

Sangfielle 25: The Perpetual Oratorio of Davia Pledge 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.

Keith: I was wrong about how dangerous the library was gonna be.

Austin: Uh huh! [Sylvia laughs] Hey, Lyke, they just fucking popped off and are throwing bombs at your friends. What are you doing?

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

Austin: You also cannot help but feel it's gotten colder here somehow.

Keith: Alright, let's discern that. What's going on there?

Austin: [singing] Last Christmas. [hums melody]

Austin (as Lenore): They've known what sort of books we had for a long time, which makes me think that they came for something other than the books.

Keith (as Lyke): It's been a rough week, though.

Austin (as Lenore): Hey, why is Virtue asleep?

Keith (as Lyke): Virtue is dying.

Austin (as Lenore): Can you look away for a moment? I'm no Arbogast, but I can do a thing or two.

Sylvia: Thumbs up.

Keith: A thumbs up. Okay.

Austin: Okay.

Keith: I cover my eyes.

Austin: Lenore leans or like kneels down next to you and says:

Austin (as Lenore): Open wide.

Austin: And takes a small dagger and cuts his hand and lets some blood fall into your mouth.

Austin: Aterika’Kaal falls out onto the ground and begins to kind of creep away in front of everybody.

Keith (as Lyke): [bluffing] Uh, Tombo, get back in... [laughter] That's Tombo! I gotta just put Tombo back in my bag.

Sylvia: Virtue is like:

Sylvia (as Virtue): [confused but uninterested] Okay. Nice to meet you, Tombo.

Art: Oh my god.

Sylvia: She hasn't met Tombo yet.

Art: Oh my god!

Keith (as Lyke): Yeah, no, Tombo's fine. Don't worry, Duvall.

Art (as Duvall): [displeased] Fine.

Sylvia (as Virtue): So, what, he has like a plant pet or something? I don't get it.

Art (as Duvall): Uh...no. No.

Sylvia (as Virtue): Oh.

Art (as Duvall): It's really bad. It's really bad, but we don't really have time right now.

Sylvia: We're looking for this painting, right?

Austin: Yes. You assume it's still at Pledge House. And yes, that big concert is two nights from now. This painting supposedly can reshape you through the study of it. It is a curiosity that someone of such means decided to support this uprising that opened the gates to so many different types of people. Maybe there's something going on with House Esterházy that is not simply they were a bunch of rich humans. Where are you doing this? [Sylvia laughs]

Keith: I think this is in the room.

Austin: Just with everybody else. You're— well, what room? Because you didn't go back to Bucho's place. Y'all just find some place to like...you find like a flophouse to chill in? Like, what did you...

Keith: Oh, yeah, I guess that's fine. I kind of just imagined us back at Big Bucho's, because that place is clear.

Austin: Where the cops are watching?

Keith: Well...

Sylvia: Yeah, I don't wanna go do that.

Austin: It's not clear!

Keith: I don't know. [Austin laughs] I guess...oh, they know about us now.

Austin: Yes.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Okay, so that's...yeah. So that— yeah.

[music ends]

Austin: They specifically can place Virtue at Bucho's, literally, so.

Sylvia: Oops.

Austin: Wherever you are, whatever this...maybe Lenore put you up. Remember Lenore? He put you up.

Sylvia: Yeah, that could work.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Kind of a cramped little hotel room, but it's enough space to like lay down— not lay down, but like lie low for the next few hours until things are a little safer. Uh, Lyke's gone.

Keith: What—

Austin: Lyke's gone.

Art: Hmm?

Austin: Lyke disappeared. Lyke is gone. Lyke was saying some words, and then Lyke was gone. The door to the other place did not open up.

Art: Well, that's where I would have checked.

[recap ends]

Keith: Honestly, I would have taken the major fallout. [chuckles]

Austin: You didn't roll it. Glitch: [Keith sighs] You disappear, only reappearing after every other player has acted at least once.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: Lyke, you are overwhelmed by...you can't see anything, at least at first. You are overwhelmed by a wall of sound, a crescendo, a huge like blast of noise that takes you some amount of time between six seconds and six hours to untangle and begin to make sense of. It is...you start to pull out things. There are rich harmonies in there. There are these really precise string hits. But it's also overwhelming, because there's so many of those things that overlap on one another, that close in on one other, that open up into new melodies that don't counter or play against anything else. It's all just noise, until suddenly it starts to make some more sense. You hear the sound of, you know, resin mouthpieces. You hear the sound of a string being reset onto the neck of an instrument. You hear the sounds of the clicks and clanks of, you know, metallic buttons on brass instruments. There are strange reverb here. And as you start to make sense of the sound, you start to make sense of the space as well. And what was black once is now 30 blacks, 80 blacks, a billion different colors of the same one shade, overwhelmingly nothing. Here it is in front of you. The oratorio plays.

Keith: The what place?

Austin: The oratorio plays. An oratorios is just like a type of music. It is a...it is like a composition for an orchestra that tends to be like...it's sort of like an opera without the stage dressing and without like the characters, but it's still often about something. It's often still about—it still has a narrative. It's just there's no lyrics, you know? And so yeah, you're in this strange realm of some sort of musical—I mean, maybe the move still worked in some way, you know? But you certainly don't see anything to pray to, and this is not a place that you can...you failed that roll. You got a three on that roll. So, you know, you cannot reduce your stress here, unfortunately. But you're here for now. Let's go...what's up with Virtue and Duvall? [laughs]

Art (as Duvall): Um...well...I guess we should go stake out the place? You don't have anything that would help here, right? You can't...

Sylvia (as Virtue): What, make him reappear?

Art (as Duvall): Make people appear? Is that...I can't. If you can, we could try it.

Sylvia (as Virtue): I'm afraid not. Perhaps we could find a stage magician of some sort. They seem to be good at that sort of thing.

Austin: [chuckles] Oh, uh, that's not true.

Sylvia: Mmm?

Austin: Your vision swims as you start to perceive worlds other than your own layered on top of one another.

Sylvia: Oh, true!

Austin: The bad part, of course, is that any action you take that requires accurate judging of distances [chuckles] like jumping, shooting or running down a corridor becomes risky. But once per session you see something useful. Ask the GM what it is. As you're like...as Duvall is asking you this, this Hex Eye—

Keith: Oh.

Austin: This echo that you have is like layering over the— again, right now, you're able to see this kind of mishmash of all of these other kind of realms on top of Sapodilla.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Austin: The material Sapodilla. You see, at this moment—let's say it's 11 p.m.—to the east of you, closer to the sea, a sort of...you know, in my mind, it's like a pulsing dark fog that's like a heavy...pulsing with a heavy rhythm, just like a dark electronic rhythm. Like, do you ever play the video game Thumper?

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: It's like Thumper is playing.

Sylvia: Okay.

Austin: But it's...and it's just this black fog underground to the east. And it's like [deep, rhythmic] *bwum bwum bwum bababa bwum bwum bwum*.

Sylvia: Hmm.

Austin: And it's slowly, like it's a little imperceptible at first, because it's so far away. But it's like if all Sapodilla is bright color, right? And maybe even part of this is like you're seeing the Residuum, and even the Residuum is being overtaken by this thing. *Vroom boom boom bada oom boom boom*. And that fog is growing more and more and more. And you can see a little

line. You can see a little thread going from where Lyke was standing moments ago. Maybe it's not even a thread. Maybe it's a little vine. It's a little Aterika'Kaal-style vine going from your little hotel room or Lenore's little bedroom to this strange fog under some building to the east of here.

Sylvia: Okay. I...

Sylvia (as Virtue): We should try following that.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia (as Virtue): At least I'm gonna follow that. You can come if you want.

Sylvia: And then she just gets up and starts going. [chuckles]

Art: So, to clarify what just happened.

Austin: Yes.

Art: I said "Do you have anything that would help here?"

Austin: Yeah.

Art: And then Virtue paused for a second, stood up, said "I'm gonna follow this thing. You can come if you want," and then walked away?

Sylvia: Yeah. I see something.

Art: Without saying— you didn't say that.

Sylvia: I know. I didn't.

Art: [laughs] Okay.

Sylvia: But maybe... [Austin laughs] That's fine. You can figure it out. Listen.

Art: It's very strange.

Sylvia: I don't gotta worry about your shit. I'm trying to get to the bottom of this.

Art: When you see something other people can't see, I think you communicate about it. I just think that's the...

Sylvia: I don't know that you can't see it. How am I supposed to know that you can't see it?
[Austin laughs]

Art: [sighs] Okay.

Sylvia: You got all sorts of fucked up shit going on. [Austin laugh]

Keith: And she doesn't trust you, right? Still?

Austin: This is true.

Sylvia: Yeah, also that.

[0:10:00]

Austin: This is true. [Sylvia sighs] Anyway, can we sneak through this town, please? To try to find your way to Lyke?

Sylvia: Yeah, sure. I'll roll sneak. By the way, the next roll I make is dangerous 'cause of my ringing head.

Austin: Oh my god.

Art: I'm not going. [Sylvia and Keith laugh]

Austin: I can't believe the party's gonna be completely split up. It's sneak—

Keith: I'll be— never mind.

Austin: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: Is it sneak haven?

Austin: Sneak haven.

Sylvia: Okay, so I just got a sneak on this. That's—

Austin: Sure you're not gonna help on— oh I guess you don't have haven anyway.

Keith: I just want to...this is...okay. [Sylvia laughs]

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: I don't want to...if what we want to do is try and find me, that's great.

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: I just want to make sure that we all remember the terms.

Austin: [chuckles] Right, but Virtue doesn't know that. Where'd you go?

Sylvia: I don't know that, and also this is like leading to something—

Keith: Okay. Okay.

Sylvia: —that seems connected to weird shit happening.

Keith: Right. I just wanted to make sure that—

Austin: That we, the players...

Keith: That we all know the terms.

Sylvia: Of course.

Austin: Right. Which is do a thing, two people do a thing, and you're back. Yes.

Keith: Yeah,

Sylvia: The...I guess I should be clear that her motivation is less about like finding Lye and more about seeing what is going on with this weird magic stuff.

Austin: Yes.

Sylvia: If he's there, great. If not, whatever.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Thanks.

Sylvia: Okay, I'm gonna roll this and see how it goes.

Austin: What are you rolling? You're rolling...

Sylvia: Just sneak.

Austin: Sneak, but it's dangerous, which means I'm gonna take— this is a bad roll.

Sylvia: This is a terrible roll, but I have to—

Austin: Because it's dangerous. But you have to get rid of this dangerous, I guess.

Sylvia: It's gonna happen no matter what.

Austin: Right.

Sylvia: Like, I could roll endure plus religion to try and ignore my Hex Eye, but I don't want to do that right now.

Austin: Oh, that's not even why it's dangerous. It's also dangerous 'cause Ring— I guess Ringing Head—

Sylvia: No, yeah. No, it's 'cause of Ringing Head, no.

Austin: Right. Right, right, right.

Sylvia: I mean like I would roll...

Austin: Yes. I see what you're saying.

Sylvia: Beforehand and reduce it to a risky then.

Austin: Right. Right, right, right.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: Alright. So then, mark it dangerous. Give me your raw sneak. I don't think wart— uh, no. Like, if you were still in...this just doesn't have warren. Yeah, go ahead. Go ahead. Sneak.

Sylvia: [nervous] Okay, let's go!

Austin: This is gonna be a bad roll.

Sylvia: That's a one! Dangerous, zero effective dice.

Austin: Critical failure. Take double stress.

