Yes, my plus one has a plus one?

Austin (as a **doorman**): (sighs) Of course.

Ali (as **Caitlyn**): (laughing) So, make it fun— (laughs)

Austin (as a **doorman**): We'll be watching you. Miss Key.

Austin: And they open the door for you. But there's like a glare. You know? There's like a, "Hmm. My eyes are on you." And there's like a big entry hall. And the sound of music kind of overtakes you. You know, there's a live band probably further in and their music is kind of spiralling throughout the halls and rooms here. There are people walking around with, you know, there *are* caterers walking around with, you know, platters of food to snack on and lots of glasses to get drinks from.

There are a lot of people in dresses both more fancy and less fancy than yours, depending on which member of your group you are (laughs). It's a— it's kind of a rager already! Uh, so, I think— you know, in fact, Caitlyn, you'll be more at home than maybe the folks out front lead you to believe.

What do you do? How do you go about running this party in such a way that you'll end up in a conversation with the person you want to talk to?

Ali: I guess it depends, right? Is this the like for real Great Gatsby thing where it's like. a bunch of people come to her house?

Austin: It *has* to be. Yeah.

Ali: A lot of them don't meet her. A lot of them—

Austin: This is our first and only, probably, 1920s game for a long time? It *has* to be that, right? We *have* to lean in.

Ali: Right.

Austin: We all read that book at some point or watched that movie...

(Ali laughs)

Austin: And we're only gonna get one chance to do it the damn right way.

Ali: Right, yeah.

Austin: So, yeah, it's like, there are people here who Gale Green, presumably, has never met before. There are people here who... are, you know, willing to just get entirely shit-faced in such a way that (smiling) is probably a little dangerous.

Ali: Right? The—

Austin: It's a blending of different upper class classes, if that makes sense.

Ali: Right. The thing that I sort of want to call out here is there was like, there would always be like a whole subsection of people there who have like never met him to the point of like spreading new rumours about him actively at the party. Of being like, "I don't know him. I thought he killed someone in the war."

Austin: (laughs) Right. I don't—

Ali: It gives it *that* vibe of being like, "Well, Gale Green is a, you know, (murmuring)," but we still drink her...

Austin: I think they all— I think the distinction here is, I think they've met her because she's been around, in a way that—

Ali: Right.

Austin: —Gatsby hadn't been. But there is, still, this, this like cycle of rumours around what her deal really is? Like, "I heard she was an actress until just recently! I heard—" You know what I mean?

Ali: Yeah, yeah.

Austin: Like, "I heard her money comes from out of town. I heard that, you know her family is in, is in, uh, shipping." Like there is— there are questions about her, but she *maintains* those questions despite being knowable. Do you know what I mean? People can have a conversation with her and then walk away still not necessarily— Feeling that they've had a genuine interaction but not necessarily understanding who she is or what she does.

Ali: Sure.

Austin: Or where her money came from.

Ali: Yeah, yeah. Yeah! I was just curious of the vibe because—

Austin: Yeah. This is on— this is— I'm really curious how you go about this. I'd say that there's probably... certainly dozens? Potentially hundreds of people here.

Janine: I have a question—

Art: Great. Oh.

Austin: Mm-hmm?

Janine: Sorry.

Art: No, go for it.

Janine: Do I know Waxwing's favourite drink?

Austin: You tell me! Would you know Waxwing's favourite drink?

Janine: Um... I guess I'm still underage so Waxwing probably does not drink (laughs) with Grouse.

Austin: Uh-huh. Yeah, but I knew my mom's favourite drink *well* before I was drinking. (laughs) Which maybe reflects something about my situation more than it reflects something about the world but!

Janine: Well. That's actually helpful because we've established that like Waxwing kind of picked up Grouse as a protege in the wake of Goldfinch leaving?

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Janine: As kind of a... sort of a coping mechanism? And has kind of expressed her anxiety sometimes, through her connection to Grouse like by giving them that horrible weapon that we never used or really defined?

Austin: Yeah. Mm-hmm.

Janine: In that sort of worst case, "If you're gonna fucking die, don't fucking die," situation?

Austin: Yeah...

Janine: Um, so I bet she would know Waxwing's favourite drink. Just because I bet she's been to Waxwing's house when Waxwing is...

Austin: Riiight.

Janine: ...is having an evening.

(Ali laughs)

Austin: It is...

Ali: I—

Austin: Go ahead?

Ali: I don't want to interrupt but I feel like this is a very important question. Is she the type of person to ask a teenager to make a drink for her (smiling) if she's had a long day?

(Janine chuckles)

Austin: My mom? Or Waxwing? (laughs)

Ali: Waxwing.

Austin: Uh (chuckles). The...

Ali: Because from what I remember listening, she was on the verge of impatience that I could see it happening? But I could understand if you'd say no.

Austin: I think no? But I don't think that would stop her from making one for herself in front of Chanti.

Ali: Right, sure.

Austin: You know what I mean?

Janine: Or would she be like, "Hey, can you, can you get the bottle out for me?"

Austin: No. I don't think she would.

Janine: Okay.

Austin: Like, I don't know if you remember, the thing that sticks out most to me was her trying to instil in you a sense of superiority? That I don't think—

Janine: Yes, that's true.

Austin: —she would have let her guard down. Like, because to do that would be to signal that she doesn't have it all together. You know what I mean? So I don't think she would have done that. But I do think you would have seen her make herself a drink... Let me see. Let me let me

decide. I have the vibe. I just need— Art, how about you help me with this? Because I have some ideas, but I need to know...

