

Sangfielle 30: Hark! The Citadel Beneath Pt. 3

Transcriber: robotchangeling

Austin: *Sangfielle* is a series that draws on elements of dark fantasy, horror, and gothic fiction. As such, a list of content warnings will always be made available in the episode description.

[Music begins: “Sangfielle” by Jack de Quidt]

Austin: Open Gates happens across the entire city. Traditionally, Open Gates is held in such a way that all of the gates of Sapodilla completely open up. The party spills out into the outside districts also. But the Macula has closed those outside gates. And I think as you approach this, you understand kind of where you're at. You're in a plaza, but you realize the plaza is actually built on or is the roof of a building, a building that has sunk into the ground.

Austin (as Dyre Ode): Below this city is another part of me, a key, a central piece. Retrieve it for me. And I'll see what can be in return.

Janine (as Es): Will I know it when I see it?

Austin: The mask turns towards a grin.

Austin (as Dyre Ode): There is no doubt in my mind.

Janine (as Es): Well, then I'll do what I can to retrieve it for you.

Austin: Instead of the regular sconces here, it is lit with this sort of blue fire. The torches here emit this kind of blue fire that, Es, you realize that this is like...it's like they've captured an element of a heritrix's true form. Some heritrix somewhere could turn into like living lightning, right?

Jack: Hmm.

Austin: And whatever that aspect is has been placed in these torches.

Janine: [dismay] Hmm.

Dre (as Chine): [muffled, mouth full] Rerro?

Ali (as Marn): Sounds like Chine.

Jack (as Pickman): Chine, we've come to get you. I'm glad we found you. Are you okay?

Dre: I think Chine says:

Dre (as Chine): No. We have to...I have to get the egg first.

[song plays out]

Austin: Welcome to *Friends at the Table*, an actual play podcast focused on critical world building, smart characterization, and fun interaction between good friends. I'm your host Austin Walker. Joining me today, Janine Hawkins.

Janine: Hi, I'm at [@bleatingheart](#) on Twitter.

Austin: Jack de Quidt.

Jack: Hi, I'm at— I'm at— I don't know what happened. You can find me at [@notquitereal](#) on Twitter and buy any of the music featured on the show at [notquitereal.bandcamp.com](#).

Austin: I know exactly what happened. Does anyone else know what happened? [Ali chuckles] Listeners at home?

Jack: Did I just begin on the wrong foot?

Austin: I said, "Janine Hawkins," and Janine said, "Hi, I'm at..." instead of saying "Hi, I'm Janine. I'm at..." And so, Jack, when you picked up the ball—

Janine: I never say, "Hi, I'm Janine." Ever.

Austin: Everybody normally says their first— maybe you don't, but other people tend to say their first name. And I know this because sometimes I'll say "Alicia," and Ali will say "Ali."

Ali: [softly] Oh yeah.

Austin: Sometimes I'll say "Keith," and Keith will say "Keith J," or I'll say "Keith J," and Keith will say "Keith." And that— and the lack of there not being that rhythm for Jack, who Jack will say, "I'm Jack de Quidt. You can find all the music on the show at da da da da da." Jack went for it but then couldn't do it, because like yawning after— [Janine and Dre laugh softly] there was not...the precedent hadn't been set.

Jack: [chuckles] Yeah.

Janine: I'm just saying it's a weird time for that to be...this the first time that's—

Austin: I promise.

Janine: —that's been a problem? That's, mmm.

Austin: I promise. 'Cause every— maybe you don't say it, but everybody says it. Anyway, Andrew Lee Swan.

Janine: [doubtful] Mmm.

Dre: Hey, you can find me on Twitter at [@swandre3000](#). [Austin laughs softly]

Janine: Burn! [Jack laughs]

Austin: Ali Acampora. Uh huh!

Ali: Hi, um, I'm Ali. You can find me over at [@ali west](#) on Twitter. I felt pressured to do that.

Austin: Oh, great. Good. [Ali and Janine laugh]

Ali: I just wanna say...I knew that I usually do, but now this has gotten weird. You can find the show over at [@friends_table](#). You can support us on Patreon over at [patreon.com/friends_table](#). And I just want to say—I forgot to do this last time.

Austin: Uh huh.

Ali: In the spooky mansion music arc...

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: I forget. [laughs] I forget the—

Austin: Oratorio. The Perpetual Oratorio.

Ali: Oratorio. Yes, yes, yes.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Ali: Keith had like a really good pitch for Run Button that had to get edited out.

Austin: Oh.

Ali: But they're doing *Metal Gear Solid*.

Austin: Why'd you edit it out?

Ali: Because two episodes got moved together.

Austin: Oh, I see.

Jack: Oh.

Austin: Gotcha.

Ali: So the intro just got...

Austin: Which definitely won't happen this time.

Ali: I'm making this bet. [laughs]

Austin: Let's go. [Jack laughs]

Janine: Mmm.

Austin: You have the power to make it happen.

Ali: [laughs] But yeah, they're doing *Metal Gear Solid* over there. It sounds really good. They're having a good time. So go support Keith.

Austin: I am 19 parts into that series I'm enjoying it quite a bit.

Ali: Ooh. Okay.

Jack: Which game are they doing?

Austin: *Metal Gear Solid* one and two. I think they're at two now.

Jack: Oh, damn.

Austin: They're into two. Keith has an uncanny ability to predict things in this game in a way that's—

Jack: In a Kojima game?

Austin: In— yeah. It's very funny.

Jack: Interesting.

Austin: In a way that's like, [clicks tongue] that's not that character. That's the same character as that character. Like, immediately, [Jack laughs] over and over again, in a way that is very funny. Keith also has played *Metal Gear Solid V*, which is interesting because he can't remember— he doesn't know the things from *Metal Gear Solid V*, but they're there in his brain in

a way that I can tell, but he can't recall them. [Ali and Janine laugh] And so like there are certain things like he doesn't know who Master Miller is, but I know he knows who Kazuhira Miller is from *Metal Gear Solid V*, and he never says those things together, but you can tell that that connection has been made. Also, he didn't know the thing about *Metal Gear Solid II*, which is exciting for me.

Jack: Oh, wow.

Austin: I'm nearing that, so.

Janine: Ohh.

Austin: Like, the thing.

Jack: That's really funny.

Austin: The thing that Kojima did with that game.

Janine: The thing.

Austin: Yeah, uh huh. So. People should go watch that. Contentburger.biz, right?

Ali: Is it when you switch your controller or is it a different thing?

Austin: It's a different thing. That's the number one. That's a *Metal Gear Solid I* thing. [Ali laughs] It's a who you play as in the bulk of *Metal Gear Solid II* thing.

Ali: [understanding] Ooookay.

Austin: Which was a secret at the time.

Ali: Huh.

Austin: And somehow Keith had just never osmosised it, you know? [Ali laughs]

Jack: Also, if you listen to *Friends at the Table* but haven't listened to Run Button, Keith and Kylie are...it's a great show. They make great LPs.

Austin: Yeah, they do a good job. Yeah.

Jack: And yeah, I highly recommend it if you're like, "Yeah, I'd like to go see Keith and Kylie play video games." [Ali laughs]

Austin: Mm-hmm. Yeah, contentburger.biz is the Patreon, and then youtube.com/runbutton for their Let's Plays and stuff. They do a weekly podcast called Snooze Button also, so go check that out.

Ali: True.

Austin: Alright. Also, briefly, this is the first— mmm, we may have missed...I may have forgotten to do this last time, actually. It may have just happened last time. But congrats to *Heart: The City Beneath* and everyone at Rowan, Rook and Decard—

Jack: Oh, yeah.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: —for winning a fucking ton of ENNIES, I believe.

Janine: A bucket load.

Ali: Ooh.

Dre: Oh, awesome.

Austin: An absolute bucket load, so congrats to them for that. It's a great game and they deserve it, so.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Speaking of *Heart: The City Beneath* by Rowan, Rook and Decard, written by Grant Howitt and Christopher Taylor. Our goals today are to ask questions instead of planning; to evoke an atmosphere of wonder, horror, and humanity; to build and break tension; to pay attention to what everyone at the table wants, both long and short term; and to play to find out what happens. Can we go over Beats really quick? Chine.

Dre: Yes. Let me pull up my character sheet. Chine, using he/they pronouns. Active Beats are both Minor. The first one is "Damage or sabotage a Haven, letting the Course in," and the second is "Gain information on why you have been chosen by the Course."

Austin: Alright. (??? 8:30) hit those, I believe.

Dre: Do you want me to go over my Fallouts?

Austin: Oh yeah, let me hear those Fallouts also.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah, my bad.

Dre: I have two Fallouts.

Austin: Mmm, mmm.

Dre: Reconfigured Physiology, which is Major Echo Fallout. My organs and bones don't make sense anymore. [Austin huffs a brief laugh]

Ali: Hmm.

Dre: I can no longer remove Stress from Blood or remove Blood Fallout at haunts or through the use of medical kits. Second one is Major Blood Fallout, and appropriately named Blooded: You show some mark of the Course in your physical form: twisting fragile antlers of bone, fingernails that curve in fractal sharp patterns, bioluminous veins, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera. I believe we said that parts of my shrew skeleton are like poking out through...

Austin: Yeah, they're out there.

Dre: Through my body. Yeah.

Austin: Uh huh.

Dre: Your frail mortal form is not designed to be used as such a canvas. When you mark Stress to Blood, roll two dice and pick the higher.

Austin: Yikes.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Austin: That's a rough one.

Dre: Eh, it's fine.

Austin: Es.

Janine: Yeah. My active Beats are: "Have a cocktail, fighting move, or legendary beast named after you," and "Catalogue your exploits for an extended period. Either do it yourself or hire a bard." And my Fallout is Siren Song: GM picks a person slash place. All actions other than trying to go there are risky, clear when you arrive. The call of nearby heritrixes is that can't be heard is what the person slash place is.

[0:10:00]

Austin: Ah, yeah. Getting there. Uh, Marn.

Ali: Um, yeah. My active Beats are: “Find a source of knowledge on tier three of the Heart,” and “Find a helpful text.” One of those seems easier than the other.

Austin: Yeah, uh huh.

Ali: [laughs] My current Fallout is—

Austin: Well, but you could probably get both together. If you get the former, you'll get the latter, right?

Ali: Wait.

Austin: If you find a source of knowledge on tier three of the Heart, then you will have found a helpful text. If it's a text, I guess.

Ali: Oh sure. Yeah, yeah. Maybe.

Austin: I guess if you find like a person that's a source of knowledge—

Ali: Yeah. [laughs]

Austin: —that's not a text. But, yeah.

Ali: Sure. Yeah, we'll figure it out.

Austin: Anyway.

Ali: Maybe it's just a strange voice on a tier three of the Heart.

Austin: That's true. That's true. Yeah.

Ali: Which could be out there.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Ali: My Fallout is In Trouble: You upset an important figure in this or a nearby Haven. Uh, there's a vampire.

Austin: Yeah. That's true.

Ali: An evil vampire trying to get me.

Austin: Out there. Uh, alright. And Pickman.

Jack: I have two Minor Beats. The first is “Find a Heart-touched sapling on a Delve, and bring it back to a Haven for planting.” I have the sapling, but I haven't planted it in a Haven yet.

Austin: Right.

Jack: And “Damage or sabotage a Haven, letting the Heart in,” and we've put “Heart,” in square brackets, 'cause what exactly is going to be let in when Pickman damages it is not necessarily clear.

Austin: TBD.

Jack: But it's from something outside of Sapodilla.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah.

Jack: Um, and I have...I have three Fallouts. I have a Major Fortune Fallout, Exiled: You are banned from entering the Haven you are currently in or one that's nearby. That's Bell Metal Station.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Jack: I have a Minor Fortune Fallout, Unlucky: Things are going to get worse before they get better; you cannot use Fortune Protection. And I have a Major Fortune Fallout, Hunted: The Shape Knights have found your heresy; a hunter has been dispatched.

Austin: Ah, good. Great. Everything going great for Pickman. Fantastic. Uh, so, where were we? Uh, if I recall correctly, [uncertain] Marn and Chine were opening up the lab. Is that correct? Or was that Pickman and Chine?

Ali: No.

Austin: That was—

Dre: Marn and Chine.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Marn and Chine.

Dre: I'm pretty sure.