Sylvia: I didn't realize I had zero effective dice.

Austin: That's why I was worrying. That's why I was like, hey, it's dangerous. Dangerous is really bad.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: You drop the two highest.

Sylvia: [softly] Right.

Austin: But then you also rolled one, which is pretty remarkable, all said.

Sylvia: Well, you know, that's just...you know. I'm just special like that.

Austin: Double stress.

Sylvia: You gotta take double stress.

Austin: I'm just gonna multiply this by two. Take eight stress.

Sylvia: Sick. What type of stress?

Austin: I think that this is gonna be echo— mmm...

Sylvia: Fuck yeah. I have protection. I only take seven.

Austin: Oh, okay. Yeah, go ahead and take seven echo. [Art laughs] The...you get lost for about two hours as you approach, try to approach this thing. Oh, give me a fallout test, actually, before I start narrating.

Sylvia: This is minor fallout, what's up.

Austin: Yeah, take minor fallout.

Sylvia: Let's go.

Austin: Yeah, of course. Of course, of course, of course. The...yeah, okay, sure.

Sylvia: [laughs nervously] At least I clear that echo stress, right?

Austin: Yeah. You clear all all of the echo stress here. Take the minor echo stress Conduit: Your best efforts to keep the unreal energies of the heart at bay are futile. Your body is a crucible for strangeness. You cannot use echo protection.

Sylvia: Okay, cool.

Austin: As this fog kind of bellows into you. And I use bellows there, because it is, again, it is...there's volume here, not just...not just volume as in volumetric space, like gaseous, but it is...and bellows not just as in gas, but bellows as in sound. You get lost among the kind of garden walkways and little dainty cul-de-sacs of the Hibiscus District, as the fog begins to

spread through it that no one else seems to be able to see or hear. But eventually— and this fog gets into you. I think very specifically...where does your echo protection come from?

Sylvia: It comes from...I have the skill Tattered Soul.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: It just says gain the curse domain and plus one echo protection.

Austin: Okay, so there's not like...there's no flavor on that?

Sylvia: I might have forgotten to put it in. I can check really quick.

Austin: Yeah, that's fine. Do you have a feeling of where that would come from for you?

Sylvia: Um...

Austin: Like, is that a Darling thing? Is that a...

Sylvia: I think part of it is a Darling thing, yeah.

Austin: Okay.

Sylvia: I think that like it's got some connection to either her like wounds from when she died—

Austin: Mmm.

Sylvia: —or just the ghostly energy around her is like...helping.

Austin: Mm-hmm. You lose Darling in the fog at a certain point.

Sylvia: Oh.

Austin: Like, you see her walking a different way than you, which is not how that's supposed to happen, which is worrying for a number of reasons. But you find your way, eventually, to an intersection. To the left, there's a kind of a...there's a water tower and kind of a bunch of houses and a little pathway, a bunch of little...what you would recognize as like the homes and attached...or maybe this is what they're built as, but they're not being used as this anymore. These used to be sort of the additional buildings attached to a larger estate, right? Maybe one of these was a stables. One of these was kind of an office structure. One of these was for all of the attendant servants. To the right, there is a large sort of restaurant that is quiet. It's, you know, the middle of the day. You have your parasol. And ironically, the name of this place is The Parasol.

Sylvia: Wonderful.

Austin: It has a big wide kind of rimmed roof that gives it sort of the shape of an umbrella. But you could kind of say that the name The Parasol is a reach. You know, it's doing its best to make the best of a very ugly roof situation. There are only a few people inside of it, including an older woman who is sipping at some tea, a small waitstaff, a couple arguing in the corner. It's an open air— or it's not an open air, but the way the door— there are like a lot of doors, and they kind of slide around the entire kind of...the entire face of it that you're looking at, so the whole front can be open air basically. And currently it is, because it's a kind of nice afternoon out by the time you get there. And in front of you is a tall stone wall surrounding an estate. And you see the most...the most striking and strange thing you've seen in quite a moment. On the left side of the— so, again, there's kind of a tall, you know, stone wall, right? When I say tall, I mean taller than a person. Not so tall that you can't see over it, but tall that you can't see much of the yard, you can only see taller structures beyond it. And you see two structures beyond that wall. On the right hand side is a concert hall. Undoubtedly, this is the Pledge House concert hall, but it does not seem to be burned as was reported in the book or as the old story goes. On the left is the framework of a huge mansion, with much of the mansion gone. There are a handful of rooms, both on the first and the second and top floors of this building that are still in their place in the framework. There are stairwells leading up into the framework, but you can see through much of the house. And so you'll just see like, the walls of a bedroom hanging up on the second floor, you know, without a hallway to reach them, without a stairwell over at that part of the house. And there are maybe four or five of those rooms left total in this huge mansion. And that...that yard...it's underneath this music house—this concert hall—and this now framework of a mansion, this framework of a manor house, where the fog is emanating from. Lyke is down there somewhere or down there and adjacent to it in terms of dimensionality or whatever. But this is where the fog is emanating from. This is where that dark rhythm has been playing. And before you can do anything, I think you are called into the Parasol by the older lady out in the—you know, who's drinking tea near one of the kind of open doors and sees you looking at it, and she says:

Austin (as woman): Oh, Miss, have you taken a liking to my house?

Sylvia (as Virtue): Hmm? Oh, uh...

Austin (as woman): Please, come sit.

Sylvia (as Virtue): Yes, quite the interesting architecture.

Sylvia: She says while sitting down.

Austin (as woman): Oh, we're going through some moments right now.

Austin: This is a 70 year old woman with kind of brown skin and gray hair back in a bun, wearing a light sun dress. Her makeup is a couple of decades, you know, out of fashion at this

point as is her style of dress, but she carries herself with a great deal of confidence. As you sit down, I think the waitstaff kind of give you a...kind of like, uhh okay. Weird look. You're not quite sure how to unpack what the look is that they're giving you.

[0:20:14]

Austin (as woman): Would you like any tea? Or lunch on me, a guest.

Sylvia (as Virtue): Uh...no, I think that's actually quite fine. I'm not hungry at the moment. Just...just the seat is fine for me, you know, to have a moment to rest.

Austin (as woman): Mmm.

Austin: And the server comes over and pours the woman more tea, and she reaches out to take your hand, and she says:

Austin (as woman): I'm afraid I don't know your name. My name is Davia. A pleasure to meet you.

Sylvia: Just thinking really quick. Like, mmm, I probably shouldn't use my real name here.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia (as Virtue): Darling. A pleasure to meet you.

Austin: [chuckles] Alright. What's going on, Duvall?

Art: Um, I was gonna go try do some recon.

Austin: Uh huh. Great.

Art: I hope I don't just run into...

Austin: You might!

Art: ...this whole scene. I was gonna just...you know, I've got a good ability to look at stuff from far away.

Austin: You do, without—

Sylvia: You could have tagged along. It's...you know, just saying. [Austin laughs softly]

Art: I think this is a communication lesson for both of us, I think, ultimately.

Austin: Oh boy. So, what are you doing here? Are you gonna...you don't have sneak. Are you using your bees to discern your way a path through this town, basically?

Art: Uh huh.

Austin: Okay. A discern haven.

Keith: Here's a—

Austin: Mm-hmm?

Keith: So, Sylvi was trapped for— in the wandering the alleys, for like two hours.

Austin: Yep.

Keith: So we've gone back in time here to do this move.

Austin: Well, we'll see what happens.

Keith: Right, okay.

Austin: We'll see what the roll is. Yeah.

Art: Discern haven...I don't have that. Get that out of here.

Austin: But yeah, Keith, a thing I'm thinking is like we could end up where like Duvall is on the grounds of this place, while...

Keith: Yes. That's what I'm thinking, yeah.

Austin: You know what I mean? Like, before Virtue even got there, you know?

Keith: Or like a total missed connections, where...

Austin: Yep. A hundred percent.

Keith: He gets there so fast that...

Austin: Yes. Yes. [laughs]

Keith: And leaves. [laughs]

Austin: And leaves before Virtue gets there! Because like, I guess I should give it a little color. This area...I talked about Virtue getting lost in the gardens and the pathways and blah, blah,

blah. But like, where this little intersection is...it's in the Hibiscus District, which means it is very nice, but it's also the sort of very nice that is the end of a long road that kids don't want to go on or go down. Right? This is the house that no one wants to go to for trick or treating. Because it's a big haunted manor. And because the lady of the house has become so reclusive that she has not done the sort of...she no longer has the sort of social capital to maintain the neighborhood that that she used to maintain with both literal, you know, paying people to be here but also the kind of like being a center of culture and et cetera, right? Now she's the creepy old lady, and that means that there's a difference in the way things work. Anyway, go ahead and give me your discern haven, Duvall. Not risky here, you just go ahead and give me the...

Art: It's only one die, so it's still very risky, if we're being honest.

Austin: Yeah, it's still very risky. Well, it's two die, 'cause you always get a base one. Hey! There's a nine.

Art: Oh, hey.

Austin: See? There you go. Yeah, you do in fact find this place before... [laughs] before Virtue does. [Sylvia laughs] An hour previous. You come across the little intersection I was just talking about. I'm gonna say that Davia Pledge is not yet at the Parasol for her afternoon tea. She is instead still somewhere else on these grounds. Or somewhere else entirely, who could say? But you get here. And you know, the way you move through town is very much from moving your bugs and peeking through their eyes and making sure there aren't Macula between you and there. And when you get here, you get the sense, Duvall, that like, there is something competing with the rhythms of the hive here.

Art: Mmm.

Austin: Which is weird.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: For the next...while you're here, all of your six things fire on five instead of six.

Art: Hmm.

Austin: There isn't...it's not a fallout necessarily. I mean, you could put it down under Fallout if you want to. It's still a one in ten chance. Do you know what I mean? I guess the only thing that it doesn't hit is your Unorthodox Methods is still a six. You still get the succeed but take stress, you know what I mean?

Art: Right. Sure. 'Cause that's not—

Austin: I'm not gonna make that— right.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: But your like...the rhythms, the quote unquote “sacred geometries” here have been overridden by a five here.

Art: Alright, so we're really counting on my ability to remember numbers now.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah, I'm gonna just give you a fallout called Take Five. [chuckles] Everything— I guess— is it really just that one move or is it two moves? It's just Sacred Geometry?

Art: It's just Majestic.

Austin: Wait, Maje— I thought—

Art: Oh, Sacred Geometry. Yeah, I guess.

Austin: What's— oh, it's both of those, right? Yes. Yes.

Art: Sacred Geometry's you roll a six when inflicting stress.

Austin: Yes. Yeah. [typing] Sacred Geometry and Majestic fire on five instead of six.

Art: Is it also roll an additional D5 for Sacred Geometry?

Austin: Ooh. Ah, no. I'm gonna give you the full.

Art: We gonna make some weird dice?

Austin: We're gonna make— roll some— I mean, you can roll a D5 in Roll20, right?

Art: Yeah, this'll do anything.

Austin: Yeah. True. Ask me again, based on how you roll, when we get there. [chuckles] Maybe it's higher.

Art: I'm never doing this. Sacred Geometry is my sucker's move.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah. That's fair.

Art: I'm never inflicting stress *or* removing stress. I'm never doing either of these things.

Austin: You—

Art: I'm just accumulating stress—

Austin: You just accumulate it, yeah.

Art: —and then removing it by taking fallout.

Austin: That tends to be the case. Anyway, you make it here. And it's the pair of buildings I described an hour— or, a minute ago, but an hour previous.