Art: Yeah. Mm-hmm?

Austin: I think it's like, I think it's like a rye whiskey with some sort of citrus element.

Art: Okay... I mean, that doesn't immediately... You know, the most famous rye cocktail is of course the Manhattan—

Austin: Right, but it's not that—

Art: —which is *not* a citrus drink.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: Um... There's just—

Austin: I pulled up a list.

Art: There's a lot of just like old cocktails that are like *nothing*? Um— (laughs)

Austin: Yeah, yeah.

Art: They're just like, you know, something with like one ingredient is like a cocktail?

Austin: Mm...

Art: Honestly, like this might be—

Austin: Oh, I got it. I got it.

Art: —is that citrus isn't a big ingredient until later.

Austin: Oh, is that true?

Art: I think so.

Austin: I found one!

Art: Citrus is a— Go for it.

Austin: I found one and it says it's... where'd it go? It says this is from 1898. So that, to me, seems like we're good.

Art: Sure!

Austin: It's called the Ward Eight? W-A-R-D Eight? And it's two ounces of rye whiskey. A half an ounce fresh lemon juice, and half an ounce fresh orange juice, and a teaspoon of grenadine. And maraschino cherry, optional. She does not take the cherry.

Art: That sounds great. What happened to this?

Austin: This sounds fantastic. What's— (laughs) Can we get one of these?

Art: It seems *real* sweet! Could be—

Austin: Oh, it's probably— Yeah.

Art: That much grenadine is gonna...

Austin: Yeah.

Art: But fantastic!

Janine: (laughing) Are you sure you don't want to use this one I found that uses balsamic vinegar?

Art: (in disgust) Ooh!

Austin: I mean—

Janine: (laughing) It's called a "New York Shrub" (laughs).

Austin: (chuckles) What's it called?

Janine: A New York Shrub? Balsamic vinegar with whiskey.

Austin: Oh my God...

Janine: We reduce it into a thick, tangy syrup, then shake with rye, lemon juice and simple syrup.

Austin: That sounds delicious, too! Fuck it—

Janine: They also say, "Don't feel the need to break out the fancy balsamic vinegar here!" (laughs)

(Austin laughs)

Janine: "A decent under \$10 bottle works just fine!"

Austin: Let's take the— Can I get the— I'll take the well balsamic vinegar, please! No need to bust out the fancy stuff!

(Janine chuckles)

Austin: Um, I'm gonna go with the Ward Eight. Because it sounds... less... balsamic vinegar-y.

(Janine laughs)

Austin: So yeah! That is what it this. (smiling) It's a whiskey citrus drink, that's all you need to know.

Art: It sounds great! Ask your bartenders.

Austin: Not right now! Don't go to a bar! While we're recording this, please!

Art: "Originally the drink was decorated with a small paper Massachusetts flag!"

Austin: Huh!

Janine: I don't know why I was expecting you to stop at Massachusetts.

(Ali and Austin laughs)

Art: A small paper Massachusetts!

Austin: Yeah!

Janine: That'd be kind of fun. Like a little rice paper cutout of a state just floating on top and it dissolves?

Austin: Yeah!

Ali: Yeah... Lots of fun. I said that like I— why do I keep saying it like that (laughs) today!

(Janine laughs)

Ali: (laughing) What is wrong with me! (laughs)

Austin: It's— we're all there. We're all— this is all— there is like a real psychic like toll being taken. I'm forgetting words I don't normally forget— It's *bad*, right now.

Ali: (sighs) Yeah. Anyway.

Austin: It's not good.

Janine: Can I just pitch— I just want to, before we move on, pitch this drink which I don't drink enough to know if this actually sounds good, but it sounds kind of good to me, a person who does not drink a lot. The Filibuster. A whiskey sour with maple syrup, and a little Angostura on top for a cinnamon-y, spicy scent. Like a—

Austin: It's called the Filibuster?

Janine: Filibuster.

Art: I hate the name. The name might be bad enough to kill the whole thing, the whole venture for me.

Janine: It's like a—

Austin: Give me the ingredients one more time?

Janine: Um. I think it's whiskey, maple syrup and Angostura?

Austin: I don't know what Angostura is.

Art: It's a kind of bitter.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: Oh, I see, I see. Yeah, okay.

Art: Um...

(Austin sighs)

Art: Sure?

Austin: That doesn't sound confident—

Art: As someone who made a— who described a maple syrup drink in a game last night? It's like the—

Austin: (laughs) That did happen!

(Janine laughs)

Art: It's a texture issue! (chuckles)

Janine: Mmm...

Austin: The B names! Ah, unbelievable work. Um.

Janine: I just found the Ward Eight, you can serve it hot!

Austin: Egh. No. You can't. Not here. They don't have the means, unfortunately.

(Janine laughs)

TIMESTAMP [01:45:00]

Janine: Oh, for the hot version they use a syrup made by muddling lemon and orange peels with sugar.

Austin: Okay, that sounds alright! Anyway. Do you ask for this drink, what is the play?

Janine: Yeah—

Austin: What is the— We need to get in—

Janine: The play is to ask for the drink and see... And see! You know, it's a starting point—

Austin: And see.

Janine: It's a starting point.

Austin: Give me... that, to me, sounds like a Charisma Check.

Janine: Are you saying that because I'm under age? (chuckles)

Austin: Yeah, uh-huh! No, I'm saying it because— to see if it has the effect you want.

Janine: Mm. Mm-hmm.

Austin: Also, what is the age of drinking here? Who even knows! What was the age of drinking? I mean, nothing because there was a prohibition. Uh— (laughs)

Janine: Yeah, prohibition, you're already kind of playing fast and loose...

