

Live at the Table 37: September 2020 - Good Society 01

Transcriber: Ishkhan

[Episode begins.]

[MUSIC - The Ball at the Pellier's (Good Society) by Jack de Quidt - PLAYS] [[click for link](#)]

JANINE: Welcome to kinda Live At The Table, an actual play podcast focused on critical worldbuilding, smart characterization, and fun interaction between good friends. I'm your host, Aust— [laughs] Austin Walker.

AUSTIN: No. That's not true. That's not true.

[ALI laughs]

JACK: Oh, wow.

JANINE: I just copied an intro, is that not...

AUSTIN: That's how it goes. Yeah.

JANINE: I just— Okay.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: Um, did I get it wrong? I should start from the top, right?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: Um, so, welcome to Live at the Table. We're playing The Good Society [[click for link](#)] today. Today. It's a Jane Austen RPG by Hayley Gordon and Vee Hendro. I'm your facilitator, Janine. I'm @bleatingheart on Twitter. And joining me today we have, in alphabetical order, Ali Acampora.

ALI: Um, hi, I'm Ali. You can find me over @ali_west on Twitter. Um, I have a Star Wars podcast [laughs] with some people at um, uh, what's our Twitter for that?

AUSTIN: It's @More_Civilized.

ALI: Underscore civilized, yeah. Go find it. Go listen to it. Thank you.

JANINE: And we also have Austin Walker.

AUSTIN: Hi, I'm Austin Walker, you can find me on Twitter @austin_walker, and you can continue to support the show at friendsatthetable.cash [\[click for link\]](#).

JANINE: And we have Jack de Quidt.

JACK: Hi, I'm Jack, you can find me on twitter @notquitereal, and buy any of the music featured on the show at notquitereal.bandcamp.com [\[click for link\]](#).

JANINE: Sure can. And also our website is friendsatthetable.net [\[click for link\]](#), should have mentioned that. Didn't, though. [laughs] Um. So we're here— I said kinda Live at the Table because we're trying something a— I guess this is new for us, right? We haven't done this before, we haven't done a...

AUSTIN: Um, we did one pre-recorded live in a sense, which was the Lasers and Feelings. Super pre-recorded.

JANINE: [crosstalk] Oh, right.

AUSTIN: Because Live at the Table didn't exist yet.

JANINE: [crosstalk] That's true.

AUSTIN: And then I guess if you wanted to count either of our live shows as pre-recorded, in a sense, because they were recorded before a live audience and then released.

[ALI and JANINE laugh]

AUSTIN: You know. But I think that this is still distinct.

JANINE: Yeah. This is, this is a slightly different intention and execution I guess.

AUSTIN: This is a very, uh, Jack de Quidt and KB uh, hallowstream technique.

JANINE: [laughs] Yes.

JACK: KB's pro method for doing streams: weeks in advance and then going, "Here we go!"

JANINE: [laughs] Um, I'm gonna turn Jack down real quick, just for me. Just a little bit hot. There we go.

JACK: That's the sound I make when I get turned down.

AUSTIN: Honk!

JANINE: Beep.

JACK: In Discord.

[ALI and JANINE laugh]

JANINE: Um, so yeah, this is technically our Live for September, but it's also going to be a seasonal Live game. We are returning vaguely to the setting that we did for Shooting the Moon, which was the sort of romance-based game that Jack and Ali and I did last year and the year before. We've also brought the setting back for Quest, for Grand Tableau, and so now we're gonna be fleshing it out a little more. Maybe decide on a name for the town finally. [laughs]

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: Oh, did you not— Did you not pick one overnight? I thought you were gonna pick one overnight.

JANINE: I tried, and I got halfway there.

AUSTIN: [crosstalk] It's hard.

JANINE: But we'll get to it.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JANINE: Um, so. Right out of the gate, let's... This is also my first time like, running a game for us. And we've picked a fairly soft one where you can technically play Good Society GM-less, but it's recommended that your first time you have a facilitator, so here we are.

My goals as the facilitator—these are slightly modified from the ones in the book—are to respect the decisions made in collaboration and foster a collaborative environment; to ask questions and build on the answers; to bring home the consequences of our character actions and our setting; to add drama and complication, but only if needed; and to be a fan of the players.

The goals of the players, as stated in the real book, are to respect the decisions of collaboration; to take action and pursue desires; to accept and orchestrate your own misfortunes; to contribute to the story; and to support other players.

So one of the first things they suggest doing— This is a thing that like, because we're rolling into this game kind of hot, we are playing with the abbreviated sort of rules and systems, we have a bunch of stuff set up already. And we did a bunch of sort of prep kind of decisions already. But what we didn't do was sort of mention what Austen as a setting, as a theme, like Jane Austen's work: what it means to us and what we kind of want to get out of a game based on that sort of thing.

I think it'd probably be worth doing that now as we're sort of doing the initial collaboration stuff, because it, you know, one, goes hand in hand with a lot of that stuff; but two, will give everyone an idea of how we actually want to play this, what we actually want to do...tonally and, you know, more explicitly with characters.

So for me, I'll just start off. For me, Jane Austen's stuff is very much about character, and very much about interaction, and very much about... You know, things can get very dramatic and things can get very intricate, but I think to me, it's primarily about just like, people being human and kind of, making very human mistakes but usually kind of...things coming around in the end. And I think that's what makes it appealing to me.

It's also very dialogue-heavy, it's very... I think it can have a reputation as being very academic, but it feels, you know, very readable today and very relatable today also. So that's for me what I'd like to kind of...replicate? Or hang our hat on a little bit?

Does anyone else have any feelings?

AUSTIN: Yeah, I think that that fits my relationship pretty well with Austen stuff. Like, I think her work is very banter-y in a way that does not sound like Marvel Cinematic Universe banter, which is to say the sort of banter I still really like. Um, there is a... The way that she makes characters seem deeply fond of or spiteful of each other is really appealing? And in general the ways in which people are caught up between their desire, to use the term that the game pulls out, and then kind of their obligations are really interesting.

And you know, most of the time in her stories, those—whatever that conflict is is resolved, and often in a way that is, you know, not a *deus ex machina* necessarily, except in the ways in which the right person entering your life can be like a gift from a god. And that is... I have a place in my heart for that even if most of my storytelling would look sideways at the idea of being able to, for instance, escape from or move into a position above whatever the responsibilities you wished to evade were. It's still very enjoyable as a, you know, person reading or watching these stories.

JACK: There's like a—

ALI: Yeah.

JACK: Oh, sorry.

ALI: [crosstalk] Oh. You can go ahead.

JACK: You go ahead.

ALI: Okay. Yeah, I... It's weird that I feel like I'm coming from this a little bit sideways 'cause I haven't read Jane Austen's stuff or watched a lot of the things inspired for it? In preparation for this game, I marathoned through all of Bridgertons.

[AUSTIN and JANINE laugh]

ALI: Which was the new Netflix special. And also the past two years I watched an episode of Downton Abbey a week, so. [laughs]

JANINE: Did you watch Clueless?

ALI: Did I watch Clueless? No. Wait, Clueless the movie?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: Yeah.

JANINE: Yeah, yeah.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: That's an Austen.

JANINE: [crosstalk] That's based on Emma. That's based on Jane Austen.

AUSTIN: That's based on Emma. Yeah.

JANINE: Loosely, but—

ALI: That's something— Yeah, that's another thing that I come to a Jane Austen where it's like, I— When I listen to the Beatles I'm like, "Oh this music is familiar to me, but not like, exciting, because all of music came from it I guess?" Or like, things have been inspired by it. So, yeah. I— [laughs]

But to what Austin was saying, the definite like, juxtaposition between like, someone's responsibility to their family versus like, their responsibility to what they want and what they need.

JANINE: Yeah.

ALI: The one question I really had, um, like thinking about Shooting the Moon in relation to this was like, how much we wanted to set this up as like, people within the society exist within the society. Like, are we doing straight, um, like girls have the seasons and they wear dresses and the thing that they want is marriage. Or is it like, we have—

JANINE: So we'll come to that with collaboration.

ALI: Okay, fair enough.

JANINE: We will— We will address that. This game is really good about making sure that people are on the same page there.

ALI: Okay, fair enough, yeah.

JANINE: So that'll be a thing that we'll definitely get into.

ALI: Okay, cool.

JACK: Um, I was— The only Jane Austen I ever read is *Pride and Prejudice*, which I read— It took me like, I think two calendar years to read that book, because I read, I'm a very slow reader. And I would have to go back and read the back half of every chapter whenever I picked it up again, and I really enjoyed it.

And I've seen some sort of BBC adaptations of other Austen things, but I'm not like, terribly familiar with her work. I do, I like the way that... It seems like her books balance that kind of like traditional, what we consider to be like the traditional sort of Austen-esque restraint of characters: characters giving longing glances but not actually saying anything, or wanting something very much and trying to move towards it obliquely, rather than directly. But there are also characters who make big swings. People are making big swings constantly in—

JANINE: Yeah.

JACK: —Austen's work. And it doesn't always go well. Like, regularly characters will um, try and act in their interests and go wildly off the course and into the rough in some respect. And I think that happens about as often as you get characters going, "Oh no, no, but I shouldn't," and holding back.

[ALI laughs]

JACK: And I think that's a really great dynamic, is like, a cast full of characters who hold back as much as they go wildly off the ropes.

JANINE: Yeah. Uh, I agree. I think it's...it's... Again, for all the flack that Austen can sometimes get by getting lumped in with a certain era of British literature in particular, her work is very much about like, characters who shoot their shot and characters who do not shoot their shot?

[ALI laughs]

JACK: Yes, yes. Absolutely.

JANINE: And the repercussions in both directions. So that's fun.

JACK: Or give up midway through shooting their shot.

JANINE: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. [laughs] So the first thing we should do is collaboration, which is where we decide the tone of the story, the historical—how important historical accuracy is going to be, how we're gonna treat the gender power balance, how much hidden information will be used in the game, and if there's anything that we should avoid or that we would really love to see. So that's the second page in our very, very good online—

JACK: So good.

JANINE: Play document. I wanna shout this document out specifically, because it's made—

AUSTIN: Oh, it's so good.

JANINE: —by, you know, it's by Story Brewers, it's by the people who made the game, and it's specifically for online play. In the bundle of like, materials and stuff for the game they have specific instructions for how to use this document. And it's really, it's fantastic. There are like, a handful of things that I wish were accounted for and aren't very...aren't, kind of? But also if you asked me, "Well, like, how would you account for it?" My answer is I don't know.

[ALI and JACK laugh]

JANINE: Um, so I feel like they've done a really exceptional job, like you can— There's all this, like, you can see a mouse, like there's a cycle of play on the side here and you can mouse over it and it'll tell you all the steps you have to do to set it up. Like, it's a dream. Um, I would be so much more nervous about running this game without this document, if I had to just do it all on Roll20. We do have a Roll20 because of course we do because I had to make a tablespace for it, but. We also have—

AUSTIN: It's a very pretty tablespace, for people who aren't looking at a video of this. Janine did a good job.

JANINE: It'll— It's— I'm very proud. I put the bowl of candy in the middle.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: The candy that stands out is the X candy? That is our X card.

AUSTIN: Wait, that's— Oh, I didn't realize that that's— I can't touch that.

[00:15:00]

JANINE: Oh, can't you?

JACK: Oh my god.

AUSTIN: I cannot.

JANINE: Hang on.

AUSTIN: Yeah. But that's very good.

[crosstalk]

JACK: Candy is off-limits.

AUSTIN: It's a pepper—

JANINE: Uh, token layer.

AUSTIN: Token. Uh-huh. You have to—

JANINE: Why can't—?

AUSTIN: You're gonna have to right click it and...

JANINE: Oh, I see. I see.

AUSTIN: Or double click it maybe.

JANINE: I double clicked it. Oh, controlled by...all players!

AUSTIN: Yeah, there you go.

JANINE: There we go. I always forget to do that.

AUSTIN: Awesome.

JANINE: Um, okay.

ALI: While we're just talking about the book and the preparation and everything, I just wanna shout out that like, the layout of this book is really gorgeous. The like, the YouTube materials of like—

JANINE: Yeah.

ALI: We're gonna talk through the, how to play this game was super great and super helpful. And then also—

JANINE: The YouTube videos are so digestible.

ALI: Yeah.

JANINE: Like, they're broken down by topic, they are like three-ish minutes long each, and then at the end there is just one whole play session you can just like, watch in one go. It's great. Sorry, I interrupted you there, what were you gonna say?

ALI: Um, the last thing I just wanted to shout out was the art by Raven Warner, which is like, gorgeous and fantastic and like, sets the tone of this book so well, so. Shout out to you, Raven. Good job.

[AUSTIN laughs]

JANINE: It's fantastic. Um, so, for collaboration here, this is kind of pre-set by the playset that we're gonna be playing with, because we're playing a game of fewer than three cycles, so we have picked a playset that we're mostly adhering to with some slight modifications. And it's in the romantic comedy thing.

So, in romantic comedy, actions have consequences but past misdemeanors can be recovered from. Fortunate and humorous coincidences can occur, and triumphant moments are possible. Connections respect their own interests but can be swayed. Society is quick to judge, but also quick to forget.

The book points out that a short game, so again three cycles or less, in the romantic comedy style is probably going to feel a little bit Oscar Wilde-y. And maybe a little less Jane Austen-y, but Oscar Wilde was still pretty cool, so I'm not upset about that at all. I think it's still gonna be fun. So the next one—

AUSTIN: [crosstalk] I love that this game has, or rather, I guess what I should say is, I wish video game difficulty sliders were presented this way instead.

JACK: Oh, my god.

[ALI laughs]

JANINE: Oh, sure, yeah.

AUSTIN: Right? Let me choose farce the next time I start Doom.

JACK: Turns all the physics way up.

AUSTIN: Yeah! Farce or drama, or you know, yeah.

JANINE: It makes all the persuasion checks way lower.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. Yeah.

JACK: Except for a *few*.

AUSTIN: Yeah, which are way harder.

JANINE: [crosstalk] Except for a few. Mhm.

AUSTIN: And have more absurd consequences.

JANINE: Um. So the next one is, Ali, kind of what you were getting at. The importance of historical accuracy. It's set at "somewhat important" right now, but a thing, an important thing to, I guess, mention is that because we are using our Marchmont kind of Shooting the Moon setting; that wasn't really a regency setting. That was like a weird sort of hybrid Victorian, Edwardian kinda Belle Epoque but also like... But also like one of the main characters wore a beanie. Like, it was a little bit all over the place.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: So, I don't think it makes sense to be like, "Historical accuracy is very important." But also, you know... Probably no one's gonna show up with a car, right?

JACK: Right.

ALI: For sure, yeah.

JACK: Or it would be like a really weird, like— That would be a *thing* if someone showed up with a car, right?

[crosstalk]

ALI: It would have to be...

AUSTIN: Trains have to exist.

JACK: Oh yeah, trains have to exist.

AUSTIN: Because you have the cafe that has the train, the toy train.

JANINE: The Glacier Express.

AUSTIN: Unless only toy trains exist, which is kind of cute. The idea that someone's invented the concept of the train but no one has made it, realized it. Like a toy spaceships.

JANINE: [crosstalk] We do also have modest and practical magics in this world, too.

JACK: Yeah, I was gonna say, you know. Um, this is sort of the Sofia Coppola version of it, right, where it's like people wearing sneakers in Marie Antoinette, or like—

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah.

JACK: Or they're like, vague Baz Luhrman, like, gun with "sword" written on it, where it's like—

AUSTIN: The fucking best thing that's ever existed.

JACK: I don't think anybody's gonna show up in the setting with a [laughs] with an iPhone or with a sports car.

AUSTIN: No.

JACK: Or even with a car, but at the same time it's like—

AUSTIN: Okay, but my facecast for my character is wearing a gold chain, so... And that's just the way it is.

ALI: Yeah.

JACK: And that's just the way it is!

AUSTIN: So... Sorry.

JANINE: So how about maybe a little important actually.

ALI: Yeah. Part of the question—

JANINE: Just based on the descriptions.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Um—

AUSTIN: Which is the lowest, to be clear, right? Is that the—

JANINE: Yes. We'll do the best job we can.

AUSTIN: [crosstalk] The options are a little important.

JANINE: But story is much more important than history. Somewhat important is like, "during breaks we'll look stuff up" kind of, and it's like, eh.

[ALI laughs]

JANINE: I don't know about that. Sorry what were you gonna say, Ali?

JACK: [crosstalk] "What year did Benjamin Disraeli die?" Sorry, go on.

ALI: Yeah, part of the question was like, I wasn't sure if the characters in this game would be looking at the characters from the Shooting the Moon game as part of the like, one character who's like, "Oh boy, they have a job in a [laughs] in a store, and I'd like to do that instead of getting married one day." Or is it like...

AUSTIN: Right.

ALI: Does it feel like it would be more engrained—

JACK: Yeah.

ALI: And like, part of the like, "Oh, your reputation is really good because your merchants are really good." Like, are we craftspeople, or...?

AUSTIN: I think it's really hard to separate this game from class in that way?

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Like—

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: You're— Because otherwise, you just go get a job and it's chill.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: Like, if it's possible for you to go get a job and it's chill and that doesn't mean like, ruin to your family, then you would do it, right?

ALI: I do feel like that, but I also feel like Shooting the Moon set up some of the thing where like, if your coats didn't sell that season, it would like—

AUSTIN: Right.

ALI: —make the reputation of your family really bad and like, make the wheels turn in the way that like, a Jane Austen setting can, but.

AUSTIN: Right. So like maybe the thing here is that like, you know. So, gentry to my knowledge, the sort of gentry that Jane Austen is talking about have a lot of their wealth being tied to the ownership of someone else's labor. Having a peasant class, right? Or not a peasant class but having a laboring class do your farming, or—

JANINE: They're landlords.

AUSTIN: Right, they're landlords. That's what they are, right? And what they own is farmland that people are working, or quarry, or some other sort of thing. Or it is just like a dense place where people are paying rent. And I wouldn't mind it being the case that here, that's tied to something else, but it's still gonna be industry, right? It's still gonna be your coats aren't selling, but whatever, right?

ALI: Oh, for sure.

JACK: And we know that this town is like, very industry focused in terms of like—

JANINE: Yeah.

JACK: It's municipal politics and in terms of the way that like, there are— The urchins are on some level unionized, or some group of them are?

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

JACK: Um, but I think are also being like, absolutely swindled by the adults. And like, you know. Didn't like a bunch of witches curse an entire...like, production line?

AUSTIN: The Velvet.

JACK: And that shut everything down?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Yeah.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: The Velvet Manor. Uh-huh.

JANINE: So—

JACK: Do we wanna talk quickly about the world? Or were you gonna come to that in a bit, Janine? If people haven't listened to the...

JANINE: I think— I think we'll come to that, and that can also be part of this conversation. What I was going to say is that, you know, Good Society, especially when you're looking at the new money, familial sort of background, industry does come into it where industry is at this point still a relatively new kind of thing.

Not in general, like there were rich merchants going back quite some time before the regency obviously. But I think that, for me, that's a lot of what I think of in terms of a moneyed class in this world, is people who have been in that game for a while. And it's the kind of thing where, you know, there was a point where your ancestors or whatever were the merchants and then the point where your privilege is to not have to be the merchant anymore. Or, you know, to have tradespeople that you work *with*.

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: But that you yourself are not, you don't— Like, you have the luxury. This is the thing that also gets mentioned in the book, like, there are genteel trades. Like, there're people who're in respectable trades, like you know, classic Austen stuff is the clergy and doctors and lawyers and judges and things like that. Those are genteel classes, but you know, the privilege is to not have to do any of those things, or to not have to join the military. The youngest sons are the ones who go to the military and stuff like that.

AUSTIN: Like, yeah, there's— Is there are a world in which it's not that the characters we're playing would be the ones who would be developing the new toys in the Shooting the Moon game, or making coats, but instead would be the patrons of the people who do that, or would tie their industry or business to that.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I'm the one who owns the factory. I'm the one who supplies you the gears and the whatevers, the cogs you need to build your little toys. I am the cog, you know, factory owner. And I'm happy that you're turning it into toys, but, you know.

JANINE: I imagine like a good candidate for a player character in this game would be um, Mr. Click's kid, basically. Mr. Click is the person who, as a little background, owns MaGuddens, the big new department store. I don't think— I mean, Mr. Click is a slightly less, I think, ideal candidate for this kind of game. Would still work, would be a fantastic connection, things like that.

But someone like Mr. Click's son or you know, just kid who they like sent to a nice school and it's their dream for that kid to marry into a slightly more established family and make those connections and et cetera, et cetera. That, I think, is how this game fits into this world, for me. Like I, you know, I don't think Dovey Bluet would be a character here.

ALI: Yeah, okay cool.

JACK: She's got her own stuff to do.

[ALI laughs]

JANINE: She's busy as hell. She's got all those dogs to face.

[AUSTIN laughs]

JANINE: So, the other part of like, historical accuracy and all, so the world, is how will we treat the gender power balance? Our choices here are historical, off, or in reverse. So basically you can have a patriarchy, you can ignore gender in general, or you can switch it around and have a matriarchy. I have tentatively set this to off, because it's not a thing that came up at all in Shooting the Moon, basically. That was a game about women with jobs.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: Basically.

[ALI laughs]

JANINE: And no one was ever mad at them because they were women who had jobs. In fact, we saw more women with jobs than men with jobs in that game.

JACK: They were mad at them because their cats' legs were too short.

[ALI and JANINE laugh]

ALI: Yeah. Different, uh, different annoyances.

JANINE: Mhm.

ALI: I'm fine with just leaving it off, 'cause it feels like we'll be able to just be focus on the drama.

JANINE: 'Kay. Um, how much hidden information will be used in the game? Oh sorry, I should read— The gender power balance says it is normal and acceptable for people of all genders to have significant and respectable careers, make the first move, inherit entailed estates, and have marital relationships with all genders.

Okay, so how much hidden information will be used in the game? This, I... This feels like something that benefits longer games a little more. If people want to go with hidden information, then now's the time to say so.

AUSTIN: Nah, I'm good.

JACK: Not really.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: You know my feelings on this.

[ALI laughs]

JANINE: Yes, we also— I mean, this is also thing of like, I think this book is really good about writing for people who don't play a lot of tabletop games, or people who change groups a lot, or people who are sort of in... You know, we're very spoiled, in that like, you know, we can trust each other to not act on information our characters shouldn't have, or to find an interesting reason why they might have access to it suddenly, things like that. We don't need to keep secrets. Like, we...we're at a, I think— I think that's, you know. So we're lucky in that regard, and it's more interesting for us and for our group when we all know what's going on, right?

JACK: Mhm.

JANINE: Okay. Is there anything our game should avoid?

AUSTIN: Um... I think like, self-harm or suicide is something that can occasionally come up as a plot device in regency stories.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So that's one that I'd not love to see right now?

JANINE: Okay.

AUSTIN: Um... This is less severe, or less heavy, but I don't— I would like this to feel like it exists in the world of this game and Shooting the Moon and not necessarily tie into Tableau, unless you have Tableau connection things.

JANINE: [crosstalk] I don't.

AUSTIN: I don't wanna have to worry about that.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: D'you know what I mean?

JACK: Fucking wizards showing up.

AUSTIN: I mean, there're already witches in this world, so like. But bee people don't need to show up.

JACK: No.

AUSTIN: We don't need to account for why there are bee people here during the holiday season.

JANINE: Or like, player characters. This is—

AUSTIN: That's really the specific thing.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I would rather the bee people show up than the player character angle, yeah.

JANINE: Maybe the way to say this is that this is not a Grand Tableau game.

AUSTIN: Mhm. Except that if it's good I'm gonna wanna work it backwards.

JANINE: Sure, I mean, that's the—

AUSTIN: When it's good. [laughs]

JANINE: That's already true of Grand Tableau though, right?

AUSTIN: Yes, yes, yes, totally.