Art: An hour in the future.

Austin: No, an hour pr— you got there before Sylvi. Right. I described— yes, correct.

Art: Right.

Austin: I'm saying your moment is an hour previous, yes. Correct.

Art: Yeah. So, I guess I'm just trying to get like the lay of the land.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: ;But I guess that's...

Austin: You send up a bug. And you get a good sense of the place. Here's the thing. I have an unfinished map of this place, which is very annoying, 'cause the parts of the map that are done aren't the important parts. Here's the intersection I just described. Right?

Art: Yeah.

Austin: And then the big empty area to the north is where there are...I guess I'll just do them very loosely here. There is a big framework of a manor there. And then to...then there's like a garden in between, kind of in the middle of this whole section, right? Which I'm just gonna put down as this kind of green garden block.

Art: Great.

Austin: Uh huh.

Art: That looks like a garden to me.

Austin: Yeah, uh huh. And then over on the eastern side here is the concert hall, basically. You enter from the garden side. You know, you enter...I'll just draw a little red line. That's like the main entrance to this place. Ope, that's not a good line at all. You get it, though, right? Like, you enter on the...on it's western...

Art: Okay. It's over here.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Exactly.

Art: And I don't suppose I could...I don't suppose anyone can see the painting? Any of these, uh...

Austin: No, you in— but no. Sadly, the painting isn't here. It certainly isn't here on like, out in the open. You know what I mean? Give me another—

Art: Sure, I'm not just gonna like sit down and let bugs come off me for an hour or whatever until I get to critical bug mass.

Austin: I think you've gotten to a...I'm gonna say you can get to a place here where you're like, able to do another discern check without it being...without it being...I mean, if you fail the roll, you fail the roll, but it's not risky to do another discern with these bugs, if you want to like send them into one of these, around one of these places. Do you know what I mean? To get a better look of this place, right?

Art: Sure.

Austin: That first discern roll was getting here. This one would be really casing the joint, you know?

Art: Yeah.

Keith: Here's my question, though.

Austin: Oh, Lyke is back. But—

Keith: Hold on. No, I'm not.

Austin: An hour— yeah. No, you're not. You're right.

Keith: Only one action has happened.

Austin: Has happened. Yes. Correct. Lyke, you'll be back in an hour. You're right. Sorry.

Keith: I'll be back in... [Sylvia laughs]

Art: Now we're really Back to the Fieliture.

Austin: Hour back, get it?

Keith: [laughs] Yeah, this is— yes, this is—

Austin: This is what he meant! [Austin and Art laugh]

Keith: This is finally Back to the Future. So, if Duvall discerns again, I will be back now. If—

Art: No, it's both players.

Austin: No, it's both players. It's players.

Keith: Ohhh, okay.

Austin: It's not two— yeah. It's not as many, correct.

Keith: Right. So, no matter what Art does here—

Art: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Mm-hmm!

Keith: I will be back later.

Austin: Unless art literally finds you, and then we'll pick up from there. Do you know what I mean?

Keith: But— but then what happens? Because...

Austin: 'Cause that's what you did with Janine. 'Cause remember, when this happened with Janine—

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: —you literally opened a door to where she was, and that rejoined it.

Keith: Yeah. So, I guess that's possible.

Austin: Yeah, totally.

Keith: But what would actually happen—

Art: It would be a strange thing to happen casing the joint, though.

Austin: Yes.

Keith: What would actually happen...now that we've gone— we've fucked with time here, and so there's consequences.

Austin: Eh, barely.

Keith: I mean, they're—

Austin: It's just that Virtue's just going to be in the fog. Do you know what I mean? It's not the end of the world.

Keith: Right.

Austin: The only time that would be an issue would be if you had to cross— if you somehow crossed Virtue's path and helped her get here, you know, on the way.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Right.

Austin: But she's literally lost in the fog in such a way that that's impossible for you to—

Keith: Yeah, yeah. That is the sort of thing, though, is because Art went first, then Sylvi's action was the second action, so we have to figure out where along the timeline of that action I showed up.

Austin: At the— after.

Keith: After. Got it.

Austin: Yeah, at the point at which she sat down with Davia Pledge.

[0:30:01]

Keith: Okay.

Austin: That's the point.

Keith: That's what I needed to figure out.

Austin: Yes. Yes. Yeah. So, we'll get there. Anyway, Duvall, continue. Do you want to try to...or do you just want to hop the fence, hop the wall and start looking around? What do you want to do?

Art: Mmm.

Austin: What's your further casing the joint situation? Or start asking around or— I mean, you don't have compel, but.

Art: Sure. Well, I should be able to at least see on the other side of the wall, right?

Austin: Yeah.

Art: I can see if it's just full of people.

Austin: Yeah, so, there's no people there. There's no people. Um...you see maybe a couple of bodies through windows in the concert hall, doing things like arranging chairs. Maybe you actually see Davia walking around inside of that building, at this point.

Art: The concert hall building.

Austin: The concert hall building, correct. Whereas the manor itself, again, the framework manor, no— maybe there's someone in those rooms, but you can't see in those rooms, and most of those rooms— I guess maybe one or two of them would have been on the outside with windows, and you can see those. There doesn't seem to be anybody in those rooms. You'd have to do a deeper check to get a better rundown of what is here, you know?

Art: Alright, um...but those sound like skills I don't have.

Austin: That's discern. I'd say that's discern. And this place is occult.

Art: Sure.

Austin: It's haven occult, so. Actually...mmm. It's occult...it's haven occult technology is really what it is. So you have plenty of domains that can work here at Pledge House. So.

Art: Alright. But it's whether I want to discern via remote or not, right? That's the...

Austin: Correct. Yes. Your bugs could find a painting, but they definitely can't carry it out, right?

Art: If I find the painting, that's gonna be really... [laughs] I'll just finish the heist.

Austin: Uh huh.

Art: An hour before...

Austin: Before Virtue gets here, yeah.

Art: I'll just go back. And then L—

Austin: Right. [chuckles] And then Lyke'll show up, and you'll be like, I don't know where Virtue went.

Art: Lyke pops in, and it's over.

Austin: Uh huh.

Art: Virtue's gone. And then it becomes a rescue mission. [laughs] Yeah, that's the best way. Discern occult. Let's see if I can make this happen. 'Cause I can always consume my own body if I get caught. That's the...

Austin: Mmm. Right. True.

Art: So let's uh, let's make that happen.

Austin: Hey, another nine. Look at that. Success, no stress. Duvall, you send your bugs up to the...you're going to the manor house to investigate— or not you, but the bugs are, right?

Art: No, I was gonna go.

Austin: You are gonna go. Okay. So then, yeah.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: You head in. You hop over this wall. The grounds are not especially well taken care of, at this point. You kind of walk past the garden or see the garden from a distance, and the bare minimum has been done. But maybe that's not true. Because the bare minimum would be to just leave it as it was 40 years ago, 35 years ago, and like it would be bad, right? This has been replanted and kind of restructured to best...to have minimal care done to it, you know what I mean? It's like okay, the sort of flowers and plants that would have overgrown this place have been uprooted and replaced entirely with lower maintenance stuff. The kind of huge hedges and topiaries have been replaced with trees that are allowed to kind of grow more slowly and it's okay. So that's like the kind of color of this place. You get to this kind of framework manor. And from the outside, quote unquote, before you step in, you can make out five main rooms. And I think, just from walking the perimeter of it once, you can piece together that there are two bedrooms— or two bedroom-size things, right? A study or a kind of den, but like, you know, a study which is like part library—you kind of peek in through a window here—part library, but also just kind of workspace. A sort of a parlor room. And then a kitchen. And then— and those are all at different parts of the house, right? [chuckles] And in fact, one of the bedrooms is at the very top, is basically in where the attic would have been. There is also a ground...like, in the foundation, right? or on the kind of...the floor is there for the entire ground floor, but there is a hatch that has been closed that goes into the floor at the kind of north eastern end of this

structure, right? And so you also know that there is some sort of underground basement thing here.

Using your bugs, you're able to peek into these places and maybe even get a little bit more in terms of what's here. You see what is almost...where almost certainly that painting was hanging, and it is in the top...the top bedroom, which has been sort of stripped of certain things. It's almost like you see a...it's like you're looking at a bedroom that was being moved out, that like everything inside of it was being packed up to be moved out. In fact, maybe there even are boxes or crates filled with books, as if someone is going to ship them or carry them away. You know, the linens are all folded up. There is a spot on the wall where you can tell a large painting used to hang, and that painting has since gone. And the rest of it is there still. The bed is still in place, right? There's a little writing desk by the window, and that's still there, and all of the writing implements are all still there. That stuff is somehow all still in place, so it's as if someone got halfway through the process of moving stuff out. You get the sense that that means that this would have been a bedroom used by Zizilliana Esterházy. Maybe not— it's probably not *her* bedroom, because the Esterházy's had like their own manor house somewhere, you know, in town. But this is one of the rooms she would have used while staying here if she wanted to sleep by herself and have some privacy, right? Another one of the bedrooms, the other bedroom is Davia Pledge's bedroom. This is still being used actively. You see a bottle of perfume that is, you know, half used. You see the bedding hasn't been completely remade since her waking up this morning. You can tell this is like someone's active bedroom. The kitchen is clearly in use. And in fact, I think your bug can sense that there is...that it was used this morning. But there's not currently anyone inside of it. The study does have a cold cup of tea, resting on a shelf, or on a— not a shelf, on a...actually, on a shelf is fun. It's as if someone like put down their tea to grab a book and then forgot to pick their tea back up.

Art: Mmm. All been there.

Austin: Davia did this, obviously. And the parlor is the least used room that still remains. The parlor is like a meeting room, but it's musty. People have not been here. There has not been hosted events here in quite some time, it seems. Actually, you know what, it's not fair to say quite some time. Not decades, 'cause we're talking about decades in terms of the overall arc of this story. This is like it's been a year since someone has been over, you know? And it feels like that in this place. And I'll even say that like there's someone else's coat is hung up in this room, that is clearly not Davia Pledge's. It's like, you know, a larger person's. We've now seen that Davia is kind of a slight woman. And this coat is like, you know, for someone much bigger. But that coat is...it's probably not much mothridden at this point, but it's looking a little raggedy. It has just been up on this hook, you know, near the entrance of this room for quite some time, or on like a kind of a, uh...what do you call it? Like a coat rack, basically. So that's the basic rundown of this place. Again, there is that...there is that doorway down. There is that hatch down. But that's what you can get from peeking around, a combination of using you and your bugs to get to look up at the second, third floor stuff. Do you go into any of these places yourself? Do you try to like climb the stairs? Do you try to like check out any of these rooms directly?

Art: Um, I think only as much as sort of like, I'm trying to project the image of someone who's just sort of wandering around kind of lost.

Austin: I see. Sure.

Art: You know, the like stepped away from the tour group.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Art: I mean, I know there's no tour group, but like that kind of like...

Austin: No, but I know what you mean. Yeah, mm-hmm.

Art: Like, oh, I thought this was, uh...I thought this was an open to the public space.

Austin: [laughs] Uh huh. It's a garden. I'm from out of town.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah, uh huh. Then yeah, that's the—

Art: If there were cameras, I'd be taking pictures, you know? Like a...

Austin: Right, right. Do you get— I guess here's the big question. Do you walk onto the wood of the house at all? Or do you stay back further?

Art: What do you—

Austin: I know this is like me setting a trap. But like, on this map, right? Like, that I've drawn for you.