(Ali laughs)

Janine: Also, this is probably still when people were giving whiskey to babies for toothaches.

Austin: I— *Still* when? That happened in *my* lifetime.

Janine: Oh my G— Okay, well.

Austin: That's not... (laughs)

Janine: That didn't happen to me... (laughs)

Art: We're learning a lot about Austin's childhood today! (laughs)

Austin: (laughs) Listen. (laughing) I had my first Screwdriver when I was like 12.

Janine: I had beer when I was a baby, but not a lot of beer. Just like a little beer.

Austin: There was *no* drinking age! Nationally. Until...

Art: I fell like 21 didn't come until like the 60s or 70s or something because it was Mothers Against Drunk Driving that got 21 as the drinking age.

Austin: Right. Right.

Janine: Mm-hmm.

Ali: Ohhh...

Austin: It was 18 in a lot of places in the 60s and the 70s. *Until* the 60s... a lot of places set at 21 but it was state by state. It was state by state, so we'd have to look into it. Doesn't fucking matter. They're gonna serve you this drink.

Janine: (chuckles) Yeah, so is this basically the equivalent of a trip to Canada? For Grouse (laughs)?

Austin: Right. Yes.

Janine: Cause drinking age up here is 19?

Austin: I mean, you tell me! Have you—

Janine: Instead of 21, so...

Austin: Is Grouse a drinker? (smiling) Has Grouse had drinks before? His Grouse out here...?

Janine: I think Grouse—

Austin: Like, playing Flip Cup, what's happening? (chuckles)

Janine: Grouse isn't like a, isn't like a party teen?

Austin: Uh-huh.

Janine: Grouse is like a, is like a... “I have parents with very sharp expectations and also I have superpowers? And a superpower parent, also? And there’s a lot of stuff going on— a lot of balls in the air.” I think she’s probably had beer. Like, I think she’s probably had *some* things—

Austin: Okay.

Janine: —but, you know, is... probably like me in the sense of just like, “I don’t want to be drunk. It’s not on my list of things I enjoy or have time for?” (chuckles)

Austin: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

Janine: That’s probably where she’s at.

Austin: Then yeah. Uh, this is a... this is a Charisma Check. Because you’re trying to get the attention of someone.

Janine: Mm-hmm.

Austin: I think it is... Or I guess, do you have a skill you would like to—? We haven’t done a Check today yet, so—

Janine: Uhhh...

Austin: —the checks, the way that this works... Uh, you are going to... ba, ba, ba, ba, bah... “Pick the trait that you think is most applicable to the task.” I think it’s Charisma. I don’t think this is like an Agility thing (chuckles).

(Janine chuckles)

Austin: “If you have a skill that pertains to the task you’re performing, add one to that trait score. The resulting number is the card count for the Trait Check.

Janine: Um... I— is this kind of plying on Insight?

Austin: Mmm?

Janine: Because—

Austin: “Perceiving others’ intentions.” A little bit, yeah! I’d say— I’d give you the one card for it. Sure.

Janine: Okay.

Austin: Otherwise it’s gonna be— this is a hard thing to do.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: To be like, “I’m gonna order a drink at a Gatsby party so that Gatsby notices me” is a kind of a hard thing to do (chuckles).

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: I get it. I think it’s a fun, it’s a fun Check. But I think it’s a hard Check.

Janine: Insight makes more sense than the other things I have, which are Diplomacy, Humanities, Sciences, or Stealth, I mean...

Austin: Yeah, just take— yeah, you’re good. Take the one to that—

Art: Unless you’re gonna make one. Then maybe it’s science (chuckles).

(Janine laughs)

Austin: (laughs) Right! Exactly. You can go ahead and draw your first card.

Janine: I’m purple, right?

Austin: That is the— You’re purple, that is the three of Spades which, which you could probably guess is going to be harder than a three. As a reminder, four is routine stuff, six is easy stuff, eight is average stuff, ten is challenging stuff, Q— Queen (chuckles) is hard stuff, and Aces are incredible difficulty.

Ali: Is there...

Art: You skip a lot of numbers...

Austin: It’s every other.

Ali: ...a way I can assist?

Austin: You can assist! Somehow.

Ali: How do you do that? How do we... let me look at my stuff.

Janine: Also, how many cards do I have total?

Austin: You look at your stuff.

Janine: Three? Two?

Austin: What is your Charisma?

Janine: Uhh... Two.

Austin: So you have three because you have two plus the one from Insight.

Janine: Alright.

Austin: And then you're going to decide after each one and remember that you also have Moxie that you can spend. To get bonuses or to just do some stuff.

Janine: Mm-hmm.

Austin: So like, you can increase your card count by one. You can gain a Boon by spending one? You can shape the narrative, which maybe is actually what you might want to end up doing here, if this goes bad (chuckles)? But go ahead. Uh... Are you gonna help? Caitlyn?

Ali: Um, yeah! I'd like to, I just don't know how to.

Austin: You just name the skill. And what it does is it increases the number on the card by one. And you explain how you're doing it.

Ali: Sure. Okay, I think I'm going to use my Sense skill in that case? I think that the way that Caitlyn can probably help here is by being able to identify someone who's probably like, not *in* but close enough to Goldfinch's like inner circle?

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Ali: Or at least what Caitlyn understands to be?

Austin: To like make sure that the news gets to her or whatever?

Ali: Right, yeah, I think that there— Yeah, there's value in being like, "Oh, you have to make sure the right person overhears this."

Austin: Right. Right.