JANINE: None of those games were played as Grand Tableau games, but they all are worked into Grand Tableau, so that's...

AUSTIN: Yeah yeah yeah, you know what I mean.

JACK: Did the people who released the Grand Tableau ever release like, spin off games? Like little—

AUSTIN: No.

JACK: —episodic tabletop things?

AUSTIN: No. Uh, no, that's— See, we haven't gotten to how PvP works yet in Grand Tableau.

ALI: [laughs] I feel like—

JACK: Oh, cool.

ALI: —this might be the like, seasonal event though, right?

AUSTIN: Yes, yes, totally.

ALI: Where it's like, eh, you go, yeah...

[JACK laughs]

AUSTIN: Exactly, yeah.

JACK: Alphinaud, you know, has a message for you.

[JANINE and ALI laugh]

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. Yeah. [laughs] Signs have to relocate to Montmart— What is it? Montmarch?

JACK: Marchmont?

AUSTIN: I don't remember what it is. Whichever it is.

JANINE: Montmartre is a real place.

AUSTIN: Sure. Oh, okay. Right. That's Paris? Is that a Paris thing?

JACK: Yes, the cool steps in Paris, right?

AUSTIN: There you go. Well, Alphinaud, once you go to one of them, you go to the wrong one and you have to walk thirteen minutes to the other.

[ALI laughs]

[00:30:00]

JACK: Like the ether is really far away.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh, yeah.

JANINE: You should talk to a person on every step.

AUSTIN: Yeah, uh-huh. And at the end of it you make a meal.

JACK: [crosstalk] Looking for Alphinaud?

AUSTIN: You make a meal at the end, you're like for real? That's what this was all about, was getting feast items to then go fight a twelve second boss? Great.

ALI: Well, you gotta improve morale for the...

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

JACK: The scions.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: Do— Is there anything we would love to see in our game?

JACK: I think that like, there is that light proximity to the fantastical that makes this setting more than just like, a little town in Europe. Where there is that like, how did you describe it earlier? Mundane and practical magic, where it's like—

JANINE: Yeah.

JACK: It's not a fundamentally magical society, or maybe it *is* a fundamentally magical society to the level where they're just like, "Yes, this is how we live."

[AUSTIN laughs]

JACK: Yup. Why aren't there magicians working in the factories? Because magicians are very expensive. Or because it's very tiring, or like, or because magic just doesn't do that.

JANINE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: There are witches in the mountain. Maybe there are like, there's a cat that can talk out there.

JANINE: I remember Dovey had grip magic? That was like the magic she could do was like—

JACK: Grip magic?

JANINE: She had good grip. Yeah [laughs] she had good grip. Like, for needles.

AUSTIN: [crosstalk] I could use that. That's useful. That sounds great, yeah.

JANINE: For like, sewing, and like...

JACK: What was your character—

JANINE: So she...

JACK: Oh sorry, go on.

JANINE: I was just gonna say, that's why she went on the horse. She went on the horse with... Carroway? To like—

JACK: Oh, yeah.

JANINE: Use the grip magic to make sure they wouldn't slip.

[ALI laughs]

JACK: God. Didn't your character, Ali, wasn't she cursed as a child?

ALI: Yeah.

JANINE: She was.

JACK: Just sort of like, "Yeah, I was cursed as a child."

ALI: Yeah. Part of the second half of that game was her being like, "We have to change the [laughs] the opinion on curses, 'cause everyone's afraid of this cursed [laughs] silk or whatever."

JANINE: I'm very on board with that. Um, whoops. Okay. Unless there's anything else?

ALI: Yeah, I'm trying to think of like, specifics, but I think that like, setting a tone to begin with when you like, set the like playsets helps with some of the...

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: Yeah.

ALI: The figuring on this.

JANINE: Okay, well if we think of anything else we can also just come back to this and, and fill things in.

ALI: Yeah. And we have our peppermint in case anything goes wrong and we wanna... [laughs]

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: We do. Alright. So. Gonna zoom out on this document. Alright, so we've completed collaboration. Um, we all know where the X card is. The X card is this little peppermint in the candy dish.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: I think the other candies are butterscotch, or maybe lemon. Maybe both and you can't tell them apart, gross.

AUSTIN: [crosstalk] Can't read— Ew, no thanks, that's not—

[ALI laughs]

JACK: I'm not a butterscotch fan.

JANINE: I can get with butterscotch but not as a flavor in a hard candy.

JACK: No.

JANINE: Because that candy isn't butterscotch. That candy is...

JACK: Sugar.

JANINE: Something else. Yeah, yeah. Um, okay. So. So basically what's going to happen here is each of us are going to make a major character, including me. And our major characters, again 'cause we've been playing—we picked out a playset, we've kind of decided the roles that we're going to play, and with that the desires and relationships and family backgrounds are also kind of bundled together and have been entered.

So, if we want to take a minute now to figure out our character names and our pronouns and our ages, and then we can go through our desires, relationships, and family backgrounds. Things like appearance and temperament also. And Austin, you have a special field you have to—
Actually, you can—

AUSTIN: Is that tied to my...

JANINE: So, that—

AUSTIN: A connection? Is that a mandatory connection or is that a separate thing?

JANINE: It can be... It has to either be a player character or—

AUSTIN: Gotcha.

JANINE: If you don't want it to be a major character, then it would be your mandatory connection.

AUSTIN: Gotcha. Okay. Um, I'm gonna wait to fill that in until we... Until I know more about the other...

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: You know, things.

JANINE: Oh also, your character— The character sheets with the family background are in the handouts. So, your family background will have the reputation traits that you get to pick from. You have to pick—

AUSTIN: Wait, where are the handouts at?

JANINE: —a positive one and a negative one. [to Austin] In Roll20.

AUSTIN: Oh, in Roll20. I see.

JANINE: Yeah yeah yeah. So I've pasted the character role with the, uh, family background.

AUSTIN: I see, in the handouts section.

JANINE: Yes.

AUSTIN: I see now.

JANINE: Yup.

AUSTIN: Gotcha.

ALI: Oh, oh, oh.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ALI: Thank you, Janine.

AUSTIN: And, wait, so where does that go? Sorry. So what are the thing we're— Just to go over the things we're doing here. We have—

JANINE: Yes.

AUSTIN: Desires, set— Name, pronouns, age. Then—

JANINE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: —Desire is set from what we decided before. Relationship we'll fill in once we know each other. Then we have our like, role.

JANINE: That's a role, yup.

AUSTIN: Which is, and there's family. Then appearance, temperament, benefactor, notes. Where does— What are the reputation tags? How many do we get?

JANINE: So those go in that chart below.

AUSTIN: [crosstalk] Yeah, I see that.

JANINE: You have to pick one positive and one negative.

AUSTIN: And that's from— One is from— They're both from family backgrounds?

JANINE: Yeah, both of these starter tags—

AUSTIN: Gotcha. Yes.

JANINE: —are from family background, and the ones that come after will be from play.

AUSTIN: Cool.

ALI: Okay, so the reputation criteria is like, what triggers it changing through the game whereas the things we're picking from are the four reputation options?

JANINE: So... Okay, the four reputation things at the bottom are what happen when you get three reputation traits basically.

ALI: Oh, oh, sure.

JANINE: Once you hit this like, green line then you pick one of the two in the relevant category that activated.

ALI: Oh, I'm seeing— Initial reputation, positive tag, negative— Oh, okay, okay.

JANINE: Yeah, so the thing— Basically the thing— So it's family background, that's what you'll replace with one of the available traits from your family background on that sheet.

ALI: Okay, cool.

JANINE: It's also worth mentioning, especially in a post-Bridgerton-discourse world which I guess we're in now, this game is very open about race? There is a little box in the character setup thing that basically explains that like, while Jane Austen's world— She wrote in a lot of ways that concerned gender imbalance a lot. She never really touched on race.

So the way that they've chosen to approach it as, you know, as game designers is that, you know, everyone is kind of free to play whatever they want, you know, role-wise, regardless of race or anything like that. It's just kind of not a factor, and the illustrations tend to reflect that. Much like Bridgerton, um...

JACK: I really love how the example text for the connections is somebody called Prudence's Aunt, who currently [laughs] in this current layout, is dominating this game.

[JANINE and AUSTIN laugh]

JANINE: I also love that Prudence's Aunt is a bit of a prude.

JACK: I know. No, "thinks *you're* a bit of a prude."

JANINE: Oh. Well— Oh, right, "I think," right. "Above major character is, dot dot dot." Of course. Um, okay.

[ALI laughs]

JANINE: So technically a lot of this step is supposed to happen like, after doing relationships but I fully don't understand how you do relationships without knowing these kinds of things.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: So we'll do it this way and it'll be fine. Are we all ready to go through?

ALI: Um, I have one question. [laughs] Which is—

JANINE: Yeah.

ALI: For Janine's— I was looking over everybody's stuff, and I don't wanna spoil this, maybe we can cut it, but I was thinking of having a character who had like, feathers? And then I noticed yours said birdlike and I just wanted to— [laughs]

[JACK and AUSTIN laugh]

JANINE: She's not an actual bird, no.

ALI: Okay, okay. Okay, okay. Um, okay, I just wanted to make sure I wasn't overstepping on the bird features. But that's funny to me now.

JANINE: No, no no.

[ALI laughs]

JANINE: Birdlike usually means like, she's thin and kind of long?

ALI: Yeah. Like, I understand, yeah.

JANINE: And like, you know.

ALI: Birdlike to describe a human and not someone who has—

JANINE: Sharp nose.

ALI: —bird features.

JANINE: Yeah, no. She's not a bird. She's not a bird lady. You can have feathers.

ALI: [laughs] On that note, we can start. Here you go. [laughs]

JANINE: Okay, well, um. So I'll just kick us off. I'm gonna be playing as Chatelaine Pellier. Her pronouns are she/her. She's twenty three. Her desire is to orchestrate at least one marriage between people of your choosing.

Oh, actually we have these cards on the table too. The card with a quote is your desire, and then the other card is the relationship that you'll be passing on to someone else after this. So my quote on my relationship card is, "There are people who, the more you do for them, the less they will do for themselves." And actually, the other side of these cards can have special conditions. So...

AUSTIN: Interesting.

JANINE: Yes. We should peek at those. Um, right. So, orchestrate at least one marriage between people of your choosing. For me my special condition is, after the first Novel chapter, decide on two potential couples and share these with the facilitator— Well, that's me.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: Your desire is to see one or both happily married. So, basic— At some— I gotta pick someone to marry off. Um, after that first chapter.

The relationship card that I'll be giving out is friends slash old flames. Friends is the public knowledge, so that's what other characters will know about that relationship. And the description of that is, "The giver and taker of this card are long standing acquaintances. They still visit on the rare occasion." But if I flip that card, it says, "Old flame. The giver and taker of this card are old flames. They had a romance once and while the raging fire of their feelings had quietened, the spark never truly dies."

So, I'm also playing as the heir from an old money family. As noted in my notes, the heir is destined for future riches, plagued with financially motivated suitors, weighed down by family pressure and obligation, and the beneficiary of nepotism.

Appearance-wise, Chatelaine has dark hair and birdlike features, and her temperament is alert, like a bird. And the reputation tags I've chosen from her family background are generous and overbearing. Who would like to go next?

ALI: Um, I can go just so we can go down from a right to left situation.

JANINE: Sounds good.

ALI: Left or right. I'm gonna be playing [laughs] Mint Charlise, who is she/her, age twenty four. My desire is to receive proposals from or make successful proposals to at least two eligible individuals, marry one and then farewell to the other.

Um [laughs] my relationship is best friends, best of friends. I checked my cards, there isn't— If I flip my relationship card it's just the same text that we're friends. And then with my desire there's no special things there.

My— [laughs] The role that I'm playing is new arrival. My family background is foreign. My appearance is graceful, my temperament is curious, and then my notes for the new arrival position are, "The new arrival is aloof and mysterious, brimming with hidden secrets, a novelty, and a pawn in local politics."

AUSTIN: Love, love it. Love to be a pawn in local politics. Um, I am playing—

JANINE: Oh, your reputation tags?

ALI: Oh, sorry. My reputation tags, the positive one is fascinating and the negative one is strange. [laughs]

JANINE: Excellent combo. Big fan.

AUSTIN: Mhm. I'm gonna make them bigger. That's a good idea. Okay. I am playing Diego Flint. Diego is he/him, is twenty three. My desire is to come into substantial wealth while ensuring my reputation stays absolutely impeccable. I am a dependent and my family is military. My appearance is warm and then, in a parenthetical, good smile, wears coats indoors. And then temperament is detached.

I have to decide my benefactor still. And then my depended breakdown is, like I said before, "Without a true home, at the mercy of those who house me, seeking permanence, and haunted by my first home." My reputation tags are positive, steadfast and negative, aloof. And neither of my— Oh, there is one thing.

The back of my "I need money" card does not have any special rules, but my relationship is rival, and on the public side it's, "The giver and taker of this card are rivals." And on the back, I guess an important subnote is, "The giver and taker of this card are rivals. For the taker," the person who I guess I am giving it to, "this may be a trivial rivalry. For the giver it is certainly a bitter one."

[00:45:00]

JANINE: That's a good bit of flavor. I like that.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: Um, I'm gonna be playing Henrietta Sameday. She is the meddler. She uses she/her pronouns. She's twenty one years old. Her desire is to "restore your reputation and be forgiven by your former friend." Um, the front side of the card says, "The giver and taker of this card were former friends, until the giver's cruel actions ended the relationship abruptly." And the reverse says, "The giver of this card wronged the taker painfully and completely." So, sick.

[ALI and JANINE laugh]

JACK: I am a meddler. I come from new money. The appearance is, still wearing the full collection, but wearing it well. I assume we're far into winter now. My temperament is capricious. My notes say, "The meddler is an outrageous gossip, always scheming in others'," quotes, "'best interests,' possessed of few social barriers, blind to schemes directed towards them." My uh, my desire card has some conditions on it.

JANINE: It does.

JACK: My desire being, "Restore your reputation and be forgiven by your former friend." Um, the conditions are, "Create and spread a rumor about what you did."

[ALI laughs]

JACK: "Start with one extra negative reputation tag and one extra resolve token." Um, so my reputation tags are positive, I am clever, and negative, I have unfortunate connections and I am vulgar. And yeah, I start with three resolve tokens instead of the usual two.

JANINE: And, uh, you get to make a rumor.

JACK: What, now?

JANINE: If you move to—

AUSTIN: About what you did.

JANINE: Yeah, mhm.

AUSTIN: We should— Can we—

JANINE: On the...

AUSTIN: Should we figure out like what our relationships are before we get to the rumor creation?

JANINE: Sure, that's a good idea.

AUSTIN: So we have an idea of like, what that might be about?

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I only say that 'cause I would like to have one— I would like either Henrietta to be my rival or to be the former friend. I know we should not do a swap because that's—

JANINE: No.

AUSTIN: Breaks the game.

JANINE: You shouldn't do swaps, but also this game does encourage you to, rather than volunteering a card to someone, to say to someone, "Hey, can I take that card."

AUSTIN: Mm, okay. Can I take former friends, Henrietta?

JACK: Yeah, of course. Do you know how I wronged you?

AUSTIN: I think you let your brother, my fiance, go off on adventure where he disappeared, and I lost him. And I lost the opportunity of—

JACK: [crosstalk] How was I...?

AUSTIN: Oh, you know, I asked you. We were friends, and I asked you, "Please plead with him."

[JACK laughs]

AUSTIN: "Not to go out on this foolish campaign. You know the witches of the Velvet Manor like to take, you know, toys of us." And you—

JACK: And I said, "Yes I will. I will plead with him." And then I didn't.

AUSTIN: Of course. And then you absolutely didn't.

JACK: Well because it's in his best interest, it's a romantic story to go away, to go up into the mountains.

AUSTIN: Yes.

JACK: To return.

AUSTIN: It's like a bachelor party for him, right? Like, before the wedding, you go out into the mountains to...you know?

[ALI laughs]

JACK: [laughs] Me, talking to a slightly nervous brother. "It's like a bachelor party?"

[AUSTIN laughs]

JACK: "You go out into the mountains."

[JANINE laughs]

AUSTIN: "You'll bring back something nice for Diego."

JACK: What's your brother's name?

AUSTIN: *Your* brother's name.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: My fiance's name.

JACK: Oh yeah. No— Your— My— [laughs] My brother. Um, what's my brother's name? My brother's— Well—

AUSTIN: I don't know.

JACK: I think it, I think who gets authorship here is probably telling.

[AUSTIN laughs]

JACK: And... Um. I can't decide whether or not you should name your fiance or I should name my brother.

AUSTIN: We can come to, we can— There's rules for this, right? There's some sort of like, negotiation rules in this game.

[ALI and JACK laugh]

AUSTIN: What works with the last name Sameday?

ALI: Henrietta, unfortunately.

JANINE: Samson.

AUSTIN: What's a good— [to Janine] Sams— Mm.

JANINE: Samson Sameday. [laughs]

AUSTIN: Samson Sameday. That doesn't sound good.

JACK: Um, um.

AUSTIN: We can't do Simon, 'cause that is the Bridgerton main dude's name.

JANINE: That's true. [pause] Honor?

AUSTIN: Honor's good. Are all the Sameday siblings H names?

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: Henrietta and Honor.

JANINE: Honor Sameday—

JACK: They're all— [laughs]

JANINE: —is a tragic name for a fiance who dies.

AUSTIN: We don't know that he's dead, we just know that he's in the—

JANINE: Eh.

AUSTIN: —woods somewhere.

JANINE: Sure. Yeah.

AUSTIN: I think Jack, when I first pitched this concept, suggested "turned into an archway by a witch" or something like that?

[ALI, JANINE, and JACK laugh]

AUSTIN: Right? I'm remembering that right?

JACK: Yeah, uh-huh. Uh-huh.

AUSTIN: Okay. Turned into a stone archway on Marchmont peak. Great.

JACK: Cut to Henrietta to her friends, dabbing her eyes. "He's probably dead."

[AUSTIN and JANINE laugh]

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

JACK: Uh, yeah, so my brother is called Honor Sameday. He was due to be married to you. I told him that it would be terribly exciting if he brought you back something from the mountains. So yeah, do we physically trade these cards, or do we just note this down somewhere?

JANINE: I think you—

AUSTIN: I'll take that card.

JANINE: Trade the cards, yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: Or, not trade, but yeah.

AUSTIN: It's the wrong person. I took best of friends, that's not what I wanted to do. That's not— We're not best of friends. Sorry. Wrong card. Where is it? Former friend?

JACK: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Yes. There we go. Alright.

ALI: Is it just a one to one switch like that, or Jack, do you still have— I guess, Austin took Jack's card.

JANINE: I mean, maybe the thing, maybe the way to do this is, you know, we've started it off now, Jack, which card would you like to take?

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: That's a good way of doing it.

JANINE: Whoever gets their card taken takes a card.

ALI: Okay, yeah.

JANINE: Et cetera. So the choices are best of friends or old flame I guess.

JACK: Oh, Ali, do you wanna be best friends?

ALI: Sure [laughs]. Yeah. I think that could work. I guess—

JACK: What's the—

ALI: It is affected by maybe how long I've been in town, but I could have been writing you letters from my, my— [laughs]

JACK: Although—yeah.

ALI: My time in the hills. [laughs]

JACK: It c— Look, you can be— Can you be best of friends— You can be best of friends very quickly with someone.

AUSTIN: Wait, can you set up what Mint— Mint, can you set up what your story is so that people listening can understand why you're—

ALI: Yeah, I guess that we haven't talked about character concepts, right? But my... I'm playing as a new arrival which is you know basically someone who's like new to the scene or whatever. And the way that I was thinking of it was sort of a split between Sleeping Beauty and Matthew Crawley in Downton Abbey? [laughs]

AUSTIN: That's good.

ALI: The Matthew Crawley situation is like oh this person died and like, you're coming into the society because you're entitled to this inheritance that you didn't know that you would get and now you kind of have to come into the cycle of this. Where Sleeping Beauty is the situation of being like, oh, we thought that she would get cursed [laughs] so we sent her to um, you know, a house in the middle of the woods and some fairies to protect her and now she's back.

And I... You know, I'm fine with just splitting in the middle. I'm fine with there being rumors of it either way. I like the idea of it being like... 'Cause my family background is foreign, but I like the idea of it being like a family who's like, established within the sort of makeup of this town. And it's like, "Oh, Mint is back, and she's, you know." [laughs]

AUSTIN: Mm.

JACK: Oh my god.

ALI: [laughs] She's...

JACK: So like... On some level, I picked best friends because I was thinking of the relationship between Emma, who is maybe Jane Austen's greatest meddler, and um, what's her name? Is her name Anne or... The girl that Emma takes under her wing and ruins her life.

[ALI laughs]

JANINE: Oh. Um...

JACK: Cha-Charlotte? What's, what's her name?

AUSTIN: What is her name? Why am I blanking on this?

JANINE: Shoot.

JACK: So, this is a character who Emma decides to make her project, and kind of, uh...

ALI: [crosstalk] Yeah, you're talking about Brittany Murphy, Tai from Clueless? [laughs]

AUSTIN: Yeah, Brittany Murphy. Tai.

JACK: Yes.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

ALI: Um.

JACK: Absolutely.

ALI: Yeah, I think this is— [laughs]

JACK: And so, you know—

ALI: [laughs] Go on.

JACK: That's not best friends, is the thing.

AUSTIN: Harriet. Harriet? No, is that right? Harriet?

JACK: Yeah! It is Harriet!

AUSTIN: Harriet Smith?

JACK: Yeah, Harriet Smith.

JANINE: I do think it's Harriet, yeah.

ALI: I do think it's a version of best friends, though, where it's like... I come to town, you see me as a mark, I see you as like a tour guide.

[AUSTIN and ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: Classic best friends material.

[ALI laughs]

JACK: I'm like, "Oh, she's terribly exciting."

[ALI laughs]

JACK: "I hear she was cursed!"

ALI: Yeah, here, take my card.

JACK: "Doesn't everybody want to meet my long time friend, Mint?"

[ALI and JANINE laugh]

AUSTIN: Oh yeah, I've heard you love people from the forest. You're a big forest fan, right, Henrietta? Love the hills.

[ALI and JACK laugh]

ALI: Um, okay perfect. I guess it's my turn to choose whose card I wanna take.

JANINE: Mhm. Rival or old flame?

ALI: Oh boy... Um, I feel like taking Austin's rival card makes sense, because I feel like it's the th— [laughs]

AUSTIN: Why? I don't understand.

[ALI and JANINE laugh]

ALI: Well I feel like it's the thing of like, you trying to like, you know, this is your— What's your desire? This is your last chance to like have a good engagement and like to really have a life of your own and this new person comes to town and is like, you know.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: Comes to town from the place my fiance died.

JANINE: Yeah. And isn't dead. Clearly some people make it out of there.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: And your fucking nemesis thinks that she's the bees knees.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. Yeah. Uh-huh.

JANINE: And that is that card, right? Like, to Mint that could be a perfectly trivial, like, "Oh, I guess they just don't like me that much."

AUSTIN: [crosstalk] Yes.

ALI: [crosstalk] Right.

AUSTIN: [laughs] But for me—

JANINE: [crosstalk] But to Diego it's like—

AUSTIN: —you are the embodiment of, yeah.

JANINE: "Oh, that fuckin', eurgh."

AUSTIN: Yeah. Uh-huh.

[ALI laughs]

JANINE: The embodiment of everything that you've lost.

AUSTIN: Which means I guess I will be taking the friends—

JANINE: [crosstalk] Old flame!

AUSTIN: —slash old flame situation. What's, what's your deal? I don't know your character's deal.

JANINE: So, my character...

AUSTIN: Wait, that's not right, that's not right, that's not right. I'm not taking that. Right? Because I took former friend already.

JANINE: Oh, did we... Right.

AUSTIN: Who's taking old flame?

JACK: Oh.

AUSTIN: Jack is tak— No, Jack already took.

JACK: No, I took best of friends.