Austin: That was right. And inside of the lab, there are, again, kind of the sort of like science lab distillery things, as you might imagine. You know, beakers bubbling and tubes running to and fro. And I think that there are probably two things that keep...that your eyes go to pretty naturally here in this space. I mean, first of all, you get the sense that this is not...I'm gonna keep the question mark on Hollowfield's lab, because there's not enough here for the stuff that you know he got up to. Or that I guess we know. This is the person who was like, Hollowfield— Felix Hollowfield was like the genius inventor behind much of the new tools, many of the new tools that the Macula use, and you imagine also the terrible inventions using heritrix, you know, using the heritrix magic and the heritrix souls, the people, these people. Uh, and like, by and large, they're not here. This is not...like, Es isn't in this room. But like, if she were, she wouldn't be sensing this, you know. The...or maybe like they would sense a little bit of it again, but they wouldn't sense the kind of huge collection crying out the way she did earlier, right? Like, that's further down yet still.

But what your kind of eyes kind of go to are a couple of other things. One, there is this big bottle that is marked Emil [pronounced: EM-ill] or Emile [pronounced: em-EEL]. E-M-I-L. We're calling it Emil, but obviously you could pronounce that Emile. And you, the people walking in the room and reading it, wouldn't know how to pronounce it immediately. You'd probably default to a Emile, 'cause that's a name that we in our world use. But you also see, uh, a beaker overflowing with kind of a dark filmic liquid, a liquid that kind of films up the beaker, which you immediately recognize as the stuff that covered your room, Chine. And you recognize it in the sort of like recognizing a predator sense. And that is bubbling and looks like it could blow up at any moment. And then glowing all around this room, in a way that feels like you've stepped into a room covered in mold, are these crystals that are humming and glowing, and they're all pointed...like, they're literally like in the corners of the room. You know, like cracking through the walls. All of them are oriented towards that big black beaker of booze. It's like they're pointing at it or like they've grown in opposition to it. And this whole space feels like it could go up at any moment. What do you do?

Dre: Whoof. That's a good question. Um, okay. Any sign of my egg sac in here?

Austin: No. No sign of your egg sac in here, unfortunately.

Dre: That sucks.

Austin: Oh, there's also a bottle that had a person's name on it, Emil or Emile.

Dre: [intrigued] Mmm.

Austin: But I don't think that we...you don't know who that is necessarily.

Dre: Sure.

Austin: And that is...that was also...that was like part of a different set of like a distillery system, with like stuff hooked up, but you're not a hundred percent sure what's going on there, so.

Dre: Yeah.

Ali: Are we able to like enter fine?

Austin: Yeah. Just, I guess, to summarize again...when you opened the door, there was that flash of the blue light that really hurt—

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: If I remember right, really hurt Chine—

Ali: Uh huh.

Dre: Yes.

Austin: —and kind of dazed you a little bit, Marn, but...

Dre: That's how I got my second Major Fallout. [Ali laughs]

Austin: Right, right. But now you're...now you're able to enter. You're in there just fine if you want to be in there. Yeah. And there's no other— there's no people in here or anything like that.

Ali: Sure.

Austin: And another thing I think I noted was it feels like this maybe isn't the full state of Hollowfield's lab. Like, you imagine there's more going on here, but yeah.

Dre: Yeah. Um...I'm looking for any sort of like notes or a journal or anything.

Austin: Give me a Discern.

Dre: Sure.

Austin: Uh, Discern Desolate Occult, here in the lab.

Dre: Okay.

Austin: If you have— I don't know what you have here.

Dre: I have—

Austin: You have both of those, so you're good with either.

Dre: I've got both of those.

Austin: Alright.

Dre: Um, do I still have Desolate? 'Cause I got that from eating the bed.

Austin: We are still on the Delve, I believe, so.

Dre: Okay. Gotcha.

Austin: So I'm gonna say yes. This is like a little...this is not a...this is, I don't think...unless we get into like a fight or an extended circumstance.

Dre: Sure, sure. That makes sense.

Austin: Which, it can be kind of a judgment call. I don't think it's a new situation.

Dre: Yeah. Okay.

Austin: We had some debate about this on the other side of the game recently.

Dre: Oh.

Austin: This is how I've been playing it all season, so. Yikes! [Ali audibly grimaces]

Dre: Nice. Let's go!

Ali: Yowza.

Austin: Let's. Fucking. Go. Oh, buddy. Uh, hoo, take... [Ali laughs] Take five...

Jack: This is a good game.

Austin: Sorry, that's wrong. That's wrong, what I just— I rolled a D— you know, what, I'm gonna let it hang. I'm gonna let her hang.

Dre: Okay.

Austin: I'm not gonna reroll this, but it should have been higher. [Dre laughs softly] What you...what happens is you're like flicking through paperwork. And maybe one of the things you notice here is that like, it seems as if the paperwork has been gone through in a way that suggests something is missing.

Dre: Mm.

Austin: And that like someone...this place isn't tossed, 'cause they didn't fuck with any of the experiments. But it's clear that they...whoever went through this place did, one, take something, and also went through all of his notes in a way that has left it kind of a mess to look through. And at some point, one of the...one of the pieces of paper catches the flame underneath that black goo.

Dre: Mmm.

Austin: And it consumes it really quick. And there is another one of these bright blue flashes of light that also spills some of the...it like shakes the flask, you like shake the flask as you try to like, "Oh, wait, don't— don't burn!" And some of that goo gets on you. Take, uh...what did I roll? Five. Take five Blood Stress.

Dre: Oh. No, you see, you *have* to reroll that.

Austin: Oh, because...because of...

Dre: Uh huh.

Austin: Roll two dice. Well, this one I'm gonna roll right. This is D10, 'cause the stuff is D10.

Dre: Okay. Sure.

Austin: Hey, only a two. There you go.

Dre: Well, no, I take higher.

Austin: [overlapping] Oh, wait, do you take higher?

Dre: Yep, uh huh.

Austin: Okay, well, take the five then. [laughs softly] And then give me a Fallout check.

Dre: Yep.

Austin: Hey, Minor Fallout. That's all.

Dre: Ayy! Okay. Let me clear this Blood Stress.

Austin: Yeah, that's easy. That's great, right?

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Austin: So, you're going to take the Fallout...um, I mean, I guess it's, it is Clou— the one in the book that is what it is, is Clouded.

Dre: Uh huh.

Austin: Which is a Mind Stress, or a Mind Fallout, but it's not really what's happening here. And in fact, I think what I'm actually gonna do...it's more unique than just Clouded. You, as that goo hits you, you should take the Fallout Nullified. N-U-L-L, you know, Nullified.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Austin: I-F-I, et cetera. E-D. [Dre laughs] Nullified. Let's— can you use it in a sentence, please?

Dre: Uh huh.

[0:19:56]

Austin: And at the...this is a...I guess I'd put this down as an Echo Fallout or a Blood Fallout. At the end of every situation, you will lose— starting now. I guess this is not the end of situation, but. Lose one domain, your choice, and at the end of every situation until treated, lose another domain. Temporarily, until treated. You'll get them back eventually, but. This goo that has now like burned into you is making you woozy and like disconnected from the reality around you. This is...this is one of the things that Hollowfield developed. It's effectively...it's nothing? It's nothing. It's like liquid nothing. And it can be applied to nullify the Course, to nullify the heartland, to nullify weirdness. And it basically, mechanically, it erases domains.

Dre: Hmm! Okay.

Austin: And so that's bad. Uh, that's not good.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: I think we saw...we saw the Macula use this in the library fight briefly on...or like, maybe they had a similar effect or maybe it never came up, but they had some of this on them when that fight happened, and it could've gone bad. So, for now, which domain do you want to temporarily lose?

Dre: Oh, boy. Um... [thinking sound]

Austin: You got a whole selection here.

Dre: Yeah, I'll lose Warren for now.

Austin: Okay. There's like...there's like an immediate like mental effect on that. So maybe this is Mind in a way, because it feels like you're very glad to be in a real room suddenly. [chuckles] Do you know what I mean?

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Austin: There's like the sense of like, hoo, I'm glad I don't have to like move through weird tunnels. And like, a moment ago you were digging yourself a weird tunnel, so.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: So that's interesting.

Dre: Alright. Well, I've hurt myself, and I started a small fire. [Austin chuckles] So, what are you up to, Marn? [laughs]

Ali: Um, this is funny, 'cause I was gonna...I was gonna futz with that beaker to see like if it responded if I like turned the flame down a little bit.

Austin: Uh huh. It stops bubbling.

Ali: Sure.

Austin: And it starts to...I mean, it depends on how much time you give it, obviously. But it moves from being kind of like more liquid to more jello-like as it starts to cool down.

Ali: Sure.

Austin: So less of a goo and more of a glob.

Ali: [laughs] Sure. Right, right, right.

Dre: Hmm.

Ali: Very, uh...

Dre: Glob o' glue.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: A glob o' glue. Yeah, exactly. Are you are you taking this? Are you investigating it? Are you...

Ali: I'll take some, sure, yeah.

Austin: Okay, well then take this, um...I guess, do you find like something with a lid, presumably?

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Right? You could take...uh, where'd it go? One second. [typing] A D8 Technology slash Null domain, which is like, it's a different domain than anything we have here. It's the domain is like Null, N-U-L-L. It's just called null stuff.

Ali: Null stuff.

Austin: It also has volatile and harmful, so be careful with it.

Ali: Um, sure. Volatile.

Austin: And as you do that...one, you can like—as you move it around the room and move into a different like jar or something—you can hear the crystals kind of hum at it, as they, like the ones closer to at any given moment, released a little like *mmmmmm*. And then as you put it away, presumably, they all kind of...there is the sense that they aren't encroaching as much anymore.

Ali: Oh, okay. I was gonna ask about that. So, that's why they react.

Austin: Yeah. Mm-hmm.

Ali: Weird. Can I... [laughs]

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Ali: Scale of one to ten, how bad of an idea this is. But let's say I pour it into a bottle and then it's mine. And then like, in the flask, there's like a little bit left. Can I pour some onto a crystal and...

Austin: Ah. Give me a roll. [Ali laughs] What do you want to roll for this?

Ali: Um...a Discern?

Austin: Sure, I'll let you Discern. [Ali laughs] This is Discern, uh...this is Discern Occult.

Ali: Sure.

Austin: Or Technology. This is a technological—

Ali: Okay, I'm gonna go with Technology.

Austin: —device in the cursed technology way that we mean often, so.

Ali: Mm-hmm. Chine, I'm guessing you're [laughs softly] taking a breather after getting hurt?

Austin: You stay clear on this one?

Ali: Yeah.

Dre: [sighs] Oh boy. What are you rolling?

Ali: I'm rolling Discern Technology, and I have both of them, so I should be fine.

Dre: I mean, I have Technology too.

Austin: What are you doing to help Discern what happens when you do this? [Ali chuckles]

Dre: [sighs] Okay, run me through again what you're trying to do?

Ali: I'm pouring a little bit of the goop on the weird wall crystals.

Dre: Mmm. [Ali laughs] Um...boy, I really don't know—

Ali: Sure, yeah.

Dre: [laughs] —how to be helpful there.

Ali: I understand.

Austin: Mm-hmm. Good.

Dre: I would love to be I just don't know how in character I can justify that. [laughs]

Ali: Yeah, it feels like one of those things that's a solo project.

Austin: This makes sense to me. Yeah, uh huh. [Ali laughs]

Ali: Another ten. What is happening? [laughs softly]

Austin: Oh my god. This is incredible.

Dre: Share some with me.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: I downloaded a Roll20 mod. I'm sorry to tell everybody. [Ali, Austin and Dre laugh]

Austin: Oh, that'd be the worst.

Jack: Whoa.

Austin: I'd be so mad. I'd be so mad. Um...so, the as you— as just like the smallest...can I paint a picture here, which is like you're about to drop a little bit on, and then Chine is like, “Hey, what—” and then you turn back to look at Chine, and so you don't pour as much as you meant to originally, [Ali laughs] ‘cause you like hold back just a little bit. But the smallest little bit hits this crystal, and that whole crystal formation shatters in a loud explosion.

Ali: Oh.

Austin: That just like tears the...that entire like part of the wall up. You're safe, and in fact it dislodges some of the higher up crystals ‘cause of the concussive force. In fact, with a ten, I'm gonna give you D8 of these Coursed crystals, which are Wild slash Cursed, if you want to pick those up.

Ali: I would love to.

Austin: And maybe, uh, don't put them near the goo.

Ali: [laughs] Sure. [Jack chuckles] The goo's in my bag. I have the crystals in like a jacket pocket or something.

Austin: Mm-hmm. Sure.