Ali: Okay!

Austin: Yeah, so increase all your card draws by one here, I'm guessing. You're not—

Art: I'm not gonna *assist* at this, but I do have a solid plan B.

Austin: Okay.

(Ali laughs)

Janine: Okay, that's good to know.

Austin: That's good to know. Go ahead and flip your second card, presumably— that is a five of Hearts, so are you going to keep the five of Hearts? As a reminder, there's another element of

this, which is that the, the Suit also determines the degree of success or failure. A Club is bad, and a Spade is good, in terms of getting the, like, secondary part of the check, if that makes sense.

Janine: Yeah. Uh... I think I'm gonna keep going.

Austin: Okay! Third and final card!

Janine: King of Spades—

Austin: That is a *King* of Spades, which is actually an Ace of Spades—

Art: Bumped up to an Ace, yeah.

Austin: Right, so! I'm guessing you're gonna keep (laughs) the Ace of Spades.

Janine: Yeah. (chuckles)

Austin: All right! With a success— with a Boon— with a Spade, you get a Boon on a success, which means that you get an additional benefit. “A Boon makes things more difficult for the target of the Trait Check or provides you with some sort of benefit. You and the GM work out what the Boon is. Some examples appear in the Trait descriptions.” So like, their example of a Charisma Boon is... “You get more information. The target tells you a secret. Sway people more than you initially intended, etc.”

I think this is a... I think I roll this into, like... In general, the party, your group is suddenly in good graces? Like the socialising you have to do to slowly work your way towards Gale Green not only *works*, not only does she overhear this, not only is she like “Huh!”. In general— I mean, you tell me what the three of you are doing as you're socialising tonight? But it's *working* and you're like turning the crowd to your side, if that makes sense?

What is the— I want an example from each of you, like, what is the story you tell or a party trick you do?

(Ali chuckles)

Austin: Or something that is impressive. That you impressed people with.

Janine: Umm... (chuckles) Oh, I have one. Um.

Austin: Mm-hmm?

Janine: I think the thing that Chanti does is... You know. She spent a lot of money on clothing and stuff. She's gotta cut corners somewhere. I think the bird on her head is like a real bird?

Austin: (laughing) Uh-huh?

(Art laughs)

Janine: But it's like a real bird who's like agreed to (chuckles) play it being fake?

Austin: Oh my Goddd...

Janine: So I think the party trick she does is that she sort of fakes like it's, like it's, like it's... kind of like a clockwork bird?

Austin: Uh-huh (chuckles). Great.

Janine: So she can like make it like flap its wings really awkwardly on command or like let out a single chirp. And everyone's like, probably like—

Art: The old fake clockwork bird gag!

(Janine and Austin laugh)

Austin: Uh-huh! God...

Janine: It's very novel, you know? It's very innovative and different and fun...

Austin: Amazing. Caitlyn, Verge, and Champ? Or story, it doesn't *have* to be...

Ali: Yeah. My first thought was like her doing like card tricks or whatever cause it would obviously be very easy for her (laughs).

Austin: Yeah, totally! God, are you doing like fucking supernatural portal-using card tricks? Cause you have like the secret compartment, right? You have like the—

Ali: Yeah, yeah, no, it's exactly that. (laughs) It's like— (laughs) Yeah. I'm pulling a card out of my sleeve but like, you know, stupid and weird because it's (laughs) all superhero stuff.

Austin: (claps) "Unbelievable!"

(Janine chuckles)

Ali: Right, but it's not exactly— like it's hard to pull away from that idea because like, in the spirit of having a good time with a bunch of drunk people, it's like an easy fun thing to do?

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Ali: Um... So yeah.

Austin: Um, Champ.

Art: Alright, I'm gonna have to workshop this a little bit (chuckles). But I think it's just Elena getting like a *little* drunk, identifying someone that like— you ever been like a— Hmm... I'm not gonna ask this as a question, but just as a statement.

You know when you're at a party and there's someone who's like *the* asshole?

Austin: Yeah!

(Janine laughs)

Art: It's in every party, there's a person who's just the *most* drunk or like the most *turned* up?

Austin: (chuckles) And if you look around and can't find that person (laughs)...

(Janine laughs)

Ali: Bad news—

Austin: (laughing) It might be you. (laughs) Yeah.

Art: Yeah.

(Ali laughs)

Art: And I think like, I just want to like paint this like montage of this person, like, you know, being a drunken dick? And then on like the third or fourth one, Elena just comes up and just like, punches him out of the party?

Austin: Ohh! Great.

Art: Just like one of those like comic book, like cartoony like, the uppercut that takes someone *over a hedge*?

Austin: Yeah!

(Janine chuckles)

Austin: One of the doormen comes over and like drags him away, and gives you like the like, "Okay, like— Yeah! Damn!" (laughs)

(Janine laughs)

Art: Yeah.

Austin: “Did our work for us! Shit.”

Ali: Everyone cheers—

Austin: Yeah, exactly!

Ali: —as he falls into the pool. (laughs)

Austin: (chuckles) Yeah, exactly.

Art: Over the hedge, into a pool, yeah (chuckles).

(Janine laughs)

Austin: Into the pool, exactly.

Ali: Oh my God...

Austin: And at that point—

Art: Pants fall down, it’s a whole— (laughs)

Austin: Right. (laughs) And at that point, I think, two different conversations get struck up at the same time. The first is with you, Caitlyn. This is a youngish woman, I’d say like in her upper 20s. Who is in... I have a picture of her, actually. Where’d she go?