JANINE: [crosstalk] Jack has best of friends. Wait, who... Did someone swap?

ALI: No.

AUSTIN: I gave—

JANINE: Ali has Austin's, Austin has Jack's, Jack has Ali's. Oh, we just, we just did a—

ALI: Aw. [laughs]

JANINE: We just did a—

JACK: Oh, the maths just doesn't work.

JANINE: —thing.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: Oh no. We can— Okay, let's figure out how to— It says, it specifically says relationships may not always work out perfectly on first attempt. So, let's— So don't be afraid to swap around.

JANINE: That is true. Um...

JACK: Hm.

AUSTIN: "Avoid swapping two relationship cards." How do the— How does it not bring up this possibility? This is a very easy thing to do.

JACK: Wait, won't this always happen with...

AUSTIN: N—

JANINE: Well, no, 'cause you could just... I don't know.

AUSTIN: What could have happened here? What else could have happened here?

JACK: [crosstalk] Isn't it just the numbers?

AUSTIN: Four? Four should not be the numbers. This game— [laughs]

JANINE: If we all just like traded to the left then it would have been fine.

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: But also that's not really what it says to do, I don't think?

AUSTIN: So... No. "Each relationship card is used to form a relationship between two characters, dadada, at the end of each step each player must have taken and given exactly one relationship card unless their desire card says otherwise." So we h— We *need* to figure out how to do this. We can't just like leave someone without a relationship.

[JANINE laughs]

JACK: I don't understand how we did it.

AUSTIN: We just did a triangle trade.

JANINE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: And we shouldn't have done the thing where... We should have made sure one of the people who went was not someone who was already involved in a trade, right? We should have like—

ALI: Oh sure, yeah.

JACK: Oh. [laughs]

AUSTIN: Or something.

ALI: Instead of being like, "Oh I've given my card out—"

JANINE: [crosstalk] Oh right. Yeah. Yeah.

ALI: "Now I'm gonna pick one."

AUSTIN: Yes. So, if we work it out backwards, then...what happens?

JANINE: I can also just, I mean, I think the way to do this is probably for me to swap with someone. Right?

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: Because, because I'm completely out of that loop, there's no risk of like, having a double swap, right?

ALI: Well you would take one of the cards that we have, and then we would take your old flame card and then reassign the...the one that we currently have, yeah.

AUSTIN: [crosstalk] Right. Correct.

JANINE: That's what I mean.

AUSTIN: We would reestablish, yes, that's correct. Yeah.

JANINE: Mhm. [pause] Um... How about this, who's— I'm the facilitator, like, this is— This story is not about me. Who is interested in the old flame card? If anyone wants or if anyone can think of...old flame-y stuff.

JACK: [crosstalk] Um, I would be interested in old flame precisely because the Emma kind of ch— The Emma character is so averse to romance, and so the idea of a relationship having—

JANINE: Yeah.

JACK: —happened and then crumbled feels interesting. Um.

JANINE: Oh, I should also frame who my character is, which is the thing we were gonna do before we realized [laughs] the cards were boned. Um, so yeah. Chatelaine in, sort of, my conceptions, I think you know, she's old money. I think she is like, the great-great granddaughter of someone who founded, like a preeminent business in town.

I'm trying to find the name of the business that I really liked and wanna use. The Copper Poppy is the one I want to call back. Because The Copper Poppy to me sounds like a business that was, that can say like, “established in 1602.” And that's long enough I think for Chatelaine's family to be considered old money. And that business is still around, it's still kicking. It's, at this point, I think the family wealth is probably tied up in investments and things like that, you know. They are... They did the thing that the early modern merchants did which was like you make your money in trade and then you put your money in land.

[1:00:00]

JANINE: Like you buy land or you do that kind of thing, and then you become respectable that way. So she's— That's happened generations ago for her. And she is kind of resting on the laurels of an established family line. And she is, she basically spends her time, you know, she is the hostess. Like, that's her role in this. In the Event that we'll get to, it's kind of her place to like, learn— She's learning the ropes, you know? She's the heir, she's going to inherit her family's property, she is in that stage of like, learning how to manage accounts and how to make sure that, you know, the people that you work with are happy and dealing with all that kind of stuff. So that's her situation. She, you know, she's a Knightley, I guess.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: So it is suitable for her to have been old flames with the Emma.

JACK: What is the— Oh, right, you mean. Right. You mean Mr. Knightley, not Snitch Nightly.

[ALI laughs]

JANINE: No. [laughs]

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

JANINE: [laughs] No.

JACK: I was like, briefly confused.

JANINE: [crosstalk] Famous landlord, Snitch Nightly.

AUSTIN: Uh, well...

JACK: [crosstalk] I mean, he'd go there. Um, what does The Copper Poppy do? What business is it?

JANINE: So The Copper Poppy was where, in Shooting the Moon, was where Dovey 1:01:38 and uh, what the fuck was his name... Uh, Spencer apprenticed.

JACK: Oh.

JANINE: When they were learning how to make toys. So the little toy train at the, um, at The Glacier Express? That little train? She made that while she was apprenticing at The Copper Poppy. So The Copper Poppy is like a kind of metal working trade shop, but a lot of it's...a lot of it is ornamental I think, is like, prestige kind of items, not practical items.

JACK: Right.

JANINE: Because they are established. They are, you know. It's that kind of business where it's like, well your father bought from them and your father's father, and that's where you get your weird thing that you hang over the door for luck when you establish a new household, like it's that kind of...

JACK: Sure.

JANINE: That kind of place.

ALI: Um, yeah, I guess that's what makes sense because then, Janine, you'll have technically my best of friends card, and it sounds like it would be like a similar relationship of

being like, "Oh let me help you, you know, kind of find your footing here." But less— [laughs] Less insincere?

JACK: Outwardly manipulative?

[AUSTIN laughs]

JANINE: I mean, yes. I think that totally makes sense, right? 'Cause Chatelaine views herself as a pillar of the community. Like she's, you know, she sees herself there as someone who's supposed to like, make things work. So if someone shows up in town and needs a foothold and things like that, she would absolutely sort of step in and try and get involved.

ALI: [crosstalk] Okay perfect, yeah.

AUSTIN: Alright, so wait, can we just go over what every— What the relationships are now then? Because I'm still a little confused as to what the shakeout was there.

JANINE: So...

AUSTIN: I am old— I am former friends with Henrietta Sameday, Jack's character.

JANINE: Mhm.

ALI: And I am rivals with you, Diego, who is Austin's character.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

JANINE: And I'm best of friends with Mint.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JANINE: Who's Ali's character. [pause] Jack?

JACK: Oh! And [laughs] I am former friends with Diego.

AUSTIN: No, 'cause I took that from you.

JANINE: So that's, I mean that's also true, but...

AUSTIN: Oh, so then what's the other half of this?

JACK: [crosstalk] Oh, right, so but I am the— I am an old flame of Chatelaine.

AUSTIN: Gotcha. Okay.

JANINE: So this kinda goes here and this kinda goes here.

ALI: Oh, sure.

JANINE: And this might be the better way to conceptualize it, right?

ALI: [crosstalk] Yes, the rules, yeah.

AUSTIN: Yes, this is Fiasco now, we're moving cards in between cards.

[ALI laughs]

JANINE: Yup. [laughs]

JACK: God, Fiasco does rule.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Okay, this makes more sense. Okay.

JANINE: Okay. Alright. Uh, are we good on that front and we all understand who's who?

AUSTIN: I believe so, yes.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yes, this works.

JANINE: Alright. Um, then the next thing we have to do is create a connection. Because of the way we're playing this game, we're either doing one cycle or two, we're not really sure yet. But either way, the connections that we need to make are the same. So basically everyone is going to make one connection now, and then one connection—

AUSTIN: Wait, wait wait wait. Before we get to connections, wait.

JANINE: Mhm?

AUSTIN: Wait wait wait wait wait.

JANINE: Yes. What's up?

AUSTIN: There's introductions. "Ask lots of questions to en—" I wanna know a little bit more about people.

JANINE: Oh, okay. Sure, sorry. [laughs]

AUSTIN: Also I need to share my character picture, so.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: I need to share my facecast.

JANINE: Sorry, yeah.

AUSTIN: We moved very quickly.

JANINE: It doesn't...

AUSTIN: My...

JANINE: It didn't say in the list of stuff I was looking at, it didn't have a thing for that so I kind of forgot it.

AUSTIN: Okay. My—

JANINE: Let's do it though.

AUSTIN: My facecast for Diego is Jharrel Jerome, who was in *Moonlight* and in *When They See Us*, about the um, I guess the now, the exonerated six. There's a couple of pictures in his GQ spread from last year that I think are very good. I will just post those but people can look those up himself, or yourself rather.

And then like, the big picture for me on Diego is, we already kind of set it up that like, he was engaged and was going to marry, you know, someone that he loved. He had a love match, and it was going to be a financially good one. I think the basic pitch is like, I'm a military, I'm from a military family and I, correct me if I'm wrong, but like in *Austen* works to be a military family meant that you bought a commission at some point, right?

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: You basically like, you're not just like in the mil— You're not a soldier. I mean, you are. You're— Plenty of *Austen* and similar—

JACK: [crosstalk] Like an officer.

AUSTIN: Right, you're an officer who maybe gets sent off to war and dies, but specifically it's about buying, like, spending money to become an officer, and earning an officer's salary and et cetera. And that— I think my grandmother did that with the last of our money as a family. Like, we had been on decline for generations and then was like, "Alright, here's the big swing. I'm gonna become, whatever, a captain in the military." [laughs] And it turns out that that still did not help necessarily, like we stabilized for a couple of generations but our, we continue to lose influence and wealth. And so happened to make a love match with my good, good fiance whose name I remember fondly but have trouble recalling sometimes 'cause it hurts so bad.

JANINE: [crosstalk] Honor.

AUSTIN: Honor Sameday. Thank you for saying it for me, Chatelaine, it's so difficult. And uh, but then after Ch— I almost said Chatelaine died. [laughs] After Honor died, I became, you know— It turns out that I've lost, you know, any hope of kind of pulling myself, pulling my family back into society. Or I'm at my last wit's end here. You know, the back side of the desire "come into substantial wealth" talks a lot about like, gambling your money. It's like, it's the classic Jane Austen thing of like, you're a gamester. You're throwing money around on the tables, you're betting on things, you're making bad investments.

And I don't necessarily know I've done that, or if I have I think it's in less... It doesn't play in that thing of like, "Oh this person can't help themselves," so much as just like I'm bad at it. [laughs] I don't think this is like a gambling addiction character, I think this is a "I don't know how to do this shit and I keep getting taken advantage of and being led into bad investments." And because of that I am— Oh, this is a thing, we're gonna get into connections now, but I am a dependent which means I need a benefactor still, which I guess will come up.

JANINE: In connections.

AUSTIN: [crosstalk] We'll talk about it after we do connections, right?

JANINE: Unless it's one of the players, yeah.

AUSTIN: But it means I'm, I don't live in my own house. I live in someone else's house. [laughs] Someone else is housing me. So, we'll see. So yeah, I don't know, maybe, we'll see if maybe Chatelaine, if that ends up being you or a connection we come up with. I'm happy for it to be either, but. But that who Diego like is at a bigger picture. I wanna know more about Mint.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: I wanna know more about Mint's family and like...

JANINE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: 'Cause you said that they were foreign in the sense that they hadn't been here in a while, or that Mint hadn't been here in a while? But like what were the connections to the town back in the day?

ALI: Yeah, I think for Mint's family what it is is that they have like a... They either have like one shop in town or they have like a chain of crystal pie. [laughs]

AUSTIN: Excuse me?

ALI: Crystal pie markets.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ALI: I made a quiche today and felt really strongly about moving—

AUSTIN: Okay.

ALI: —[laughs] pie dough into a container. It was like this would be great for this live show. And I think that like the interesting thing in the like, sort of strange slash fascinating thing about their family that sort of makes people think like, "Oh, what's the Charlise's?" Um, is that like I think the idea of them having like land that they own out in the mountains and the quote unquote witch area is like, "Well isn't that special, don't you know that they're [mumbles]." So [laughs] I was thinking of it more of something like that where like, oh people know who the Charlise's is, they know Charlise's pies, but like, they think that they're all magical weirdos. So sometimes it's kind of like a nose-turning-up thing.

AUSTIN: Right, okay.

ALI: I think that's also attached to like, we don't really know the story of how Mint disappeared. But she, you know, was here at a young age, left, and is now back and is like, "Hi. Hey. What's up." [laughs]

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ALI: Um. The— I don't really have a facecast for her. I was really guided by the actual, like game art for this. The game art for the new arrivals has like really good picture of a person who um, like... Like short cut dark hair and despite not having like a very detailed face, like sort of looks like, their eyes are really sunken in and like with a really neutral expression, which I really like. I was thinking of like Samir from Fire Emblem: Three Houses, mixed with someone's like, crow fursona. [laughs]

AUSTIN: Hell yeah.

[JANINE and JACK laugh]

ALI: I was thinking it would be really cool if like she came from the mountains and she had like, black feathers on her neck and shoulders as sort of like a cape-let situation but like, just attached to her. [laughs]

JACK: Like what if Eileen the Crow was a crow.

ALI: Yeah. Yeah yeah yeah. And you know, just about town wearing shirts normally like people do.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ALI: But, you know. [laughs] Came back from the hills with feathers and don't ask about it, that seems rude. But yeah, that's Mint's deal at the moment.

AUSTIN: Um, I can keep asking questions, because I'm still curious about people.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: But I don't know if anyone else wanted to do more character introduction stuff, but uh.

JACK: I have been wrestling with the facecast and I... I think I am just gonna have to go with Cher from Clueless. I was thinking about it.

[JANINE and AUSTIN laugh]

JACK: And it is the single most transparent thing that I can do, but I'm gonna live with my choices.

AUSTIN: Like a regency version of Cher from Clueless.

JACK: Well—

AUSTIN: Or like a Swiss mountain town version.

JACK: Like a Swiss mountain town version of Cher from Clueless.

AUSTIN: [crosstalk] Like what if she went skiing.

[JACK laughs]

AUSTIN: In Clueless.

JACK: But not in the outfit that she would invariably take skiing.

AUSTIN: [crosstalk] Okay.

JANINE: [crosstalk] I'm gonna be honest, Swiss mountain town Cher from Clueless is really just Romola Garai from the BBC Emma.

AUSTIN: It is.

JANINE: Like she has a very similar face but her hair is a lot like, fluffier and she sometimes wears these dresses that are a little bit, just like slightly alpine looking.

JACK: Oh, yeah, perfect. Yeah, I'm looking at this. Yes.

[ALI laughs]

JACK: Absolutely.

AUSTIN: That version. That version looks great.

JACK: [crosstalk] This was the first Emma that I saw.

AUSTIN: It's so good.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: It's so good.

JANINE: So good.

JACK: Um, is Michael G— Michael Gambon is her dad. He's great.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: He's great in it. He's fantastic.

JACK: Yeah, definitely. I think, yeah, alpine Cher meets Romola Garai from the BBC adaptation. Both of which are just Emma, but that's—that's fine. Emma didn't live in a witch town.

[JANINE and ALI laugh]

JANINE: I actually have a question for everyone. What are your— What's your family situation like now in terms of like, who's around for you?

JACK: [sighs] My brother is missing. It's a tragedy.

AUSTIN: [sighs]

JACK: It's deeply sad. My poor— Ah, I can't just say my father is alone, because now we're just [laughs] doing Emma again.

[JANINE and AUSTIN laugh]

JACK: I'm grateful for the support of my mother and father. I guess they were the ones who, so I'm from new money. And I think they are...

JANINE: Right, how did they make their fortune?

JACK: They made their fortune... Hm... They bought a way to manufacture something. They didn't invent it themselves. It was like a kind of Panama hat situation.

AUSTIN: Ah.

[ALI and JANINE laugh]

JACK: Where they saw an opening for, it was—

JANINE: Swiss mountain Panama hats.

JACK: [laughs] It was a, it was... It was something really dull. It was a method for fastening bridles and yokes onto oxen, in a way that can be made extremely cheaply for the factory and can be made extremely quickly.

JANINE: Carabiners?

JACK: It might be— [laughs] It might be the invention of the carabiner.

[JANINE and AUSTIN laugh]

JACK: Whatever it is, I think it is a sort of a source of shame for Henrietta.

[1:15:00]

JACK: Not just that her family are so new to their wealth, but also that, that it's not something exciting or that it's not something romantic. And that it's not something that they came up with themselves, you know. They bought it from a farmer or something.

AUSTIN: I think both of my parents are out in the world as military people, together. They're deployed together as— I don't know what the military is here, but we keep— I, you know, we keep talking about it in terms of being the like, there are the witches and the hills and the mountains and, you know, whatever. And I don't even think it's like, I don't think they're going to do invasions necessarily. [laughs] But I do think that they're deployed at some fort together, which is allowed in this world. I don't know what the [laughs] the fraternization stuff is.

JACK: [crosstalk] I have a suggestion for that.

AUSTIN: Please.

JACK: What if they are some kind of magician that requires them to be together. Like a sort a Jonathan Strange, Mr. Norrell thing.

AUSTIN: [crosstalk] Oh, that's good. I like that a lot. Yeah, sure.

JACK: Where like of course they get deployed together because that's how the magic works.

AUSTIN: Sure.

JACK: And maybe that—

AUSTIN: [crosstalk] I only talk to them with letters, and I'm always being like, "Don't worry, when you get back to town, everything is going to be fine. I'm making headway. The fortune will be returned and when you're done with this commission and you return home, the family estate will be rebuilt."

Which we were rebuilding, my husband or, my fiance and I, by the way, were rebuilding. You might recall from my notes that one of the things that I am haunted by, my first home, and that was the family estate that my fiance was helping me rebuild and is still in disarray.

I also have an aunt in town who is like a doctor, I wanna say. I wanna say that like, she did the thing of being like, "I'm just gonna become a doctor. Like, it's fine. [laughs] I'm just gonna, I'm gonna not do the—" I don't— Maybe she's not on good terms with my family, but in terms of like people here. Or maybe it's like a second cousin. Like I don't even think it's like a sister to one of my parents. It's like a, you know how you have someone who you call an aunt but isn't an aunt actually and is like a second or third cousin, but it's like, that's the generation it is. And it's that situation. So that's the person in town who thinks that I should just probably get a job too, and stop with this shit, I don't know.

[ALI and JACK laugh]

ALI: Um, yeah, I think that um... I think that I have living parents but they're out of town. I think that they also, they like travel back and forth between like estates and the mountains and in town. But I think for the um... I guess they could come up in a connection so I shouldn't've said this, but I think for the game that they're like, out of town. I keep going back and forth on siblings. I probably have a couple. [laughs] I probably have two. I probably have two much younger siblings. I'm twenty four. All of the characters are here, sort of are in our low twenties.

AUSTIN: [laughs] Yeah.

ALI: So I feel like I maybe have like, two young siblings who are like in the eight, twelve area? Sort of not...you know, dealing with this yet. [laughs] But um, yeah. I, again, I think the family is established enough to like have like a nice house in the city with a staff. And I probably, you know, get along with the staff okay, but yeah.

JANINE: Um, Mint and Henrietta, what are your families' expectations of you?

JACK: [sighs] [pause] You know when you have a kid in Crusader Kings, and at the end of the kind of training sequence they basically say, well this kid's just average. They're not gonna be a star.

[ALI, JANINE, and AUSTIN laugh]

JACK: I think my parents—

JANINE: [crosstalk] At least they're not possessed. Good luck.

JACK: Yeah, it's like, they're an adequate diplomat. I think my parents are like, our kid is a vulgar meddler, and she will not in— You know, she will benefit from our wealth and it's not like they're disinherit me or anything as drastic as that, but I think that— I think there is an understanding between us that I—that the business is not going to be, um, placed into my hands in anything other than a sort of detached overseeing capacity. I think they want me to get married. I think they probably want me to settle down and stop being so, um, [laughs] such a meddler.

[JANINE and ALI laugh]

ALI: Um, yeah I think with my family it's interesting 'cause there was obviously like all of this investment in my safety from a young age.

JANINE: Mhm.

ALI: And then also the like pageantry around coming back? I think like wealth-wise the family is like pretty modest. Like I said that they have like a fairly well, uh, you know, making enough money bakery, but like not like in the top-top of the town or in the bottom-bottom. I think it's like a, you know, a neutral living there. And of course they would wanna like, marry me with somebody who has more money, 'cause that would be great to have more money. [laughs] Also just like improving their reputation. I think that for my family it's a little bit like, "You have feathers? Just go out there, who cares. Who cares about the hills, they're fine. We're from there." Whereas for in the society it's like [uncertain noise].

JANINE: Mhm.

ALI: But [laughs] yeah. Yeah.

JANINE: Um... Just to quickly go over for Chatelaine facecasting, I'm imagining Alison Brie in Doctor Thorne. She plays an American heiress in that. And she mostly exists to smirk at people while other stuff happens. And it's a good time honestly, it's a good time. And in terms of her family and her parents and the town, I think I went over most of her background as relevant, but I think, you know, I think her parents are in town because she hasn't inherited yet. They are still managing the brunt of things. But there is that burden of expectation. Like, they are close enough to keep an eye on things. Oh, my computer just went to sleep.

AUSTIN: Uh oh.

JANINE: That's... That's not good.

AUSTIN: Is it back?

JANINE: Yes. I think—

AUSTIN: Janine? Okay.

JANINE: I think it just straight-up went to sleep. Uh, yeah. Anything else we should—

AUSTIN: [crosstalk] Recording still good?

JANINE: I think so, yeah. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay, okay.

JANINE: I think it was just the monitors going to sleep.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JANINE: 'Cause I hadn't touched my mouse in a bit.

JACK: I have an unfortunate connection. Um... And I think that um...my cousin or my family member or something, stole something from the town and vanished.

AUSTIN: Ooh.

JACK: Uh...

JANINE: Ah!

JACK: I think they stole...like a monument.

AUSTIN: [crosstalk] When you—

JACK: Or a building or something.

AUSTIN: [crosstalk] When you say you have an unfortunate connection, is that a connection like the thing we're about to make, or is that a—

JACK: I don't know. It's not—

AUSTIN: What is that?

[JANINE laughs]

JACK: It's not clear to me. It just says "unfortunate connections" is one of my negative tags.

AUSTIN: I see.

JACK: And so I think we could leave it open as to whether or not that's just an unfortunate connection in my family that can be brought up.

AUSTIN: Is that tied to the rumor you need to k—you need to spread about yourself?

JACK: It could be.

JANINE: I think unfortunate connections is a new money thing, right, where it's like—

AUSTIN: Ah.

JANINE: —unfortunate connection would be like, oh, you're directly related to a cobbler. Ew.

JACK: Ha!

[ALI laughs]

JANINE: I think that's probably the intention there.

JACK: Right.

AUSTIN: Sure.

JACK: Yes. You—

JANINE: But also being related to a thief counts, right, like.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Uh-huh.

JACK: Yeah, especially because it casts aspersions on the money, for people who aren't in the know.

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: Actually—

JACK: Whereas—

JANINE: No, keep going.

JACK: [crosstalk] Oh, go on. Oh, it's just that the money wasn't stolen by direct thievery of property, just slightly abstracted thievery of labor.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Uh-huh.

JANINE: Mhm. Um, I was gonna say that's a good segue into Rumor and Scandal, because you need to make a rumor.

ALI: Uh, were we gonna do that after we had connection cards?

JACK: [crosstalk] Oh yeah, let's make connections so that...

JANINE: So, I— [sighs] I don't know if we're supposed to do that after connections 'cause it's part of the desire process.

ALI: Oh, sure.

JACK: Okay.

JANINE: And also the rumor— I mean, well, the rumor can be about a character or a connection or about the world. But I think because this is specifically about your desire, um...

AUSTIN: Yeah, it actually says create and spread a rumor about what you did.

JANINE: [crosstalk] Yeah, what you did.