Art: Do you mean, like, do I enter this yellow square?

Austin: Yeah. Yeah.

Art: Yeah, almost certainly.

Austin: Okay. Um...I would say, maybe you've been in there about five minutes. You know, you had to cross—

Art: But not up the stairs. I want to be clear about that.

Austin: No, no. Yeah, that's fair. That's fair. Well, let's actually focus on the stairs here. You're walking past them, and your eyes kind of like go up to look up the stairs. And when you look up the stairs, there's a hallway there that you did not see from the ground floor. Like, it goes. Like, the hallway continues. And you do the thing where you like, okay, wait, let me like back up a step and look up the stairs from the side. They don't go anywhere. They go up to nothing.

[0:40:22]

Art: Mmm.

Austin: But when you look up the stairs directly, you can see that they continue down a hallway.

Art: Oh, that's intriguing. So it's like a hall— not a hallway to nowhere, but uh...

Austin: No, like, there's other doors up there. It's like a hall— I mean, you know, it's a hallway to the manor you can't see, or to the manor that once was, or to a manor in your head. Like, who knows what that manor is? But that hallway—

Art: Ah, I'm not doing this. I'm not doing that by myself. [Austin laughs] This is a full group activity.

Austin: Uh huh. Yeah.

Art: I'm willing to get this far by myself—

Austin: Yes.

Art: —but this is...I'm gonna retreat and hope that the other two people reappear. [Art, Austin, and Sylvia laugh]

Austin: As you leave, you get the sense...not the sense that you're being watched, but the sense that you have intruded on...let me make it more material than that. You find your footing— okay. You're walking south from...I've drawn for Art a box, a yellow box representing the framework house, right? And Art clicked on, let's say...and there's a tile set in there, right? There's like tiles of— right now it's just grass, right, 'cause it's just drawn on top of a bunch of grass. But there's like, you know, a one two three four five six seven eight, an eight by eight grid of checker, of tiles, and Art clicked on one that's like, you know, seven over and and six up or something.

Art: In the north, the northeast quadrant.

Austin: On your— the easiest thing for you to do would just be to go north two tiles to get out of this thing. But your feet take you south, and you realize quickly that you're walking the hallways

you can't see. It's like, you're like, oh I have to walk to the front door. I have to go out the front door. There is no front door. You could just leave, but your feet— when you're like, “I have to get out of here, because this is creepy. I'm not doing this by myself,” you find yourself hewing to the structure of the house that isn't. It's like, we get the top down view of you taking turns down hallways that don't exist anymore. And briefly for you, they flare up into existence as you near the foyer and the front door. You're not gonna get trapped here, but like, you hear...as you leave you hear the sound of someone playing violin. You hear the sound of of two young women laughing. You hear someone shout up the stairs, you know:

Austin (as voice): Miss Esterházy is here to see you, Miss!

Austin: You hear the sound of a fire, not the the fire of Pledge House but the more quiet intimate fire of a fireplace in the evening. You smell roses and breakfast. You have this sense that this place still exists somehow. And you breach through the the door back into the world around you, and you can hear the sound of distant thunder on the sea. And it has been an hour here, so. Lyke, you reappear in the bedroom. [chuckles]

Keith (as Lyke): Aah!

Austin: Back at Lenore's place.

Keith (as Lyke): [exhales as if getting his bearings]

Austin: And Lenore, I think, comes in. And he's like putting on like work clothes, and he's like:

Austin (as Lenore): Um, where'd your two friends go?

Keith (as Lyke): I don't know.

Austin (as Lenore): [sighs] Did anyone ever tell you that like, you're the normal one? It's weird, right? 'Cause... [Sylvia laughs]

Keith (as Lyke): [thoughtful] Has anyone ever told me I was the normal one? No. [Austin chuckles] No.

Austin (as Lenore): Well keep it up. I think it makes you a little more likely to get out of this town safe than the other two, you know? Anyway, there's an extra key in the drawer, and I'm gonna go get lunch.

Keith: Meanwhile, I've got a nuclear rock [Austin laughs] and a mini god in my pocket.

Austin: Yes!

Keith: Like, its tentacles are like swirling around. [laughs]

Austin: Yes. Uh huh. Uh huh!

Keith: Talking fish.

Austin: Yep. Mm-hmm.

Keith: A ritual knife and a bunch of weapons.

Austin: [laughs] A ritual knife. Yeah.

Keith: [laughs] And a little note that describes how to get back to my cart full of dynamite.

Austin: [laughs] God. So, Duvall. Hop back over this wall, and there across from you, in the pavilion is Davia Pledge sitting down, who now you know because of some photos or a painting or something, right? You're like, oh yeah, that's that same woman but much older.

Art: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Sitting down with Virtue Mondegreen, in an outside table. So that's fun. Do we want to try to get everybody here?

Art: Yeah, I'll—

Austin: I guess the question here is...I guess at this point you would still be leaving there, leaving Lenore's place, but Lyke, what are you doing before we go to this other intersection of people?

Keith: Uh, I don't know. Do I have any leads?

Austin: I guess not, right? Well, you know where you just were, right?

Keith: I was at the orchestra.

Austin: Yeah, but you don't necessarily...maybe there is some sort of sense there that you could follow that back, because unlike...you know, unlike normal, when you use that move normally you open a gateway to a distant place that is sometimes physical sometimes not but always far away or nearly always far away. Whereas here, there's a very like, oh yeah, it's a 45 minute walk, the other side of town, you know what I mean? In a real way, like you can sense that that's the direction it came in. Or maybe if you can't, then Tombo or Aterika'Kaal can. [Austin and Keith laugh] It's worth saying, I actually think if you do— like, after Lenore leaves, if you just do like a rundown of all your stuff to be like, alright, I still have everything, right? There is...there is like...Aterika'Kaal is like greasy. Or like sooty, maybe the better word is? Like, there's like a little bit of like a grime on Aterika'Kaal from this excursion.

Keith: What, like ash?

Austin: It's not ash. It's like...it's like the the fog that I described to Virtue solidified on a Aterika'Kaal. In fact, maybe it's not even cleanable. Like, you take a little— not napkin, but you take a little cloth and try to like, do a little wash down. You're able to get some of it off, but there's like bruising on Aterika'Kaal or like marking on it, which is weird. Also, I'm imagining it's like mewling a little bit as you try to clean it, like a cat, you know? [Keith laughs] Just your little pet god. Yeah, I guess if you don't want— if you're not...I guess we should talk about what's going on with...Duvall, are you gonna go? Do you make eye contact with Virtue and then slowly— what do you do when you see them there? Both of them there.

Art: I certainly would like to try to make eye contact. I'm not gonna like...I'm still trying to keep inconspicuous, you know? I'm not...

Austin: Yeah. Yeah.

Art: But like, sort of like get into the line of sight and like... [Austin chuckles] give an opportunity for a signal or something or even just a meaningful glance. I'm here to help.

Austin: You can always like send a butterfly across her field of vision or something. You know what I mean? And be like, oh, Duvall's here.

Art: Sure, if we think that'll work.

Austin: I don't know, but I— yeah.

Keith: You have butterflies now?

Austin: Bugs. It's always been bugs, so. I don't know why we never touched moths or butterflies, but they're in the mix, presumably.

Art: Well, 'cause I've imagined them as kind of steampunky bugs, and I can't really imagine a steampunky butterfly.

Austin: Oh. Yes, you can.

Sylvia: What?

Austin: You said that— [chuckles] come on.

Art: [laughs] Okay.

Keith: Like a butterfree with like goggles and...

Austin: Yeah, come on.

Art: Well, it's not like literally gogg— they're still biological.

Austin: You do a Google search on your own time, but people have gone down this road. Let me tell you. This is— you are not the first.

Art: I'll Google search whatever I want.

Austin: [laughs] You are not the first person to be like, steampunk butterflies.

Sylvia: About eleven million results for “steampunk butterfly.” [Austin and Art laugh]

Austin: Including some sort of...some sort of store? I don't know. Anyway. Um. Virtue, do you notice—

Art: You have to...you have to make sure that you're filtering out the ones that are like steampunk people who named themselves Butterfly.

Austin: Right, Butterfly, right, sure. Of course. Of course.

Sylvia: I will not filter them out. I— good for them.

Austin: [chuckles] I want them in my life.

Sylvia: Yeah. No. Now, let's not go too far. [laughs]

Austin: [laughs] But I hope that they're doing well.

Sylvia: Exactly.

Austin: Yes.

Sylvia: I'm supportive from a distance.

Austin: Yes. Fair.

Sylvia: Yeah, I think I'll see the signal. But I also like, you know, older lady who is probably around the same age as Davia Pledge introduced herself as Davia to me—

Austin: Oh yeah. Yes.

Sylvia: —so I'm not gonna just get up and leave. [laughs]

Austin: No. No, of course not. Of course not.

Sylvia: But uh, yeah.

Austin: I think it's probably been, you know, a minute or two, or maybe a few minutes, since we last saw the two of you talk.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Austin: And I think it's been very...you know this song and dance. You know the sort of like polite pleasantries conversation, as someone who's trying to feel out like who you are and if they should trust you and if they are...

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Austin: You know, you send vibes. You're Virtue Mondegreen, you know? [Sylvia laughs] There is something.

[0:50:01]

Sylvia: Queen of vibes.

Austin: Queen of vibes. And you can tell that she's kind of feeling you out, and very much like, "So, are you from Sapodilla? Did you move here recently? Are you—" like, that sort of stuff.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: How have you been responding generally? Or, you know, kind of more abstractly?

Sylvia: I think it's like, [sighs] less lying and more like vagaries. Like, where are you from? Oh, I'm from up north. Like...

Austin: Mmm.

Sylvia: Blackwick is both up north but also like the region that Virtue said she was from in her interview is up north. It's like—

Austin: Right, right.

Sylvia: There's a few different ways it can be interpreted.

Austin: Right.

Sylvia: But not necessarily like, dir— like, dodging the question, but not changing the subject, you know?

Austin: Right. Sure.

Keith: There's also a bunch of cities up north.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah, exactly.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: I mean, countries, right?

Keith: Countries, right, sure.

Austin: There are whole regions of this world up, north, right?

Keith: Kingdoms is what I meant to say.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah.. Totally, totally. I think that she notices your eyes catching the signal from Duvall and maybe sees the well-dressed gentleman crossing the street, and says:

Austin (as Davia): Oh, a friend of yours. Would you like him to join us for tea?

Austin: She sends Duvall a little smile.

Sylvia: Um...

Art: Weak wave. [amused sounds]

Sylvia (as Virtue): I mean, I'm sure he'd be welcome, but I can't—

Sylvia: I mean, I guess the— what the general vibe of Duvall. Is he hurrying out of there? I don't want to like pull him over [chuckles] if you are trying to get out of there still.

Art: Um, I mean, I think my preference would have been to get out of there, but I'll get sucked into this. I'm...

Austin: [laughs] (??? 51:38)

Art: What are we without manners?

Sylvia: God.

Art: The watchword of Art *Friends at the Table* failures.

Austin: Ah. Uh huh..

Sylvia: Yeah, I think Virtue's like:

Sylvia (as Virtue): Mmm. I mean, it seems like he might have somewhere to go, but I suppose it wouldn't hurt to say hello, right?

Sylvia: I think part of her's like, well shit, maybe I could get out of here. [laughs]

Austin: Ah, a little trade.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: Um, she offers you her hand, Duvall, as you— if you approach. You know, classic like:

Austin (as Davia): Pleased to meet you.