This woman. Who, if you do a search on the internet for Nancy Cunard? C-U-N-A-R-D. You will find lots of images of her throughout her life, from when she was a very young, like I said earlier, an it girl. Kind of just like a... The equivalent— like a party girl or someone who was just like a socialite who hung around and like everyone knew? Through her like middle age where, as she grew up, she became like this— She was an heiress who became like a social activist, and like an anti-racist and a publisher and an essayist and supported the, like the arts and the Harlem Renaissance and stuff. She’s sick.

But I think it’s just this look. It’s just this like, kind of like a... a black dress that has a little more volume than a lot of the ones that we’ve seen so far? With like a white fringe? Lots of like, like, a *dozen* very thin arm bangles? Like gold arm bangles? Her hair is, like, how— someone who knows how hair works describe this hair in this shot that I just posted?

Art: Short!

Austin: (sighs) Someone who knows hair (chuckles)? It’s like wavy—

Janine: It’s finger waves, right? It’s—

Austin: Yeah...

Janine: It's like a bob with the really tightly gelled down finger waves.

Austin: Love it.

Ali: Right. Yeah.

Austin: This is the model for me for her. Kind of very pale but with dark features, dark hair, dark eyes, you know. Obviously it's a black and white photo so some of that stuff is not necessarily—I don't know what color lipstick she has on? But it *fee/s* like she has like, paler skin but with like dark features

And *she* says to you, Caitlyn.

Austin (as the **young woman**): Exciting night we're having—

Austin: Her voice is, her voice is a little more like mid-Atlantic.

Austin (as the **young woman**): (deeper and slower) Exciting night we're having.

Austin: And you recognise her as the woman who, you know, that Hollis was seeing. This is Alexandra Hughes—

Ali: Ohhhhh...

Austin: —who happens to be staying at the Canary, at the Grand Canary. The second conversation that gets struck up is between Gale Green and you, Chanti! She approaches you— like, there's *no* sneaking up on (chuckles), on anyone here when you're Gale Green. It's a little hard to get away from people? But she manages to kind of, you know, move toward you. And I think to some degree you're caught up in the— between your bird tricks, between the Champ knocking someone the fuck out.

(Janine chuckles)

Austin: Between the card tricks, your whole crew has gathered quite a little group around them? And so when she breaches that group, it's kind of like, "Ooh. Ooh!" You know? "Gale's here!" And she does walk up to you and says,

Austin (as **Gale Green**): Interesting drink. Who taught you how to make that? Or who told you— who told you about that drink?

Janine (as **Grouse**): A friend of mine has it pretty often. I thought I'd take the opportunity to try it for myself.

Austin (as **Gale**): What do you think of it?

Janine (as **Grouse**): Um. It's good! I like the citrus. Adds a brightness.

(Austin chuckles)

Austin (as **Gale**): (sighs) Youth. Welcome to my party, I don't think we've had the chance to meet. Would you care for a tour?

Janine (as **Grouse**): I would love a tour.

Austin: As a reminder, Gale Green here is in her late thirties.

TIMESTAMP [02:00:00]

Austin: Early forties? There is a degree to which she like has very gracefully moved from like the sort of social standing of young auteur into patron? Which we already saw last year with Messy Business. But here, I just want to underscore, again, that the... It's not necessarily clear, even as she begins to give you this tour... There's an air of (sighs)... There's an air of like an unfit—

You know, there's a point at which a puzzle comes together and you go, "Oh, I know what I'm—" Or like a Picross puzzle. You know the point in the Picross puzzle where you're like, "Oh, I see I'm making a garden hose. I see it now." Or whatever. (chuckles) Garden hose is a bad example, but. "I'm making a tulip!" And you go, "Oh, that's a tulip!" There's not enough here for you to even get the feeling necessarily... You have this sense that like she's comfortable in her skin. She's in command of her faculties and yet *something* is missing. And you're not sure what, and it's clear that she doesn't even necessarily know what that is.

But she gives you a tour and it's like, here is the dining— here's the first of the dining rooms. Here is a, you know, the master closet. Here is a, you know, the music room where there's like a piano for entertaining guests. Here is a different parlour. Here is a library. And you can have this conversation with her as you're going on this tour.

Champ, I wanted to know, which of the two groups or two, you know, groups of people are you staying with here? Are you staying with Chanti? Or are you staying with Key?

Art: Um... I mean, I'm more *interested* in Chanti, but I'm worried that I'm intruding.

Austin: Mmm.

Art: But I'm gonna intrude. That's the one.

Austin: (chuckles) Okay.

Art: I love drama.

Austin: (laughs) She is not going to breach this any further, you're going to have to be the one who like... brings up something else at this point, you know what I mean?

Janine: Um... (sighs) I guess we also kind of don't know how much to trust her. In this situation— (chuckles)

Austin: Yes.

Janine: And that's awkward.

Austin: I think, of the group, you're the person who probably has the most reason to trust her, in the sense that—

Janine: Yeah...

Austin: —you've heard lots of positive stories, you know?

Janine: But also I don't want to be naive about... You know.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Janine: Things are clearly different in this world, in a way that Chanti, [pron. Chan-*t*], I don't think, has... Sorry, Chanti [pron. Chan-*ti*]— I said it the way you say it! In a way that I don't think Chanti has like a full grasp on. And is aware she doesn't have a full grasp on— like, she knows a lot of stuff going on in this world that...

Austin: Right.

Janine: Doesn't really fit with her understanding. Um... (pause) Which is why I'm struggling with like, does she even say she's not from here?

Austin: Mm-hmm...