AUSTIN: So actually it should be about...

JANINE: [crosstalk] Yes, yeah.

JACK: [crosstalk] It should be about honor, right?

AUSTIN: Henrietta.

JANINE: So it doesn't—

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: It has nothing to do with connections.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JANINE: So now that we've thoroughly established what you did, who was involved? How it went down?

JACK: Rumors are created by the players rather than the characters, right? They are not speaking a true— They're not a character speaking a true thing into the world.

JANINE: [crosstalk] No, you are speaking as, yeah. You are apart from the character in the Rumor and Scandal phase. You are speaking as the community, basically. So what is it that people say about your character?

JACK: Oh, I think it's that Henrietta knows where her brother is.

AUSTIN: Hm.

JANINE: Here's actually an important question. Was the brother the heir?

AUSTIN: Uh, would have at least have been a partial heir in terms of being a way for me and my family to restabilize.

JACK: Yes. Definitely.

AUSTIN: So it had to have at least had access to some of it, so. I don't know what the inheritance laws are here in the mountains.

[JACK laughs]

JANINE: 'Cause like if Henrietta has the brother out of the way for whatever reason, does that put her in a better situation at all?

JACK: I think it does, yeah. I think so.

JANINE: Gives her a bigger cut or something at least, right?

JACK: Henrietta knows where her brother is, and I'm gonna add to this rumor, and stands to inherit. [laughs]

[JANINE and AUSTIN laugh]

JACK: The— Austin, the line of succession is called alpine gavelkind.

AUSTIN: I see, yeah, of course. Yeah.

[ALI laughs]

JANINE: Naturally.

AUSTIN: Mhm. I had to download a mod to make it work in CK3.

JACK: I know, it's fucking...

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: Okay.

AUSTIN: They said it would be in at launch, and it wasn't.

[JACK laughs]

JANINE: Are we ready for connections now?

ALI: Yeah.

JANINE: Yup?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: Okay. So for connections, we are going to make one now and then one partway through the game. So everyone needs to draw three connection cards, basically.

AUSTIN: Oh. Okay.

JANINE: And then that gives you a choice. Um, when you make a connection mid-game, you can just pick whoever you want from the deck, but when you make them at the beginning of the game you have to pick um...

AUSTIN: Is there... So it's just a picture of a person, right?

JANINE: Yes. So there's a picture of a person and then a number at the top.

AUSTIN: [crosstalk] Okay.

JANINE: I'm gonna put mine on the table so people can see. And there is, in the handouts there's a link to the full deck of connections. So this is a tricky thing because these cards are double sided.

AUSTIN: [crosstalk] I see.

JANINE: And I couldn't make double sided— Like, these double sided cards I have on the table now, technically are individual decks of cards because Roll20 doesn't let you put a front and a back on an individual card unless it's a deck. The card back is deck-wide.

AUSTIN: Right, okay.

JANINE: So to do the front and the back for these connections, I would have had to make a deck for each one of them, and there's like a bu—there's like thirty or something. I wasn't gonna do that. So, I used the picture and then we can go to the deck of connections and sort of compare them from there. So I got forty eight, forty nine, and sixty six. So, just as an example, I'm also gonna paste this link for y'all.

[typing]

JANINE: In our Discord. But it is in the handouts also. Um, okay. So I've Daniel, Francis, and Margaret.

AUSTIN: When you say there's a front and a back, there isn't on the Roll20, but is there...

JANINE: It's in that—

AUSTIN: Is that forty one...

JANINE: It's in that document.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JANINE: So they all have numbers. I know it's clumsy but I didn't have a better way to do it.

AUSTIN: [crosstalk] Yes, I see this. No no no, I'm not— This is— I'm not on you about this. I'm just trying to make sense of— So like, for instance—

JANINE: Basically it's meant to give you a sort of alternate personality choice.

AUSTIN: But it's the same face. It's the same per— Okay, I see it now. I see it now.

JANINE: [crosstalk] It's the same face. But yeah, so for Francis who's one of the characters I drew, the front of her card says, "reserved, precarious, prospects. Sensible, quiet, and anxious. Secretly she helps her father with business matters and publishes financial articles under a penname." The back of that card is, "gentle, wealthy family. Sweet, intelligent, and mousey. Settled into her destiny of spinsterhood by learning how to best manage her father's business affairs." So it's a bit of a spin just so you can basically find a variation of this character that appeals to you.

AUSTIN: Gotcha.

JANINE: And what you need to do with them, you know? Especially 'cause like, these— Some of these like cards are like, you know, if you need to have a parent and a cousin, like, you need to find people who's lifestyle lines up with what your family background is.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ALI: And we're choosing one of the three that we drew?

JANINE: Yes. And that'll be your connection. In Austin— I don't think any of us have a mandate on what the connection has to be except for Austin, who either has to pick a benefactor from among the major characters, or from among the companions.

AUSTIN: [crosstalk] Right. Right.

JANINE: Or, connections.

AUSTIN: Connections, uh-huh.

JANINE: So while we're thinking about connections and doing that stuff, the important thing to remember with connections is that they're there to complicate the lives of major characters and be a tool in the major characters' plots and schemes. So you should specifically make a connection that has a really direct influence on your major character.

AUSTIN: But we're not playing these major characters, correct?

[1:30:00]

JANINE: [crosstalk] No, you are— You're playing the major character but you're not playing the connection.

AUSTIN: Sorry sorry sorry, that's what I meant. I meant the connection. Right.

JACK: Oh, we should—

AUSTIN: Right. Yes.

ALI: Do other...like, other people at the table play those connections?

JANINE: Yes.

ALI: Okay.

JANINE: Exactly.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Um, I'm— I need to decide if someone— [laughs] I need to decide if I need to make a benefactor or not. So I have two options here. I've got it down to two. Drew three cards, each side is double sided. Darling, forty one A in the book could be my benefactor if there is not a benefactor available. Actually, I want the forty one B version, which is, it's like a woman in a bonnet and kind of like, gray and white, and a knowing smile. "Independent, apparently married, always ready to offer advice and assist in its execution. Married to an absent naval captain leaving her free to make her own mark on society." Easy to imagine that that is, you know, my parents know her because of military connection.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Know that family, left me in her care. Right? Also I think I'm gonna just delete the bit about having an aunt here, because otherwise I would just stay with her, right? So I just don't have family here. Otherwise I would just be staying with my aunt, right? So that's one. But if I end up, if for instance I was adop—not adopted by, but if I was staying in the Pellier house for instance, or another connection's house, then I would put Marzie here into the mix. And Marzie is, let me find the thing again. Marzie could be fun because Marzie's thing is uh, "vivacious, wealthy orphan. Fun, quirky, bubbly. Easily offended but quick to forgive. Her considerable wealth is provided by a mysterious benefactor she's never met."

JACK: [laughs] It's Magwitch.

AUSTIN: Which is also fun.

JACK: The benefactor is Magwitch from the prison barge.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. [laughs]

JANINE: How would she hold influence over you? Or how would she— What way would she have on you?

AUSTIN: She— I think that she would be the person who seems the easiest fix to my money problems because of her wealth. And similarity in terms of having lost something, right? Ahe's an orphan, I'm a— She like, is a very clean, easy, this is a potential suitor for me?

JANINE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: I lean Darling, but that's just because I think that's fun to have— We don't have anyone who's older here yet. We have no one here who is above the age of twenty five yet, or twenty six.

[JACK laughs]

JANINE: That's partially because the game kind of discourages it. I mean, connections are the place to get that.

AUSTIN: To do it.

JANINE: Because in terms of player characters for romantic comedy, the book does really discourage too much of an age disparity, because you need these people plausibly moving in the same circles and, you know, visiting each other and that kind of thing.

AUSTIN: Mhm. So I lean Darling, but if someone thought it would be fun to play a mysterious rich orphan, I would also be happy to leave that connection on the table.

[JANINE laughs]

ALI: Yeah, I don't have— I think you should go with your heart on that one, Austin.

AUSTIN: Okay.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: I'm gonna go with Darling.

ALI: I'm a little torn on mine. My first one is Evelyn, who is a doctor either way. The front card is, "successful physician, impeccably connected. Homely, sincere professional. Holds the confidence and secrets of many of society's most influential." And on the back is, "local physician, uninspiring prospects. Homely, polite, and lacking in ambition. [laughs] Only the fate of modern medicine can rouse him from his state of professional uh, cordiality?" Anyway. [laughs] Um, I was initially—okay. I was initially like attracted to this card 'cause I was thinking that the crystal pies would be like, medicinal in some way. [laughs] Like if you're eating like a pecan pie out of a rose quartz or whatever like it's gonna make you um, you know.

JACK: Oh, the containers are crystal.

ALI: Yes. Yeah yeah yeah yeah. But I was having trouble thinking of a way that that would be someone who has influence over me. Like, an employee of my family's company is not someone who I think would make my world turn in that way. So I think that I'm— I'm thinking that I'm gonna pivot to James, who is either, "successful businessman, new money. Polite, reserved, and extremely private on personal matters. New to good society. Disguises his humble origins at all costs."

JACK: Mmm.

ALI: Or— [laughs] Or, "ruthless businessman, new money. Rich in funds but poor in titles. His cold and mercenary personality is carefully hidden under, uh—"

JACK: Oh my god.

ALI: "—a gentlemanly exterior."

JACK: That's— That's Mr. Click's awful son if ever there was one.

ALI: [laughs] Yeah, I was thinking that. I was thinking either Mr. Click's awful son or like someone who wanted to be engaged to me?

JACK: Oh! A Mr. Elton.

ALI: [laughs] I'm, um, I'm not sure which side of the card I wanna go to 'cause I think that they're both really interesting. I think that once we get to the point where like, someone has

to choose to play this character, they can choose which one they'd rather do. But I think I'm gonna go with James.

JANINE: Mm, you should choose.

ALI: Oh okay. [laughs]

JANINE: 'Cause this is, this is—

ALI: Okay.

JANINE: This character is very much supposed to be tailor made to fit into your character's situation.

ALI: Okay, sure. Hm.

JANINE: So it should be a thing that like... It should be clear how this person can sort of throw a wrench in the works for you.

ALI: Sure, sure sure. Okay. Yeah. Um. [pops lips] [laughs] It's tough. I think I'm... I think I'm gonna go with the meaner one. I think I'm gonna go with, "ruthless businessman, new money. Rich in funds but poor in titles." I think it's really interesting for someone who's like, on the scene, knows that he has like social capital in the scene, but not actual like social social capital? You know what I mean? 'Cause he has money but not...

JANINE: [crosstalk] And also knows that like you've been out of the loop, right?

ALI: Right, yeah, exactly.

JANINE: Like, you don't know his status in the way that a local would. He can kind of talk himself up if he needs to.

ALI: Right. And then buy me a bunch of gold— Show off his gold coins and then I'll be like, "Oh, obviously he's somebody of high uh, reputation." But isn't really. Um, okay yeah. I think that works.

JACK: Um... I'm going for Anastasia. They are a... They are my former governess and a mentor in meddling. They use they/them pronouns. The description says, "unconventional, widowed. Cad of a husband died in a horse racing accident, leaving them the estate. Cares little about society's opinion." Yeah, I think this is someone who has been introduced into my life and, at a young age, and is much better at the thing I like to do than I am. And I think they probably have their own designs on what's going on. I think they are delighted not to

have a husband anymore. Though I don't know that it was a— I don't think it was a deliberate horse accident.

[AUSTIN and ALI laugh]

JACK: I think it was— Sometimes the universe provides, you know? You go, it was a financial—

AUSTIN: [crosstalk] It wasn't a hitman situation, you're saying.

JACK: It was a—

AUSTIN: There was no...

JACK: [laughs] It wasn't a hitman situation where the hitman was the horse.

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: It was, um— No, I think it was just a you know, it was a financial match. I think, you know, sometimes—

AUSTIN: Ah...

JACK: Sometimes someone goes off a mountain.

AUSTIN: Sorry. [laughs] It sounds like something happened on the sheets. I was not "Ah"ing your words.

[JANINE and ALI laugh]

ALI: The situation.

JANINE: I had to fix a typo.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: Um... So I've picked Francis. She/her. Oh I haven't written— None of us have written "I think above major character is dot dot dot."

AUSTIN: Wait, is that—is that— Do we decide that? Or does the person playing them decide that.

JANINE: I think we decide it, don't we?

AUSTIN: I don't know. I didn't realize that. Also Darling is she/her or they/them.

JANINE: 'Cause it's part of the... Yeah. It's part of the process there. Anyway, I've picked Francis. I didn't draw anyone who looked parent-y, even though as an heir you should pick the person you're inheriting from. So I went with Francis who's description was, "gentle, wealthy family. Sweet, intelligent, and mousey. Settled into her destiny of rich spinsterhood by learning how to best manage her father's affairs." I've decided that Francis is Chatelaine's twin.

AUSTIN: Ooh.

JANINE: And sort of the representative of her parents. So maybe her parents are in their country estate. They've left the daughters in town to manage things and Chatelaine manages things on the sort of social level. The sort of status side of things. And Francis actually manages the books, but also is kind of the eyes and ears of the parents to make sure that Chatelaine's on track.

JACK: Is Darling their first name, or surname? Or is it a mononym?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: Mhm.

JANINE: Darling d'Darling.

AUSTIN: People call them Darling.

JACK: Mhm.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: Can't quite remember the name of the naval captain. Uh, Captain.

JACK: [laughs] Ah, right.

JANINE: Captain and Darling.

AUSTIN: Yeah, Captain and Darling. [laughs] From—

JACK: From Majora's Mask.

JANINE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: From Majora's Mask, yeah, uh-huh.

JACK: The fucking worst couple in that game.

[ALI laughs]

JACK: All they do is spin round in a circle and kiss.

[AUSTIN and JANINE laugh]

AUSTIN: Very judgey, Jack.

JACK: [laughs] Fuckin' hate— I've played the game recently. Honey and Darling suck.

[ALI and AUSTIN laugh]

ALI: Yeah, I think fleshing out my [laughs] relationship with James a little bit, who is he/him. I'm— I wasn't sure whether it's like a relationship that Mint's parents are trying to push on her.

AUSTIN: Ooh.

ALI: But I think that it actually might make more sense that he is pursuing me in order to like work out this like dynasty situation so he can get like a discount on—

JANINE: Pies.

ALI: My family's crystals, yeah. [laughs] Exactly. They wanna sell, um, you know, seasonal gift boxes of holiday treats, and I think that, you know, if we had the Charlise pies in store, you know, in the department store, then, you know, there's way less overhead.

JACK: Fuck that guy.

[ALI and JANINE laugh]

JACK: Anastasia thinks that Henrietta is meddling unambitiously and directionlessly. Show some spine. Think bigger.

AUSTIN: [laughs] That's good.

JACK: You want a mentor that challenges you.

AUSTIN: Mhm. Darling thinks that Diego is wasting his beautiful youth in mourning. Move on.

ALI: [laughs] James thinks that Mint is naive and a good opportunity.

JANINE: Good. Great.

[ALI laughs]

JANINE: These are good. These are workable. These are good.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: So now we get to decide who we want to—which of these connections we want to play as. And they suggest for easy understanding, copying and pasting the name at the top of your own sheet into the uh, connection thing, just so it's all color coded.

ALI: Oh I see.

AUSTIN: Gotcha. That's neat.

JACK: Oh, right.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Mhm.

JANINE: So.

AUSTIN: Um. Hm.

JANINE: Um, I would love— I would— Does anyone have strong feelings?

JACK: All of these rule and it would be great to play any of them.

[ALI laughs]

JANINE: Yeah.

ALI: Yeah. My only thing is that because Mint and your character Janine are already friends, I would wanna get Anastasia or Darling? Just to make it a little more spread out.

JANINE: Sure.

ALI: But beyond that...

JANINE: Who would you like then, Anastasia or Darling?

ALI: Um, yeah, um, hm. Let me go with Anastasia.

JANINE: Get a little taste of that meddling.

ALI: Yeah. [laughs]

JACK: Austin, do you have a preference?

AUSTIN: I do not.

JACK: Then we are at a stalemate.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: Ah.

JANINE: I would—

AUSTIN: Does Janine have a preference?

JANINE: I would really like to play James, is the thing.

ALI: Sure. Yeah.

JACK: Hell yeah. Then I would, I would play Darling.

AUSTIN: Okay, and I'll play Francis.

ALI: Oh this is fun. [pause] Sorry. [laughs]

[JANINE and AUSTIN laugh]

JANINE: Is that the right color? That's kind of the right color.

AUSTIN: You can just copy it and paste it and it'll stay.

JANINE: Yeah, it, I— Didn't work for me. But.

AUSTIN: [crosstalk] Oh wait, will it? Wait, yeah, it's just off. Weird.

ALI: [crosstalk] I like that this one is darker 'cause it's like your evil character.

AUSTIN: Right.

[1:45:00]

[ALI and JACK laugh]

JANINE: It's true. That is true.

[ALI laughs]

JANINE: Um, okay. So we've got all that set up. We've gone through the player principles. So besi—

AUSTIN: Wait, have we? Have we gone through player principles?

JANINE: [crosstalk] Yes. We went through player principles at the very very start.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JANINE: It's the— It's all the like, respect collaboration and—

AUSTIN: Yeah, okay.

JANINE: Take action, pursue desires. Accept and orchestrate your own misfortunes. Contribute to the story. Support other players.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JANINE: There is also a handout here called cycle of play. But it is also in the side of the thingy with a mouseover which is really handy. So we start out in the Novel phase, which is very familiar to us. Like, we play a lot of games that have the Novel phase, which is basically where... For our purposes the first one for sure will be Event. Which is like an event. A party, a something like that.

AUSTIN: That's like a frame a scene type of play?

JANINE: It's a thing where yeah, we get to basically frame as many scenes as we want to frame for that event. And yeah. And then after that we adjust reputation based on what happened in that scene. Every character on your sheet, you will have, for example— I need to open the dependent, here we go. You have reputation criteria. So for the dependent, you gain a positive tag if you acted in the service of duty or morality and— Actually, I guess it's the same for everyone. I think it's the same for everyone.

So if you act in the service of duty or morality in a way that compromised your desires, you gain a positive tag. If you act in obedience to society's conventions despite considerable hardship in doing so, you gain a tag. If you made a sacrifice or denied your own desires to preserve the dignity of yourself or others in an unbecoming situation. Those are all, you'll gain a positive tag. You gain a negative tag if you do the opposite basically. If you act in contravention of society's conventions, if you act on desire in a way that compromised your duty or morality, or if you publicly displayed strong emotions. Because this is about a kind of—

AUSTIN: [crosstalk] That is different from...

JANINE: Oh is that different?

AUSTIN: There is some difference.

JANINE: Okay.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: From place—from person to pers here. Person to person here.

JANINE: Okay, yeah. The last one seems to be different for each I think.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ALI: Yeah.

JANINE: Yeah.

ALI: For mine, I'll just go around. My positive one is “make a sacrifice or denied your own desires to uphold the value of your place of origin,” or “acted in a way that would shame or embarrass your place of origin.” So.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: That's fun.

ALI: Defending the witches...

AUSTIN: I, I'm glad that— I'd not written it this way but like you know, the stuff that I've mentioned with Diego of like temperament detached or negative things aloof, lines up so nicely with my negative being displaying strong emotions, because I'm from a military family. Which is just like, miserable. What a stupid life the world gives us. Can't be publicly sad. Fuck off.

JANINE: Um, Jack do you wanna read your third thing in positive and negative?

JACK: Oh yeah, my third is “secured a personal invitation from somebody of higher social status than yourself.”

[ALI and AUSTIN laugh]

JACK: And negative is “acted in an uncouth, low class, or vulgar manner.”

[ALI and JANINE laugh]

AUSTIN: Wait, uh oh.

JANINE: Uh oh.

JACK: Uh oh.

AUSTIN: What— Can you go over your negative reputation tag again?

[ALI and Janine laugh]

JACK: So here it says [laughs] vulgar, and it also says unfortunate connections.

AUSTIN: I see.

JACK: Because my cousin stole a church.

AUSTIN: Wait, is that what it was?

JANINE: I thought it was just a monument.

AUSTIN: It was a church?

JANINE: It was a whole church?

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: I think so.

AUSTIN: Is your cousin, uh, Carmen Sandiego?

[JANINE and JACK laugh]

JACK: Oh, god.

JANINE: So for the heir, the special criteria for me is "denied your desires or made a sacrifice to uphold the family name." And the negative one is "shamed or embarrassed the family name." Okay.

So then after that is the Rumor and Scandal phase, where we both— Or where we take a turn, we take turns going around and then back around, so everyone gets two chances to either create a rumor or spread a rumor on that sheet. And if you spread a rumor that is already on the sheet, you basically attach a token to it that can be used to spice things up.

And we'll— I'll explain those in a second. After Rumor and Scandal is Epistolary, where everyone gets to write a maximum of two letters. And you can use your resolve tokens to prompt people to write to you if you think they should, things like that. Or you can like, you know, an example they give is like if you're in debt with a school you could like write to the school and ask for an extension on the debt, and then I as the facilitator would respond as the school and like, if you wanted to compel me to accept, to release your debt a little bit or something, you'd use a token for that. And then it cycles around again. So during that Epistolary phase we'll probably decide, do we want to do a one cycle game or a two cycle.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: Right.

JANINE: We'll just see how we're feeling about things. Um, okay. So resolve tokens, the things I keep mentioning. Everyone starts out with two of those. I start with three. 'Cause reasons.

JACK: I think I have three too.

JANINE: You also— Sorry, yes, you also start out with three because you're starting at a bit of a disadvantage, reputation-wise.

[ALI laughs]

JANINE: Resolve tokens— Also, each connection has two resolve tokens. Resolve tokens you basically can use to change things in ways that would normally be out of the scope of what your character can do. So if you want your character to know something they shouldn't know, you can use a resolve token to explain why they know that. Or if you want some big event to happen, like a carriage to overturn, you can use a resolve token to make that happen.

You can also offer resolve tokens as a sort of trading chit to another player if you want to do something that's going to harm their interest. Or if you want to sort of force them to do something that helps you. And they have the right to refuse those, they can accept them, or they can accept them with conditions. This is also a thing that we've done before in some games, I'm pretty sure.

So a good example would be— I mean [sighs] There's like some fiddly rules here, like you can't use resolve tokens to counter reputation condition once those are in effect, and things like that, we don't need to worry about that right now. But mostly it's a thing of like, if you need someone else to participate in a thing you're doing, then odds are you need to offer them the resolve token. Are there any questions about that?

AUSTIN: They'll come up in play.

JANINE: They will.

AUSTIN: For sure.

[ALI laughs]

JANINE: I'll also be modeling how to use them, so it'll be fine. We have another kind of token, the monologue token, which, everyone just has one of. Basically in a cycle, which is this, you know, the two rounds, you basically have a monologue token that at any point you can sort of give to someone and say like, "I want to hear your character's inner thoughts. I wanna hear like, what do you think of so and so proposing to you just now."

And then you give them a little space to have an inner monologue about what just happened or about whatever your prompt is. Or you can just say what's on that's character's mind.

Okay. And that brings us to reputation tags, which we kind of went over. When we get to the reputation phase, if things have happened that trigger those conditions the reputation gets adjusted accordingly. If you get three reputation tags and hit that green line, you trigger a reputation condition, which are the things below. You get to pick which one it is. And those will basically stick around until they get cleared by spending your reputation tags. You can spend reputation tags as resolve tokens, BTW. So this is actually kind of a Shooting the Moon thing.

AUSTIN: You can spend someone else's negatives, right?

JANINE: Yes. You can spend someone else's negatives, but only you can spend your positives. So if you wanna say, "Actually, you're getting along really well with the guy I'm trying to woo, I'm going to use your 'aloof' negative tag. I'm gonna offer you this token and say that like, you look disinterested to him and he kind of picks up on that." And then it's like a do you accept, do you not accept, is there a condition? That sort of thing plays out. Then that player gets that token and can play it again, et cetera. Okay. Um. Any questions? Reputation tags are— There's also the description there so if it comes up, um.