Art (as Duvall): Charmed. Leo Duvall. Nice to meet you.

Austin (as Davia): Mr. Duvall. Davia Pledge. Would you like some tea or anything to eat? Your friend here seems satiated already.

Art (as Duvall): Oh, I'm afraid I couldn't possibly impose.

Austin (as Davia): Of course not. Well, I hope the two of you are finding your time here in Hibiscus...well. It can be a hostile part of town for outsiders, I know.

Art (as Duvall): Mmm.

Sylvia (as Virtue): Well, no trouble yet, thankfully.

Sylvia: Gives Duvall a big smile. [laughs]

Austin (as Davia): Oh, the Macula haven't tried to find something to be mad at you about yet, I hope. [Art laughs]

Sylvia (as Virtue): Why, I'm not even sure what they could be mad at me over.

Austin (as Davia): Oh, they'd find something.

Sylvia (as Virtue): Do I seem like the type?

Austin (as Davia): [laughs softly to self] Dear, you seem...you seem...you seem more than the type. You seem the mold.

Sylvia: She laughs at that.

Sylvia (as Virtue): I'm choosing to take that as a compliment.

Austin (as Davia): I mean it as one. If there were more virtues in the world, then...

Sylvia: Uh?

Austin (as Davia): Hmm.

Austin: And she does a little laugh.

Sylvia: Sorry, was that like you intentionally using my real name? Or...

Austin: Oh, right. I'm sorry. You didn't know the—

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: Right, right, right, right.. Sorry. No, I forgot that you'd gone under—

Sylvia: I wanted to be sure.

Austin: She can go the other way. If there were more darlings in the world. It still works—

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: As a bad pun from a strange old woman.

Art: Better, honestly.

Austin: Yeah. Uh huh.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin (as Davia): I could do with a few more darlings in the world.

Sylvia (as Virtue): Oh, couldn't we all?

Austin (as Davia): [sighs in agreement] This isn't a very...and as someone who lives here, I say this with a bit of shame. This is not a much visited part of Hibiscus. What brings the both of you here today?

Sylvia (as Virtue): Well, I was just wandering mostly, if I'm being quite honest, trying to feel out Sapodilla a bit, enjoying the scenery. You know, things like that.

Sylvia: She did— out of character, she did technically get lost while in gardens and stuff. It's a pretty easy excuse.

Austin: This is true. That's not a lie.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah. Mm-hmm.

Austin (as Davia): And Mr. Duvall?

Art (as Duvall): Well, I had heard about the event tomorrow night, and—

Austin (as Davia): Ah!

Art (as Duvall): I was just making sure I knew my way around.

Austin (as Davia): Oh, the event. I...are you a fan of music, Mr. Duvall?

Art (as Duvall): Pfft. I think anyone who says they aren't is a liar.

Austin (as Davia): Now, that's not true. I've met a few people who truly can't find the joy in harmony.

Art (as Duvall): Well. What a dreary world that must be.

Austin (as Davia): Are the two of you...were you looking to come to the show tomorrow night?

Austin: Or two nights out. No, tomorrow night's right. Yes.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: Tomorrow night.

Art (as Duvall): Uh, yeah, we were certainly considering it.

Austin (as Davia): Hmm. [sighs] Now, I don't do this often, but I do have a few spare tickets. Mmm. That said, I would say that the composition is really for those who know Sapodilla. Well, Hibiscus specifically. People who...people who are one with the town. It would be a joy to have you hear the composition and hear the performance. It's something I've worked on for a long time. But I do think maybe part of it would be lacking for you. But I wouldn't be...mmm. Any who want to hear, should.

Art (as Duvall): Well, we'll keep that in mind.

Austin: She writes— she like produces something from a little handbag. She produces a small piece of paper and writes something on it and signs it. And it is two— it is, you know, admit these two plus, you know, plus ones each. So you each have it's you plus one, and then signs it, which is not really a ticket, it's more of just a her signature would allow this, right? And slides it to you.

Austin (as Davia): [slowly] I have to say, I'm surprised to see the two of you out in broad daylight, but I respect the courage.

Austin: She says with a smile and then makes a hand gesture to the server who comes over and takes away her teacup and and her plate. You don't know if she's explicitly talking about the way that the two of you are wanted for murder, but sure seems like it. Could also be talking about how you're like a wax person, Duvall, and you're a vampire. You don't know how she would know that necessarily. [Sylvia laughs] But.

Sylvia: I mean, you know, I'm not exactly like the most subtle about it.

Austin: Do either of you respond to that pseudo accusation?

Sylvia (as Virtue): I mean, I'm afraid I wouldn't know what you mean by that.

Austin: She smiles and says:

Austin (as Davia): Of course not. Well, if you would like to see tomorrow's events from front row, I'd be happy to have you, but as productive as the two of you have been...I would just...I would consider listening from a distance.

Austin: And she stands up and says:

Austin (as Davia): I have to take my leave. With the oratorio tomorrow, final steps need to be taken.

Sylvia (as Virtue): Yes, well, good luck with that. Perhaps we'll see you there.

Austin (as Davia): A pleasure, to both of you.

Austin: And leaves.

Sylvia (as Virtue): Alright, so the old bag definitely knows something.

Art (as Duvall): She is on. to. us.

Sylvia (as Virtue): Mm-hmm. [Austin chuckles]

Art (as Duvall): Uh, let's...let's get out of here. Let's see if we can find Lyke. [Austin laugh]

Sylvia (as Virtue): Oh, right, him.

Austin: Lye Lychen, alone at home. What are you up to?

Keith: That's a good question. I don't think that I would have left. Um...

Austin: Yeah, we can just have you still be there when they get back. That's kind of fun.

Keith: Hey, maybe I've tried to pop Sanctum of the Stone Chorus again.

Austin: Okay.

Keith: No, no, I would wait for...I would wait for...

Austin: Right, 'cause maybe they would want to help or—

Keith: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: Yeah, help this time actually.

Art: That's a slanderous way to portray [laughs] what happened last time vis a vis help.

Austin: Well, you know what I mean. [laughs]

Keith: Oh, I meant maybe they would want to be...get healed in it.

Austin: No, I said maybe they want to help. I think Art was dragging *me* for making it seem as if they were unwilling to help.

Keith: Oh, gotcha.

Art: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Sure. Sure. Um, you know, maybe it's uh...I guess I just bide my time.

Austin: Yeah, alright. Let's get the—

Keith: I guess maybe I'll talk to— maybe I'll talk to Lenore. What is the—

Austin: Oh, Lenore left to go—

Keith: Oh, okay.

Austin: To go eat lunch I think somewhere and be, you know.

Keith: Lenore got any cool stuff around to look at?

[1:00:00]

Austin: You gonna rob Lenore? Yeah. I mean, yes. Lenore is—

Keith: Um, I'll decide after I decide how cool the stuff is.

Sylvia: Oh my god.

Austin: Lenore is a vampire who— I, you know, Lenore probably didn't leave. Lenore probably went downstairs. Like, I bet this is a similar situation to Bucho where Lenore has like a...an apartment in a building that also has like, you know, a ground floor restaurant, and probably went downstairs for that. Because I just remembered, unlike Virtue, Lenore is a living vampire, is a regular undead vampire and probably is not going outside in the sunlight today. Though there are rain clouds gathering, obviously. There is...so, Lenore probably just went downstairs to get— to get a bite. Wink. [Sylvia laughs] I don't know what the blood situation is downstairs, but. But yeah, like, Lenore's a vampire and a member of the Telluricist Union, so there's just like all sorts of shit around in the apartment. So it's probably like, alright, is this a Telluricist Union thing or a vampire thing? Weird ritual knife, who could say. You know, strange implements. Is this for doing blood magic or is this for figuring out the mineral composition of a stone, you know?

Keith: Right.

Austin: Lots of books. Books in languages you don't know. Books in languages you do know. Multiple copies of books sometimes, with some with notes in the margins, some without. Lots of kind of...lots of wall hangings and like little miniature tapestries on the walls, lots of textiles across the room as decoration.

Keith: As...you explained the sort of loose connection between the Telluricist Union and my...

Austin: Your Junk Magenness or...

Keith: My *Sa'Ferna-ta-Fera* book.

Austin: Mmm. Mm-hmm.

Keith: Is there any— you mentioned the books on the wall. Is there anything else that I can find that would be interesting in relation to that sort of thing?

Austin: Um, you know, there are books about...there are lots of books about Sangfielle like folklore.

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Or, you know...I think specific— the thing is, okay. So, specifically— it's weird. Lenore currently has three of the four things you need to be a Keen. A Keen is like top ranking members of the Telluricist Union. It's what Marn is.

Keith: Right.

Austin: Someone who's done all of their kind of coursework, but also they've specialized— they've done all the specializations, right? The one that Lenore is missing right now—and therefore the one that he would have the most books about, like taken out from the library or just gathered over years—is about being, is the practical one. So it's the one about being a doctor. It's the one about doing like practical hands on stuff. Not fixing tools, but using tools, right? So, again, that's surgery, that's carpentry, that style of like, what do you do with this stuff when you make it? And so yeah, I think there's— you probably find books that have that overlap that are about kind of folk medicine and applying applied folk medicine.

Keith: Hmm.

Austin: Or the history behind that stuff. I think that's probably the closest you get. Nothing here is especially rare or powerful.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: But yeah, there are books like that. Are you stealing from Lenore? Are you gonna take a book from Lenore?

Keith: He's a librarian. I'm borrowing the book. [Sylvia laughs]

Austin: No, you're stealing it. Let's just— you're stealing it. Take a D6 book on folk medicine.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: This is...what would this be? Da da da da da. Let's say that it is D6 haven, haven occult.

Keith: Does this have a title or should I just call it book on folk medicine?

Austin: Book on— for now, just book on folk medicine. I don't have a title on hand here. And maybe around the time that you slip that into a satchel or whatever, Virtue and Duvall get back.

Sylvia (as Virtue): Oh, wonderful. You're not dead.

Keith (as Lyke): No. I was— it was loud, and then I was back.

Sylvia (as Virtue): Good job. [Sylvia laughs softly]

Keith (as Lyke): Uh, I want to try again!

Sylvia (as Virtue): Uh, mmm?

Keith (as Lyke): To, you know, pop open my, you know, room. You know, the Boundless Conclave.

Sylvia (as Virtue): Is this still about the dynamite?

Keith (as Lyke): No, but did you...do you have something to trade?

Sylvia (as Virtue): [exasperated] No. I'm not interested in your dynamite.

Keith (as Lyke): Okay. But I can still pop open that room.

Sylvia (as Virtue): Okay.

Austin: Go ahead.

Keith (as Lyke): Duvall, do you still need— you still need to heal.

Art: You mean I'm still stressed.

Keith: Okay. I know how...I know how they can help, if someone wants to help.

Sylvia: Yeah, I'm down to help.

Keith: Okay.

Sylvia: It's discern and religion, right? For this?

Keith: It is discern and religion.

Sylvia: Oh yeah, cool. I have both, so.

Austin: How are they helping?

Keith: Well, one great way to help would be to give me an occult or religion item to consume—

Austin: Oh my god.

Keith: For Sacrifice.

Sylvia: Don't have either.

Austin: You just got an occult item a second ago.

Keith: I'm going to read it. I want to read it.

Austin: Okay.

Keith: This is for reading. Another way to help would be...uh...

Austin: I mean, like, I'll give you the die by you conceptualizing a way in which they can help you do the ritual, right? Help you in the pure mechanic way.