Janine: Although, I guess... I guess that Gale would also, would be open to that idea for sure (chuckles)? Like, she clearly knows you can hop around and stuff?

Austin: Yeah. Well, she at least... Again, Gale is someone who at least knows... At *this* point, there is, there is this like classic euphemism of being from out of town. You know?

Janine: Mm-hmm. Oh! Um...

Austin: Mm-hmm?

Janine: This is... (chuckles) This is, this is such an aside, but it also feels like the most honest thing for Chanti to ask about, without revealing too much all at once. I think she says,

Janine (as **Grouse**): I think I saw a picture of you once! Like as a kid.

Austin: You're in, let's say, the study, which is— like her personal study. This is like the right moment to speak to her, there's no one else around in this moment. It's like, you know, nicely furnished. Nicely appointed. Lots of dark woods. You know, there's a kind of warm color from the electrical lighting in here.

And... I think she kind of freezes for a moment. And she says,

Austin (as **Gale**): A picture of *me*, as a child? (sighs) H-how? How do you know it was me? Tell me about it.

Janine: Um, was it, she was like sitting on a swing or something?

Austin: Yeah, she was like sitting on a swing set. Yeah.

Janine: I think that's—

Austin: And just had like piercing eyes, you know?

Janine: Yeah. I think Chanti just says something to that effect, like,

Janine (as **Grouse**): Well, it looked a lot like you. You were like a kid and you were like sitting on a swing. And there was just something about... about this little girl's eyes.

Austin (as **Gale**): Hm. I have a vague memory of such a thing. I... (sighs) When you reach my age, youth is like another world.

Austin: And she sits down at her desk. And takes out a bottle of whiskey (chuckles) and says,

Austin (as **Gale**): Would you or your friend, I'm sorry, I didn't catch your name. Would either you like another drink?

Janine (as **Grouse**): Sure.

Art (as **The Champ**): Yeah, brandy! In one of those swishy glasses.

(Janine laughs)

Austin (as **Gale**): (smiling) Of course.

Janine: A swishter. Swishter?

Austin: Swishter, that's— Mm-hmm! (chuckles) She pours you them, the drinks, and says,

Austin (as **Gale**): (sighs) So. How do you know Caitlyn Key? Are you also troublemakers?

Austin: She says with a smirk.

Art (as **The Champ**): Ha!

Austin (as **Gale**): I'll take that as a yes!

(Janine chuckles)

Janine (as **Grouse**): I prefer to think of myself as a trouble-solver, but that's not everyone's perspective, (chuckles) I'm sure.

Austin (as **Gale**): Hm. A trouble solver. What sort of troubles do you solve?

Janine (as **Grouse**): (sighs) What kind of troubles you got?

Austin (as **Gale**): Big ones. Big, weird ones.

Janine (as **Grouse**): The weirder the better.

Austin (as **Gale**): (inhales, then sighs)

Austin: Give me a Charisma check again.

Janine: Um. Is this is another situation where... Insight or Diplomacy—?

Austin: Yeah, Insight or Diplomacy. Yeah. Definitely, so take one. Are you helping, Elena?

Art: Sure. Believe I'm also helping with Diplomacy. I was being very honest just then.

Austin: Yeah, you were! That's true. Go ahead and give me your first draw!

Janine: That's a five...

Austin: That is a five of Diamonds (chuckles). Six of Diamonds now.

Janine: Let's keep it going!

Austin: Uh-huh!

Janine: That's the Queen of Hearts and I will take the Queen of Hearts.

Austin: You'll take the Queen of Hearts. You will take the Queen of Hearts which becomes a King of Hearts. Hearts does not give you a Boon but it is, it is not also— it is neither a Club, which would be bad. She says... And you're stopping there? I'm guessing?

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: Okay.

Austin (as **Gale**): This is my city. And something's wrong with it. My city is sick. I don't... It's always *been* sick. But in the last year, something's dragged it down. I don't— (sighs) It's dragged *me* down. (pause)

I can't keep focus. I don't... I leave things half-finished. The city *feels* half-finished. There are roads that I don't... I know them, I *know* how to move through this city. But the roads aren't there. The—

Art (as **The Champ**): I don't know if that's a you problem. It is *bonkers* out there.

Austin (as **Gale**): (smiling) It's always been *bonkers* out there. Miss Flores. But. This is something else. This is a strangeness. This is... This is room half-furnished, this is... I don't know.

And I can't— It won't crystallise in my head. It feels like I'm missing something big, something important. And I keep reaching... I keep reaching for someone's hand, and it isn't there. And I don't know who!

Austin: She's like blinking rapidly to stave off a sort of... To stave off tears she doesn't even know why they would be welling up.

Janine (as **Grouse**): Hmm. You don't know who?

Austin (as **Gale**): I don't. Something in the order. The drink. It made me feel the same way.

Janine (as **Grouse**): If I knew who, would you want to know? Who?

Austin (as **Gale**): Absolutely.

Janine (as **Grouse**): Do you remember living outside of Blough?

Austin (as **Gale**): Like a lot of young women, I spent some time out of town. I saw the world. I had family elsewhere. I remember, I... Pleasant days. But this is my city and I'm home.

Janine (as **Grouse**): But the hand you're reaching for isn't here! It's out there.

Austin (as **Gale**): Was it always out there?

Janine (as **Grouse**): I mean, I think so. I haven't heard otherwise—

Austin (as **Gale**): This is... Do you know something or not? This is getting to be a lot of talking in circles, and I have a lot of guests—

Art (as **The Champ**): I know!

(Janine chuckles)

Austin (as **Gale**): (chuckling) To entertain!