Ali: And that was a D8?

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Dre: Okay. Yeah, phew, okay.

Austin: D8 worth of them, yeah.

Ali: Okay. Wow.

Austin: Yeah, they're rare and weird, so. [Ali laughs softly] These are both very powerful bad things. Well, bad's in the eye of the beholder, but you know what I mean.

Ali: Sure. Seems rough.

Jack: What color are these crystals?

Austin: Uh, I think that they're kind of like, uh, clear but they take on, you know, a rainbow of color depending on, you know, how the light passes through them, you know? They're kind of quartz, I guess.

Jack: Like big salt crystals, almost.

Austin: Mm-hmm, yeah.

Ali: Did it seem like there were any other like big projects happening in this room? Or it was mostly the...

Austin: [sighs] You would need to do another Discern roll to see if there's any other like info in here.

Ali: Sure.

Austin: But the gist of it is that like those seem to be the active projects out on the desks, you know, out on the tables as it were. Also just, by the way, armory group, you did hear a loud explosion coming from down various hallways. [Ali and Jack laugh]

Ali: Fair. Yeah.

Jack: Hmm.

Ali: Yeah, I'd be happy to do another Discern, just to sort of...

Austin: Alright.

Ali: ...turn the place.

Austin: Yeah. Go for it.

Ali: It's an eight.

Austin: An eight, no Stress. Um, so I think you find some notes here on... [exhales] On what, it's not clear, because there is a sort of jargon at work here that alludes even you as a Keen, but I will say the gist of it reminds you of some of what Alaway was up to, which is about...I guess like, if I can like throw some words out there that you do understand or that you think you get is that like, oh, a power, a threshold. There's a lot of stuff that you don't know what it refers to, like antecedent. And you're like, I don't know, an antecedent of what exactly? [Ali laughs softly]

You...and then you see the word Zevunzolia. And so I think I would take this as like D6 notes, you know, Felix Holloway's* notes. You'll need more time to try to work through whatever the fuck this guy was writing about. But Zevunzolia is...I don't think you've heard that word yet in character, and so it's just like a weird thing to see. Capital Z as if it's a place, but you don't know the name of that place. You don't know what that's referring to, I don't believe, so.

Ali: Oh, right, right.

Austin: So, yeah.

Ali: And I spaced out for a second there. Did you say that was a D6 notes?

Austin: D6.

Ali: Okay.

Austin: Yeah, Holloway's* notes on...Holloway's* project notes, let's say. Does the other group want to show up around now, maybe? See everything's okay?

Jack: Yeah, I think, following the explosion...

Janine: Uh huh.

Jack: Might be worth heading back. [Dre laughs] This is like a Macula headquarters or *the* Macula headquarters?

[0:30:07]

Austin: This is...this is...mmm. There are Macula like armed stations and guard stations and watchtowers throughout the city.

Jack: Sure.

Austin: This is the central hub of their leadership, as far as you know.

Jack: Right, okay.

Austin: What you don't know is whether...how deep that this is tied in to the Wrights of the Seventh Sun, the group that you know that Calen fel Dynestia was tied to that has some relation to the Macula.

Jack: Yeah. No, I was thinking of like trying to sabotage the armory in some way—

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Jack: But I think the explosion in the lab is a more pressing concern. [Ali laughs softly]

Austin: Sure. Fair. Yeah. Destroying this armory would suck for them, but like, they have no shortage on guns or swords around town, you know what I mean? The thing that—

Jack: They'd just be like, "Fuck, they destroyed the armory."

Austin: They destroyed *this* armory, and the thing that they'd be missing— I mean, you've already taken the big things, which is like the—

Dre: Pistol.

Austin: —stuff Holloway* was making specifically.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: Like, that's the weird shit, and some of that stuff is out in rotation already. This is the kind of backup stuff that you've now taken all of it. So like, they just...if the stuff that they have out in the city right now goes away, they won't have more of this blue light shit, for instance.

Jack: Great.

Austin: So yeah, I guess y'all show up together at the lab.

Jack: Yeah.

Dre: Oh hey, you have my stuff, don't you?

Jack: Uh huh. Uh, yeah, and I'm just gonna— I'm gonna hand it over.

Dre: Uh, thanks. I'm trying— I think Chine is trying to pull up their like high collar, and it no longer is able to cover their face.

Jack: Huh.

Austin: Different face, new face.

Dre: Yep. Yeah.

Austin: Who this? [Ali laughs softly]

Jack (as Pickman): We heard an explosion.

Ali (as Marn): Oh, yeah, it was just, uh...

Dre (as Chine): Uh. Yes.

Ali (as Marn): We did that.

Dre (as Chine): Yes.

Dre: And then I think Chine just points to their face.

Jack (as Pickman): Ah. Okay. Well, ready to keep moving?

Dre (as Chine): Yes.

Austin: Alright, where to? As a reminder, there's a little side off hallway that can take you to the barracks, but you heard some noise from there. I don't know what the risk/reward you feel on that is. [Jack chuckles] There is this ballroom, and there are also some...there's also the sinking halls, which I realize I have not drawn— I've not revealed all of the...that there are other connections from the sinking halls. It makes the sinking halls look like they're a dead end. They are not a dead end.

Dre: Mmm.

Austin: So let me reveal that, one, the sinking halls also connect to the ballroom, and then likewise they do connect somewhere else.

Ali: We'd heard that...

Janine: Is there...

Ali: No, go ahead.

Janine: I was gonna...is there still like a downstairs? This is still like floor...

Austin: You are...the...

Janine: Thing of whatever?

Austin: Yes, going to the sinking halls feels like you would be going further down into the lower— a lower level still. It's hard to tell because of how uneven the ground is here. As a reminder, like this whole place has sunk into the ground. And so sometimes you realize like, oh, I've been walking up an incline or down an incline for the last two minutes, and so like, have I fallen down to a lower level? Have I...has this connected to a different hallway than it was actually supposed to like intersect with?

Janine: Mm-hmm.

Austin: You know? And there's evidence of that sort of thing here, you know? So.

Janine: It's fun to think that at one point the sinking halls were the only part that was sinking.

Austin: Uh huh. [Dre chuckles]

Jack: Then it was all of the halls.

Austin: Now it's all the halls, yeah.

Janine: Could rename everything—the sinking armory, the sinking barracks—but that's so much work.

Austin: It's a lot of work. Yeah.

Dre: Mmm. Mm-hmm.

Austin: The sinking halls are really sinking. [Jack laughs] Is what I will say.

Jack: Um...yeah, I mean, I suppose, do we... [laughs] Do we want to go via the ballroom or do we want to go via the sinking halls towards the ballroom and whatever is attached to the bottom end of the sinking halls? [Dre sighs] There's something bad in the ballroom, right?

Ali: Yeah.

Janine: The ballroom gives me such “final boss before you leave the area” vibes.

Ali: [laughs] We were told something was happening there, so.

Dre: Right.

Austin: There was an event happening there.

Ali: Yeah.

Janine: And also three doors have led there. [Ali and Janine laugh] So it's like...

Austin: But that's just— listen, sometimes doors have to lead to a place for it to make sense.

Janine: [laughs] Yes.

Austin: You know?

Dre: That's true.

Janine: Yes, I agree. I'm just saying it just feels like, you know, even if we come up on the other end of this thing, we're probably still gonna be pretty close to an entrance to the ballroom to deal with it, like...

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Janine: Yeah. My vote is sinking halls.

Austin: Yeah, you should go where you want to go. That's all I should say.

Dre: [sighs] I think, in character for Chine, the ballroom is the place that they would want to go, because that's like, they're looking for something in particular, and if they're...I guess...I'm trying to remember what we know about the ballroom in character. We heard in character that somebody said something was going on there, right? Like, some sort of event or...

Jack: There's like—

Austin: Chine, you specifically heard guards say: steer clear of there tonight; the Marquis is holding some— is having a thing.

Dre: Okay.

Austin: And just like— but in a tone that's just like, it's not worth our fucking...like, it's like it's gonna be a hassle. It's gonna be a pain in the neck if you try to cross through the ballroom tonight. You know, that sort of vibe.

Dre: Okay. Gotcha.

Austin: Not like a like...um...yeah, that's the gist of it.

Janine: Oh, not like a rampaging monster kind of thing.

Ali: Yeah.

Janine: More like a weird underground...thing.

Austin: You tell me, right?

Jack: I got both senses of the... [Ali and Jack laugh]

Austin: Yeah. I mean, these people—

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: —turn people into tools for themselves, so like, what the fuck—

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: What's their scale, you know?

Janine: I had been thinking full on like Cleric Beast kind of business, and then...

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Janine: And the idea of like, maybe it's a weirdo party, had not occurred to me even in the slightest. [laughs softly]

Austin: Mm-hmm. [Dre laughs] These are also things you can Discern in system, right? Like.

Janine: Yeah. Put an ear on that door.

Austin: You could like investigate the hallways or the ballroom. Right, exactly. Exactly.

Dre: Stack up Scooby Doo style in a slightly open doorway?

Austin: Uh huh.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: Exactly. Exactly. But I'm...obviously, I am down for whatever. All of this is prep. None of this is wasted, so. [Ali laughs]

Jack: [laughs] Ah, Austin, are there any secret passages in here that would allow us to move around more easily Cluedo style? [Ali laughs]

Austin: Give me a Discern.

Jack: Oh, shit! I—

Austin: You're in a fucking underground castle, like...

Ali: Yeah, hadn't you said there was like another part of this lab?

Jack: Oh. Hmm.

Austin: I had said that there was probably— that this probably wasn't *the* lab.

Jack: You know—

Ali: Oh, sure, sure, sure.

Austin: Yeah. But—

Jack: I said that as a joke, but I mean, I would...

Austin: Give me a roll. Like, I don't— yeah.

Jack: I would roll Discern to see if there are—

Ali: I would love to help you.

Jack: I'm sorry, what did you say, Ali?

Ali: I said I would love to help you.

Jack: Yeah, amazing. [Ali laughs] So this is Discern...Discern what, Austin?

Austin: Uh, Desolate still.

Jack: Okay. Cool.

Austin: Yeah. Are you getting help?

Jack: I think from Marn, maybe?

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Discern Desolate, plus one die from Marn. Uh, what difficulty is this?

Austin: This is standard.

Jack: Yeah, it doesn't seem like, you know.

Austin: It's not especially...yeah, I think you're—

Jack: I'm just going around pulling on wall sconces and things.

Austin: Yeah, exactly.

Jack: It's not super dangerous.

Austin: Exactly. [Ali laughs] There you go.

Jack: Mm!

Austin: Success at a cost. The...I guess I'm gonna wait on the cost part of this, because I don't know if it should happen while you're looking or while you're traveling. [chuckles] Yeah, you absolutely find a...in the, Hollowfield's lab, a, um...god, what would it be? It would be a, uh, a sliding, you know, classic sliding bookshelf situation, right?

Ali: Oh hell yeah. [Jack laughs]

Austin: Behind which there is a stairwell down, and that stairwell immediately like...you remember the thing of like jumping over stairs?

Jack: Oh yeah, in the Mario 64.

Austin: Right. It's similar to that, except now they're just like, the in between stairs are just literally missing. And it's like earth as dark is nothing. In fact, you're not a hundred percent sure there is anything between those stairs, but it has to be dirt. It has to be just like really tightly packed really dark black underlit dirt. There's probably something there. It's probably not just stairs floating into the nothingness. But that is the direction that you do find. You do find that. Let me roll...let me roll this Stress at least. [Ali laughs] Alright. That's not too bad. In fact, maybe just take two Mind as you open this strange...this strange...

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: That feels right to me.

Jack: That seems pretty fucked up.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: That's one Mind, because I have one Mind Protection.

Austin: There you go. Give me your Stress roll.

Jack: My Stress is getting pretty high, but that's the game.

Austin: Oh, it sure is.

Ali: I need Stress too.

Austin: Oh, you do.

Jack: Oh.

Austin: I'm sorry. My bad. [Ali laughs] Yeah. Similarly, Marn...

Ali: [whispering] Five. Yowza.

Austin: Well, you know what? Marn, you take...what were you doing to help? You were just pushing and pulling on things, right?

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Similarly.

Ali: Just also being somebody who looks at stuff, mostly.

Austin: You take it to Fortune.

Ali: Sure.

Austin: And then give me your Fallout test. Oh my god.

Ali: Oh wait, that— no, no, no, no, no. That was...

Austin: No, that's not...

Ali: That was a different roll.

Austin: That's a— yeah, that's not right.