ALI: Yeah.

JANINE: They give you a bit of wiggle room.

ALI: I bet I'll be asking you when it [laughs] when it arrives.

JANINE: [crosstalk] Yes.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: I mean a good example, we can, you know— Unexpected connection is one of yours, Ali, it says "a famous, wealthy, or aristocratic connection you made abroad arrives in town. Create them as a connection. While this condition is active you remain their favorite." So you basically, that— Taking that reputation, taking that thing would basically give you a wealthy person who adores you, in play.

ALI: Sure.

JANINE: Which would be extremely beneficial because they're gonna act in your interest, probably.

ALI: Mhm.

AUSTIN: And when that happens, someone else adopts that character to play, basically. That new connection.

JANINE: Um, I would adopt that character.

AUSTIN: Because you're the facilitator. Got it.

JANINE: Yes. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Cool.

JANINE: No matter what, everyone only plays one connection, and all the other connections are— End up in my stable.

AUSTIN: [crosstalk] Gotcha. Okay.

JANINE: This should be— It'll be fine. [laughs] I'm not at all worried about it.

JACK: [crosstalk] It'll be good.

JANINE: Okay. So how about we just jump into the Novel phase? As the town name, I wrote down Nievelmarch, which is really not that much better than Nieveldorf.

AUSTIN: That's a mix. Nieveldorf is already bad.

[ALI and Jack laugh]

JANINE: It's a coined— Dorf is just such a rough sound.

AUSTIN: It's why I love it.

JACK: [crosstalk] Oh, dear.

JANINE: Dorf.

JACK: What about—

AUSTIN: Love a Dorf.

ALI: Dorf.

JACK: Nievalbad?

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: Nievel— Nievelmarch is alright. Nievelmont? Nievel...

ALI: Oh, Nievelmont isn't bad.

AUSTIN: That sounds too like, like, Middle Ages-y to me though.

JANINE: Also, Nievelmont is like, you're in Marchmont already.

AUSTIN: You're— I know.

JANINE: You know, Nievelmont, the foot of the Marchmont.

JACK: [crosstalk] Unless it's the mountain that— [laughs] Or yeah, or like, between the Nievelmont and Mount Marchmont is—

[ALI laughs]

JANINE: Nievelmarch.

AUSTIN: Is Nievelmarch.

JACK: Oh, dear.

JANINE: I'll take it.

AUSTIN: I'm fine with Nievelmarch.

ALI: Yeah.

JACK: How's that spelled?

AUSTIN: N-I-V-E-L. Right? That is— I forget. So, Nievel comes from something that I don't know how to look up anymore.

JANINE: [crosstalk] It's like snow, it's like a...

AUSTIN: [crosstalk] It means—

JANINE: Vaguely spun out of the word for snow and something.

AUSTIN: Yes. That is correct.

JANINE: N-I-E-V-E-L?

AUSTIN: That's what I have written down, but [mumbles] I don't fucking know.

JANINE: March?

AUSTIN: I don't know how to get there again. Or it could have been like Nievel [emphasis on "el"] or something, and I changed it, I don't know. Word for snow.

JANINE: [crosstalk] Evel Knievel March.

AUSTIN: That's it.

JANINE: Okay. In the town of Nievelmarch, nestled at the feet of the snowy Marchmont mountains, the twenty sixth is just as significant a celebration as the twenty fifth, among a certain set of the population. At midday on the last business day of the year, merchants and clerks alike close their books, stop their inkwells, set their pens to rest, and lock their doors. Street by street they close up, one after another, and stepping out onto the compacted snow and muck of the walkways, they knock at the doors of any neighbours who have lost track of time.

One after another they build the procession from which Procession Day gets its name, and make their way to the most gracious home in their path, one belonging to some pillar of the neighbourhood who invariably hosts them for dinner. That's how it started, at least. Now it's a social event and anyone who's anyone joins the procession and the meal via whatever tangential connections they have. Should your uncle trade in velvet or your best friend work as an accountant, you need little more than that and a suitably fine processioner suit to join in. And why shouldn't you? All the best deals are made when the ledgers are shut.

So, our first event for this Novel phase is Procession Day. It's basically, it's kind of Boxing Day. But it is celebrated sort of exclusively, or at least, the spirit of it is, is celebrated exclusively among merchants and tradespeople and you know clerks, bureaucrats, accountants, like, the whole class of people that's tied up in the commerce of this market town. Which, basically ends up extending to everyone who is rich enough to go to a party at that time. You know, everyone's got some root or some connection in that town.

So it's custom for everyone to kind of just join in this parade as they march to whatever the house in that neighbourhood is that's hosting dinner. And this year's procession dinner is uh, is at the Pellier house. And Chatelaine Pellier is hosting it, and hosting pretty much all

commerce, you know. I'm sure there is a, there is absolutely a— [sighs] You could fuck up and get turned away at the door for sure.

[JACK laughs]

JANINE: Like, I don't think the odd job boys get into these parties. I don't think they get turned away empty handed, but also it's... This is, you know, a class of people that have decided that this is their thing, even if it originally wasn't their thing. Functionally—

[2:00:00]

AUSTIN: Is it a thing— Would they know ahead of time that they would get turned away, and like maybe do it anyway 'cause they know they won't be turned away empty handed, but like, is it a question as to whether or not you make it in? Or is it a known quantity because you pretty much know where you are in the pecking order.

JANINE: This is society, right, like this is...this has become a society event even if a long time ago it was a tradesperson event and tradespeople weren't part of society. Now there is a class of tradespeople who are part of society. And it also probably depends on the neighbourhood you're in, right? Like if you are in a posh neighbourhood full of like, the really expensive lawyers, and like really expensive shops, you probably know that if you are the odd job boy who is in that neighbourhood, like you're probably gonna go a few blocks over. Like that's where your party is going to be. That's you know sort of the... That's the shitty part of having your extremely stratified Christmas market society, right?

[ALI laughs]

JANINE: So.

AUSTIN: Uh, uh-huh?

JANINE: We are encouraged to just leap into the middle of it. So I think I'm going to leap right into the middle of it. I'm assuming that everyone's at this party. I guess we should establish that first. Where is everyone in this situation?

AUSTIN: So is the party— Sorry, is the party at the house, or is the party the procession itself?

JANINE: The procession leads to the house. It makes the most sense to me, since we're sort of starting in the middle of action, for the procession to have arrived at the house. Like, this is everyone settling into the party proper and not just traipsing through the snow. I bet

there's some people who even skip the procession, right? Like, they just kind of go straight to the house, but they do it a little bit late so no one notices.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: This is a—

AUSTIN: What's a party look like?

JACK: Yeah, I was gonna say, is there a— There's— There's presumably a dinner, right?

JANINE: Yes.

JACK: But that might be later in the evening? Are we currently in the sort of, hang out in various drawing rooms and make polite conversation phase? Or...

JANINE: So this I imagine—

AUSTIN: [crosstalk] Also like, is this a dozen— Is this like twenty people or is this like two hundred people?

JANINE: This is like two hundred people.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: Oh, damn.

JANINE: This is basically everyone who's everyone in this neighbourhood gets to come to this party if they want to, and you know most people wouldn't turn it down 'cause it's the holidays anyway and you know, this is... I should frame this a little more.

This is part of sort of a larger holiday where there is basically a week of not working. Like, you work through Christmas because you still will sell things on Christmas day to people who need to get gifts at the very very last minute, and you still will have to do some accounting and some bookkeeping and some whatever, so midday on the twenty sixth is when everything kind of shuts down. And it shuts down until just after New Year.

So this is the start of that event and it's, you know, kicking off with this big feast. And every neighbourhood has their sort of pocket that they go to. So this is, when you arrive there's

food laid out. It is, I think probably still decorated for Christmas specifically or for you know that holiday specifically, because the timeline is so short.

AUSTIN: Yeah, what is our Christmas equivalent here, because it's probably not— I don't— What is our Christmas equivalent here? [laughs] Without getting into— I'm guessing Jesus Christ and the Catholic church don't exist in this world.

JANINE: Um, no.

AUSTIN: Of witches, that we're chill with, for instance.

JANINE: That's true. I think—

JACK: [crosstalk] Well, we're chill with the witches in a kind of labor dispute sense.

ALI: Yeah.

JANINE: Yeah.

ALI: And I think—

AUSTIN: Nah, the pope— You've played Crusader Kings. If the mountains had the witches in it, my military parents would not just be hanging in the fort.

[JANINE laughs]

JACK: Out into the mountains, yeah. Um.

ALI: I do think that like, Shooting the Moon definitely set up like a very specific winter gifting holiday.

JANINE: Mhm.

ALI: In a way that like, even if it's separate from something spiritual in that way, it's like, you know, the people who are merchants know that they're getting their bonus and they know that they're getting this vacation. The people who have money know that they are going to be expected to be giving gifts to their staff and to their friends.

AUSTIN: Right, right.

ALI: Yadda yadda.

JANINE: Mhm.

ALI: So it's like, you know, pretty Christmas-y [laughs] to be fair. But like—

JANINE: Yeah.

ALI: Around this, this um...you know, the pageantry of it.

JACK: Yeah, like bring—

JANINE: I think it's also hard, it's hard to separate— I know this isn't a Grand Tableau game, but it's hard to separate from that idea of like MMOs having their like Christmas event where they call it like, Moon Nights, but it is Christmas.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. I think it's a McElroy thing, we can't say Moon Nights.

JANINE: Oh, shit.

[ALI laughs]

JACK: Yeah, no sorry. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Or it's Marvel? It's one or the other. Hard to get them separated these days.

JACK: [laughs] But people you know people cut branches down—

AUSTIN: Yes.

JACK: —from the trees and bring them inside. There uh—

AUSTIN: There's wreaths and lights and—

JACK: People are buying and selling candy.

AUSTIN: Candles, yeah.

JACK: There's probably like some equivalent of carol singing.

JANINE: Mhm.

JACK: And then it is like probably massively tied up, like Christmas is, in money and class.

JANINE: Oh yeah. Yeah. Maybe the thing to do is to call it something like Arbor, because it's a very tree centric...

JACK: [crosstalk] Arbor day!

[ALI laughs]

JANINE: Well, Arbor Day's already a thing.

[JACK and AUSTIN laugh]

ALI: I do like it being tied to sort of like the end of the year sort of like a good luck, rest period in between going into like quote unquote quarter one, you know?

JANINE: Yeah.

JACK: This town invariably calls it that.

[ALI laughs]

JANINE: So it's the thing is, I have the name, there's Procession Day which leads into Liber Clausa which means closed book, and that caps off with Renewal, which is, everyone goes back to work. That's the party where everyone goes back to work.

[JANINE and ALI laugh]

AUSTIN: Mm, love it. My favorite party.

JANINE: 'Cause that's these people.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Like going into a store on Labor Day and being like, "Happy Labor Day!" To the...

AUSTIN: Yeah. "What are your sales?" Yeah.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: "Can I get a cheap car?"

[JANINE laughs]

JACK: They haven't been invented yet.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: Fuck! Can I get a cheap train?

JACK: [laughs] Only very small.

AUSTIN: Ah. Good enough.

JACK: I think I am like, perched on a stool near the edge of the room, like talking to some other younger people, and just like, just gossiping. Like gossiping kind of directionlessly. But like, "Oh look who's coming, I didn't think they'd show their face this year," or like, "Have you heard what happened down at the somewhere or another." Or just like, that kind of like, the easy ground level gossip that I think that Henrietta and her friends sort of live and breathe.

JANINE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: I am attending to Darling, who is holding court, and I am standing there looking like a bodyguard.

[JANINE laughs]

AUSTIN: In, you know, whatever the equivalent of like— 'Cause like I'm not in the military probably, but there is still like that kind of like, dress uniform look about me.

JANINE: High collar, lots of buttons.

AUSTIN: High collar, lots of buttons, coat on. I always just look like I'm ready to leave. Like if I have to leave right now, I don't— I probably did— I almost certainly handed off an overcoat, but I still have a topcoat underneath the overcoat that's less heavy that I'd be like, I'd be fine. I could get home in this. And I'm just like, doing the like, people watching, scanning the room while Darling holds court with you know a bunch of people about the events of the week and the holidays and blah blah blah blah blah, and I'm half listening.

ALI: Um, I think Mint is like, in like a music courtyard. I don't know if this is like a specific drawing room or.

JACK: [crosstalk] Sick! Those exist?

[ALI and JANINE laugh]

JANINE: A sound bath?

ALI: Yeah, just like a garden somewhere where like live music is playing. I'm thinking of like a, like a bunch of harps or like large instruments that people are playing in like a half circle. And I think it's one of those things where like you sort of expect the party guests to like move from place to place between this space and like enjoy the music, but she is like standing there like actually [laughs] listening to it, and it's creating this thing in the party of like, other guests being like, "Well should I also stand there?" Or, you know.

[AUSTIN and JANINE laugh]

ALI: It is what it is. But I think she's seemingly like actually enjoying the music and like, a cup in her hand and just hanging out.

JANINE: So I don't wanna— That's a good example of why I don't want to just define this party too too much, because this is a game that is about you all sort of deciding how things are a little bit, even though this is Chatelaine's house. In terms of just some like loose things that are definitely going on: there's food, you know? I think it's probably like a buffet style and not a sit down style. It's like, set out on plates, it's kind of a free for all. It's, you know, everyone kind of have at it. I love the idea of some kind of like harp orchestra, like a harp ensemble.

[ALI and AUSTIN laugh]

JANINE: All various sizes of harp, like, I like— I love the idea that in this universe in the same way there's like a cello and a viola and a violin, it's just like that but harps.

[ALI laughs]

JANINE: That's important to me now.

[ALI laughs]

JANINE: I think Chatelaine is doing the very busy hostess thing, right, like she is flitting from room to room and group to group. I think that's where we'll get our first scene. I think Chatelaine uh... I think Chatelaine runs up to Mint when she gets into the sort of, into the courtyard with the harp ensemble. And I think she reaches out to sort of, you know, she's wearing a blue velvet dress, gloved hands, 'cause it's, you know, it's chilly when you're moving inside and outside and stuff. I think she reaches to clasp Mint's hands in hers. And says,

Chatelaine: Oh, it's so good to see you! I'm so glad you could make it.

ALI:

Mint: Oh, I was so happy to be here! Thanks for inviting me. I had such a good time with the procession.

JANINE:

Chatelaine: Have you ever done one before? Or were you too young when you were here before?

ALI:

Mint: I haven't. I haven't. I went up and down a couple extra blocks just to—

[JANINE and ALI laugh]

JANINE:

Chatelaine: Just to see how everyone is doing?

ALI:

Mint: Yeah. It was lovely.

JANINE:

Chatelaine: And you've— Have you eaten already? You gonna eat later? You have to eat something.

ALI:

Mint: I haven't. What's on the menu?

JANINE:

Chatelaine: We have those little cream puffs. And some of them— It's very fun. So some of them are just plain cream puffs. And some of them have little candied cherries and candied angelica in them. And it's like a little surprise 'cause you don't know which one you're going to get until you bite in. Our cook is very clever. I'm very proud of her. We've also got a young kitchen mage. She has so many ideas, it's very exciting.

ALI:

Mint: How modern.

JANINE: [laughs]

Chatelaine: Have you seen James?

ALI:

Mint: Um, no, is he attending this party?

JANINE:

Chatelaine: He was asking for you. He actually got here quite early. Maybe it—
Maybe a little too early, but I wouldn't— Don't say that I said that.

ALI:

Mint: Oh, no. No, I have not seen him. I, I'll keep an eye out. Thank you.

JANINE:

Chatelaine: Well if I see him I'll— Should I send him your way?

ALI:

Mint: Um, yeah. [laughs] Sure, sure. Yes! That's a good idea. Yes.

JANINE: Mhm. Is it a good idea? This is me asking you.

[ALI laughs]

JANINE: Is this like— Is this a thing that Mint is actually wanting or is it a thing where she's being polite.

ALI: I think for Charlise, she is aware of the sort of like social pressure on her from her family. I think part of my desire—my desire specifically is to receive proposals from a lot of different people. I think that part of her desire is like, "Oh I have to sort of try to make a better relationship for myself out of this. Because my family has already sort of chosen one for me. So I think that she is like, sort of like politely being like, "Oh I should definitely talk to him," because she knows that that's sort of what would be expected of her.

JANINE: Mhm. Okay.

ALI: Yeah. [laughs]

JANINE: I'm trying to— I have a dilemma now where I don't actually know if this thing is worth a resolve token for you then. I was going to say, what if once Chatelaine finds James, he is basically attached to Mint for the rest of the evening.

ALI: [laughs] Um... S— Oh. Yeah. Um, I think that makes sense like story-wise and I—

JANINE: Do you think it would be a burden?

ALI: Sort of. I think so. 'Cause for her it would also, it would cut off access to like, speaking to other people and being able to make other relationships. So...

JANINE: She can still do that, he'll just also be there. [laughs]

ALI: Right, yeah.

JANINE: Gooning.

ALI: [laughs] I guess that's sort of the thing, right, you can flirt with other people in front of somebody, so, you know. Yeah. I, yeah, that's the thing, I'm trying to think if like, if there's one of those like, yeah I do that but yadda yadda.

JANINE: Mhm.

ALI: And I guess, I guess that would be the thing, right, like yes that'll happen. He'll be attached to me, but because people sort of see them coupled at the party, other potential suitors for Mint are now like, "Oh let me go talk to her." I think that's a fair like, exchange?

[2:15:00]

JANINE: Okay.

ALI: Okay cool.

JANINE: I'm gonna give you a resolve token.

ALI: 'Kay, cool.

JANINE: And now you are going to have some James stuff to deal with which will be fun. So I think Chatelaine agrees that if she, you know when she finds James she'll send him over, and she does. It probably does not take very long. And Chatelaine flits off to the next room to greet someone else.

[AUSTIN and ALI laugh]

JANINE: So what is everyone else up to at the party? This is a good time to also bring connections in.

JACK: Mm.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: I think that um, hm. So can you start a scene with a connection? Could Darling turn to Diego?

JANINE: Yes.

JACK: Or should— Yeah, okay.

JANINE: Yeah. It's kind of a free for all, right, it's like it is any scene that you think should happen at this event, basically.

JACK: Right. But it's not like um, oh god what game is it that we play where we have a major and a minor character? Like a Microscope-y type thing?

AUSTIN: [crosstalk] A bunch of things.

JACK: Where like a minor character can't frame scenes or whatever. In this case, in a sort of very Austen-esque way, the ensemble cast is able to sort of, to frame scenes and things?

JANINE: Oh yeah, it's— I think it's very important that they do, right? Because a lot of them are going to be like shitty suitors and like mean parents and things like that. So they need to be able to take the— They also have resolve tokens. Like, they can do that shit too.

[ALI laughs]

JACK: So I think that um...

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: I think that in a lull in the conversation— Are you still standing beside Darling's chair?

AUSTIN: Oh, yeah. Yes, absolutely.

JACK: I think she just sort of like, gently touches your arm, as if to be like, bend down, I want to whisper to you.

AUSTIN: And I do. As, like, maybe at the knees as not to show my ass, liter— You know what I mean?

[JANINE and ALI laugh]

AUSTIN: As not to literally bend at the waist?

JANINE: He's wearing those military low-rise pants.

JACK: I was gonna say, yeah, the military— [laughs] The military low-rise pants.

AUSTIN: Yeah. You don't know what the military does here. You have to be very...

JANINE: Sexy.

AUSTIN: Uh, yeah. Sexy. In the military of Nievelmarch.

JACK:

Darling: [sighs] Mr. Flint. While you've got a moment, I think you're being very—you're being terribly kind, you know, keeping an eye on me. But you know that I'm quite capable of handling this crowd myself, don't you?

AUSTIN:

Diego: More than capable. I, um, it's not so much that I'm keeping watch over you so much as I'm hoping to pick up a few pointers.

JACK:

Darling: Oh. I—

AUSTIN:

Diego: Selfish, I know.

JACK:

Darling: You know, I think that— I think that there would be much more benefit to be gained from your time at this party than spending it with an old person like myself.

AUSTIN:

Diego: You do yourself disservice. You're as young as the accomplishments you earn in a year, and at the end of a year like this one, you are younger than me.

JACK:

Darling: Hm! I'm sixty seven. Um—

[ALI laughs]

JACK:

Darling: And there are so many beautiful, beautiful young people here at a place like this. Why, there are, I believe the owner of Penny Anythings is here. I believe that people from all up and down the town have come to visit, and I think that this is an opportunity that you are maybe setting aside, Mr. Flint. Far be it from me to give advice.

JACK: And like, a long, sarcastic pause.

AUSTIN: [laughs] Yeah, uh-huh.

JACK:

Darling: Far be it from me to give advice, but I think that you should be spending less time by an old woman's side and more time with the caanapés and the vol-au-vents and the bright young things of this beautiful town.

AUSTIN:

Diego: Is there one that catches your eye, that you suppose should catch mine?

AUSTIN: Looking out across the crowd and, you know, nodding in a direction.

Diego: The woman with the ostrich stapled to her head, perhaps. Is that...

JACK:

Darling: [clicks tongue] Too flamboyant.

AUSTIN:

Diego: Should she be a replacement for Honor? Or would you prefer that I waste my time this holiday speaking to the faux officer who has served not a day in his life and yet wears the regalia?

JACK:

Darling: It is a—

AUSTIN:

Diego: I'm not above these people but I'm beside them and would like to remain as such.

JACK:

Darling: You are beside *me* and you would like to remain as such by the sounds of things, Mr. Flint. It is not a binary choice between ostrich lady or fake dandy. There are plenty of people to choose here. Why, I've heard that uh, Miss Charlise has

recently returned to town. I'm sure she has many fantastical stories of—uh, hah, I'm sorry. That was—

[ALI laughs]

JACK:

Darling: Forget her. [sighs] And of course the—

AUSTIN:

Diego: You've found— You— Darling, you have found a way to drive me from you. Worry no more.

AUSTIN: And I walk away. Into the crowd.

JACK: [crosstalk] Darling turns to the woman in front of her and says,

Darling: You see what they've done here with the wallpaper is quite extraordinary. By getting the roller right up into the corner of the room, they've managed to...

[ALI and AUSTIN laugh]

JANINE: I'm trying to think of if there's something that should intercept you.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: I think there is. I think as Diego breaks away from Darling... Um, as Diego breaks away from Darling, I think Chatelaine walks up. And Chatelaine has already talked with Darling.

JACK: Hm!

JANINE: But I bet that conversation did not involve Diego, right?

AUSTIN: Sure, yeah, totally.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Totally.

JANINE: So I think Chatelaine— I think Chatelaine is very like, smiley and effusive and sort of immediately decides like, oh, he must need guidance. He's broken off, like.

AUSTIN: [laughs] Uh-huh, yeah.

JANINE: He clearly— Now he—

AUSTIN: I finished this first engagement, and now.

JANINE: He doesn't know where to go.

AUSTIN: Yeah, uh-huh.

JANINE: So I think she says,

Chatelaine: Oh, Mr. Flint, Mr. Flint. The dance floor of course is this way. If you prefer the harps they are in the courtyard outside. There's plenty of food. Have you ever been to the Pellier estate before?

AUSTIN:

Diego: Ah, no, and I'm certain I would remember it if I did. This is quite a fete that you are throwing, Ms. Pellier. A Procession Day like no other. I congratulate you on your well earned attention here.

JANINE:

Chatelaine: Would you like a tour around? It's quite busy, but I'm sure it's there...

AUSTIN: Looking— The camera pans you know across or kind of you know twists across the floor and like it's just Diego looking at people he wants nothing to do with.

[ALI laughs]

JANINE:

Chatelaine: I could introduce to uh... I mean of course many people.

AUSTIN:

Diego: [crosstalk] Uh, a tour. A tour would be— A tour sounds wonderful. I would love to see more of the estate.