Janine (as **Grouse**): I mean, I just don't... I just don't want to say, if it's a thing that's just gonna make you sadder.

Art (as **The Champ**): You can't control people's emotions— just, just... She's. She's suffering! Just tell her!

Janine (as **Grouse**): (sighs) So, part of the reason that I came to your party tonight... with my friends, is because I wanted to ask you some questions about something that's going on here. But that wasn't all of it.

Where I'm from, there's a person who helped me a lot when I was figuring some things out. And... You, I think, you... I guess. Were very important— *Are* very important to her.

And then you left which was understandable. I think she understood. She tells me she understood.

But I think it definitely still... She definitely still reaches for a hand but she knows whose hand she's reaching for.

Austin (as **Gale**): I'm sorry, this... Whoever this person is, I... I believe you! Maybe I'm just tired—

Janine (as **Grouse**): But you don't remember?

Austin (as **Gale**): I just need... I'm going to go talk to some more guests.

Janine (as **Grouse**): Can I just, before you go, ask you one thing real quick?

Austin (as **Gale**): Of course, A refill.

Janine (as **Grouse**): No, no. I just wanted to know if you knew anything—

Art (as **The Champ**): But also, yes.

Janine (as **Grouse**): (chuckles) If you knew anything about the... the pumping. The water pumping.

Austin (as **Gale**): (sighs) The Whitakers.

Janine (as **Grouse**): Mm-hmm.

Austin (as **Gale**): I... Some big construction project, they asked me if I wanted in on it, I have *no* interest in real estate. I think they were describing, um... a *tunnel* somewhere. And I said, "We already have so many highways in development, do we need *tunnels* too?"

Anyway, that's the pumping. They, they need to get the water out (chuckles). So they can put the tunnel in.

Janine (as **Grouse**): Mm...

Art: I don't think that's how you build a tunnel!

Janine: No, that's a thing. Because if you're digging the tunnel below the water table level, it'll flood. From the groundwater. So you would need to pump the water out, while you, while you're like reinforcing the walls and stuff. I think. That's my understanding. That makes sense, though. I don't know if that applies to LA?

Austin: That was also my belief—

Janine: But— (chuckles)

Austin: Yeah— (chuckles) Well, you have to remember like, we talked about this during that last, during the last... The last Blough game, that like there *was* a lot of wetlands in LA. I don't—I know that they got drained so that you could build suburbs instead. And this is just that, but—

Janine: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

Austin: —this tunnel project.

Janine: I have to say, in grade seven geography I thought the water table unit was the most useless garbage but it's really paying off right now! (chuckles)

Austin: (laughs) Finally! Um. Also, we know that this is not a simple tunnel. The last time that we talked about the tunnel project or saw it on screen was in the last— Was it the last arc? Was the horror game that I forget the name of now. Catch the Devil?

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: And what we saw looked like a sci-fi, like, Hadrian Collider-type vibe. So, maybe a little more complex than like “Put some cars down a tunnel,” but.

TIMESTAMP [02:15:00]

Austin: Your characters don’t know that! So. So yeah. So she says,

Austin (as **Gale**): Yeah, I— the Whitakers, I want to say the Nebraska family, some others. (inhales) I don’t get involved with their types, (exhales) as best as I can. There’s something about them. And if you’ll pardon me. That makes me want to punch them across the face.

Art (as **The Champ**): Yeah! Uh-huh!

Janine (as **Grouse**): You could!

Austin (as **Gale**): No...

Art (as **The Champ**): You definitely could!

Austin (as **Gale**): I hear you were pretty good at that stuff once.

Austin (as **Gale**): Punching people in the face? Where’d you hear that story?

Art (as **The Champ**): Yeah, with your superhero wife!

Janine (as **Grouse**): You’ve lived an interesting life (chuckles).

Austin (as **Gale**): With— excuse me (laughs). With *what*? I have never been married.

Art (as **The Champ**): I think you were! (chuckles)

Janine (as **Grouse**): I mean, you don’t remember punching people either. It’s— This is a talk for... a less alcoholic night. (sighs)

Austin: She’s been looking past you, at this point. You know. She’s completely... This is like more of— In some ways, this was the thing— This was the spark that— Hearing “your *superhero wife*” was direct enough to kind of spark something.

(Janine chuckles)

Austin: But also something very sad and uncomfortable. And so she stands up and says,

Austin (as **Gale**): Well. I’m sure you’ve many other people that *you* can entertain. Also. Thanks for seeing me. Thanks... I hope you enjoy the rest of your stay.

Austin: Meanwhile, Caitlyn, you've been hanging out with Alexandra Hughes, (smiling) who has been telling you all of the latest gossip about everyone in this room! Uh, who is fucking who, who is *not* fucking who but saying they are. Who is *stealing* from who, who is actually worth nothing. Who is a secret, you know, millionaire who is hiding it, and pretending to, you know, be a young upstart, so that when they suddenly have money, they can pretend that they made it big. Who's an informant and who's a snitch.

You're just getting, you're just getting, like, both barrels of goss right now.

Ali: Yeah, I, um... It's great. I'm enjoying it.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Ali: Um, there's— I've been trying to think about this because, as good as it's been to talk in (chuckling) character as Caitlyn, I kind of want to talk around it because I feel like there's... There *has* to be a less direct way to sort of go about the information that she wants?

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Ali: And... I know that, like, meeting someone at a party who wants to talk shit about a bunch of people (chuckles) doesn't mean that that person is going to be very open and honest.

Austin: Right.

Ali: Speaking as someone who talks shit about people at parties.