Keith: Yeah, that's sort of the thing I'm having a hard time conceptualizing. It's not— it's never been something I needed help with, so it's...but now I guess I'm kind of like, eh, maybe I should...

Keith (as Lyke): You know what? Maybe I do have too much stuff. Could you two just hold my stuff? Hold my stuff. I'm gonna take off my coat. I'm gonna sit down, take my time. Hold this stuff. It's important.

Austin: I don't think someone just holding your stuff counts as help.

Keith: No? It's not a

Sylvia: Also, Virtue's not doing that. [laughs]

Austin: Okay. Okay.

Keith: This isn't taking off your weighted training clothes?

Austin: No, 'cause you could just take...you could just literally do that and put that on the bed.

Keith: Yeah. Okay. Well.

Austin: Virtue holding it for you is not... [laughs]

Keith: [rapidly] I don't need help. I don't need help. I don't need help. I don't need help. Nine.

Austin: Oh my god. He just rolled it anyway. Yeah, nine.

Keith: Nine.

Austin: Alright.

Sylvia: God.

Austin: Give me a number from one to ten.

Keith: Three.

Austin: Okay. Um, generate deities. Ooh, okay.

Keith: Ah.

Austin: This is...

Keith: Maybe two? [laughs]

Austin: No. No— oh. I'm making— what was— wait, the first one was three, right?

Keith: Yeah, yeah.

Austin: Alright. Do you want three or do you want two?

Keith: [thoughtful sigh] I'll stick with three. Let's hear it. Let's hear what elicited the noise.

Austin: Alright. The god of falsehood takes the form of a young man. He's very short and has an over-muscled build. He has wavy apple green hair worn in the style that resembles a trailing ribbon. His eyes have a hypnotic quality to them. His skin is covered in ever speaking, ever lying faces. [Keith laughs softly] He is usually portrayed as wearing a complicated costume. He carries a ruler. [Keith laughs] He has three hands at the end of each arm. He is surrounded by strange, deceptive, ever-changing images. There's a fucking winner right here.

Keith: Not a good liar, though.

Austin: Well, he's the god of falsehoods, not the god of lie—

Keith: Okay.

Austin: Like, he's not...he's not a lying— I mean, maybe he could lie in a different form, you know? But.

Keith: Sure, sure.

Austin: What's the door to this place even look like? It's probably a face.

Keith: Uh, okay.

Austin: That opens its big mouth, and you walk in the mouth.

Keith: At the last place that I lived...

Austin: Mm-hmm. [laughs softly]

Keith: At the last place that I lived, there was a...a door handle but the han— it looked like a doorknob, but the knob doesn't turn. (??? 1:08)

Austin: Uh huh.

Keith: The way that you get in is by you put the key in, unlock it, and then just like push it open. The door—

Austin: Oh. Okay, sure. Yeah, we can do that.

Keith: So, I want a door here where the handle— the way that it looks like you get in is like slightly wrong.

Austin: Yeah, that's good. Yeah. Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Love it. And you go in, and inside there is a statue of this figure, and as he is the god of falsehoods, his— like, everything about him changes each time— not everything, but his posture, the statue's posture, the position of the hands, the expression on the various faces across his body, all of that changes each time that you look away and then look again. And you can't quite determine if there is a true...a true position on any of this. This place is creepy as shit.

Keith: What kind of people are here? Like staff or whatever.

Austin: There are people here. You don't know which ones are staff and which ones are adherents and which ones are—

Keith: Right.

Austin: Other people like you coming to try to—

Keith: They're all just wearing street clothes.

Austin: Um, they're wearing various outfits.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: Some of them are in, you know, slacks and shirts. Some of them are in dresses. Some of them are in robes. But none of them— even the robed ones don't look like they're like in charge.

Keith: Sure.

Austin: Someone comes up to you and says:

Austin (as temple NPC): Oh, can I help you?

Austin: Woman with her hair in a bun, or her hair in a ponytail, let's say, and kind of a high waisted, high waisted pants and a kind of nice blouse tucked in.

[1:10:12]

Keith: I tell her that for now we're just here to, you know, to meditate and to pray.

Austin (as temple woman): Of course. If you need anything, let me know.

Art (as Duvall): Do you work here?

Austin (as temple woman): [Keith laughs]

Art (as Duvall): Hmm.

Keith (as Lyke): Do you though?

Austin (as temple woman): No.

Keith: Does she though?

Austin: ["I don't know" sound] [Keith laughs]

Sylvia: God.

Keith (as Lyke): Okay, thank you.

Austin (as temple woman): No.

Austin: And she just stands there looking at you, watching you.

Austin (as temple woman): Are you lying about what you're doing here?

Keith (as Lyke): Are *you* lying about what *you're* doing here?

Austin (as temple woman): Are you here to take things from the temple?

Keith (as Lyke): Are you here to trick you— trick *me* into saying I'm gonna take things?
[Art laughs]

Austin (as temple woman): What's the trick?

Keith (as Lyke): If I tell you that I'm not here to take things, what are you gonna say?

Austin (as temple woman): Whatever comes to mind.

Keith (as Lyke): And if I tell you that I am here to take things, what are you gonna say?

Austin (as temple woman): Whatever comes to mind.

Keith: I'm gonna take something in front of her.

Austin: What are you taking?

Art: Oh my god.

Keith: What's the closest object?

Austin: Um...

Keith: Like—

Austin: On the...the kind of stone base of the large statue of the god of falsehoods, people have placed their own hand crafted rulers. And when you look at them, you see that all of the notches on the distances that they're supposed to measure are wrong

Keith: That's really funny. So...what would I have to roll...no, it's such a stupid idea.

Austin: To do what?

Keith: [laughs] To like, quickly and nervously look over her shoulder to see if she'll look and then take the ruler right then.

Austin: Feels like compel to me, maybe? What do you... [mumbles] Let me look at— let me look at how these are written. [laughs softly] Alright. Make people do what you want via threats, lies, flattery, or reasoned argument is compel. Um...I think it's probably compel. It could be...it's not sneak, 'cause you want...you...maybe. Hide yourself from things or the attention of others? It could be sneak. Sneak or compel sounds right.

Keith: Okay. Neither of those— I don't have either of those.

Austin: Oh, okay. Great. This is religion. You have a religion domain.

Keith: I do have religion. I don't know that...I don't know necessarily that anyone wants to help me here by— by, when I react, also reacting.

Austin: [laughs softly] I don't think you've communic— have you communicated that this is your plan, to steal a ruler?

Keith: Um...

Austin: More importantly, in other words, just like, how would they know to help you in this thing you're trying to do?

Keith: So, they're standing, and I do the surprise fake shoulder look thing, then they already know that nothing is there. So they could be like, I can play into that.

Austin: I mean, Duvall and Virtue can answer whether or not they think that that's...they would respond that way, right?

Keith: Sure.

Austin: That's not a me question. That's a them question.

Keith: Right, right.

Austin: Yes.

Art: I don't have any of those skills or domains, so I guess Duvall does not have much improv training.

Sylvia: [sighs] I just don't know what the point is of getting one over on these people, I guess? [laughs]

Keith: It seems like it's what she wants.

Sylvia: Okay.

Keith: I think I'm...I think I'm participating in the religion.

Sylvia: Alright. [Art laughs]

Keith: This is what Lyke thinks.

Austin: Right. Yeah. Mm-hmm.

Keith: I think that Lyke thinks that he's doing...he's doing the god of deception thing.

Sylvia: I don't... [laughs] I don't know.

Keith: That's okay. No, I'll just roll it.

Sylvia: Yeah. You might just be on your own with this one. I'm not really...

Keith: Oof.

Austin: That's a five. That's a failure, unfortunately.

Keith: So, she doesn't look.

Austin: What's the, uh— yeah, but you still— no, I mean, you go for it, right? 'Cause you failed this roll.

Keith: Sure.

Austin: Or she catches you in the act.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Whether you go for it or not. What's the— how much does this— can you heal here? is a D6?

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Okay. That's how much stress it is. Take five to...

Keith: Oof!

Austin: Is this... [laughs] Take five to supplies, as—

Art: Ohh!

Keith: Three to supplies, 'cause I have two protections.

Austin: That works. As you tried to do this...what are some things that don't matter to you enough to list them as resources but are in your bag or your coat? Just, you know, things that you don't have written down but are your twelve points or your blank points of supplies? You know what I mean? Rope—

Art: Like your—

Austin: Your gear. Like what you're—

Keith: Oh.

Art: Gum. Breath mints.

Keith: Yeah, stuff like that.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, stuff like that.

Keith: I've talked about having like various magical trinkets that I like to just test out.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Keith: Stuff like that.

Austin: So, you do that maneuver to like make her look away. And you think she's done— you think she's turned to look away, and so you go to grab the...one of the rulers, but when you look down to grab the ruler, it's like five things from your pack and your coat that have been put there as offerings, taken from you and your supplies. And she then tsks you. She's like:

Austin (as temple woman): [clicks tongue disapprovingly] Now, now. You've already made your offering. Keep your hands to yourself.

Austin: And so, you've taken supplies stress on this, as she's stolen from you. And when she's tsking you, you now see that her arm ends in three hands like the god of falsehoods does, so she's tsking you with three hands at once at the end of one arm. Give me a fallout test.

Keith: Major.

Austin: There's a major fallout. There's a major fallout. So, maybe it's actually worse. Let's see. God.

Keith: But I clear all my stress, right?

Austin: You clear all that stress. All that stress is gone.

Keith: I have been dealing with between eight and eleven stress for like four hours of play, so.

Austin: [laughs] Must be nice.

Sylvia: Yeah, honestly.

Keith: It's...well, there's a sort of like constant stress to it versus the like ripping the band aid off of getting that major fallout.

Sylvia: Fair. But you did say that you got like a bonus from being above a certain stress threshold.

Keith: But I never got it.

Sylvia: Oh, okay.

Keith: I have to be at four mind stress.

Sylvia: Oh, right. It's specifically mind.

Keith: I was at— I've been at three mind stress for two arcs.

Sylvia: Jesus.

Keith: And never gotten that fourth one.

Austin: I'm gonna roll D6. Here's your major supplies fallout. The actual— it's as written...six, okay. As written: a resource you are carrying is destroyed. It degrades into uselessness, it is revealed to be fake, it breaks in your pack, or scatters on the ground. Remove it from your possessions. I just did six damage to Aterika'Kaal. Aterika'Kaal has one of ten HP left.

Keith: Aw, you get to pick?

Austin: The fallout?

Keith: No, the item.

Austin: Yes. And the— I mean, I could have just killed it, according to this fallout.

Keith: Right.

Austin: I chose not to. I chose to instead do a D6 damage to it, which has brought it down to one, one HP. It's a combination here of both being in this much stronger god's domain and also the the damage of being so close to whatever that thing was before that wounded it. The kind of dark marks on Aterika'Kaal's, you know, plant flesh have grown. Not good. In fact, maybe a Aterika'Kaal is actually just...I think she says like:

Austin (as temple woman): Ugh, you can take that back, though.

Austin: And points to the jar of Aterika'Kaal that has been placed on the altar. And is again inside of that jar, not looking very healthy.

Keith: Well, that's bad.

Austin: Yeah. You gotta get Aterika'Kaal somewhere quick.

Keith: Yeah. I just gotta get that...gotta get that, uh...

Austin: Yeah.

Keith: That last thing.

Austin: You're all are here to heal, right? Not to waste a fallout?