Ali: But another— what is...

Austin: But it is another critical success.

Jack: Yeah, Ali just—

Ali: I think that I actually have to restart my computer, 'cause this is... [laughs]

Austin: Uh huh.

Ali: Freaking me out.

Austin: Alright, Pickman got Minor Fallout. There we go.

Jack: Oh no!

Austin: Ah, and here's Marn getting Major Fallout. This is what we're talking about here.

Ali: [quietly] Hell yeah.

Austin: This is that shit.

Ali: Hell yeah.

Austin: Now we're talking.

Ali: Does that clear everything, though?

Austin: That clears everything. Yeah, absolutely. Absolutely.

Ali: Wow. Dang. I have all these healing moves for no reason.

[0:40:00]

Austin: Uh huh. [laughs softly] God. I'm...you...okay, so. Let's start, I guess, with the Mind, the Minor Mind Fallout. That's not so bad, right?

Jack: That's not so bad, right?

Austin: It's a little less bad. [Dre laughs] I'm gonna trigger these in reverse order, perhaps. Marn, you are pretty sure you're gonna lead people...you're like, aha, I knew it. I knew there was something wrong with this lab. I'm gonna lead everybody to the true lab of Felix Holloway. [Ali laughs] Holloway, rather. And instead, you're gonna take the Fallout, the Major Fortune Fallout, The Road Less Traveled, which is you arrive at the wrong landmark.

Ali: [quietly] Ah.

Austin: And what I'm gonna do is just take this little pathway that's drawn down to this direction, and I'm gonna move it this way and connect it over here. [Jack, Ali, and Dre laugh]

Jack: Oh no!

Ali: Oh, okay.

Austin: I've slid this sideways to...god, this is fun. Over here to [Jack laughs] the other side of the ballroom. You are...you're like, you're certain. You're like, "Everybody follow me. I got this." You do not got this. [Ali snorts] You've led them into like a different...like a different part of the castle. Like, all of the materials of this castle feel like they've been kept up in a way that the above, the places you just were, had not been up kept. Like, there's new stonework down here. And this is the Marquis's Halls, and this is a strange rolling drunken party. This is like walking into the Masque of the Red Death. Everyone here is in costume— everyone here. You emerge from a door, and there are just dozens of people chattering. And I say chattering, 'cause they're skeleton people.

Ali: Ooh!

Austin: There's just dozens of skeleton people wearing masks and costumes and—like, full body costumes in some cases—having just an absolute like ball. And this place is more confusing than the one you just left. [Jack chuckles] You are like...you get separated from each other almost immediately. It takes you a second to like catch back up with each other You've no idea where you are in relation to the rest of the...the rest of the castle, the Sunken Citadel. Like, to the degree that to get out of here anywhere— obviously, we're in the middle of a Delve, so you'd have to roll a Delve anyway, but it's risky at this point just to move around here. And also people are staring at you. They assume you're someone's guests, you know? But like, you stumbled into a whole other world, effectively. Into some other society that you did not know was here. Marn led y'all to a fucking underworld of skeleton people, everybody. So that's...

Ali: Sorry, guys.

Austin: Eh, you know.

Jack: Not a lab, Marn. [Ali laughs]

Austin: [laughing softly] It's not a lab at all.

Ali: It could've been.

Austin: And then what'd you get, a Minor Mind? Is that what I said it was, Pickman?

Jack: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Okay. Um...

Jack: [laughs softly] Trapped in skeleton party.

Austin: That's it. You got it. [Ali laughs] God. It's weird. I think you get, um...hold on a second. I need to look at your sheet really quick to see if you have a thing that I can take away. You do. Alright. You take Vulnerable: You feel small, shaken and scared. You cannot use Mind Protection. Ongoing.

Jack: Hmm.

Austin: This is just not what you are prepared for, effectively. You know, you're in a very strange place surrounded by people all of a sudden. The sudden switch from like cloak and dagger walking around shit to a loud, boisterous party is kind of weird. So, there you go.

Jack: Great.

Austin: [quietly] Is this not letting me...

Jack: This is also like...I think that...you know, Pickman is not necessarily someone for subtlety, but I think the reason she was looking for secret passages was because she used to be a bootlegger.

Austin: Mmm. Sure.

Jack: So like, she definitely had this past—distant, distant past—of being, you know, being like 12 or 13, and being like, oh, I'm trying to find like bolt holes and places to hide whiskey or whatever.

Austin: Right, right.

Jack: And I think it is very, you know, it's very interesting that she takes this passage and then is just immediately overwhelmed by people and a situation she doesn't understand and...

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Jack: In terms of like, a throwback to Pickman being a teenager and—

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: —a terrible thing happening to her.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: She's like, oh god, I don't know about this. [Ali laughs]

Austin: Um, so who's taking the lead at trying to get you rearranged somewhere else?

Ali: Chine fits in.

Dre: [uncertain noise] Uhh... [Ali laughs] In that I have some skeletal stuff in the front?

Ali: Yeah, skeleton folks. Yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: That's true. That's true. You do.

Dre: Um, hmm. Okay. I mean, if you want me to take the lead, I got an idea how to do this. [Ali laughs] It'll just, it'll probably make things worse for us in a way. [someone chuckles] Um. I would like to use my Twisting Territory move.

Austin: Ooh, what's that do?

Dre: Once per situation, I can ask the GM who's in charge of the immediate area around you. By smell, sight, or some other esoteric sense, you gain an intuitive understanding of the apex predator or alpha creature in the local area, whether that is a person or a beast. When I use this power, the target gets an uncanny feeling that they are under threat.

Jack: Hmm.

Austin: Huh. Well, that's a choice.

Jack: Hmm.

Austin: You sure?

Dre: Yeah, I want to know who's in charge in this room.

Austin: Well, it's not a room. Remember, this is like...this is like twisting hallways of a castle.

Dre: Yeah, sure. Oh, if you're gonna give me the whole castle, that's even better, 'cause I wanna know—

Austin: No, it's not the whole castle. That's what I'm saying, is like—

Dre: Mmm.

Austin: It's not...it's like a...again, these like, this box I've drawn it's not a hallway, but it's a collection of hallways and rooms and bedrooms and little meal rooms and et cetera.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: But what I'll say...what I would say is the area is complex, 'cause you're at a sort of liminal space between two things. And I'll give you this, like I'm just gonna give you both answers. One of them—

Dre: My—

Austin: Go ahead.

Dre: My thinking behind this is that Chine is looking for the egg.

Austin: Right.

Dre: And figures either, okay, the person in charge will either have it nearby or I can ask them where it is.

Austin: Right. Well, so that's the thing is that like, the closest area, the hallways don't have anyone in charge in the like official sense. And so you're gonna have to take steps towards—

Dre: Sure.

Austin: —the person who is in charge in either direction, right?

Dre: Okay.

Austin: One of them is, you're able to get a line on. You'll still have to roll to get there, but this...I'm gonna say using this move has made this not risky, 'cause you kind of get a sense of where these people are. One is in the ballroom, and that is the Marquis, obviously. That is...and you don't get a vision. What do you get from this? Like, what's the...you get a sense? You get an image?

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: What's this feel like?

Dre: [sighs] It just says like, through some sort of sense, so it says like smell or sight or...

Austin: Okay. Um...let's go with touch, but like a really broad understanding of touch.

Dre: Okay.

Austin: You feel the sensation of being unbalanced and like on an incline and then the sense of like...the feeling of other people around you dancing. And then a bunch of...and then the sensation of you being forced to kneel. And that is Callix, the Aquiline Marquis, and that is in the

ballroom, which you now have a sense of where that is to you. The second is a familiar feeling for you. And it is the feeling of hair wrapping around your wrists like fishing line.

Dre: Mmm.

Austin: Which happened to you before.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: And I'm just going to...I'm going to effectively mark on the map where that is happening, even if you don't necessarily know the exact path on how to get there. Does that make sense?

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: So that other— oh, I guess you have the...you know who it— like, I guess you don't know by name. It doesn't say you get the name, but I gave you the name of the, um...I gave you the name of the Marquis, so I'll give you the name here. I'll say the name again, at least. It is Mabriella du Feza— [pron: FEZZ-uh]

Dre: Okay.

Austin: Du Feza [pron: FAZE-uh], who seems to be the person who had those kind of wicker puppet people, wicker marionettes, coming for you.

Jack: And Blick mentioned her before. He doesn't like her.

Austin: This is correct. He does not like her.

Dre: Okay. [sighs]

Austin: So yeah, so now you can do a Delve or some other sort of like movement roll or Compel or something where it's not risky, 'cause you have a general sense of the directions you're going in.

Dre: Yeah. Um...I think Chine kind of does a mix between like a sigh and a snort and is like:

Dre (as Chine): There's [dismissive sigh] nothing important here. Let's keep moving. Let's get out of here.

Austin: As a note, they both...both of those people now feel under threat, right?

Dre: Mm-hmm. Yep.

Austin: Okay. I will keep that in mind. [Ali laughs]

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: Which direction are you leading people in?

Dre: Um...I'm gonna say the halls, the sinking halls. I guess both of these are halls, but...

Austin: Wait, wait, wait, sorry. You're here in the Marquis's Halls. So you can go east—

Dre: Oh, I'm sorry. I thought you said we were in the ballroom. Okay.

Austin: No, no, no, no, no. No, no, no.

Dre: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I'm with you now.

Austin: No, you would know if you were in the ballroom.

Dre: Right. Yes, yes, yes.

Austin: Trust me.

Dre: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Dre: Okay. [Ali laughs] I guess let's go—

[0:50:02]

Jack: Fucking ballroom.

Dre: South, which on my screen it's south.

Austin: Yeah, south-ish.

Dre: This little, like...

Austin: Yep

Dre: This thing.

Austin: Yeah, to the room that is...yeah, I gotcha. Yep. And just as a note, there are pathways more, you know, effectively west, south, and east, and then the long underground hallways and

secret passageways that you took here that's like northeast, which again is all very vague and, you know, it's just a layout, so. Okay, give me a, uh, some sort of movement roll.

Dre: Okay.

Austin: Delve or...or tell me how you're getting through this and navigating your way through, I guess is what I want.

Dre: Um...I would say it's probably Delve or Hunt.

Austin: Yeah, either one of those I think works, because of what you're doing is tracking something at this point, right?

Dre: Yeah, yeah. And is the domain Desolate still?

Austin: Uh, here it is Haven. [chuckles]

Dre: Ah, okay.

Austin: Haven Occult, though, so.

Dre: Do I have Occult? Oh, I do have Occult.

Austin: This is an undead city, effectively.

Dre: Cool.

Austin: It'll change back to Desolate if you get out of this— the Marquis part of it, but, you know.

Dre: Sure. Does anyone want to help? Does anyone have any input on...or are we okay with just Chine just like taking the lead?

Jack: Hmm.

Ali: I could help, if you want some help.

Austin: Worked out last time.

Dre: Uh huh. [Ali laughs] Hey, you got us here.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: Maybe, yeah, maybe I take a back seat or I make up for my entrance.

Janine: What are the things we need again?

Austin: Uh, Delve and then Haven or Occult.

Janine: Oh, I have Occult.

Jack: I also have De— how many people can help at once, Austin?

Austin: How many people want to take Stress if you fail? [Ali chuckles]

Jack: Yeah, okay, but there's not like a...

Austin: The answer is actually...the answer is more limited than that. The answer is like, what makes sense for any given situation.

Jack: Sure.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: But with the note that, yeah, a bad roll could hurt people, but you don't get a bad roll. You tend not to get a bad roll when you have a ton of dice, which is what we learned in the first arc.

Jack: Oh, yeah. [Dre chuckles]

Austin: So.

Jack: That was weird.

Austin: It was weird. So, what I would say is, in a case like this, I would say two people...I'd say one person can help another person, otherwise what you're kind of doing is all kind of finding your own way. You know, it's not like leading with a support.

Dre: Right.

Austin: It's, you know.

Janine: I'm happy to help. I have very little Stress right now, so.

Dre: Okay.

Austin: Let's do it.

Dre: So is that one or is Marn also helping?

Austin: It sounded like— I was saying I think I'm gonna cap it at one.

Dre: Okay.

Austin: In a situation like this.

Dre: No, that's fair. Yeah. Cool. Alright, let's do it.

Austin: Success at a cost. [laughs softly]

Jack: Oh, just...

Dre: God.

Austin: As we said, as we noted. That was not risky, either. [Ali laughs softly]

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: Alright, Chine, take six Stress. [laughs softly]

Jack: Oh no!