Austin: Uh-huh!

Ali: (laughs) But I *do* think that there's like, if you spend a long enough time talking to someone and endearing yourself to them by being like, "Ha ha! Yeah, let's go make fun of this person!"

Austin: (laughing) Uh-huh!

Ali: "Let's go see what's going on in the wine room!"

Austin: Yes!

Ali: You could eventually get to a place where it seems like Caitlyn is sort of griping about what she's been dealing with in her daily life?

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Ali: That like *leads*... to getting information about this person's relationship with Hollis, right?

Austin: Yeah. And that's— like in terms of like, "I've shared my stuff. Now it's time for you to share about your personal stuff!" Is it like that vibe? Or...

Ali: I think it's a little bit— That's the thing, I don't know if it would be like, "Well, I'm working with this kid, and, you know, he's in trouble, yada yada."

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Ali: And like trying to get them to come to the same point?

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Ali: So she'll be like... You know, "You're on the opposite side of this. Let's talk shit about what's happening." Or if it should be the other thing of being like, "Well, what's wrong with you?" Because I don't know with what we get more information. You know?

Austin: Give me the— give me the cards and we'll see—

Ali: Sure.

Austin: We'll decide, basically, based on what happens here.

Ali: Yes (laughs).

Austin: So this is definitely a Charisma Check again.

Ali: Yes, yes, yes.

Austin: Based on what you're describing. Do you have a skill?

Ali: Uh... I think that my Sense skill still works here obviously.

Austin: Mm... I think it— I don't know that it does here!

Ali: Yeah...

Austin: Cause Sense, before, was like good for like spotting the right people to be around. But it is literally like sight, hearing, smell (chuckles).

Ali: Right. Yeah.

Austin: Whereas Insight is specifically the sort of like, those things but about people.

Ali: Okay, yeah, that's fair.

Austin: You might just not have something here.

Ali: Yeah, yeah.

Austin: You have Moxie that you can spend, obviously.

Ali: Sure. I have a bunch of Moxie, I would like to spend some. Yeah, this isn't gonna be a Sleight of Hand (laughing) situation—

Austin: No.

Ali: But I'll spend the Moxie! Um... Sure. So this is...

Austin: I'm double-checking how that works, one second.

Ali: Okay, yeah.

Austin: You don't have to spend it yet. You can do it at *any* point during the Trait or Power Check, but you can only do it once. So once per Check. So you can start this, you can— You have two cards right now, you could— If your first one's like the Ace of Spades, then like you don't need to spend that Moxie, in other words (chuckles).

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Yeah. So go ahead and draw your first card!

Ali: And that's a six of... Diamonds?

Austin: That's a six of Diamonds. Yeah. Do you keep it or do you draw again?

Ali: I'm drawing up to three cards here with the—?

Austin: If you spend Moxie, yes.

Ali: If I spend the Moxie, I get the third card— Okay. I'm gonna pull a second one. That is a—

Austin: The six of Spades!

Ali: (laughing) Six of Spades...

Austin: Spades is good! Spades means that, even if it's a failure, you get a Boon or you get a Motivation, rather. But... It's still a six.

Ali: Oh, fuck. Um... There's a lot of cards out there that are better than a six...

Austin: There are.

Ali: But I don't want to fuck up more... This is a tough one.

Austin: This *is* a tough one.

Ali: Um...

Art: Most cards are higher than a six.

Austin: And you've drawn two of them! So there's— Two sixes are not in the deck (chuckles).

Art: Well that's not— (chuckles)

Ali: But there's all those fours and all those fives, and all those twos in there...

Austin: But there's *more* cards above, six or above than six or under.

Ali: Oh, right, I guess because you get up to 10 and then you start adding more... I'm gonna do it. Oh, it's a four of Clubs, that's fantastic—

Austin: (sharp inhale) Nightmare! Four of *Clubs* (chuckles) is terrible!

Ali: Great.

Austin: "If you fail on a Trait Check, *and* end up with Clubs as the Suit for your card, you Botch. You also Botch if you flip the bad Joker. Not only do you fail, the GM imposes an extra setback due to failure. In combat a Botch might" blah, blah, blah. "If your character is trying to impress someone, they might anger them instead." That's not what happens here. Don't worry!

I think what happens here is... The first thing that happens is, she says,

Austin (as **Alexandra Hughes**): (sighs) Verge. Don't...

Austin: So I think you try to come at it sideways, right? That's the setup. Is I think you tried to do the thing where you're like, you explain— you talk about your day and like, try to like, "Oh, I'm working with this kid." (chuckles)

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: And she says,

Austin (as **Alexandra**): Verge. I know. I— Don't try to play me. I had a good time talking about all of the inadequacies of everyone in this building. That was a lot of fun. If you're going to come at me, come at me direct. Ask me for the favour. I'm—

Austin: This isn't her voice. Her voice is longer. Because I haven't been doing the voice, I didn't have it.

Austin (as **Alexandra**): (slower, smoothly) Verge... If you're going to ask me for something, ask me directly. Don't play games. And at this point, I don't know that I'll answer anyway. I feel like you are a little out of your depth. I don't want you or anyone else getting hurt. And the second that we start telling the *truth*, the truth is much, *much* more dangerous than anything anyone in this city knows.

Austin: And at that moment, the door opens. And one of the doormen comes in! And says,

Austin (as a **doorman**): Hey, uh. Miss Key. There are some officers here looking for you.

[Extracurricular: Out of Time by Jack de Quidt plays until it fades to silence]

END OF TRANSCRIPT [02:26:26]