Art: Yeah, I mean, uh...

Keith: Not anymore.

Austin: What do you mean not anymore? Oh, you're not, right.

Keith: Right.

Austin: You healed, in a sense.

Keith: Yeah.

Sylvia: I don't think I need to, even. Yeah, I'm good.

Austin: Yeah, what are you at? Virtue, you're at zero.

Sylvia: I'm at zero. I got a fallout earlier.

Austin: Incredible. Right, yeah Duvall, you can roll a D6 to heal that fortune, that fortune stress. Hey! It's all gone.

Keith: Nice.

Art: This isn't one of those things where it's bad if you overshoot, right? I've never...

Austin: No, it's not. It's not.

Keith: I mean...

Art: I've never gotten to heal stress the normal way. [Austin laughs]

Keith: In a way, I got exactly what I wanted, which was to get rid of all of my stress.

Austin: Uh huh.

Keith: so.

Austin: In a way, it's like Aterika'Kaal's almost a bond who took all that stress from you.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: But not exactly.

Keith: Not quite. Not yet, anyway.

Austin: Because of how it's dying instead of just getting stressed out.

[1:20:03]

Keith: Hey, can I use, uh...can I use Mark of the Weaver on Aterika'Kaal?

Austin: To try to heal it. Maybe! Yeah. You can give me the roll, certainly.

Keith: Okay. I'm gonna eat—

Austin: This is a roll, because it's, you know—

Keith: I'm eating my folk medicine book!

Austin: Oh my god. What's that look like?

Keith: Oh, sorry. I say eating, 'cause it says consume.

Austin: Right.

Keith: This is a funny pun that I was doing—

Austin: Yes, this is right. Yeah, I forgot.

Keith: —until I learned that Chine actually literally eats.

Austin: That Chine also does this. Yeah. Uh huh.

Keith: So, I guess I'm doing two things. I'm reading a bit of the book that I thought sounded familiar, and then whatever I have read in that book like needs something. I'm like tearing the pages out to create some sort of like...

Austin: Yeah, yeah.

Keith: Like, you know, ritual area, like spell area.

Austin: Sure. That's fun. Okay, yeah, go ahead and give me the mend religion, right? Or mend occult?

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: What is it? I think you have— you have both things, whatever it is.

Keith: So, I'm gonna delete this, and do I get...

Austin: Yeah, I'm gonna say this is mend occult, what you're doing here.

Keith: Mend occult, which is fine.

Austin: Or mend— let's say mend religion. It's a god.

Keith: Mend...

Austin: And then yeah. Sorry, yeah, you get to— are you— you're using that. You're sacrificing this thing, is what you're doing?

Keith: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: So yeah, go ahead and roll the D6 dice to get that much protection against stress here first, before you actually roll the stress, or before you actually roll the skill.

Keith: Three.

Austin: Alright, so you have three protection. That's good. And then give me the...the mend religion.

Keith: Religion. Eight.

Austin: Hey, that's an eight. Take no stress. As always—

Keith: As always.

Austin: You putting up the shield means you don't take damage.

Keith: Yes. I have 100 per— I mean, in a way—

Austin: It's very funny.

Keith: Like, if I could...you know, let's pretend that this is actually true and how things work.

Austin: Yep.

Keith: In a way, deciding to use Sacrifice is...

Austin: It's working.

Keith: Right now, it's a guarantee that I'm just gonna succeed on the roll.

Austin: Yeah. Give me a D— actually, just click on your overstuffed coat thing to heal, to do that much D6, you know, healing here. Six! Look at that. Alright, so you've done this ritual to keep Aterika'Kaal healthy, back up to seven, not so bad anymore.

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: Burning through resources as it is.

Keith: By the way, I've got Aterika'Kaal here on the floor, doing a thing to it.

Austin: Anything here, Duvall? As literally Lye Lychen *heals* the last remains of Aterika’Kaal back into healthier shape than it was in moments ago.

Art: Yeah, I guess we don't have pressing concerns right now—

Austin: Ah.

Art: —like we did last time.

Art (as Duvall): Hey.

[music begins: “Lye”]

Keith (as Lyke): Yeah.

Art (as Duvall): What's going on with this?

Keith (as Lyke): Trying to fix it up. Trying to make it better.

Art (as Duvall): No, that's...mmm. I feel like you know that's not what I mean.

Keith (as Lyke): It is...it is still the answer.

Art (as Duvall): That's a weird thing to say. [Austin laughs]

Keith (as Lyke): Better— not evil better, good better. I'm so...I'm really sure that I can do it.

Art (as Duvall): [baffled] Why?

Keith (as Lyke): What do you mean?

Art (as Duvall): Why are you sure you can do it?

Keith (as Lyke): Oh. Um...'cause I...'cause I really want to.

Art (as Duvall): Oh, that's a bad answer to why do you think you can do something. Because you really want to? That's...that's not...that's not reassuring.

Keith (as Lyke): I've put work into figuring it out.

Art (as Duvall): Have you?

Keith (as Lyke): Yeah, yeah, yeah. I'm one step away, pretty much, I think. I'm at least one step away from it not being dangerous to you.

Art (as Duvall): So it is dangerous now.

Keith (as Lyke): I said it's barely dangerous to you like this. It's just— well, it's just more dangerous than...than later it will be.

Art (as Duvall): Doesn't feel good to be kept in the dark about stuff like this.

Keith (as Lyke): Well...I had promised that I wouldn't take it, take any of it, and I did—

Art (as Duvall): I remember, yeah.

Keith (as Lyke): I did— and maybe you won't believe me. I did genuinely mean that when I said it. **[music grows softer]** But it was *right* in front of me, right there, really maybe literally begging me to take it. After I had thought, well, I'm just not going to. I was...so I'm gonna fix it up!

[lull in music]

Art (as Duvall): What are you gonna tell the others about this?

Keith (as Lyke): I have yet to do that.

[music returns in full force]

Art (as Duvall): This is dangerous. You're being dangerous.

Keith (as Lyke): I think that I'm being... **[quickly]** Well, fine, but we're all dangerous all the time anyway.

Art (as Duvall): Alright. You can't keep this a secret forever.

Keith (as Lyke): No. I only—

Art (as Duvall): You couldn't keep it a secret very long at all.

Keith (as Lyke): I only need to keep it a secret long enough to...rescue someone from peril.

Keith: Hey, I rescued Aterika'Kaal from peril!

[another lull in music]

Austin: That's not the s— that's not what that means.

Keith: Okay. Okay.

[music resumes]

Austin: Also, Aterika'Kaal is still in...you know HP is still on the screen here.

[music ends]

Keith: I'm just—

Austin: In a weird way, establishing the thing would be rescuing Aterika'Kaal from peril, but as long as Aterika'Kaal is in a little glass—

Keith: Right.

Austin: —tube in your backpack, that's still imperiled.

Keith: I take out the...mmm, maybe I shouldn't do this. Never mind. Ah, I do it. It's funny. Uh, yeah. [laughs softly] I take out the Endless Ember, and I'm like:

Keith (as Lyke): This is the shit you gotta be worried about!

Austin: Oh my god. [Keith laughs] Duvall, that thing is like, um...god, I guess you...your connection to the Structure. That thing is like, truly, devastatingly dangerous. That thing undoes but also can power Structure. It's something that could...being in its raw presence like this is, you know...it does some of that melting your insides wax, you know, just by being near it, but also just seeing it makes you think of ways in which you could use its heat to reshape yourself into something more like what you wish you were. It's at once this kind of devastating, destructive force, but also something that could absolutely re-scalpel you and your place in the world if you could harness its power properly.

Art (as Duvall): I don't really know what to do with this information in this time.

Austin: No, but that's just how it speaks to you as you see it.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: And Lyke has it in the backpack next to the god.

Keith (as Lyke): It's wrapped up.

Art (as Duvall): I mean, okay. Great.

Keith (as Lyke): And I just found this like at the...on the train or near the train, so. [sighs]
I guess my point is it's a dangerous place.

Art (as Duvall): I really don't know what to do with this information still. I guess,
congratulations, you've overwhelmed my capacity to object.

Keith: [laughs] Oh no. I mean, that's all I gotta do here.

Austin: Alright. Y'all make your way— you leave. The signal for when you're supposed to leave does not come when it's supposed to, and it almost tricks you. Like, it's like, oh, we still have another 10 minutes left. And you're like, no no no, wait, we should leave. We should leave before we're stuck here, because this place is lying to us about how much time we have left before the door closes. But you get out. You get back to Lenore's hangout spot. Lenore is now gone for work. It is nighttime. Lenore, hoping that the fucking Macula don't come bother him at the library again.

Sylvia (as Virtue): Alright, so what do we want to—

Keith: I also hope that for Lenore.

Sylvia (as Virtue): What do we want to do about this oratorio thing? 'Cause clearly something was—

Art (as Duvall): 'Cause we were definitely made.

Sylvia (as Virtue): Yeah, something was 100% up when she was inviting us to there, so.

Keith (as Lyke): Up like in what way?

Sylvia (as Virtue): Like in she knows something about us that she probably shouldn't, seeing as how she's an old woman who we've never interacted with once in our lives.

Keith (as Lyke): Sounds true.

Sylvia (as Virtue): Thank you. Yeah, it was, uh...at the very least, it made me feel like she had some...it felt threatening, I guess the way that she said we might want to listen from afar.

Keith (as Lyke): Mmm. That sounds helpful to me.

Art (as Duvall): No. I understand why you might think that, but it was not helpful.

Keith (as Lyke): It wasn't like, "Careful. I like you two. Don't want you to get arrested or killed, so stay a little bit away."

[1:30:02]

Sylvia (as Virtue): Mmm...

Art (as Duvall): No, I got no impression that she liked us.

Sylvia (as Virtue): Yeah, like, stay away if you don't want to get arrested or killed *by her*, possible. Stay away 'cause we might get killed or arrested because she cares about us, less so.

Keith (as Lyke): Shit. What are we trying— we're trying to get a painting from there, right?

Art (as Duvall): Yeah.

Sylvia (as Virtue): Yeah.

Art (as Duvall): I think I have an idea of where it is.

Keith: Is this...this is up that hallway?

Art (as Duvall): There's a...there's a hallway.

Keith (as Lyke): Okay.

Art (as Duvall): That doesn't seem like it should exist. And that feels like where I would keep a secret painting. And it's in the other building. Theoretically, there will be fewer people there. We could try to just sort of make it work. But it's creepy over there. It's...it's off.

Keith (as Lyke): I mean, I guess so. If we're stealing the thing, we gotta, you know, steal the thing.

Sylvia (as Virtue): Yeah, I can't really argue with that logic in any way. [Austin laughs]

Keith (as Lyke): It's ironclad.

Sylvia (as Virtue): Yeah.

Art (as Duvall): Yeah. I mean, I pretty much agree. We can just sort of...I think we make this work. There's...we got a full complement of people on this.

Austin: Mm-hmm. When are you going?

Art: You know, try to show up when the crowds are still outside, try to blend in I think.

Austin: So the next night, in other words. You're not— yeah, yeah, yeah. Okay. You're gonna go during the show, basically.

Art: Yeah, I think that's right.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: I'll— if anyone thinks that's not right, I'll hear it.

Keith: Sounds right to me.

Sylvia: Yeah, no, there's no complaints here.