JANINE: I would like to um— I would like to invoke your negative tag here, aloof.

AUSTIN: Ah, okay. Yeah, good.

[ALI laughs]

JANINE: I think when the hostess is talking to someone, especially someone who has kind of faded into the shadows by choice for a bit. I think when that attention is singled—singles them out, people are going to look. I would like to offer you a resolve token in exchange for your aloof tag, if Diego cannot feign interest or pleasantness really. I mean maybe pleasantness, but if—

AUSTIN: Um, I will trade— I will negotiate with you here.

JANINE: Mhm?

AUSTIN: Which is that I— Diego cannot feign interest in a polite or a um, elegant way. But instead does find some sort of business opportunity through you. Is just, the instrumentalization of the contact rises to the top very quickly. And successfully.

JANINE: Mhm, what's the offer? What's the...

AUSTIN: So you come up— I don't know, you come up with something that is— Maybe, you know, annoyed by my refusal to like, care about the harps or the art room, you hand me off to someone who—with an introduction, to someone who could help make me money. And you know, the rumor spreads—or maybe not the rumor spreads, or we'll see when we get to rumors—but like, you know, it's clear that I was not a particularly engaging conversationalist with you.

JANINE: Mhm. I think that's—

AUSTIN: And it's rude. It's rude to be like...

JANINE: Yeah, I think of it—

AUSTIN: For me to keep coming back to the money thing, right?

JANINE: I think it's also really conspicuous when the hostess hands someone off. Especially depending on who they get handed off too. Like if you get handed off to some new money investor guy?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: Right?

AUSTIN: Totally.

JANINE: That's a pretty— That's a— That's bordering on a snub.

AUSTIN: Could you hand me off to James? Who I would then be stuck now in a Mint, James sandwich?

[ALI laughs]

JANINE: Mm, I don't know that I would— 'Cause my whole desire is orchestrating a marriage? I don't know that I would put you in between that.

AUSTIN: Okay. [clicks tongue]

JANINE: I mean the thing I wanna say is that I would hand you off to Francis, but you also play Francis, but also that doesn't need to be a scene.

AUSTIN: I can't do that. Uh, yeah.

JANINE: That like, that could just be it right? 'Cause that's gonna be like money talk, that's gonna be like...

AUSTIN: Mhm. Yeah, then just do that. That's fine.

JANINE: Okay. And also, yeah. Francis is not the party—

AUSTIN: Oh, okay, and here's the thing that happens. Here's the thing that happens. Instantly— Like Francis and I seem to like hit it off instantly.

[JANINE laughs]

AUSTIN: In a way that is like, a little insulting.

[ALI and JANINE laugh]

AUSTIN:

Diego: Ah, Miss Pellier!

AUSTIN: I say, sitting down. You know, or like—

JANINE: Does it almost look like you're putting a point on it? Like—

AUSTIN: It could be interpreted that way.

JANINE: Yeah.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: My warmth, which is available to others, was not available to you.

JANINE: And then it's available to Francis, who everyone is just like—

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: Francis is not The Pellier sister. Francis is the also-ran of the Pellier family.

AUSTIN: Mhm. Totally.

ALI: But also literally your twin which makes it interesting. [laughs]

AUSTIN: But also your twin, yeah, uh-huh.

JANINE: Yes. Mhm. Yup.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Perfect.

JANINE: So your aloof tag gets consumed.

AUSTIN: Right. And I get a resolve token from that.

JANINE: Yes. Yup.

AUSTIN: Right? Okay, cool.

JANINE: What's Henrietta doing? What's Henrietta's moment here?

JACK: It's like, it's gotta be about the part— The awkwardness of being at a party with— [sighs] It's rough, right, because I don't want to just run into Diego and have a “this is an awkward at the party scene,” so it might be... Hm. I'm trying to think what's the angle, what is the most successful angle for her to play?

JANINE: Oh, is it— Does Henrietta go for Darling? Oh, right, you're Darling. Dang. [laughs]

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. Yeah.

JANINE: I mean, that's the thing, is like if that happens then I play Darling for that exchange. Like that's still a doable thing. But is that the way that you start trying to mend things with Diego, or like how...

JACK: Oh!

JANINE: You know, what's at the forefront of Henrietta's mind here?

JACK: I think I actually come and see you.

Henrietta: Chatelaine, have you got a moment?

JANINE:

Chatelaine: Of course, always! Especially now, 'cause apparently I'm quite boring tonight.

[ALI laughs]

JACK:

Henrietta: Oh, really?

JANINE:

Chatelaine: We don't need to get into it, it's...

JACK:

Henrietta: No, no, we do, we absolutely need to get into it! Who has called you boring? Come with me, let's go in the harp room, people won't be able to hear us.

[ALI and JANINE laugh]

JACK: Is Mint still in the harp room?

JANINE: [crosstalk] The harp courtyard, please. [laughs]

JACK: Are you still there, Mint?

JANINE: [crosstalk] That's a good question. Is—

ALI: Yeah.

JANINE: Mint and James, vibing to the harp music.

[ALI laughs]

JANINE: James is holding two drinks.

ALI: Oh, great.

JANINE: Just 'cause. Just 'cause, you know.

[ALI laughs]

JANINE: You have to have like, milk and then like something a little bit more robust. It's tradition.

JACK:

Henrietta: James is holding two drinks, Chatelaine, and I think one of them is milk. What kind of a hostess are you?

[ALI, AUSTIN, and JANINE laugh]

JANINE:

Chatelaine: The milk is good— The spiced wine is very spicy this year, and the milk cuts it.

JACK:

Henrietta: [disbelieving] Uh-huh. The milk cuts it.

JANINE:

Chatelaine: It was the new kitchen girl's idea. I thought it was very innovative.

JACK:

Henrietta: Who was it who said you were boring?

JANINE:

Chatelaine: [sighs] Again, he didn't say I was boring, it was just implied by the interest he took in Francis. It's fine. I— It's fine. I'm not mad about it. I have a whole party, I can't be mad about things tonight.

JACK: [laughs] I think Henrietta just pulls a face like, "Oh? Yeah?"

[AUSTIN and JANINE laugh]

JANINE: I've had too much milk to be mad about things tonight.

[ALI and AUSTIN laugh]

JACK:

Henrietta: Look, I [sighs] This is all very good fun, but I need to— I need to talk to you about something. Something sincere. Is this something that we can do? I don't mean to bring the tone of your party down, but I need to talk to you about Diego.

JANINE:

Chatelaine: What about Diego?

[AUSTIN laughs]

JACK:

Henrietta: Well, you know how things are between me and him.

JANINE:

Chatelaine: [sighs] I'm a little surprised he's still holding onto it— No, I'm not surprised he's still holding onto that at all.

JACK:

Henrietta: He, he, he—

JANINE:

Chatelaine: In hindsight.

JACK:

Henrietta: He is a man who keeps grudges, and, what with the closing of the book coming up, I have been doing a lot of thinking, and I've been thinking that it, it might be... It might be getting close to the time to close the book. I want to apologize, Chatelaine, and I want him to uh, accept my apology.

JANINE:

Chatelaine: It wasn't your fault.

[2:30:00]

JACK:

Henrietta: Of course it wasn't my fault! I had absolutely nothing to do with it! If my brother wanted to go up into the mountains, who am I to stop him? In fact I thought it was a perfectly exciting idea. But—

JANINE:

Chatelaine: People go up into mountains all the time, and then they come back and it's fine.

JACK:

Henrietta: And then they come back! They absolutely come back. Most of the time they come back.

JANINE:

Chatelaine: Look at Mint!

JACK:

Henrietta: Look at Mint. She came back!

JANINE:

Chatelaine: She did.

ALI: Hi.

JACK: We both turn and look at Mint.

[AUSTIN and JANINE laugh]

ALI: Um, James and Mint are now trading glasses for some reason. Mint looks really confused by it, but now she's holding a cup of milk and he's holding two wine glasses, and going on about stocks. Um. [laughs]

[AUSTIN laughs]

JACK: He sucks.

JANINE: He seems fun.

[ALI and JACK laugh]

JANINE:

Chatelaine: I don't know, I think they look okay.

JACK:

Henrietta: I think they look terrible.

JANINE: [laughs] He might—

JACK: His— You—

JANINE:

Chatelaine: He might, he might— It might just be that he needs an influence of...you know, it could be the same thing with Diego. Maybe Diego just needs a mellowing influence, and he'll stop being such a prat.

JACK:

Henrietta: [sighs] Maybe he does. And, you know... You know that when I want to apologize for something, that's the result of a lot of thinking. An apology does not come easily to me. But I'm prepared.

JANINE:

Chatelaine: It's true. It does take you a very long time to apologize for things.

JACK:

Henrietta: It does take me a very long time, doesn't it, Chatelaine? But I am prepared to apologize.

JANINE: [laughs]

Chatelaine: [crosstalk] I recall that.

JACK:

Henrietta: Uh-huh. And I'm, I think I'm prepared for him to accept it. I think that we can close the book and we can move forward. So. [sighs] I don't want to see him tonight. He would reject me. I would leave, crying. But I was wondering whether or not you could find it in your heart to...

You haven't mentioned whether you've spoken to him yet. Maybe you could find it in your heart to, to greet him and let him know that I'm think— You didn't hear it from me! But you've heard from someone who's heard from someone that Sameday's prepared to apologize. Is that something that you could do for me, Chatelaine? As friends.

JANINE:

Chatelaine: Uh, you know, honestly I think— I think he would be more inclined to hear that from Francis than from me. He did not seem particularly interested in anything I had to say. I don't know that I'm the person you would like to have in your corner tonight.

JACK:

Henrietta: But I don't like Francis.

[ALI laughs]

JACK:

Henrietta: I like you.

JANINE:

Chatelaine: No one likes Francis. Everyone likes me more than Francis, I know.

JACK:

Henrietta: [crosstalk] No one likes F— James likes Francis.

JANINE:

Chatelaine: Well. [sighs] James—

AUSTIN: There's an obvious solution here, right? I just wanna make sure everyone— Okay. That's all I'm saying.

JACK: [laughs] Yes, Austin?

AUSTIN: That's it. I'll let you get there organically.

JANINE: N—

JACK: Oh!

AUSTIN: You're her twin!

JACK: You're her twin! [gasps]

JANINE: We're fraternal.

[ALI laughs]

JACK: I don't—

AUSTIN: Oh. What? Why are you twins then? Just make her your older sister.

JANINE: [laughs] That's what twins— She can't be the older sister, because I'm the heir.

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: Alpine gavelkind could mean that the younger sister inherits.

AUSTIN: [crosstalk] Make her your younger sister then.

JANINE: We're fraternal twins and she's two minutes younger than me.

AUSTIN: Aw, that's not fun. Okay.

JANINE: She's two minutes younger and two minutes more boring.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: Well, since you're not prepared to try the twins plot again.

[AUSTIN and JANINE laugh]

JACK: I'm gonna spend a resolve token to try and compel you to, uh—

JANINE: Ooh. To vouch for you? Or to get Francis...

JACK:

Henrietta: [crosstalk] Oh, not to vouch for me, don't say vouch for me, Chatelaine. Say that you heard from Elaine that Elaine heard from Rosina that Sameday is prepared to apologize. Because I am.

JANINE: I will accept that resolve token on the condition that... Oh I'm trying to think of a good condition here. I will accept that on the condition that you, hm, fuck. What's a really good— I need something. I need like, something meaty here. I wish we'd made two connections each so badly.

AUSTIN: We can still introduce new ones, right?

JANINE: Yes, we can. But it's a little bit tricky because they need to have like— I guess I can actually just introduce them whenever. Okay.

AUSTIN: One of mine likes dogs a lot, that's her thing. Just in case you need her.

JANINE: I'm gonna create a new connection then. And my condition is that I will vouch for you to Diego, I will be your champion to Diego, if you introduce my sister Francis to a potential suitor that I'm going to set up right now.

[Ali laughs]

JANINE: I'm going to choose... [laughs] Oh man, it's killing me that I can't copy and paste the text off of these cards.

AUSTIN: Yeah, it's hard.

JANINE: Okay. There's this dude called Mortimer, right? He's number fifty. He looks like uh, he looks Mads Mikelson kind of, but boring?

JACK: Okay.

AUSTIN: That's v— You're being very generous to Mortimer.

JANINE: I'm being very generous. It's killing me that I can't copy and paste this text.

AUSTIN: You can just— Oh, right. Yeah.

JANINE: 'Cause I have to like, tab between the windows to fill it in.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: So his name—

[typing]

JANINE: —is Mortimer. He is an awkward horticulturalist with flowering prospects.

AUSTIN: Mm.

[JACK laughs]

JANINE: "Enjoys conversation but rarely recalls it. Recovers from social faux pas by feigning expertise or redirecting to the Latin names of flowers."

AUSTIN: Ugh.

JANINE: What's the abbreviated version of that?

JACK: Gardening bore.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: Phony.

JACK: Yeah, Austin and I one two punch. Gonna roast this guy.

[AUSTIN laughs]

[typing]

JANINE: I'm going with talkative but forgetful, into plants in a boring way.

[ALI and JACK laugh]

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: Or boring comma pedantic way.

ALI: I wanna talk to this guy every day if I was playing Pokemon.

JACK: Yeah, uh-huh.

[AUSTIN laughs]

ALI: [laughs] He'd be great.

JACK: He'd give you a pesky berry or something.

[ALI and AUSTIN laugh]

JACK: So I think that um, Henrietta says,

Henrietta: You want me to set your sister up with this gardener?

JANINE:

Chatelaine: He's not a gardener, he's a horticulturalist. It's a respectable trade. It's a very academic trade.

JACK:

Henrietta: Oh, very academic.

JANINE:

Chatelaine: It's a little... You know, he's... [sighs] He's— Some would say he is a little bit beneath my sister, but his family connections are good. He's a middle son, so he's probably not going to inherit much, but I can take of her so I'm not worried. I'm more interested in her finding a compatible match.

JACK:

Henrietta: [crosstalk] Oh, compatible.

JANINE:

Chatelaine: Someone who can meet her in wit.

JACK:

Henrietta: Mm. I would be s—

JANINE:

Chatelaine: And...

JACK:

Henrietta: And?

JANINE:

Chatelaine: Patience.

JACK:

Henrietta: And— Yes. I will be sure to mention all of your sister's best qualities. Like, uh, like... Sh— Like, she's fairly tall?

JANINE: [laughs]

Chatelaine: Mhm.

JACK:

Henrietta: And uh...

JANINE:

Chatelaine: That's a good one.

JACK:

Henrietta: Excellent.

JANINE:

Chatelaine: Go with that. That's a good one.

JACK:

Henrietta: Well, consider it done, Chatelaine. And thank you so much. I can't thank you enough. Really this is my— This is my project of the coming year. I'm very grateful.

JANINE: I've taken that resolve token. Very good. Are there any other scenes that we think should happen at the party? Again this can be with connections or with main characters. You're allowed to double up as well.

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: I wanna see something between Mint and Diego.

ALI: Yeah.

JACK: Or like some sort of a...

AUSTIN: [crosstalk] Yeah, same.

ALI: Yeah. An awkward party meetup.

AUSTIN: The thing that I want— Can I spend— I can— Okay, so you can also just spend resolve token to do something—

JANINE: Yes. You could right now be like, "I want the roof to cave in on this room, here is my token."

AUSTIN: Okay, well that's not what I'm doing, 'cause I'm not a monster. Nor would that be difficult for me to do. I mean I guess it would be, but Diego would never.

JANINE: No, you could, I c— It could be an act of fate is what I mean. It doesn't have to be the character, it can just be like—

AUSTIN: [crosstalk] I see, yes.

JANINE: Some bad shit goes down because I want it to happen in the story.

AUSTIN: Right, I gotcha. No, the thing that I want is, is the talk with Francis to have gone well, specifically. And it's cheating for me to just do that because I am Francis right now. And I know you could play Francis, but like, we're not interested in the business talk particularly, because we— I don't know enough about the business about the time or place that we are in to have an interesting version of that conversation.

But I basically would like to spend a resolve token to have successfully negotiated something that gives me some sort of foothold. I'm open to suggestions on what that is, but something that is not marriage related but is some sort of potential income for my family. And I don't know what that is quite yet.

Or a connection. Francis has agreed to connect me to someone who could provide something for the family. But I don't know what that is, so I'm open to suggestions or to be abstract at this point and to cash it in later when it makes sense. We could also just have it immediately hand off— Again, Francis could hand me off to James at this point as a like, "Oh this would be a great business partner," because Francis does not have Chatelaine's interest in matchmaking Mint and James. Nor might Francis understand or know that Diego and Mint have beef. Or that Diego has beef with Mint.

JANINE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Beef with Mint being served in the large room.

[ALI and JACK laugh]

ALI: Um, yeah, I th—

JANINE: I think—

AUSTIN: But I don't know if that's, is that a fair— To the facilitator, is that a fair expenditure of resolve?

JANINE: Yeah. I think I'd be cool with you just essentially putting that token in the pool and not necessarily paying it.

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: 'Cause that's a thing you're changing about the story, right, it's not a thing that is hurting anyone's interests. And I think it makes sense for Francis to be like, "Well hey, you know, I know a guy who takes risks on opportunities. That's not really a thing my family would do, but there's this guy who— He's very interested in connections and making a name for himself, and, you know. It means he has an ear for proposals."

AUSTIN: Yeah. Totally.

JANINE: So yeah. That's totally fair.

AUSTIN: And that also gets us to Diego and Mint near the harps. Or are you somewhere else now, Mint?

ALL: I could still be near the harps. I think it might be a situation of like, Francis handing you off to James and then James being like, "Oh, very interesting, let me go refill my glass and we can go over the details." And then it's— [laughs]

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

JACK: More milk.

AUSTIN: Yeah, uh-huh. Yes. Yes.

JANINE: There's just a punch bowl full of milk.

AUSTIN: God. Is Diego inv— Okay, here, can I pitch Diego inventing a terrible thing which is like— I guess these already existed. Like, a mercenary outfit effectively. Being like, "Now I heard that you've been looking to expand into the woods and do some you know lumber work or something. I've heard terrible things about what's in the woods, and my family has an expertise in handling the things that we'd rather not speak about, and could, you know, basically do that service."

But not in a like a, you know, a grubby way? In a much more like, almost— I'm almost inventing like, you know, like an order of knights, do you know what I mean? Which is not this setting, but is— This is why I feel more like it's a gross like [laughs] private military contractor situation? But James is new money, is the sort of person who I think would be interested in that. And so very— This is not the occasion to talk about those matters, but I think that's probably the pitch I make James before he goes to get more punch.

ALL: [laughs] I, yeah.

AUSTIN: The order of, the order of whatever my last name— The Order of Flint or whatever, you know?

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: The Order of Flint and Steel. Yeah.

ALI: Oh, sure. Yeah.

JANINE: Mhm.

ALI: Yeah, I think that specifically works because I think that James, um, what was the department store? Have we said that he's just the department store heir I guess? What was the name of that?

JANINE: Oh is he the MaGudden's heir? I didn't know that that was...

AUSTIN: [crosstalk] I didn't think that— I didn't know that we had, yeah.

ALI: Oh okay then, it doesn't have to be—

AUSTIN: Given him a particular—

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: New... I just knew that he was new money.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I guess if that's true, then that's fine.

ALI: Right. Yeah, I was just specifically thinking like, not only is the department store like very willing to like, buy other businesses or like find other opportunities in that way, but like the idea of Diego being attracted to like, I'm gonna have like this traveling job that's gonna take me out of this town.

AUSTIN: Out of this fucking town. Yeah, uh-huh.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: He would never say that here, but. Anyway, James leaves and now it's Mint and Diego I guess. And the harps.

ALI: And the harps, yeah.

AUSTIN:

Diego: [sighs] Are you enjoying the harps, Miss Charlise?

ALI:

Mint: Oh they're wonderful, yes. Various sizes that make a variety of tones. It's...

AUSTIN:

Diego: Do you have harps where you're from?

ALI:

Mint: Yes, yes a few. Yeah. Hi. [laughs] You said that—

AUSTIN:

Diego: I just wasn't sure.

ALI:

Mint: Yeah. Oh, yes, nothing's quite so extravagant as this. Um.

AUSTIN:

Diego: Miss Pellier really does know how to throw a party, it's fair.

ALI:

Mint: Yes, indeed. I haven't seen anything this grand since I was a child, and it's wonderful to be here. Um, you were mentioning um, traveling to the woods with James there.

AUSTIN:

Diego: Yes. I have family there now.

ALI:

Mint: Oh.

AUSTIN:

Diego: In a few ways.

ALI:

Mint: It's a beautiful— It's a beautiful part of town. You should really make the time to, to visit.

AUSTIN:

Diego: What is your favorite part of the woods, Miss Charlise? I know you've been to many places in the mountains, and I would love to hear of a location that a visit would be rewarding.

ALI:

Mint: Oh, yes yes yes yes indeed. If you travel from the east of this town and go straight, you'll come across three hills.

[2:45:00]

ALI:

Mint: Three separate peaks. And on the middle peak there's this gorgeous lake. You must go there.

AUSTIN:

Diego: I'll keep it in mind.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN:

Diego: What's your business with uh, with James?

ALI:

Mint: Oh, me—

AUSTIN: Mr. James? Mr. James probably. I'm not just calling him Jim, right, like.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: I guess I don't know.

ALI:

Mint: Oh, um James is uh, a lovely acquaintance. He's been so um, generous with his time and his attention since I've returned to town. I, you know, it's great to meet new people. You're not always the newcomer. So I'm trying to find excitement in my situation.

AUSTIN:

Diego: I— It has been impressive how quickly you've made friends, Miss Charlise.

ALI:

Mint: Oh, well thank you! I hope to include you as a friend one day as well, Mr. Flint.

AUSTIN:

Diego: I'm sure... I'm sure you do.

[ALI laughs]

JANINE: Um, I think James comes back.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: And when James comes back, he has a drink for Diego and for himself. He does not have a drink for Mint.

[ALI laughs]

JANINE: And he is kind of, he positions himself in such a way where he's still kind of standing with Mint, but also a bit in front of her and facing Diego. He wants to talk prospects. He wants to talk business. He is like, more interested in Diego than he was when he left. Like he's keen now.

AUSTIN: [sighs] I think there's a point at which, despite this, Diego is like...[clicks tongue] Can you give me an example of something he says to do this, so that I can bounce off of it?

JANINE: Yeah. I think, so he comes back with the drinks. He hands Diego a drink. He is functionally ignoring Mint. Or just treating her kind of in an ornamental way.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: And just launches in with uh,

James: So I've been thinking about some good places for detachments of a, you know, of a private service, defense service, armed service in the woods. There are several lees, there is a pass—there is a rather problematic pass that I think if we could secure the land rights and really tighten it up, tolls would make a mint.

AUSTIN:

Diego: Mr. James, have you heard of...have you heard of the *lake* to the east that Miss Charlise— A moment ago when you stepped away Miss Charlise was saying that there is a wonderful lake.

AUSTIN: And I'm just trying to keep her in the conversation. One of my like positive reputation things is to make a sacrifice or to deny my own desires to preserve the dignity of others or myself in an unbecoming situation. And it is very— I get to be rude to people. Other people don't get to be rude to people.

[ALI and JANINE laugh]

JANINE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: And so I'm like, doing my best to keep Mint in the conversation. I haven't like, you know, I haven't... I basically keep going like, you know,

Diego: Mr. James, I would love to speak with you about this prospect further. It sounds like an excellent opportunity, I'm so glad that you're interested and to have caught your attention in this moment. However, it was perhaps too forward of me. We are in, of course, in a moment of rest, and I apologize for raising it before the new year, before Renewal. Perhaps we should enjoy the harps with Miss Charlise until then.

JANINE:

James: Nonse— Nonsense! All the most important business gets done before Renewal. That's when you can get everything in, you know, off the books, under the table. You get better deals. You don't have to disclose as much to nosy family accountants. It's the only time to do business. Let me tell you, the sooner the better. We should make an appointment for tomorrow. Brunch. Brunch tomorrow.