Austin: And Es, take four.

Dre: What is this to?

Austin: Both of those are Mind.

Dre: Oh.

Austin: Both of those are Mind. Moving through this confused weird space is like...also, you're just like, it's kind of what I said about Pickman before, is like, you were prepared for a very particular type of event. And so suddenly like, someone just like hands you a bottle, like a beer bottle. Like a beer bottle that we could go get now.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Austin: And like, what is...why is this...what is happening here? [Ali laughs] You know.

Jack: Shock Top. [Dre laughs]

Austin: Yeah, exactly. At some point, Es, someone like...you walk past a group of people, and they all laugh at the clothing you're wearing. They're like, [snickers].

Janine: Wow, rude.

Jack: But the vibe here isn't like immediately hostile. They're not like...

Austin: They're like socially hostile.

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah, but not—

Austin: They think you're all a bunch of rubes who are out of place.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: You know what I mean? But no, no one here is like raising an axe at you.

Jack: Drawing weapons or...

Dre: Yeah, and they like—

Austin: I mean, there are people throwing weapons— oh, drawing weapons. There are people throwing weapons at like, the sort of like, knives at targets. Do you know what I mean? Like, there's like a carnivalesque atmosphere that's happening here.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: For sure.

Dre: It's a *Mean Girls* “You don't belong here”, not a *Skyrim* guard “You don't belong here.”

Jack: Right.

Austin: That's exactly right. [Dre laughs]

Janine: Mm.

Austin: Thank you.

Jack: Um...

Austin: Can I get Fallout checks before we continue?

Dre: Sure can!

Austin: Or, wait, what were you gonna say, Jack? Before...

Jack: My suspicion is this is a Discern roll, which I'm not prepared to make especially in this situation, but like I was wondering if there was any through line between these skeletons and the sunken skeletons from outside of Blackwick?

Austin: That's a Discern check.

Jack: Yeah. Well, let's resolve Fallout and see how we feel about it after Fallout.

Austin: Mm-hmm. Hey, no Fallout. You rolled a twelve against eleven.

Jack: Ah, great.

Austin: Perfect.

Dre: Phew.

Austin: Uh huh.

Janine: I need to...I need to state my thing before I roll my Fallout, that I put my floating Protection into Mind.

Austin: Good call.

Janine: So I only one Mind.

Austin: Gotcha. Okay.

Janine: 'Cause I have two there by default.

Austin: Right, already. Yeah. I gotcha.

Janine: Yeah. [brief pause] And I still got Fallout anyway! [laughs]

Jack: [sympathetic] Ooh.

Austin: Take Minor— you still got Fallout anyway! Unbelievable.

Janine: Yeah. Okay, great.

Austin: [sighs] There is a...I'm gonna save yours for a second here. Am I? Or should I just make this thing happen? [chuckles] Actually, this is just a fun immediate thing to resolve, but

it's...it could be bad. At some point, you walk past another group of people, and they spray you with a perfume that briefly triggers your true form. [Jack laughs in surprise]

Janine: Oh.

Austin: You take Creepy: [Ali laughs] You react in a strange way that weirds out your friends. Tell us how. Any friendly character who sees you do it marks D4 Stress to Mind. So, what's the...what is the like uncontrolled true form like quick flash look like that creeps out the rest of the party?

Janine: Is it not just the eyeball? The eyeball body?

Austin: I don't know. Is there something even...yeah, I'm sure it's the eyeball body, but is there like a...

Janine: That's currently true form as true form is described, until I take that other move that like expands true form.

Austin: Oh. Well, do you know how your...is there a version of this where we get to see a preview of that?

Janine: No. I don't have— no, 'cause that's—

Austin: Or do you want to save it?

Janine: No, that's like an evolved...

Austin: Okay.

Janine: There's, you know, there's other things that come with that, so I don't think it's...I don't think it's fair to do that now.

Austin: You don't think that there's like a pre— again, like a foreshadowing of whatever that would be.

Janine: No.

Austin: Okay.

Janine: I also think anything I come up with now would, if I take that move later, box me in or would feel...I don't want to—

Austin: Do you have big eyelashes? Is there like a...do you have big eyelashes when you're...

Janine: Yeah, yeah, no, we...that's...

Austin: Yeah?

Janine: Yeah, it's, um...I describe—

Austin: They touch everybody by mistake.

Janine: I describe the eyelashes as being like the...

Austin: Right, right, right. Yes.

Janine: Flagella on a paramecium.

Austin: So like those—

Janine: They're all like on the outside.

Austin: I was just trying to draw the line between “they've seen you do this before” and “they're creeped out,” and so the thing that specifically is like, you feel one of these flagella like on the back of your leg briefly, because the perfume has caused this quick loss of control in a way that makes Es's long, long eyelashes briefly like slip against you. So everybody take D4 Mind, that isn't Es, obviously.

Janine: Does this auto resolve?

Austin: This is— yeah, this is gone. You don't have to write this down.

Janine: Okay. Sorry.

Dre: Did you say take four or take D4?

Austin: Take D4. Oh, right, sorry. I should roll these D4s, huh? I guess you can do—

Jack: Aw, I took four.

Janine: Oh, man. [laughs softly]

Austin: You did take four. You did take four. Does anyone want...

Ali: Oh, I—

Austin: Does everyone want to just roll their own?

Ali: Sure.

Dre: Sure.

Austin: [brief laugh] Alright.

Dre: And Fallout test again?

Austin: Oh, wow.

Janine: Wow.

Austin: Uh huh. Yep.

Dre: Let's go, babyyy!

Jack: Okay, wait, what—

Janine: Cool that my friends are so upset.

Ali: [quietly] Where's the Stress going?

Austin: Huh? Say this again, Ali?

Ali: Where's the Stress going?

Austin: Oh, this is Mind Stress.

Ali: Oh. So...

Jack: How much Mind Stress do you have? Because I have a move about once per situation you can bellow an order and remove D4 Blood or Mind Stress from a nearby—

Austin: You have to do the Fallout stress— you have to do the Fallout test before this happens.

Jack: Ah, fuck. Okay. Well, fair enough.

Austin: Yeah, you can't intercept it in that way. [someone sighs] Uh huh.

Dre: And so does Major clear all my Stress or just the Mind?

Austin: It— just the Mind.

Dre: Okay.

Austin: Just the— oh, no, no. A Major Fallout will clear everything.

Dre: Okay, cool. I got Major Fallout.

Austin: Jesus Christ.

Dre: Uh huh.

Janine: Oh, wait, does...sorry, Minor. Does Minor clear...

Austin: Minor clears the one it's from.

Janine: Okay.

Austin: Yeah. Uh...

Jack: Marn and I are both fine.

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Jack: We just go [grossed out] “ugh.” [Janine and Ali laugh]

Janine: Thanks.

Ali: I already have hair. Like, what's the problem? [Ali and Janine laugh]

Jack: [chuckles] Yeah, true.

Austin: It was not...uh, the problem is that you're walking through a living nightmare right now.

Ali: Sure.

Austin: And for a brief moment, you thought that you may have lost your friend to the nightmare.

Jack: Which is also—

Austin: That the nightmare may have turned her against you.

Jack: Yeah, that sensation.

Austin: Because that's the form that she uses to kill things. [Ali laughs]

Jack: Like, if they can blow perfume at us and create these effects, it's like...

Austin: Right.

Jack: It's some *Midsommar* type shit, of like, what is...what...what could we be opening ourselves up to?

Austin: Jesus. Uh, sorry, I'm looking at Major Mind Fallout here for Dre.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Though it may not...it may...you know, here is...alright. There is...god, something very interesting is about to happen in such a way that like what I say might not even matter. You're gonna take Scarred. Scarred is the upgraded version of Shaken. Shaken is that you choose fight, flight, or freeze, and that's all you can do in the situation. But in this case, in addition, every time you encounter the source of Fallout from now on, the GM can ask you to make an Endure check or suffer D8 to Mind. Which is being tied to the true form of a heritrix specifically. So, in this moment...I'm just gonna copy and paste this. I'll read it again. Your mind cracks and reforms in primal instinctive patterns. This function as Shaken, and again, Shaken says basically fight or flight. Or, it's fight, flight, or freeze. And then every time you encounter the source of that Fallout from now on, the GM can ask you to make an Endure check or suffer D8 Mind, D8 Stress to Mind. So. And that trigger is the true form of a heritrix. Now, are you fighting, flight— fleeing, or freezing?

[1:00:32]

Dre: Um... [sighs] Boy. Um, I don't think it's fight, because I've seen this before.

Austin: Sure. Yes. And you don't— you didn't forget that this is your friend. Do you know what I mean?

Dre: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah. Um, I think it's freeze?

Austin: Okay.

Dre: Yeah, like I think I'm trying to like lead us down this hallway, and then that happens. And I think...oh, you know what it is? 'Cause you said it was Es's like eyelashes, like, rub—

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Dre: Like...in this moment with my messed up body, it feels exactly like having those strings tied around me.

Austin: Yes. A hundred percent. Yes, a hundred, a hundred, a hundred percent. Chine has frozen in place. You can...you can...I'll leave it up to y'all. Like, you can go forward without Chine, and Chine can catch up. Or you can stop and try to get Chine to calm down and help them out. I mean, obviously those are the options, because that's what the options are, but.

Ali: [laughs] I'm willing to be in Chine emotional support group.

Jack: Yeah. I would assist there, but since we're now not in the middle of a Fallout thing...

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Jack: What's your Mind Stress, Ali?

Ali: Mine right now? I only just took two, 'cause I have two Mind Protection.

Jack: Okay. Okay.

Ali: And that's all of the Stress that I have right now, so.

Jack: Oh, that's sick.

Ali: Yeah.

Jack: Uh, how about you, Es?

Janine: Um...sorry, I'm like, I'm fine.

Jack: Okay. It's worth keeping in mind that I can...I can bellow an order and remove D4 Blood or Mind Stress from a nearby ally. And I want to make sure that we don't trap ourselves in that situation that we did just then—

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Where like, we only remember that it's available to us midway through a Fallout test?

Dre: Mm-hmm. [Ali laughs softly]

Austin: That's going to erase it and make it...yeah, mm-hmm.

Jack: Yeah. But if you're happy to continue with that two, given that it's a once per situation thing, Ali, I don't know.

Ali: Yeah, I would hold off on that. I think most of us just cleared all of our Stress like within the last...

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah.

Dre: I mean, I just cleared all mine, so. [laughs]

Ali: Fifteen minutes or whatever.

Austin: Mm-hmm!

Jack: Yeah, that's the only reason I didn't offer. [Jack, Ali, and Dre laugh]

Austin: Yeah. I do think, narratively speaking, that could open a way towards helping Chine here, though. Like, I don't know that you need to use the move necessarily to do it, but that's...then again, I don't know if yelling at Chine is actually what they need either, so. [Ali laughs] Bellowing, I guess.

Jack: No, I don't think I'm bellowing at Chine. But yeah, I'll let you take the lead here, Ali, and I'll help if you want help.

Ali: Sure, yeah. I don't know that there would be a roll here beyond like...

Austin: Oh, there'll be a roll here, 'cause this is a...

Ali: Okay.

Austin: This is a mechanical effect, for sure.

Ali: Okay.

Austin: But you tell me what it is. But more importantly, tell me what it looks like first.

Ali: Yeah, yeah, yeah. And to me, Chine just looks like freaked out?

Austin: Chine?

Dre: Yeah. I'm just...Chine is just like tense. They are shaking, but you can tell it's because it's like a...because the thing that like snapped the string out of me earlier, the last time this happened, was me like violently shifting my form very quickly.

Ali: Mmm.

Dre: And so I think in a way, the shaking is—

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Dre: —almost like trying to like, I'm going to shake this off of me.

Ali: Oh, sure, sure, sure. Um, yeah, in that case, it's probably like putting like a hand on your elbow and being like:

Ali (as Marn): Hey, are you okay? Do you want to take a minute?

Ali: Like, maybe like going into one of these weird rooms that's like maybe less people than the hallway full of perfume jerks.

Jack: Hmm.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Ali: [laughs] Just to like, find a quiet place to be like:

Ali (as Marn): Hey, do you want some water or something? We're gonna get through this.

Dre (as Chine): I don't...she's here. I don't know how, but she's here.

Dre: Is it she, Austin?

Austin: Yep.

Dre: Okay.

Austin: Yep, yep. Mabriella, yeah. Um, give me a...I believe that this is a Mind— or, sorry, a Mend Haven, Marn.

Ali: Sure. Mend Haven.

Austin: A situation like this, I would say anyone who has either of those and wants to help can help.

Jack: I have neither of them.

Austin: Ah, I see. [Ali laughs]

Jack: I'll stand outside the door to this room. [Dre laughs]

Austin: Yeah, okay. Hey, actually, I think that that...I think that...I like that enough to be a thing that could help, you know? A vibe of like, I'm gonna help ensure that you have...

Jack: My friend's in there. They're having a bad time.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Jack: Don't come in. [Ali laughs softly]

Austin: In that way, you're doing a...like a Compel, effectively, right?

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: Which is also part of it in talking through the situation. I think Compel could work here too.

Ali: Okay, cool. And then just as a heads up, because I took that fortunate Fallout a bit ago, I'm rolling with the mastery for the remainder for the situation.

Austin: For the remainder of the Delve, yeah. Yeah, totally.

Jack: Oh, sick.

Ali: Okay.

Dre: Nice.

Austin: Es, are you also helping?

Janine: I can't. I don't have either of those, so.

Austin: You don't— oh, you have Compel, don't you?

Janine: Oh, I thought it was Mend or...

Austin: Yeah, and then I said, oh, Compel would work here too.

Janine: Right. Um...I mean, yeah, I don't see a reason not to.

Austin: How is Es helping out?

Janine: Honestly, the stand outside the door thing kinda...I feel like after I'm the one who spooked everyone out, that...

Austin: Sure.

Janine: It feels a little weird to be like, “And also I'll come in and help, and if something goes bad, then it'll happen again, and risk triggering the thing, and...”

Austin: Uh huh. Fair enough. Fair enough.

Janine: Maybe no.

Ali: So does that count as another help?

Austin: I think if you're just doing the same thing Pickman's doing, i think that that's not probably an extra die, you know?

Janine: Oh. Well.

Ali: Okay. I'll just roll.

Austin: You gotta do it to do it. That's the old rule, you know? [Ali laughs]

Janine: Yeah.

Ali: I'll just roll it.

Austin: Alright. Alright, success.

Ali: That's a success.

Austin: Take no Stress. Yes.

Jack: [relieved] Ah.

Austin: Um, so yeah. Chine, what's it look like as you find, like, control? Not just control, but like a feeling of, you know, calm again?

Dre: Oof. Um...man, I don't know. Um...

Ali (as Marn): Who is she?

Dre: Yeah, I think actually what it looks like is it's Chine just talking to Marn about everything they've been through in here.

Austin: Mmm.

Dre: Like, from the moment where they knew they were in trouble and they went—

Austin: Right.

Dre: —to try to like attack the interrogator, and they got caught, to, you know, being chained up in a cage, to trying to fight and having like their brain poked at and...

Austin: Mm-hmm. Yeah, totally. And just venting all of that out at this moment helps quite a bit.

Dre: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

Austin: And then, yeah, you're able to, at that point, come back out and move into the next, the way out. You're able to continue to track that sense. Which, by the way, Es, lines up. You're continuing to head down towards that sense of what's in front of you as well. Or what the thing that's been calling out to you, the kind of heritrix vibes, still going in the correct direction. You end up finding a little hallway that goes to another stairwell, and it emerges out on, uh...you hear the sound of this party giving way to quiet again. And again, down here everything is separated and weird and the stonework is further and further apart. And then you come to a door that feels...not just the door, but the archway to the door, the frame, like everything feels very well put together. And you're pretty sure you're safe to open the door. You peek inside, and it seems like it's a library. Y'all head on in?

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: Alright.

Jack: I think so.

[song begins: “**The Scale Model**”]

Austin: So, the room is a kind of humble library. We're not talking about the massive underground tower that the other side of the game saw while they were elsewhere in Sapodilla. Here we're talking about, you know, a single room with maybe a half dozen independent shelves, plus the walls as shelves, across the entire room. You get the sense that there are people in here, but that is a secondary concern. Because as you come into this room, the thing that grabs your attention the most is what is at the center of it. It's like someone's poured sand out in the middle of this kind of square recess in the room. And rising out of that sand is a kind of stark white marble structure, like a tree trunk or a tall geological formation. And at the top of that—this kind of long, thick pillar—it kind of sprouts out into a six petal rosette shape. It's sort of like a...imagine like a flower with six petals and then some connections...kind of a circle around it all, and then kind of almost like an umbrella-like connection between the edges of each petal. And that is all made of white marble. It's like a flat shape like that. And then on those petals across that rosette is a model—all in marble, all carved out of marble—of a vast and beautiful city. There are broad boulevards and striking arch work. There's this very special blend of larger

towering structures and these kind of tightly interworked and interwoven little low neighborhoods. There is a balance and a beauty here that you have never seen expressed before. Whether or not you have heard it uttered the way that Pickman has or if you've seen it written the way Marn just did, upon seeing this model, you know what you are looking at: Zevunzolia. Everyone take a D12 refresh upon seeing this, or remove any Fallout that you want. [Ali laughs]

Dre: Ooh!

Austin: The world shifts around you upon witnessing this paradise.

[song ends]

Jack: A D12 refresh of any stat?

Austin: You roll it, and then you put...you roll a D12, and then you put it in wherever you want. Across however many you want.

Ali: [quiet exclamation]

Austin: Or you get rid of a Major Fallout. Unbelievable, Marn.

Jack: Oh my god!

Ali: Getting rid of my two Stress with my twelve. [laughs softly]

Austin: With your twelve. Uh huh. You didn't want to get rid of In Trouble?

Ali: I...no.

Austin: You like it. It's good. It's interesting. [Ali laughs] Alright.

Dre: Um, I'm gonna get rid of Reconfigured Physiology.

Austin: Okay. So that like literally happens. You see this place and your body reacts to it. That's the one that prevents you from healing Blood Fallout, right?

Dre: Yeah, mm-hmm.

Austin: Yeah, get rid of that. That's gone. Pickman?

Jack: Hmm,

Austin: Pickman, I know you have like mostly Fortune Fallout, right?

Jack: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Which is interesting, because it's like, oh, this thing is so beautiful that China's organs reconfigured themselves. That's weird. It's more— is it more or less weird that a hitman would be called off? [Austin and Ali chuckle]

Jack: Yeah. I mean, part of me is like...I want to see the way we make that work.

Austin: Uh huh. I know how.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: Which is that...and we can even leave that character in in a way that could be very fun. I can pitch that one if you want me to pitch you that one.

Jack: Yeah, no. I mean, let's do it. Let's get rid of my Major Fortune Fallout, Hunted: The Shape Knights have found your heresy; a hunter has been dispatched. Except I saw an architect's model. [Ali laughs]

Austin: Yeah. And you know who else did? The hunter.

Ali: Oh.

Austin: And they are...these desires get confused in their minds. Or, you know, in their mind. I don't know who this character is yet. I don't know if you have a good name for the sort of person that the Shape Knights send after someone to kill them.

Jack: Uh...

Austin: But you think about it. Wherever they are, in this moment, you and they see the same thing. And it's this city that is...has been described as the telos of telos, the end of all ends, the thing that drags everything towards it. And so compelled are they by it, that it becomes the thing they are hunting. But it's still twisted up with you in some way, where it's about finding you, and then making you help them get to this.

Jack: Hmm.

Austin: Like, alright, I gotta get to Pickman. Pickman's gonna help me get to Zevunzolia.

Jack: Interesting. Okay. And I'm just gonna...I'm just gonna remove that.

Austin: Uh, leave it there for now, but like, make it not a Fallout. You know what I mean? Just make a note somewhere on your sheet, so I don't forget it.

Jack: The Shape Knights have found your heresy. A hunter has been dispatched. *But...*

Austin: [chuckles] Yes. Thank you. [Jack laughs] So when I prep for next session, I remember this.

Jack: Possessed by the wonder of Zevunzolia...

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Jack: They instead seek Pickman, believing they can help them reach it.

Austin: There you go. Uh. So, also in this place—which is strangely lit, and feels just very weird—are some people, and they're just sitting at desks reading books. They are...each of them is a mortal person who has been...who has, let's say, interfaced or melded with the sort of wicker puppets that we saw attack Chine a few episodes ago. This is not a bloody or gory thing. It's like they have wicker piercings all over their body or something like that. It's as if the like, the wood moves through them. And they're, they seem perfectly comfortable. And they're flipping through pages of books. There's about three of them here. I'd say there are three of them. Not about, there are three people here. Because I have their names, and it's Appletun, Getta, and Bleaser. And so. They're just doing some research. They don't seem to react to you. You don't know if they would have reacted to you if Chine had not signaled the...that they were on the hunt and maybe they, you know, who knows how they would have reacted under different circumstances. [Ali laughs softly] But right now, they seem to be like ignoring you. So yeah, that's the situation. You're in a library, there's a big model city, there's sand all over part of the ground, and there are some people doing some research in here. Lots of books.

Ali: Hell yeah.

Austin: And, you know, doorways onward. But you're in a library, so.

Jack: Um...I think I'm gonna approach one of these reading wicker people.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Jack: And just—

Austin: Are you approaching the...

Dre (as Chine): Chine, be careful. Er, Pickman, be careful. [Austin and Janine laugh]

Austin: "Chine, be careful," is just what goes on in Chine's head constantly. [Ali laughs]

Dre: Uh huh.

Jack: Chine. I'm you.

Austin: They're always telling themselves...

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: Are you approaching Bleaser the devil, Appletun the caprak, or Getta the ojantani?

Ali: Ooh.

Jack: I'll approach Appletun in the caprak, 'cause I'm a caprak.

Austin: Okay. You're a caprak, yeah, mm-hmm.

Jack: Have we got some kind of like cool wicker horns situation going on here?

Austin: Yeah, definitely. Absolutely. Love it.

Jack: Um. Yeah, I think I'm gonna like make a sort of uncomfortable cough, like you're trying to attract someone's attention in a library.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Jack: So like a clearing the throat noise.

Austin: I think he slowly looks up at you, yeah.

Jack (as Pickman): Hello.

Austin (As Appletun): What is it?

Jack (as Pickman): Now, I'm sorry to interrupt you.

Austin (As Appletun): Very busy.

Jack (as Pickman): What is that?

Jack: Points at the model of Zevunzolia.

Austin: Looks at you and is like:

Austin (As Appletun): You know what that is.

Austin: Looks back to the book.

Jack (as Pickman): Who made it?

Austin (As Appletun): It was made.

Austin: Looks back to the book.

Jack (as Pickman): Everything is made by somebody.

Austin (As Appletun): Mmm.

Jack (as Pickman): What, and that's it?

Austin: Is not responding. Uh huh.

Jack (as Pickman): It was made? Do you know who made it?

Austin (As Appletun): No.

Jack (as Pickman): Oh, fat lot of use you are. [Austin and Ali laugh]

Austin: Does not seem particularly interested in like converting you.

Jack: No. Okay, yeah. I mean, I was prepared to roll Compel there, Austin, but it turns out that this person's just useless.

Austin: You can do a Compel, but this person's kind of a...oh, I mean, you know, you can choose to roll Compel.

Jack: [sighs] Can I see what they're reading, just over their shoulder?

Austin: Yes, and it makes very little sense to you. It's in a...uh, that's not true. You recognize words, but it feels like dialect...it feels like written dialect from a different part of the world, is what your...

Jack: Oh, yeah.

Austin: That's what your instinct is when you see it.

Jack: Like reading Esperanto or something, [Austin sighs thoughtfully] where you're like, I can get the feeling of this as a English speaker, or...

Austin: It's closer than that, because it is...it would be like still reading like English. I'm trying to figure...give me a—

Jack: Middle English, maybe.

Austin: It's closer to something like that. It's closer to something *like* that, without giving it away. Give me a...if you want to give me like a Discern roll here, or a Compel roll to be like, "What the fuck is this?"

Jack: It would be more Pickman to say, "What are you reading?"

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah.

Jack: So yeah, I will do a Compel.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Jack: This has rankled Pickman. This fucker.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Uh, Compel Haven?

Austin: We are in Haven Desolate, yeah.

Jack: I'll do Compel Desolate, then.

Austin: Uh, this is like a weird...this is maybe the most...this whole final little area is going to be, uh...actually, I would say this is Desolate Occult is actually right. I'm actually looking at my notes to see where we are. And where we are is, uh, we are in...we've moved past the Marquis's Domain, and we have moved on to...I guess I shouldn't say the whole thing here until we get the full thing of what it is, but it is tier three down here.