AUSTIN:

Diego: Brunch. I—

ALI:

Mint: Um, what shall you be arming in the woods? Um, there's, there's... There's great people out there. I was wondering what you would be bringing to the environment.

JANINE:

James: Well we can arm them for starters. They'll probably work cheap.

ALI:

Mint: Oh.

ALI: [laughs] I'm trying to figure out—

AUSTIN:

Diego: Miss Charlise will be bored by the specifics of the business arrangement we're discussing, Mr. James. I suspect. Not to speak for Miss Charlise.

ALI:

Mint: Well I'm certainly familiar with the area, so I'm curious of, of where your ambitions direct here.

AUSTIN: Are you asking me or are you asking James?

ALI: [laughs] I think I'm a little bit asking James. I think it's one of those things of being like, the two people next to me are talking about something fucked up. [laughs]

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

JANINE: Uh-huh.

ALI: [laughs] She's trying to very politely and sort of being like, "I must not be grasping what they're talking about because what they're talking about doesn't make any sense to me. So let me ask for a bunch of details," but like sort of souring this deal as I'm seeing it happen.

JANINE:

James: Well the woods—

AUSTIN:

Diego: Well—

JANINE:

James: The wilderness, it's very dangerous. It affects trade. We've seen so many instances in the past five years alone of all manner of things interfering with, with Nievelmarch's concerns, and I think it would be very lucrative to have a private force.

AUSTIN:

Diego: [crosstalk] We haven't even recovered yet from the Velvet Manor incident.

ALI:

Mint: Well I wouldn't say that it's dangerous so much as it's, you know, misunderstood.

AUSTIN:

Diego: I would say that it's dangerous.

ALI:

Mint: I, I would dis—

JANINE:

James: A child is entitled to not like—

AUSTIN: [crosstalk] Just, direct eye contact. Just, just through you.

[ALI laughs]

JANINE:

James: Yes, yes, like Mr. Flint said, I think a child is entitled to not like the taste of carrots if they prefer, or any number of other minor curses, that seem minor but they can affect us in ways that are unfair. We should prevent them.

ALI:

Mint: Most of these things are seasonal. I'm sure if you just, you know, held off your market intentions for a month or two and you know. [laughs] Had your velvet supplied in a time that would be, you know, more agreeable to the...

AUSTIN:

Diego: I am a novice in the world of business, Miss Charlise, but what I've learned in the last year is that patience is a sin. Whomever moves first, wins. Perhaps Mr. James and I will not be the ones to expand into the wood to the east, will not be the ones to build the port at the beautiful lake. But someone will.

And as things have gone historically, it is frankly people like the Pelliers or the Samedays. People like my wonderful benefactor, Darling, who make those maneuvers first. Because they gain the opportunity first. They hear about it first. But for Mr. James and I, and for those like us, who see opportunity opening, it is imperative that we take that opportunity.

Perhaps you will not like the paint that we put up on the docks at the lake to the east, but the shape of the thing will be the same whether I do it or whether the Pelliers do. Surely you can see why we must discuss such things. Though again, I would be happy to discuss them at brunch tomorrow instead of here at the wonderful Procession Day event that we are enjoying.

JANINE:

James: Absolutely. We do not need to trouble Miss Charlise with all of this.

[ALI laughs]

JANINE: James like, raises his glass of milk first, takes a sip, then his glass of wine, takes a sip.

ALI:

Mint: Well, I think that it would be in your best interest to, both of you keep your eyes and your hearts open in your trips to the, to the east. And a happy Procession Day to you Mr. Flint. If you'll excuse me.

[ALI laughs]

JANINE: James bows and follows her.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: Aha, yeah, uh-huh. Great.

JANINE: You gotta respect the resolve token. He's—that's— They are companions for the night.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

[ALI laughs]

JANINE: It is just that— That's how it is.

JACK: What's the like, last beat of Flint there, having been left first by Mint and then James just turning around and following her?

AUSTIN: Where's the nearest exit? Like.

[JACK and ALI laugh]

AUSTIN: Like to the pla— I think like, if the, the um, the harp— This is like an outdoor harp place?

JANINE: Yeah, it's like the courtyard. The um...

AUSTIN: The courtyard. I think if like the courtyard is attached to some sort of like, hedge maze or like open aired garden, I think I go in that direction. Without a second, you know, without anything. Like, yeah, good. I'm done, we're good.

ALI: I have to go prepare for brunch tomorrow. [laughs]

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

[JANINE laughs]

ALI: Okay cool. I think, I think—

AUSTIN: I think that's my scenes.

ALI: [crosstalk] Mint and James are having like a bad couple at a party having an argument. [laughs]

[JACK laughs]

ALI: But they're not a couple yet. But you know the vibe. [laughs]

JACK: God.

JANINE: You know what we need, though? What we need next. We need Henrietta making good on setting up Francis and Mortimer.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: Ooh.

ALI: [laughs] Oh, shoot.

JACK: Yikes. Okay.

JANINE: Important question. Do you think either of them know this is coming?

JACK: It's funnier if they don't, right?

[JANINE laughs]

JACK: If it's just—

JANINE: It is.

AUSTIN: Oh, absolutely.

JACK: If it's just nobody.

JANINE: [crosstalk] Especially for the meddler, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: Mhm.

Henrietta: Francis, come and— Francis, come and sit by me.

AUSTIN:

Francis: I-uh-um, I'm, uh, attending to a few things right now.

JACK:

Henrietta: Oh, Francis.

JACK: Grabs you by the hand.

AUSTIN:

Francis: [surprised] Ah!

[ALI and JANINE laugh]

JACK:

Henrietta: I saw you talking to Diego earlier. You looked like you were having a fantastic time.

AUSTIN:

Francis: I— uh, of course, he's a fine gentleman with business interests at heart. We have much to speak about.

JACK:

Henrietta: A fine gentleman with business interests at heart. You are someone who has your priorities right, Francis, that's what I've always said. Unlike that sister of yours.

AUSTIN:

Francis: Okay. W— Uh, my sister of course is the older, uh, sibling, is the heir and she needs to attend to the things she needs to attend to. I simply do my part in the family, uh, which is to say I need to go back to where the books are and— This, this huge feast is remarkable, but someone needs to pay attention to the particulars. You

understand. So if you would just let me go! And I can go back to my office, this would be fine.

JACK:

Henrietta: Well!

JACK: I have maneuvered us to sit at a bar where Mortimer is sitting on the bar stool like to the left of me, and I just like, swivel around on my chair to see Mortimer.

Henrietta: Mortimer! I don't believe we've met. My name is Henrietta Sameday. I'm a very good friend of the hostesses. Have you had an opportunity to meet Francis yet? The hostess's, if I may say, more delightful sister.

JANINE: Um, I think—

AUSTIN:

Francis: [whispers] Don't say things like that.

JACK: Just like turns and grins.

JANINE: Mortimer is fingering a pine garland, like he's like, kind of just like checking like you know, like, are these needles dry? How fresh is this? Like, what variety of pine is it? Like, that's where he's at.

[ALI laughs]

JANINE: He's into checking the freshness of the garlands, and the point of origin. So I think he's a little bit startled. I think he gives a bit of a jolt when Henrietta and Francis show up. Um, I think he's very surprised but also kind of immediately looks kind of flattered that, okay, you know, not the like *hostess* hostess, but tangentially the hostess has been brought to meet him. That's exciting for him. Um, so I think he says, he just says nothing for a bit, waiting for words to come, that kind of energy. And then eventually just says,

Mortimer: No. I've never, we've never spoken. I've heard um, of, of Miss Pellier. The younger.

AUSTIN:

Francis: It is true. We have not spoken before. Mr. Mortimer, a pleasure to meet you. But it is not necessarily true that we have not had any engagement or association. You see—

AUSTIN: And I turn and gesture to a spread of—or not a spread but like a display of flowers towards the entrance.

Francis: In fact I believe a number of the decorations here today come from your— I don't know what it's called. Is it a greenhouse?

JANINE:

Mortimer: Yes.

AUSTIN:

Francis: And, and they're very fine and I think that you do exceptional work and congratulations. Alright, now we've met. Thank you so much for the introduction.

JACK:

Henrietta: Mortimer!

AUSTIN:

Francis: Uh, Henrietta. Unfortunately I need to be getting back. Hostess duties, you understand.

JACK:

Henrietta: Absolutely not! Why, this flower that I wear in my hair, I heard someone say that it has a, a meaning. A sort of a, a sort of a, a secret in the flower, and I've never been one to know these things. Is that true?

JANINE:

Mortimer: Of course. The flower in your hair specifically, I believe it's called a lily of the ponds. It's typically grown— It's ironic actually. It doesn't tend to grow near ponds.

[3:00:00]

JANINE:

Mortimer: They call it a lily of the ponds because the leaves have a sort of oblong shape with a dip.

JACK:

Henrietta: Mm!

JANINE:

Mortimer: And it's said to resemble the pond near the childhood home of a man who uncovered the plant. And he decided it should be called lily of the ponds. It's said to mean a number of things depending on which, you know, which language of flowers you ascribe to—

JACK:

Henrietta: [crosstalk] Isn't he delightful, Francis? He knows so much about flowers and plants.

AUSTIN:

Francis: Yes. My father always said the only secret a flower has is a wasp.

[ALI laughs]

JANINE:

Mortimer: Well bees generally prefer flowers. I... I suppose I don't know that much about wasps.

JACK:

Henrietta: [crosstalk] No. No. Sh-She was—

JANINE:

Mortimer: They're the ones that eat insects and spiders.

JACK:

Henrietta: She was saying something poetic, Mortimer. It was like, it was a, like a beautiful turn of phrase. Don't you think that she's capable of such... Her father I suppose. But her memory for such phrases.

AUSTIN: [laughs]

Francis: This is... has been so... [sighs] [clicks tongue] I hope you're finding the party good, Mortimer.

JANINE:

Mortimer: Oh it's very good. It's very good. Your plants are in fantastic shape.

JACK:

Henrietta: Great.

JANINE:

Mortimer: And I can see they were soaked and chilled.

JACK:

Henrietta: [crosstalk] And now finish that sentence.

JANINE:

Mortimer: I can see that they were soaked and chilled for a considerable amount of time, which is exactly as we advise when we sell the boughs.

AUSTIN:

Francis: I'm certain that our household took whatever advice you gave, and executed it on the letter. We have great, great people here in the household. Perhaps you know some of them, you've crossed paths. In any case, welcome to the house. I hope you enjoy your stay, and that Renewal will be pleasant for you. Until the next year, I am going to go to check in on... You're the flower person, the... oh, the beef.

JACK:

Henrietta: The beef?

AUSTIN:

Francis: The beef...baron.

JACK:

Henrietta: The beef baron?

[JANINE laughs]

AUSTIN:

Francis: The beef baron is here. And I have got to um... You understand. A pleasure, the flowers, they're fantastic. The beef baron is calling, I can hear him now.

JACK: I can hear his horn.

ALI:

As The Beef Baron: Francis!

[AUSTIN laughs]

JANINE: There's a strip club in London that's gonna sue us now.

AUSTIN: I know, I know. I know, I'm sorry. [laughs] It's where my mind went.

[ALI and JACK laugh]

JANINE: [laughs] Francis needs to go to the strip club right now.

AUSTIN: [laughs] Francis needs to go to the Beef Baron immediately.

Francis: I bid you farewell. And good day and good year. Both of you. In fact, it sounds to me like—

JACK:

Henrietta: No, no no!

AUSTIN:

Francis: Mortimer—

JACK:

Henrietta: No, no no!

AUSTIN:

Francis: It sounds to me like, like Miss Sameday—

[ALI laughs]

JACK:

Henrietta: No, no no.

AUSTIN:

Francis: Sorry, it sounds to me like Henrietta would love to hear more about, what was it, the lily of the pond. And the shape that, it goes down, and then the—

JACK:

Henrietta: Quite enough.

AUSTIN:

Francis: Things like that. And Henrietta has always had an eye and a mind, in my experience, for such things as that.

JACK:

Henrietta: You are the worst sister. You are the worst sister.

JACK: And just turns and—

AUSTIN:

Francis: We are not sisters, to be fair, at all. I'll be going, bye.

JACK:

Henrietta: [sighs] Mortimer? It's been great to meet you.

[JANINE and AUSTIN laugh]

AUSTIN: Poor Mortimer!

JANINE: I think Mortimer's okay, honestly. Like I think Mortimer...

AUSTIN: Okay.

JANINE: That all just happened to Mortimer, for sure.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

[JACK laughs]

JANINE: He's probably going to leave just thinking about like, "Oh, the holly, that was an interesting shade. I should grow that shade of holly leaf. For next year." Like that's, you know. He's okay.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: He'll be fine.

JACK: Henrietta at the bar just like, ordering a drink. The bar— Not the bar, I don't know, what would it be at this time? It's presumably like someone who comes around with drinks on a tray.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah, that makes sense.

JANINE: Like a footman.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: Butler. I don't know the difference. I'm sure there is one. Um. Is there anything else? We haven't seen any of Anastasia, but also like, would they be here as a governess at this party, or no?

ALI: Yeah, I've been like, looking for opportunities to sort of bring them up, but I think the honest answer might be that they're at like, a party that's like a step up from this. You know? This is certainly the party for like, young socialites and for people talking business and you know more of the like, eligible bachelor and bachelorette situation.

AUSTIN: Mm.

JANINE: Mm.

ALI: Where I think because Anastasia is both older and also a governess, they're at like the queen's, I don't know that there's a queen here, but. [laughs] They're—

JACK: Oh, right.

JANINE: Mm. So a governess though. Governess usually means like a tutor, right? Like, childcare.

ALI: Oh, oh oh oh.

JANINE: So a former governess would be like the person who—

ALI: [laughs] A fancy governor.

JANINE: Who helped raise Henrietta and sort of taught Henrietta both like, simple mathematics and embroidery and stuff, that kind of thing.

ALI: Oh, sure sure sure.

JANINE: But also taught that meddling, you know, the gossip kind of side of things.

ALI: Yeah.

JANINE: So they would actually be lower, like they— That's why I was wondering like, would they be at this party? Because technically a governess is considered like quote unquote part of the help.

ALI: Yeah. I guess in that case that actually goes the other way but it's the similar thing of being like they're probably at the merchant party. They're at the party that like our Shooting the Moon PCs are.

JANINE: The better party.

ALI: [laughs] Yes, they're having a much better time.

JANINE: There's probably a horse at that party.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Oh, definitely.

JANINE: Horse that never breaks eye contact.

[ALI and AUSTIN laugh]

AUSTIN: That's a Bluff City character.

[JANINE laughs]

JACK: I think it's a Shooting the Moon character. I think there's like a really menacing horse.

AUSTIN: Oh, is there?

JANINE: Ransom the Horse never broke eye contact first.

ALI: Oh my god that's true.

AUSTIN: Oh, that's fantastic.

[JACK and ALI laugh]

JANINE: There's also fifteen Saint Bernard dogs and then one much larger Saint Bernard dog.

[ALI laughs]

JACK: God.

JANINE: It's a good game.

JACK: Also I reckon there are four queens and they are holding four separate parties?

ALI: Oh, yeah yeah yeah.

JANINE: Oh, yeah. In each corner of the city.

ALI: People go from one to one though.

JACK: Yeah.

JANINE: [laughs] You have to get your invite for the next one at the previous queen's party.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: Yeah. Getting all four is like an achievement.

JANINE: You have to fill your stamp card.

AUSTIN: There's achievements in this town.

ALI: Yeah yeah yeah.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh, yeah.

ALI: The— What we haven't said about this is that you have like a Monopoly map and throughout the day you go to different parties and then— [laughs]

AUSTIN: It's like collecting McDonald's Monopoly stickers, I get it.

JACK: But for the queens!

ALI: Yes.

AUSTIN: But for the queens, yeah.

JANINE: Um, alright. Are we— Do we think we're done with this dinner party? With our Procession Day event?

AUSTIN: I think so.

ALI: Yeah.

JANINE: Okay.

AUSTIN: Or, I am, certainly.

JACK: My only question would be, I suppose that um, beginning to talk about Henrietta being prepared to apologize to Diego is like a post-party thing, probably, right?

AUSTIN: I guess. Right, who made that promise again? Who promised...

JACK: Chatelaine has promised me.

JANINE: Oh, right, Chatelaine promised.

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: So that's— I was thinking that would make sense for the Epistolary stage.

JACK: Oh, sure. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah that works. I, yeah.

JANINE: That was kind of my plan unless we—

AUSTIN: I have no...

JACK: Yeah yeah yeah.

JANINE: Just because Chatelaine and Diego did not exactly get on and I feel like Chatelaine would be like, "Let's give that some breathing room."

[JACK and ALI laugh]

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ALI: Um. Yeah, my only thing is that I sort of wanna pick out some potential suitors for Mint.

JANINE: Mhm.

ALI: But we haven't had like other characters come on scene?

AUSTIN: You can go meet Mortimer.

[ALI laughs]

JANINE: We do have Mortimer.

ALI: [laughs] Yeah, I could go do that I suppose. Um...

[ALI and AUSTIN laugh]

JACK: He's great.

ALI: I'm, yeah, I'm fine. I don't know if it should be like a later in the game thing, or.

JANINE: [crosstalk] The other thing is you can also use, you can use your resolve tokens to— If you want to like change the story in such a way where— You know, if you wanna do things like that, if you wanna make big changes, I'll let you spend resolve tokens.

ALI: Okay, yeah. I think also like, narratively, I'd sort of set up when in the first resolve token, that like, James is attached to her, but it makes her attractive to other suitors in the party.

AUSTIN: Mhm. Yeah.

JANINE: Yes. That's true.

ALI: And I think as the people see that relationship sort of break down real time at this party... [laughs] I now have the ability to like, yeah, make—

JANINE: Maybe that's the scene we should have then, right? Like maybe that's our capstone scene for this, is someone sees like a bit of weirdness and strain and decides to kind of elbow in?

ALI: Yeah.

JANINE: Do you wanna pick a uh— This could be your like mid-game connection. 'Cause everyone can make a connection through the course of play. Like a second connection.

ALI: Oh, sure sure sure.

JANINE: Do you want to make a suitor, basically? That wouldn't even cost a token. You're just allowed to do that.

ALI: Okay, yeah, I'd be up for that. Do I have to choose from the same like collection of—

JANINE: You can just go down the sheet and pick whoever you want from the sheet.

ALI: Oh.

JANINE: When you're making someone mid play.

ALI: Sure, okay. Oh my god there's so many people.

JANINE: You could pick Grant.

AUSTIN: There's a million.

JANINE: Or Hilda. Or um... We already used Mortimer. He's really good.

AUSTIN: Margaret? Or...

JANINE: I love Margaret. And Beatrice. Oh my god, Beatrice. She's my everything.

ALI: Sure. [laughs]

JANINE: She's also newly out, so there you go.

ALI: Uh... Yeah. Sorry, I'm just browsing through these before I...

AUSTIN: This lady has a magnifying glass, that's a lot going on.

JACK: That's Sherlock Holmes.

AUSTIN: Oh, I see. This one lady's covered in bees.

JANINE: She's not covered in bees, there's three bees near her.

AUSTIN: Don't trust her. Covered in b— You don't see her below her shoulders, do you?

JANINE: You know who I don't trust? Mary Anne. The woman who is vengeful and well off.

AUSTIN: Oh.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: That's not fair, the other version of her is scheming and fashionable.

[JANINE laughs]

ALI: Dog lover, comfortable prospects. [laughs]

AUSTIN: You want that dog lover, I have the card for her already in my hand.

ALI: [laughs] It's fine. Um.

AUSTIN: God, are there dogs at this party? Are they barking? Is it the worst?

JANINE: No. Maybe. I don't know, someone probably brought a tiny dog.

JACK: [crosstalk] The dog courtyard.

AUSTIN: [laughs] Yeah.

ALI: Okay, I'm torn between Stephanie and Marzie.

JANINE: Marzie's so good.

[ALI laughs]

JANINE: Marzie is really cute.

AUSTIN: I also like Marzie in my hand.

ALI: The two options here I have for Stephanie is, "outspoken, old money. Witty, intellectual, literary. Her privileged family background grants her the luxury of being opinionated most women cannot enjoy." And then the Marzie one I would go for is, "vivacious, wealthy orphan. Fun, quirky, and bubbly. Easily offended but quick to forgive. Her considerable wealth is provided by a mysterious benefactor she has never met." God, she's fucking— [laughs] She's the Helix Waltz character. [laughs] Um, god. Yeah, I think I'm gonna go with Marzie.

JANINE: That's a really fun one.

ALI: Yeah, my apologies to Stephanie.

AUSTIN: I dragged Marzie onto the sheet, just so she's out there.

[JANINE laughs]

ALI: Oh thank you.

AUSTIN: It doesn't matter, but, you know.

ALI: Yeah. Yeah, I guess it depends on who— Oh, I guess Janine would be playing Marzie. So I'm just typing more stuff so I can upper case it.

[typing]

ALI: Whoop.

JANINE: I'm making a note of the letter I have to write to hold up my end of the bargain.

[AUSTIN laughs]

ALI: Okay. I'm making Marzie she/they, and then Janine's Marzie's, okay. Yay. Okay. Perfect. Um, yeah, I think this is, you know, it's sort of late into the party at this point. People are enjoying desserts at this point. [laughs] Yeah, I guess framing a scene around this is hard. I think that the first thing that comes to mind is like, Mint sort of innocently running into Marzie at the like dessert table and then being like,

Mint: Oh, what... What was inside of it?

ALI: And then sort of re going over the thing that Chatelaine had said before about like, oh it's a surprise, there's either cherries or whatever. I guess it doesn't have to be like a drawn out scene because we sort of know that this is a new suitor situation for Mint. [laughs]

JANINE: Mhm.

ALI: But yeah. I'm not— Am I spending a— Do I send a— Do I get rid of one of my—

JANINE: No. You don't have to spend a token for this because everyone is entitled to make another connection.

ALI: Okay.

JANINE: In play.

ALI: Cool. Yeah, I think they hit it off. It's late into the party. Marzie seems great. [laughs]

JANINE: Yeah, Marzie's fun. Marzie— I think Marzie is probably the person who, once she figures out the thing with the like, oh some of them have a candied cherry inside, some of them have candied angelica, some of them have nothing. You know, she wants the candied cherry ones so, you know, Marzie's there kind of like discreetly... Once it looks like everyone's kind of had their fill, they're there like cracking open the cream puffs trying to find the ones with the cherries and like eating those and like, hiding the other ones in a napkin

or something. But doing it in a way where it's like, they're casting you a lot of like conspiratorial kind of funny like, looks. Just like, don't tell anyone! Like I think that's kind of their little game.

ALI: I think that's fun, yeah. These two people just sort of like... It's like going through a candy box and very innocently like pressing the bottom of it to try to figure out what the flavor is.

JANINE: Yes. You have to squeeze a little bit and then you smell it, or like, you know with the cream puff you squeeze a little bit and see if there's like any like, juice, like any pink you know cherry cream whatever stuff. And if there isn't then you put it back.

[ALI and JANINE laugh]

JANINE: It's a very mature, a very good thing to do at the fancy party.

[3:15:00]

ALI: [laughs] This is great. Yeah. I don't think that there needs to be like a big zoom in on this conversation beyond being like, "You shouldn't do that, wah wah wah," but like, in a cute way. [laughs]

JANINE: Mhm. I like the idea of Mint as the outsider being the one who's like, you probably shouldn't be doing this.

ALI: [laughs] Is this a custom with pastries in this town that I've been missed out on, not being here?

JANINE: It depends on who you talk to.

ALI: [laughs] Okay, cool.

JANINE: Yeah. I think that's a good, fun moment. Uh, alright. Maybe let's do this one at a time for the sake of clarity in terms of reputation stuff. Or actually, we can do part of this all together at once. Did any of us act in the service of duty or morality in a way that compromised our desires?