Ali: Oh.

Austin: And it is Desolate and Occult for the rest of this.

Dre: Oh, we're tier three now, huh?

Austin: We are tier three now.

Jack: Hey.

Ali: Wow.

Austin: Yeah. Weird shit is happening here.

Jack: The weirdos in the party get excited.

Austin: Like a model you look at that heals you somehow. [Ali laughs] That's the sort of place we are.

Ali: (???)

Austin: So yeah. What do you— what's your— Compel Desolate is what you're rolling?

[1:20:01]

Jack: Yeah, I'm gonna roll Compel Desolate.

Austin: Sounds good.

Jack: Is this...what difficulty is this?

Austin: Standard. No special things here You're just in a nice library trying to talk to someone who doesn't want to be talked— spoken to. Talked at, perhaps.

Jack: [chuckles] I mean, I will just ask for the sake of it: does anybody want to help here? But I think that... [Austin laughs softly] I think Pickman has been getting a vibe from these people that they do not necessarily support her choice of action here. [brief pause] I'll roll away. [Ali laughs]

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Ali: Wait, who was "these people" in that sentence?

Austin: Doesn't matter, 'cause Pickman rolled a ten.

Ali: Oh. See, there you go.

Austin: What's the thing that changes here? Do you think it's like that you've asked him about a specific thing?

Jack: Or is it that I've made it clear that I'm not, you know, going away without an answer? [Dre laughs]

Austin: That's fun. Yeah. That's kind of good.

Jack: I think Pickman, you know, just like pulls out a chair on the other side of the, opposite the table.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Jack: And sits down and says:

Jack (as Pickman): Yeah, it was made. Tell me about it. What are you reading? [Austin laughs softly]

Jack: And just like puts both her elbows on the table and leans this big goat head forward to look at the caprak on the other side of the table.

Austin: And, yeah. [sighs] And I think at this point goes like:

Austin (As Appletun): Mm. [hesitates] It's...from another...how much do you know?

Jack (as Pickman): Zevunzolia is a city some people are trying to make.

Austin (As Appletun): [chuckles] Oh. Yes, then this is a book from Zevunzolia, huh? Detective story.

Jack (as Pickman): What's so funny?

Austin (As Appletun): You don't know much. [chuckles]

Ali: Damn. We stay getting clowned in here. [laughs softly]

Austin (As Appletun): You come close. Look.

Austin: And points at the kind of grammar and structure of the sentences and some of the words and says:

Austin (As Appletun): Do you recognize these?

Jack (as Pickman): Those words? I can sort of read it.

Austin: [chuckles] Yes. Imagine another world where 300 years have passed, and the language has changed. These are the words of that world.

Jack (as Pickman): This is a book from the future?

Austin (As Appletun): No. It's a book from a different present. [chuckles]

Jack (as Pickman): Shut the fuck up. What do you think you're doing?

Austin (As Appletun): Reading.

Jack (as Pickman): Yeah. Give me the book.

Austin (As Appletun): [chuckles] Here.

Austin: And hands it to you. [Jack sighs] It's called something, you know, like, you know, *The Ivory Staircase* or like, you know, *The Broken Vase*. It's like the equivalent of like a Raymond Chandler book.

Jack (as Pickman): You can read it?

Austin (As Appletun): I can read many things.

Jack (as Pickman): Can you read this book?

Austin (As Appletun): Yes.

Jack (as Pickman): What's it about?

Austin (As Appletun): Ah...

Jack (as Pickman): You've told me it's from the future.

Austin (As Appletun): [laughing] It is not from the future! It's from today. A different today, star-studded.

Jack (as Pickman): What's it about?

Austin (As Appletun): Oh...you know Kay'Va?

Jack (as Pickman): Yes.

Austin (As Appletun): In...under a different sun, Kay'Va stretches much further. And there, there is a...one of them, you know, drakkan. Takes on tasks for money, little things. Gets in over her head. You know, nose bloody, corruption. Strange story, uh, very rarely a happy ending, but compelling.

Jack (as Pickman): What the fuck is wrong with you? Talk to me plainly.

Austin (As Appletun): [sighs] It's a mystery, isn't it? But the mystery isn't who or how, it's... [sighs] It's how will and how far.

Jack (as Pickman): Is it illustrated?

Austin (As Appletun): Look.

Austin: No.

Jack (as Pickman): Ah, f— Great.

Austin (As Appletun): You keep it. We have more.

Jack: [laughs] This is the most confusing critical success. [Ali laughs]

Austin: Uh huh! Yeah, I guess like, you could ask me a question, and, you know, I'll keep answering questions.

Jack: [laughing] I've *been* asking you a question! Okay, right, so.

Austin: I have to be honest about who this person is, you know?

Jack: No, yeah. As Ali pointed out in the chat, [Ali, Austin, and Jack laugh] this is a top tier *Dark Souls* NPC. [Dre laughs] We got the evil laughter.

Austin: Uh huh.

Jack: We got the abject refusal to answer any direct question. [Ali and Jack laugh] Okay, hold on. So, this is a book from a different present, which Pickman thinks is the future.

Austin: Uh huh.

Jack: It is a detective story.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Although that could be a metaphor. I don't know if it's fiction or—

Austin: No, no, no. It's...this is like a Raymond Chandler, Dashiell Hammett. This is like a hard boiled detective story.

Jack: Okay, about...in this world Kay'Va is bigger and stretches further. And there is a Kay'Van agent who has gone and got their nose bloodied. They've gotten into some trouble somewhere.

Austin (As Appletun): They always do. [chuckles] [Ali laughs]

Jack (as Pickman): What is this agents name?

Austin (As Appletun): Marrisa.

Jack: Uh, did I know the name of the dead Kay'Van agent from...?

Austin: This is not that person at all.

Jack: Okay.

Austin: No. I don't remember if you do or not, but...unless I've stumbled into saying the same name twice, which I guess is possible. It is not, no.

Jack (as Pickman): This book. Are you in it?

Austin (As Appletun): [chuckles] No.

Jack (as Pickman): Am I in it?

Austin (As Appletun): Perhaps. No. It's fiction. Do you know fiction?

Jack (as Pickman): Y— yeah.

Austin (As Appletun): It's fiction. But you can learn things from fiction.

Jack (as Pickman): [exasperated] Yeah, yeah, yeah. [Ali and Jack laugh softly]

Jack: What can I get here that's a crit? The book is presumably valuable. Uh...oh! Okay.

Jack (as Pickman): Tell me about how...Zevunzolia in this book, right? The place.

Austin (As Appletun): No.

Jack (as Pickman): The book has nothing to do with Zevunzolia?

Austin (As Appletun): Well, it's through Zevunzolia, the visitor, that we got these books.

Jack (as Pickman): Someone has come from Zevunzolia and given you these books.

Austin (As Appletun): The visitor goes many places.

Jack (as Pickman): But someone has come from this city.

Jack: Points at the middle of the room, like jabbing finger.

Jack (as Pickman): They came from there, and they gave you this.

Austin (As Appletun): Do you come from the living room to the bedroom?

Jack (as Pickman): Where is the visitor?

Austin (As Appletun): Oh, if we knew.

Jack (as Pickman): When will the visitor be back?

Austin (As Appletun): [laughs softly] You are asking questions we wish to know. Do you know?

Jack (as Pickman): By what signs will I recognize the visitor?

Austin (As Appletun): Uh, if you see the visitor, you will know and be blessed. We seek to get to the visitor or make the visitor irrelevant. Zevunzolia will be achieved. We'll build our branch, and then there will be more books.

Austin: Big toothy grin, except the teeth are all wicker.

Jack (as Pickman): Why are you all like this? Why are you all made of wicker?

Dre (as Chine): Because they're puppets.

Jack (as Pickman): Are you a puppet?

Austin: And he starts laughing, and then the other two start laughing.

Austin (As Appletun): Only a little.

Jack: Looks at Chine for like, [laughs softly] I don't know. I think I've done everything I can here.

Dre (as Chine): [sighs] Should burn them.

Ali: [softly] Damn. [laughs]

Jack: Uh, yeah, Pickman just like looks taken aback. [laughs] Looks back at this caprak. [Austin laughs]

Janine: I don't...*should* we burn them?

Austin: The books or the people?

Ali: Oh, I need one of those books first, before you burn all of them.

Austin: Uh huh. Oh, do you want to Discern and see if you can find an interesting book? [Ali laughs]

Jack: I can give— no, I will willingly give Marn this fucked up book, this useless book. It doesn't have any illustrations in it.

Austin: I suspect that Marn is hoping for a useful text.

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Or—

Ali: A of source knowledge.

Austin: A source of knowledge. [Ali laughs]

Jack: This caprak guy said that fiction—

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: You can learn from fiction. [Jack and Dre laugh]

Austin: That's true.

Jack: Who's— what's this fucker's name?

Austin: Uh, what...Appletun.

Jack: We met an Appletun before? The name is familiar.

Austin: I don't know. Maybe. Genuinely, I couldn't tell you. There's only so many names, which is the problem.

Jack: Alright, fine. I'll mark down this, and I'll, you know, introduce my friend Marn to this weirdo, [Ali and Jack laugh] unless you wanted to go at it another way.

Ali: No, I think I'm wandering. It's a library.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Oh, I guess before I go, I'll say:

Jack (as Pickman): All these books. Are they from the visitor?

Austin (As Appletun): Yes. Small trades.

Jack (as Pickman): How many of them can I take?

Austin (As Appletun): How many can you carry? How far will you go? [Ali laughs softly]

Jack (as Pickman): Did you say small trades?

Austin (As Appletun): Mm. Did I?

Jack: [brief pause] Sorry, Marn. I have one further question. [Ali laughs softly]

Jack (as Pickman): What do you mean “small trades”? And speak plainly.

Austin (As Appletun): The visitor wants things.

Jack (as Pickman): Yeah, like what?

Austin (As Appletun): Books.

[1:30:00]

Austin: Like, deathly still face looking at you, like you've asked like a very stupid question. [Ali laughs softly]

Jack (as Pickman): Books and...?

Austin (As Appletun): It's a trade.

Jack (as Pickman): Books for books?

Austin (As Appletun): Books for books.

Jack (as Pickman): You're just down here swapping books?

Austin (As Appletun): Books for books.

Jack (as Pickman): With someone from the future?

Austin (As Appletun): [chuckles] It's a library.

Jack: Alright, Marn. [laughs] I'm gonna take Zevunzolia fiction. Fiction from Zevunzolia.

Austin: Uh, it is...let's call it *The Ivory Staircase*. Is that what I said it was before?

Jack: Yeah, I think you gave it two titles. You said like *The Ivory Staircase* or something, but I don't know.

Austin: I forget what the other one is, so. Uh, so now let's say it's, you know, it's the one I just said, and it's, uh, but it also says underneath whatever the equivalent of like, a Marrison Lefebvre, you know, story, or something like that.

Jack: Oh, the name of the Kay'Van spy?

Austin: Of the detective, yeah, mm-hmm.

Jack: And how big is this book?

Austin: It's a novel. It's, you know, it's 228 pages. [Ali laughs softly] Maybe. 192.

Jack: Can I carry three?

Austin: Sure.

Jack: What's the dice value of these?

Austin: Dep— uh, they're niche is what I would say. So they're like D12 niche. Good luck finding someone who wants to buy this book from another world.

Ali: Bunch of folks like that, I bet. [laughs]

Austin: There are.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah, totally.

Jack: Want to go and see that charlatan that you got ripped off? [Ali and Austin laugh]

Ali: He doesn't deserve it.

Jack: Alright, okay, I'm done with this, this guy. [laughs]

Dre (as Chine): Pickman.

Austin: Anyone else? Yep, go ahead.

Dre (as Chine): What is...who is the visitor, Pickman? [Austin laughs softly]

Jack (as Pickman): You're asking me?

Dre (as Chine): You were talking with that person about the visitor, so I assumed maybe you knew.

Jack (as Pickman): I got nothing at all from that. I've never heard "the visitor" before in my life.

Dre (as Chine): [sighs] Okay.

Jack (as Pickman): Here's what I understand of Zevunzolia. [sighs] Back at Bell Metal Station, a little worm called Calen was trying to make, uh, a train under his command. He believed that this was a necessary step in the construction or the, uh, the bringing about of a city or a world called Zevunzolia, which he considered to be just tremendous. That guy—

Jack: Pointing at Appletun.