AUSTIN: I think trying to keep Mint in that conversation was what I was trying to do with that, despite also maybe getting a negative tag for some stuff in that.

[ALI and JANINE laugh]

AUSTIN: Which we'll get to. But yeah.

JANINE: What tag do you think you would gain for that?

AUSTIN: I am thinking about it.

JANINE: Considerate, maybe? Something like that.

AUSTIN: Yeah, considerate works, I like that.

JANINE: Um, acted in the service of duty or morality in a way that compromised your desires.

JACK: I think I just, you know, unsuccessfully tried to set people up with each other and talked about apologizing, but—

JANINE: Mhm.

JACK: But fairly lightly.

JANINE: I mean it's sort of your desire.

JACK: Yeah. It's— It was my actual desire, yeah.

JANINE: Yeah, okay. Acted in obedience to society's conventions despite considerable hardship doing so? On the one hand, define considerable hardship, but.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Yeah, I think for me, and it's weird because this is— They're sort of opposite readings of the same thing, but I think that Mint either acted in obedience of society's conventions despite considerable hardship and also made a sacrifice or denied her own desires to uphold the values of her place of origin by— I think both of those are just like her trying to be like, "Oh I'm going to keep pleasant conversation while people talk about like, invading my hometown." [laughs]

AUSTIN: Destroying your place. Yeah.

ALI: Which both like, trying to be engaged that is acting in obedience, but like also ruffling that is sort of making that sacrifice because it sort of affects her relationship with James in that way? So.

JANINE: I wonder if that would be a negative. Like, is the thing that happened there that Mint didn't push as hard as she could have because it was James, who she considers a possible suitor.

ALI: Yeah.

JANINE: You know what I mean?

ALI: Right.

JANINE: Would that shame and embarrass your place of origin, or were you upholding the values of your place of origin? Or like, I guess the other thing here is like what do you consider your place of origin? Right? Because I think the thing—probably the thing you were doing does uphold the values of Nievelmarch.

ALI: Sure, sure sure. Yeah.

JANINE: Be nice, like...

ALI: [laughs] Yeah yeah.

AUSTIN: I very much would imagine— For me— I felt like— Maybe I was misreading this, but I very much thought that Mint was very slyly trying to blow up our spot on trying, on talking about, you know, turning the woods into a lumberyard, which felt like— I mean, you know, maybe she could have been more upfront about that, but certainly interjected herself in a way that would have made it more complicated for James and Diego to...

JANINE: And that was a risk. That wasn't like a riskless thing.

AUSTIN: [crosstalk] To seal that deal. Yeah.

ALI: Right, yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: Especially when James was kind of trying to block her out.

AUSTIN: Right, the question there for me is like, was that a sacri— Or if I was trying to, you know, judge this it would be about, was that a sacrifice or denial of desire? But if it was, I do think— I don't know. Yeah.

ALI: I think it's a denial of like trying to keep pleasant company of James. I think she tried to do the first thing and ended up doing the second. If that makes sense. 'Cause yeah, looking over the negative tag stuff, like, I didn't act on my desire in the way that compromised my duty or morality. Like, going along with that conversation being like, "Oh you know I could tell you good places that you should go to cut down trees," was not the thing that she did and that would have been like a negative tag thing. [laughs]

AUSTIN: If only.

ALI: Yeah. So I think I'll take the positive tag here.

JANINE: Sounds good.

AUSTIN: Is it like, loyal or something maybe?

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Or like... Does loyal feel like too—

ALI: Yeah, I need a word—

JANINE: Like candid or something like that?

AUSTIN: Like personal.

JANINE: Like honest, or...?

AUSTIN: Ooh, that's okay.

ALI: Yeah, I think candid might be closer to... I'm gonna go with forthright, which seems more in tone with this game.

JANINE: Ooh. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Ooh. That's good.

[ALI laughs]

JANINE: Very good.

AUSTIN: I like that a lot.

JANINE: So the meddler secured a personal invitation from someone of higher social status than yourself?

JACK: No. Nope.

AUSTIN: What's a personal invitation in this scenario?

JANINE: Yeah, 'cause the— That's what I'm thinking is like, you didn't secure personal invitation but you did convince Chatelaine to vouch for you to someone else.

AUSTIN: Yes.

JACK: And she is of higher social status than me.

JANINE: Yeah. I'd give you that. It's a short game. You know? [laughs]

JACK: Okay. In that case I will take industrious because I was prepared when you said, or when Chatelaine said to, you know, to set her sister up with this gardener, Henrietta just sort of went, "Okay, yes, let's go. This is what the rest of the party's gonna be about for me."

[ALI laughs]

JACK: And it did not go well.

JANINE: For Chatelaine, her reputation criteria is "deny your desires or made a sacrifice to uphold the family name." I kind of don't feel like this happened. She, you know, did the hostess thing. I don't think that was a denial of her desires though, that's a means to an end with her desires in a way, if she wants to, you know, hook people up. So I don't think that really qualifies. Gain a negative tag if you acted in contravention of society's conventions. I think a lot of people would take this, right?

AUSTIN: The thing is I might double— I, my last one is publicly displayed strong emotions, which is where I think I trigger that one more than the contravention of society's— Depends on— I don't know what society's conventions are here, right?

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Because—

JANINE: 'Cause we're defining that as we go, kind of.

AUSTIN: Yeah, exactly.

JANINE: Versus operating within an established context.

AUSTIN: Yes.

JACK: Right.

AUSTIN: Yes, like I think we are, we are— I think there's a degree of interpretation that we have to do.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: In terms of like, for instance when Mint says, "I hope that we become good friends," and I say like, "I bet you do," or whatever.

[ALI and JACK laugh]

AUSTIN: Is that, that is cer— I would rather check the mark for publicly displayed strong emotions than acting in contravention of society's conventions. But maybe I'm wrong about that. I don't know.

JANINE: I think a lot of this is here so that like if you did something multiple times, like if you told five different people off in five different scenes or something you could still get credit for all that.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: Yeah, I mean, I'd say count it based on events and take the tag based on that, makes the most sense.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: I have a question about behaved, acted in an uncouth, low class, or vulgar manner. Is there a distinction between saying to Francis, "You're the worst twin," and going—performing like an Emma style public act of vulgarity, like at a party or something. Like when Emma says, you know, [laughs] "No one likes you and you're boring."

JANINE: Yeah. I think telling that to a member of the family hosting the big year end accountants get to home now party probably is pretty uncouth. And the reason that it's like— The reason that it seems less uncouth is because Francis has been minimized a lot as a character, right?

JACK: Yes, that's true.

JANINE: But the fact is she is still the hostess's twin sister. Who also handles like, all the business affairs, right, like. [laughs] She's not no one, she is just mousey. She is just...you know. So I would say that does still count, yeah.

JACK: Okay. So this triggers a negative reputation condition.

JANINE: Ooh.

AUSTIN: Fuck.

JANINE: Which one do you want?

JACK: Neither! Um.

[JANINE laughs]

JACK: So my options here—

JANINE: Well—yeah.

JACK: Oh, go on.

JANINE: No, no, you read them.

JACK: My options are mind your own business. “Others distrust you and refuse to participate in your schemes and plans.” And fracture, which is “someone close to you is appalled by your behavior and refuses to talk to you.” Neither of which are good, 'cause they kind of cut at the heart at what the meddler wants, which is people to rope into their schemes and to try and maintain at least cordial relationships with those around them.

Who would be most... Do you think it is more likely that other people— I think honestly it's, I'm tending towards fracture, right, because if I go mind your own business it suggests that people have got wind of some sort of scheme I'm running. Whereas the thing that triggered this was just in fact that I was like playfully rude at a party outside of the societal custom.

AUSTIN: And that— The thing about fracture that works there is a specific person is appalled, where it's not a wider—

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: —condemnation of you.

JACK: Right.

AUSTIN: It's someone thinks you went too far. I'm having a little difficulty with a thing but I'll wait until you figure this I think.

JACK: It could be um... It could be Anastasia. That could fall in line with their belief that I am basically just splashing around and sort of play-acting at being a meddler rather than being focused or careful. It could be Darling, who has been, you know, in a sort of particular control of certain aspects of the party and that would, you know, cause trouble with Diego.

JANINE: I have an i— I have a suggestion.

JACK: Yeah, go ahead.

JANINE: For why Darling might be pissed off. So, Francis was the first person that Diego seemed to take any interest in at that party. And then not so long after Diego goes to talk to someone else, you're trying to set Francis up with some random guy who's way below her.

[ALI laughs]

JACK: Right.

JANINE: Instead of—

JACK: Yeah!

JANINE: Instead of putting your meddling to good use, by helping Diego out.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: Yeah, and I mean I wonder if Darling would just be like, "You and Diego need to set your differences aside. That bit's not as important to me as you know you basically squandered this opportunity that I made for Diego."

JANINE: The thing here is that it should be someone who's close to you. Someone close to you is appalled by your behavior and refuses to talk to you. You haven't really...gotten much Darling-Henrietta...

JACK: I feel like it's—

AUSTIN: Yeah, but we could fill that in though, right? There's no reason to not just retcon in that Darling and Henrietta had—

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: —some familiarity, especially if Diego is a former friend of the Samedays.

JANINE: We do also get a scene when we trigger reputation conditions so we could get that moment now.

AUSTIN: Oh okay.

JANINE: Though it is— I would need to play Darling, because, because Jack plays Darling so that wouldn't really work scene-wise.

JACK: Oh, right.

AUSTIN: Right right right.

JANINE: But.

AUSTIN: Right. Which also undercuts that as a good—

JACK: Yeah, because I can't leverage it.

AUSTIN: —use of reputation, because it's like, yeah.

JANINE: It might be good... You could sort of do a similar thing with Anastasia where Anastasia hears about like, "I'm sorry, Chatelaine tried to get you to hook up Francis and Mortimer?"

[ALI laughs]

JANINE: "And you went with it?" Like, "What kind of amateur hour shit is that?" Like.

ALI: Yeah. I was thinking from Anastasia's perspective it ends up being this like, disappointment of not being able to see the full chessboard, you know? It's like if you were really dedicated to this, you would have understood the connections better than just agreeing to this.

JACK: Yeah. Do you think that the not speaking is... I mean, we can figure this out in a scene. I was gonna say, do you think that the not speaking is sort of an instructive measure,

or do you think she's like actively annoyed? Oh, sorry. Or do you think that they're just like actively annoyed?

ALI: Um. I think that it's more instructive. I think that's it's like maybe, because it's so early in this relationship and in this character's arc that this is sort of like this door is closing that I think that it might be like part of the course of your relationship. [laughs]

JACK: Huh. [laughs]

ALI: Where it's like sometimes Anastasia goes through the moods of being like, "Oh I should shut up this connection with Henrietta so she's not, you know, taking advantage of the knowledge that I want to give to her." If that's cool with you. [laughs]

JACK: Yeah, definitely. Is it— Do I— I'm trying to think of like a scene that communicates this briskly, and is it some variant on like, you know, Miss Sameday is here at your house. And like Henrietta, sorry, and like Anastasia just doesn't come down. Like, I wait in the parlor for like hours and.

[ALI laughs]

JACK: Anastasia's staff is just like, or someone is like, "Well, they'll be here," and they just don't show. Or do you think there is actually a moment of like explicit confrontation.

ALI: I think there is a moment, 'cause I feel like it's that sort of like post-party brunch or whatever, being like, "Oh well here's who I spoke to and yadda yadda yadda."

[3:30:00]

ALI: And then it's like a very curt like, I'm leaving the— I'm not even finished with my scones, there's half a scone on my plate and I'm leaving. Just to be like, "You should learn from this. You've made a mistake here. You have to earn your way back into my good graces, and this is how I inspire you to—" [laughs]

JACK: This is absolutely someone out-meddling the meddler, right?

[ALI and JANINE laugh]

JACK: Yeah, I'm happy with that.

ALI: Okay cool.

JACK: And I'm gonna take the negative tag...[pops lips] Um, what's it called when you're like— Oh, unfocused. I was gonna say when you can't focus.

[ALI laughs]

JANINE: Well. [laughs]

JACK: Yup. Found it.

AUSTIN: Mhm. Here's a thing. So you cashed in my aloof, right?

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And then because of that, I became aloof. Because that's how that works. Isn't it just immediately going to re-alooof me?

[JACK and JANINE laugh]

AUSTIN: As, by being aloof, I have acted in a way, in contravention of society's conventions?

JACK: It's catch 22. For being aloof.

JANINE: I guess you could also— You could make it more specific, right, like? You can be— You have rude down here.

AUSTIN: You know what I mean though, right? That like—

JANINE: Yeah, yeah, but you have—

AUSTIN: Why— So I guess my bigger question is why would I accept that next time?

JANINE: I think it's because you have the option to change it up and be specific.

AUSTIN: I guess you get a resolve token out of it.

JANINE: I mean, also the other thing is that like if you... Not every situation is going to result in your reputation taking a hit. That particular one did.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: But also it gives you a chance to specify or like, change the wording or... You know, I would say that what happened there wasn't even aloofness really, it became rudeness, right?

AUSTIN: Right, it's, yeah.

JANINE: Which is why rude is there.

AUSTIN: That's just how I played aloof there, right?

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Like that's just me not playing aloof well because you have to speak into a microphone and you can't act by looking around a room quietly.

[ALI and JACK laugh]

JANINE: I think you played it well, but you know, reputation tags are about how people are seeing you. And in that situation everyone who's looking at you isn't going to think, "Wow that guy's so fuckin' aloof."

AUSTIN: Right. Sure.

JANINE: They're gonna think, "That guy's rude as shit." You know?

AUSTIN: Anyway, I took rude and mercenary.

JANINE: Yeah.

JACK: Yeah.

JANINE: I'm going to take as a negative, related to "acted on desire in a way that compromised your duty or morality." I actually guess it could kind of be that or "acted in contravention of society's conventions," by trying to set up her sister with a horticulturalist who, you know, she thinks would be a good match but honestly, eh. Not necessarily a better match than someone who's like rich and cool.

AUSTIN: Sure. I guess that's the thing where I'm stumbling a little bit, is like how is that contravention of society's conventions and not just, you are attempting to live up to society's conventions, just not particularly well.

JANINE: So the way—

AUSTIN: Contravention feels so intentional to me. Contravention seems like, "I don't care for these rules." Whereas struggling at something but pursuing it feels like you're just—the loss is already fictional.

JANINE: So—

AUSTIN: You know what I mean?

JANINE: Yeah. So the thing with Chatelaine is her desire of course is to orchestrate a marriage between two people of her choosing. For her it's— There is— This is why the negative reputation tag I'm thinking of is milquetoast romantic.

[ALI and JACK laugh]

JANINE: Because for her it is more about like, "Wouldn't it be nice if my sister married someone just as boring as her?"

AUSTIN: Right, right.

JANINE: And not like, "Wouldn't it be nice if my sister married someone who was her social equal, as I should be doing because I'm the heir and that should be my stance in the family, blah blah blah."

AUSTIN: I think that also checks the shamed or embarrassed the family name.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: For sure. If you wanted to check something there.

JANINE: Well I mean it's, I don't think it's that like, dire, but it is like— It is such a like weird and unnecessary move to be like, "Yeah I'm gonna set my sister up with this weirdo plant person."

[ALI laughs]

JANINE: "At this party." Like, when you could introduce her to literally anyone. Um, we got everyone's negative things, right?

AUSTIN: I think so, yeah.

ALI: [crosstalk] I'm not sure if I should take a negative one. I don't know if I hit any of these. If we ended up...

JANINE: Acted in contravention of society's conventions. I think, hm, acted in a way that would shame or embarrass your place of origin. I think we decided on the thing there being a positive, right?

ALI: Yeah. Um, yeah.

AUSTIN: Sticking up for the trees.

ALI: Yeah. So I don't wanna double dip on the same action.

JANINE: And I don't know that giggling as Marzie ruins the cream puffs counts.

[ALI and JACK laugh]

JANINE: Necessarily.

ALI: I will have opportunities to be negative later on, but.

JANINE: Yes.

ALI: Yeah.

JANINE: Um, alright. Then let's see. Ooh, I'm mousing over. Rep tags trigger rep conditions. Move rep conditions if any. All done. Rumor and Scandal. Um, create or spread rumors. Two turns each. We go in a circle and then we go back. So I'll have two turns in a row, but otherwise it just kinda... It'll go the order on the table clockwise, so Ali, Austin, Jack, me. Me, Jack, Austin, Ali.

Basically in this phase it's just, you have the choice to create a rumor. And that can be a rumor about characters—again these are from the perspective of the world and the community. It can be rumors about the world, that would affect people in the community. It can be rumors about connections and things like that. So you can create one of those, or you can choose to spread an existing one. And if you spread an existing rumor or scandal, that'll attach a token to it, so that in the next Novel phase you can use that rumor to make other stuff happen.

ALI: Oh, sure sure sure.

AUSTIN: Does creating rumors start with one token and then you add more tokens to it, or?

JANINE: No, it has to be spread for there to be a token.

AUSTIN: I see.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Gotcha, gotcha. That makes sense.

JANINE: And because we're playing a shorter game we're not gonna worry about rumors fading out, but normally if a rumor's not spread, after the next turn then it starts to fade off. And would be deleted, but we're not worrying about that. Uh, so. Ali.

ALI: Yeah. Hi. Um.

JANINE: We do have one existing rumor on the board. Henrietta knows where her brother is and stands to inherit.

ALI: [laughs] Um. Yeah, I'm wondering if like starting a rumor about Diego's new opportunity is a good fit to start out with here?

JANINE: Mm.

ALI: Um. There's talk on the town that you know Diego might finally be stepping up. Yeah, I mean we each get two so I might as well.

JANINE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: The thing is, you're gonna go last the second time, so if you create a new one the second time, that will not be tokened because no one will have the opportunity to spread it.

ALI: Oh, sure sure sure.

AUSTIN: Is a thing worth thinking about in case there's one that you really want, you know what I mean?

ALI: Yeah yeah yeah. But I have three tokens right now, so if I ended up in a scene where I needed a token for a thing, I wouldn't have to—

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah. That makes sense.

ALI: —spend it that way. Um, yeah I'm just wondering if there's like something that should be like interestingly off about the reality of the scene versus the like. rumor that's spread about Diego.

AUSTIN: Oh I mean the rumor version of it that's fun. What if you're also— What if the rumor is that Diego, James, *and* Mint are working on some sort of business opportunity in the woods.

ALI: [laughs] Oh, yes.

AUSTIN: Do you know what I mean?

ALI: Where it's because the thing of like, oh, you know, Diego's working with the forest nymph who came in, yeah yeah yeah. [laughs]

AUSTIN: Right. Yes. Right.

ALI: I'm actually, yeah. I'm gonna write down Diego and Mint are working closely together for expansion.

[AUSTIN and ALI laugh]

AUSTIN: Oh, it's miserable.

ALI: To the east. [laughs]

AUSTIN: I'll spread it. I think I'm— Do I wanna spread that immediately? I'm gonna spread that immediately.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: I'll, wait, I— No, I'm gonna spread it immediately. Go ahead. Spread it. Put a token on that.

ALI: [whispers] Spread.

JACK: Um.

AUSTIN: And again, that's not Diego spreading that, that's the world.

JANINE: Yes, that's people, that's interest.

AUSTIN: That's spreading it. Right?

ALI: Yeah.

JANINE: That's public. Mhm.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: I'm gonna say um... Mortimer has discovered a rare flower that... [sighs] Hm. What is a good implausibly magical thing for a flower to do? If you lived in a world where sometimes flowers did magical things, what would be the coolest rumor?

ALI: [laughs] It's tough 'cause I'm so Animal Crossing poisoned at this point that like, oh you, there were two red plants and then there was a blue rose. [laughs] But like something in that vein of like, a beautiful new shade. A crossbreed that nobody thought was possible or wasn't specifically bred in that way.

JACK: Just like a rare flower? That—

AUSTIN: What if it's like a— But what if it's like a color that's, or a material that should not be able to be like, crossbred in that way, do you know what I mean?

JACK: Oh sure, it's a flower made of...

AUSTIN: These are glass flowers, or...

JACK: Glass, it's a flower made of silk. It's not a flower made of velvet, 'cause there's too much velvet and everybody would immediately think that Mortimer was working with the witches.

AUSTIN: Yes.

[ALI laughs]

JACK: It's a flower made of... [laughs] Oh, it's wintertime. It's a flower whose petals are made of ice.

JANINE: Ooh.

AUSTIN: Is this— Is the effect of that to— I guess this doesn't go into the rumor part of it but like does that make Mort— Mortimer seems sick now, right? Mortimer discov— Or that's like what the... That's how I'm guessing this is like, interpreted by society writ large?

JACK: Yeah, or like he's got something very valuable or whatever. Although I'm actually debating the value of this rumor because I assume Mortimer being Mortimer he'd just go, "No no, I haven't of course. A flower can't grow from ice." [laughs] You know?

ALI: But nobody's talking to Mortimer about that, right? If it's like the town being like, oh, Mortimer's great discovery. There's only a handful of people.

AUSTIN: [laughs] What's happening is people are coming into Mortimer's shop or whatever.

[JACK, ALI, and AUSTIN]

AUSTIN: And being like, "So I hear you got some special flowers." And Mortimer's like, "We absolutely do."

[JACK laughs]

AUSTIN: Not knowing what they mean.

JACK: "Why, have you considered the trailing ellis? It's a—"

[ALI and AUSTIN laugh]

JACK: God. I mean he seems like a very nice guy. Just uh...

ALI: Yeah.

JACK: He cares a lot about flowers in a kind of boring way.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: Mhm.

JANINE: I am going to go with... [pause] Honor isn't dead. He helped Henrietta's cousin steal the monument and abandoned his fiance.

[ALI gasps]

JACK: Ohohohoho.

ALI: Woah.

AUSTIN: Big one.

JANINE: Big one. Big swing.

ALI: Who's talking about that? [laughs]

JANINE: People. People with ideas.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: People talking about how they would steal a monument. And also fake a death and, et cetera.

JACK: Jesus.

JANINE: Um. I'm gonna make another rumor. Which is...extremely, extremely Austen. Austen with an e, not Austin with an i.

[ALI laughs]

[typing]

JANINE: Marzie is an illegitimate child of the Pellier's.

ALI: Oh.

JACK: Ooh.

JANINE: 'Cause she has a mysterious benefactor.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: With deep pockets. And was at that party.

JACK: Um, let's just spread the Mr. Darcy is a monster rumor equivalent here and go for Honor isn't dead, he helped Henrietta's cousin steal the monument and abandoned his fiance.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: And also I'm gonna then immediately spread Henrietta knows where her brother is and stands to inherit, because that actually then, with both of those spread, actually puts Henrietta in a fucking spot.

[ALI laughs]

JANINE: Uh-huh. It really does.

[JACK and ALI laugh]

ALI: Oh boy, okay. Um. I kind of want to think of something instead of spreading these last two.

[AUSTIN laughs]

ALI: I can't think of anything so— [laughs] I'm actually gonna spread the Marzie one. Which I think is probably the right call here, just to get Marzie deeper into the narrative.

JACK: Yeah.

JANINE: Mhm. Then I think that's that for now, right?

AUSTIN: I think so.

JACK: So we're set up to come back in next time with writing letters?

JANINE: Yup. The next time we come back we'll be doing our Epistolary stage, which is basically everyone gets to write two letters. You can write them your main character or as your connection. You can also compel letters if you want to receive a letter. Like if you wanted to receive a letter from Honor, even. And wanted to create Honor as a character and like, reintroduce him into the story, you could spend a resolve token to make that happen basically.

JACK: Sure.

JANINE: That's what that'll be.

JACK: Okay.

JANINE: Thank you to everyone for joining us for this episode of Live at the Table. We'll be back next week with more Good Society. Until then, take care.

[MUSIC - The Ball at the Pellier's (Good Society) by Jack de Quidt - PLAYS] [[click for link](#)]

[Episode ends.]