Jack (as Pickman): —says that the visitor comes from Zevunzolia and gives them these hardbacks. That's all I can tell you.

Dre (as Chine): [sighs] I hate this place.

Jack: That's right, Austin? There's not something I'm missing?

Austin: Uh, I would be cautious of saying "from Zevunzolia."

Jack: Comes from...what, the visitor—

Austin: Maybe comes through Zevunzolia, maybe was at Zevunzolia.

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Austin: But not necessarily from Zevunzolia.

Jack: I mean, forgive me. [Ali laughs] I was speaking to the most oblique person. [laughs]

Austin: I get it, but that was...that was part of the...that's part of what they were getting at a little bit.

Jack: There's something about Zevunzolia as well.

Austin: What he was getting at.

Jack: This might be in an episode description? I want to make sure Pickman hasn't heard it.

Austin: Mmm. Mm-hmm.

Jack: Where like, isn't there a sort of basilisk thing going on with Zevunzolia?

Austin: Yes. Yes.

Jack: Where like, it's...hold on. Let me see if I can get this straight in my head. It will reward you for building it, once it has been built. And so it is—

Austin: That's what some people believe.

Jack: Yeah. It is in your interest to strive towards the creation of Zevunzolia, because you are...you are constructing something great for you from it, right?

Austin: Well, and there is also the basilisk other half of it, right? Which is the like—

Jack: [laughs] It will—

Austin: If you then *don't* make it...

Jack: It knows that you haven't made it, and it will punish you for it.

Austin: Perhaps. There's the chance that it will, and so why take the chance? But also—

Jack: Sort of a Pascal's wager type vibes.

Austin: Right. But also you looked at a model of it, and it healed you and change the world. So like, that also is part of the sway it has.

Jack: And this model was made, and that's all I got.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Mm-hmm. Fair enough.

Austin: Fair enough. Uh, you looking for a book here?

Ali: Yeah, I feel like I'm walking up and down the shelves.

Austin: Give me a Discern. Yeah, for sure.

Ali: Sure. Discern...

Austin: Discern, and then what did I say? Desolate Occult?

Ali: Oh, I have neither of those. Great.

Austin: Oh boy. [Ali laughs] Oh boy. Well, you've been getting these tens!

Jack: I could help, Marn.

Austin: You to ask what you're...yeah, what's the book hunt for? What are people looking for? What type of book you looking for? Marn?

Ali: I don't even know what I would narrow down here, 'cause I feel like...maybe this is actually something Marn would do after, 'cause I think the Discern that I wanted to do...

Austin: Mmm.

Ali: And stop me if this is a boring way of doing this. But I kind of wanted to like study the model of the city and look over Hollowfield's notes again—

Jack: Huh.

Ali: And see if like things get re-contextualized.

Austin: Sure, because you know what Zevunzolia is.

Ali: Right, yeah.

Austin: Sure. Go for it. That's...that's probably still Occult, I would think. Um...

Ali: Okay, yeah.

Austin: I'm trying to think if there's anything else that would be similar, but no, I don't think that there— ah, mmm, no. I think that's what we've kind of set as being the thing. So, Discern Occult, probably.

Ali: Okay.

Austin: This place (??? 1:35:43)

Ali: I would accept your help here, but it seems kind of like a solo action, and you've been talking to this dude, so.

Austin: Yeah, I would let like Es or Chine help, because this would be happening while that other conversation was maybe going on.

Jack: Speaking to the helpful library attendant.

Ali: Yeah. [laughs]

Austin: Yeah.

Dre: I...again, in fiction, Chine does not want to help. Chine hates this room and wants to leave.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Yep. Fair.

Janine: I'll help. I mean, I think...I think Es is like probably weirdly comfortable in here.

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: Just because, I mean, you know, the Cursed Occult domain. I specifically set out to make it so she was just like cool with weird books. [Ali laughs] Like, I think I specifically cited like—

Austin: This is that spot. Yeah.

Janine: Sometimes you go, sometimes you just float through a wall and find some weird books, and you're just... [Austin laughs] It's weird to her that some knowledge would be off limits and some would not.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Janine: Would, you know...

Austin: Totally.

Ali: Okay, cool. That's an eight.

Austin: Alright, eight. No Stress. So yeah, so what are you...you're trying to figure out what...make sense of these notes a little bit.

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Austin: And I think maybe you're able to get from...it's still sketchy, right? Because you're looking at notes that are not like a 101 on what Zevunzolia is necessarily, right?

Ali: Mmm.

Austin: But now what you should do is rename what you wrote. What did you write down before for those notes?

Ali: I wrote "Hollowfield's project notes."

Austin: Write "Notes On a Paradise Medicine."

Ali: [laughs softly] Great.

Jack: Hmm.

Austin: And check off your things, your Beats.

Ali: Oh, sure.

Austin: What Hollowfield is writing about and part of what's so confusing— and there's still stuff here you don't understand. You don't know what an antecedent is in the way that Hollowfield was using it. But the gist of it is that...what you can make out is there are other worlds. Those other worlds are all in a race to build Zevunzolia. Something happened to those places—no one's really a hundred percent sure what—to introduce the idea of Zevunzolia. But also, and this is one of those things that maybe seeing the word antecedent again and again, seeing the way that he talks about the Panic. The moment that things got bad in Sangfielle, these other worlds, things got bad in the other worlds too. That's the theory, anyway. And Zevunzolia maybe arrives from that Panic or from that chaos, the idea of it. No one's really sure, because no one...Hollowfield certainly isn't sure. But part of the— one of the first things that Zevunzolia and the quote unquote "visitor" have made clear is: if the last 300 years have been different in these other worlds, then there have been advancements in some of those other worlds, differences in technology, differences in culture, differences in magic, where there might be some— there might be stuff out there that is powerful in a way here that it might not even be where it's from. You know, there's a sort of like...he doesn't use this analogy, but like kryptonite is a thing that hurts Superman here on Earth, but not on Krypton, the planet he is from, you know?

Ali: Mmm. [laughs]

Austin: That is sort of like the situ— I mean, also I think on Krypton they don't have the powers, because the sun is different or something. Anyway. But you know what I'm saying, right? That there's a sort of like, one man's trash is another man's treasure quality to this.

Ali: Oh, sure.

Austin: One world's rock is another world's philosopher's stone, you know? And in this case specifically, what we're looking at is like, various theories on how to...how to make something that can cure death and anything that might lead to death. The paradise cure, the perfect medicine.

[1:40:05]

Ali: Mmm.

Austin: And this is where he starts working on the null stuff, because he's like, if I can make something that can erase anything, then I can start working from that towards something that can erase specific things. It's—

Ali: Oh, sure.

Austin: You see? Right? Uh huh.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Now... [Ali laughs] He's kind of, um, what's the...he's kind of an authoritarian fascist super scientist.

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Austin: So maybe not a good person. [Dre laughs]

Ali: You don't say?

Austin: But these notes would allow you to maybe start figuring out how to work similar paths and see what his, you know, what's going on with that black goo and those crystals and what do they come from, and what's their...there's definitely mention of...he talks a lot about the medium in the way that you've heard Chine talk about the Course. So that's kind of the gist of those notes. But the other thing is just like looking at this place, there is the sense of...you...there are times when it feels like the model of the city is the city itself or is alive somehow, where like, if you look close enough, can you almost see people walking down the boulevard? Can you almost see windows opening and closing? You can almost see, you know, laundry being hung out to dry. There's a real gravity to this place that draws you towards it and that makes you feel at ease. Take— both of you can take mastery on your next roll.

Ali: Cool. How do I take double mastery? [laughs softly]

Austin: Oh, do you have...do you still have that other thing? Uh, I think—

Ali: Are we still in the Delve or are we out of it now?

Austin: I think at this point we are out of the Delve.

Ali: Okay.

Austin: We are in the...we are in the final little bit here.

Ali: Okay, sure.

Austin: Based on those previous rolls. This is certainly its own situation.

Ali: Okay. I'll uncheck it after my next roll, then. [laughs]

Austin: Sounds good. Yeah.

Jack: I have a quick question about the notes.

Austin: Yes.

Jack: How is the...in what way does the paradise cure relate to the idea you described of like something in another world having a different property than it does in this world?

Austin: Maybe part of what that paradise cure is is something either developed in that other place—

Jack: Okay.

Austin: Or there is some sort of material that is not available here but might be available in another world in this race to Zevunzolia.

Jack: Right.

Austin: And if Zevunzolia is sort of a middle ground, it could be a place where that sort of material is obtained for this world.

Jack: Okay, I see.

Austin: Also, all of these people could be wrong about all of this.

Ali: [laughs] You don't say.

Jack: Yeah, this is all just a bunch of academics like trying to figure it out, right?

Austin: Right, right. You're at like the headquarters of a weird secret society of occultists, right? Occultists and super cops, right? So like, occultists, it turned out, were wrong about a lot of things. But also, he did make a thing that blew up bad and that did erase one of the domains on China's sheet. [Jack laughs] So like, there's something here, but whether it's the cosmology that they are talking about, who could say? Anything else that y'all are gonna do here in this library?

Ali: Um, just going forward from that, 'cause the context from that...can I try to find like a...like a medical journal or something?

Austin: Totally.

Ali: Cross referencing some of those like words that I saw or...

Austin: Yep, give me a, um...

Ali: Another Discern.

Austin: Give me, again, a Discern. Discern Occult. Yeah.

Ali: Do you also want to pick up the risk here, Es, or are you gonna let me wander off on my own? [Ali and Jack laugh]

Janine: Um, I mean, I can...I'm still fine to help.

Ali: Okay, cool.

Austin: Love to wander the stacks.

Ali: Yeah, just a fun library visit.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Ali: I got that success at a cost. [laughs]

Austin: Oh, that's success at a cost. That's fine.

Ali: [laughing] Sorry.

Austin: Uh, that's to Fortune. Three to Marn, two to Es, as you wander off into this library. It's not a huge library, so it shouldn't be that big of a deal. Hopefully. Give me your Fallout tests. Minor Fallout from Marn.

Ali: Hell yeah.

Austin: No Fallout from Es. So...

Ali: Oh, once per situation. I'm keeping this...

Austin: You're keeping what?

Ali: I'm keeping this mastery.

Austin: Oh yeah? Oh, wait, wait, wait. [Ali laughs] Did you roll that with— wait, did you roll that with mastery?

Ali: I rolled that with mastery, because you said I got it for the next roll, and...

Austin: For the next roll. Right.

Ali: Because I'm about to take Fortune Fallout...

Austin: You're then going to keep it on for—

Ali: Uh huh.

Austin: Right. Great. Good.

Ali: For the remainder of this new situation.

Austin: Uh huh. [Ali laughs] So you succeeded at a cost, right?

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Austin: And I think that this cost is the Fortune Fallout, Foreboding.

Ali: Oh, sure.

Austin: You hear...the door back to the Marquis's Hall and then also the door kind of on the eastern side of this library both open, and the sound from both places begins to like echo in. And it takes you a second to realize like, why did that happen? And the answer is like, the ground shook. The whole ground all around you began to shake a second ago. It's like a tremor

from something somewhere...not super close by, but not like, you know, maybe a mile away, there was like some sort of impact or something started happening. "Something is coming," says Forboding. [laughs softly] I'm showing the barrel of a gun here.

Ali: Uh huh. The Cleric Beast.

Austin: Yeah. [Ali laughs softly] I'll also say like, the party from the Marquis's Halls has continued, and there is the sound of like some... [sighs] God, what does it...what's it sound like? I guess sort of like a centrifuge like spinning around in the room to the east or the direction to the east. And then something kind of braying, the sort of sound of something braying.

Dre: I mean, east is where Chine wants to go.

Austin: It sure is. But yes, also briefly, Ali, you succeeded in that roll, right?

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Austin: You did succeed? Yeah. So then, take a, um...take like D6 untranslated medical journal, you know?

Ali: Okay. Take some time with that later.

Austin: Exactly. [Ali laughs] So, Chine, do you just rush at...Chine?

Dre: Hmm?

Austin: The direction of the braying is the direction that the thing you're missing is at.

Dre: Yep. Um, I don't know if I rush per se, but I start moving that way, and I say:

Dre (as Chine): We need to go.

Dre: Like, I'm not gonna leave without everyone else, because I already tried to fight this person one-on-one when I was in much better shape than I am now.

Austin: Mmm. Mm-hmm.

Dre: But I am also...I'm sick of us looking at library cards, and I'm ready to go. I need to go.

[Music plays: "Sangfielle"]