Austin: Alright, then, let's say it's the next night. Or the next evening, you know? You're able to get into place, go, you know, across the street, into the alleyways and case the joint a little bit from a distance. There are lines of people in their finest. The Parasol is fucking bumping with people who are waiting for the gates to open. Everyone...you know, the energy is strange. As a reminder, it's been 35 years since the fire, which means there's a whole generation of people, people of means and personal freedom and time, now, from this this upper class, who were not alive for the fire and who don't have that immediate...it's kind of like fascinating for them. It's kind of like, [gossipy] "Ooh, yeah, there was a fire here. Did you know about the fire?" And again, a lot of people talk about how they've heard that people have gotten...individuals, you know, every year. "I heard that Davia Pledge invites five people every holiday season to come listen to a composition, and they always come back changed." You know, stuff like that. No one ever says they were that person. But they all say—

Keith: Right, 'cause they all got changed. I'm worried now.

Austin: Exactly. Uh huh. Yeah, sure. Um. And so yeah, that's the vibe beforehand, and then yeah, you know, the front doors open. There is the sound of an orchestra warming up. Though, I guess from outside the walls, you're not— you've not really done a lot of looking— you don't know what's going on in there. Do you know what I mean? But people start filing in to get into their seats. The lights are still down on the stage, you know? Those of you who'd connected to the strange black pulse before feel it again, beginning to kind of ramp up slow. But you know, the fog begins to spread, Virtue. And the kind of slow driving chorus of sounds, you can hear it in the back of your head, Lyke. And the time has come to go check out this abandoned framework, you know, manor. Which, Lyke, it's the first time you're seeing it, and it's weird. It's weird to see a building like this.

Keith (as Lyke): Wow, it's weird in here.

Austin: Oh, you're seeing from the outside even at this point, but yes.

Keith (as Lyke): Wow, it's weird out here.

Austin: As the junk wage, Lyke, I think you put together very quickly that the parts that are missing from the manor framework were used—which is most of it—were used to repair the concert hall. Like, it literally is like, oh, they brought down all these, all of this wood, and brought it across the yard, brought it across the estate to where the concert hall is, and rebuilt it with the parts of the manor, or built a new one on top of the ruins of the old one.

Keith: Hmm.

Austin: And what's left is what has not been deconstructed, basically.

Keith: That's pretty cool.

Austin: Yeah. And the three of you—

Keith: Reduce, reuse, recycle.

Austin: That's what they say. Uh. Tonight, as the engine, as the kind of dark pulse begins, as it revs up. As soon as you break onto the kind of foundation area, as soon as you kind of cross the threshold into where the house would be, you sense both at once—and again, especially for you Virtue with your Hex Eye—both worlds on top of each other, the modern, empty framework manor and also this kind of ghastly place of the past, where you can hear people running down the hallways. You can hear people sitting down for meals, the sound of silverware against plates, people talking in parlor rooms, distant. And it is disorienting to say the least, to be in both. And because also you hear the sound of music beginning to play. And here, Lyke, you recognize parts of the sound that begins to play here. It's like one of the melodies you heard that happened all at once when you were in that black space, that sound space. You hear one of the early melodies there that kind of disentangled from the rest of it begin to play, and you can hear people gasping and clapping at whatever it is they're hearing or seeing at this point. And that's all happening, but it's like it's muted, 'cause it's in a building across a garden from you, you know? But yeah, you're here now. You're in this complete mansion, that's also an incomplete mansion. Where are you going? What are you doing?

Art: Well, we gotta go to the secret hallway.

Austin: Yeah. So, you find your way there immediately. And yeah, everyone sees what Duvall saw before, which is in the material world, this doesn't go anywhere, obviously. But here, it's very clearly up the hall. It goes, you go up the stairs, and then you're in a hallway. I'm gonna need a delve haven to explore this place.

Art: Oh, I'm great at that.

Austin: We're in a delve at this point.

Keith: I'm also good at that, so I can help.

Art: Oh, do you have haven?

Keith: I have both, yeah.

Art: Oh, then you should do it. I can help, but...

Keith: Okay.

Austin: Uh, who does— just out of curiosity, which of you have delve equipment, because you also should take into account how much damage you will be doing to the delve, effectively.

Keith: I have my magnifying glass, my excellent magnifying glass.

Austin: [sighs] Not gonna work for this sort of, this part of— there are situations here where it will work.

Keith: Okay.

Austin: But just the opening exploration thing, not as much.

Art: Oh, then I have a D6 dimensional barometer.

Austin: That would work here.

Sylvia: I don't have any.

Austin: Okay.

Keith: Oh um...okay, nah, this wouldn't work. I do have my every domain book.

Austin: Yeah, that's as a resource, not equipment.

Keith: Yeah, yeah.

Austin: The other thing that would work here, Duvall, it's worth saying, is...I said it was haven. This is also occult. This is— you're in a— you're in a cursed haunted house, right? Or not— actually, not cursed, but haunted for sure. Uh...is it also cursed? No, it's not cursed, not by my

definition, not by the way I'm interpreting cursed for our setting. This is occult, though, so you could do discern occult and get help from Lyke, for sure.

Art: Delve occult.

Austin: What did I say? I said cursed?

Art: Discern.

Keith: Discern, yeah.

Austin: Sorry, yeah, delve. Delve.

Art: Oh, I also have my good *Red Zephyr* torch, but that doesn't really seem like it's what I want to be using here.

Austin: No, there's plenty of light in this weird, ephemeral, half memory manor that you're in. So, go ahead and give me...

Art: Well, I could also use it to call the train.

Austin: I mean, that's— that's right, you could do that. That seems very dangerous to me.

Art: [laughs] I don't think it's a— maybe later.

Austin: Yeah. I want to put good— I guess I— yeah, good there is fine. Don't forget that it's good, 'cause good means that you if you're doing something— if you're doing a risky delve where a torch would be useful, you get to ignore risky, so keep that in mind.

Art: Alright.

Austin: Alright, give me your roll. Plus one from Lyke.

Keith: Wait. Oh, its not my roll? Okay.

Austin: Oh, are you— are you not helping, Lyke?

Keith: No, I thought I was rolling still.

Austin: Duvall can do a higher damage to it, to the—

Keith: Oh, okay. I understand. Right, sure. So yeah, I'm helping.

Austin: You see? Yeah. Yeah. Ooh! Increase outgoing stress die size. [laughs] Alright. Do D8 damage to it. Give me a D8. You rolled a ten, a one, a two, and a one.

Keith: Yeah, so it was—

Art: Yeah.

Keith: It was a critical success, but it was close.

Austin: It was close to being a non success, yes.

Art: Needed all four of those dice.

Austin: Yep. And that's four. So that's not ideal, but you still did pretty good. That's not nothing.

Keith: Yeah. On a D6, a four's pretty good.

Art: Under a D6, would find that a good...yeah.

Austin: Yes. Sure. Absolutely. You find your way up into this manor. And as you step into this long hallway that has a sort of long floral rug rolled out, you manage to make sense of it. You manage not to immediately fall into the trap of getting separated. You manage to immediately grok the sort of ways in which you're in two places at once, both walking on— like, you look down, and you're walking on nothing sometimes. This place kind of blends in and out of your vision. And you kind of learn how— you know when you're looking at like a magic eye painting, you know what I'm talking about? One of those illusions?

[1:40:33]

Art: Mm-hmm.

Keith: Mm-hmm.

Austin: It takes that sort of effort to see the manor as it stands, or to see— sorry, to see the manor, the kind of ghastly version of the manor. Otherwise, you're...sometimes you'll look away and be like, ah! I'm gonna fall! because I'm just looking down at the ground floor below me. But you're able to make that effort and able to learn how to do that pretty consistently here. Maybe you're all a little woozy for a moment, but you find your way forward. And now you just have room after room around you of what was once, you know, a mansion filled with dozens of rooms. Some of them are bedrooms, some of them you can tell are, you know, drawing rooms or little art rooms for people. And you're not— what you're no longer sure of is where you are in the mansion, so you need to kind of find your way forward from here somehow, towards— where are you going? Where do you think you're going for this painting?

Art: I was hoping would become obvious once I was up here.

Austin: Not so much. You're in that— but you're in this other version of this mansion now, so. Someone give me another roll as you explore.

Art: Well, I know where it— I know where—

Austin: Yes.

Art: I know it used to be in the— it used to be in the bedroom.

Austin: Uh huh.

Art: So I guess I want to try the bedroom on this side?

Austin: Sure. Okay. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Art: On the upside down manor.

Austin: Yeah, sure. Give me another...give me another delve. Keep hitting this thing.

Art: Alright. My second. You still gonna help?

Keith: Still no magnifying glass, right?

Austin: Not yet, no. Not for this sort of—

Art: 'Cause you have to be in the room for the magnifying glass.

Austin: Yeah, sure. Uh huh.

Keith: Okay, yeah, I'm still helping.

Austin: Yep.

Keith: [whistles] Nine.

Austin: Another success. Give me another— now D6. Give me your dimensional barometer damage.

Art: Come on, six!

Austin: Ah, only a one. [Sylvia laughs] Chipping away at this. You find your way to a...along a different long hallway that has a window looking out onto the concert hall. And when you look

out the window, you see the concert hall on fire. But then you also see it not on fire, and you hear people clapping again. And it takes you a second to realize that the one that is on fire is a little bit bigger, which you can intuit means it was the version of it from decades ago, that they couldn't rebuild it back to its full size using the materials available from the mansion. They had to make it a little bit smaller this time. So that means that you're looking out onto a version of what happened decades ago when Zizilliana Esterházy died, the night of the Pledge House fire. Above you is a...you know, on the ceiling here is one of those pull...is one of those like doors going up to an attic space, but there is a lock on it. Or there is a...there's no pull tab, and the kind of square outline or the rectangle outline where you know steps will be able to be pulled down is kind of bronze with a bunch of strange writing or like grooves in it? You're not quite sure what to make of it. You don't know like, is it a language you don't know? Like, what is it? But that's where you're trying to get, at least now. You could also—

Art: Now it seems like a like a fancy magnifying glass might be...

Austin: A fancy magnifying might be a good choice to use here. However, you do also hear the sound of people around you. Or people like downstairs calling up. They say...you hear someone say:

Austin (as voice): Zizi! Zizi, are you up there? Zizi, there's been a fire.

Austin: And you hear the sound of someone starting up the stairs. This is now risky.

Art: 'Cause there's ghosts coming.

Austin: Mmm.

Keith: Great. Risky. My magnifying glass is great with that.

Austin: That's true. Yeah, what is it?

Keith: Excellent.

Austin: It's an excellent magnifying glass, right?

Keith: Yeah.

Austin: So yeah, you can actually— it is not risky for you, then.

Keith: Standard.

Austin: Because you're using excellent. Standard, yeah.

Keith: Delve haven, right?

Art: And I'll be— I'll help.

Austin: Yeah, delve haven or occult, for sure.

Keith: Sure. [brief pause] Ten.

Austin: Oh my god. The crits keep coming.

Sylvia: God damn.

Austin: Eight, ten, one, two. Give me a...

Art: Take that, us from a few days ago.

Austin: Uh huh.

Keith: D8, right?

Austin: Give me D8. Yeah, D8.

Keith: Alright. I'm gonna roll my revolver, 'cause it's a D8. Seven.

Austin: Okay, but you're not actually shooting it.

Keith: No, no, no, no. [Sylvia and Austin laugh] It just is a D8, so

Austin: Ahh. Yeah, I gotcha. I gotcha. I gotcha. Alright. You find your way...you look at the mag— the magnifying glass reveals that inside of the engravings that are along this kind of rectangular bronze kind of frame around where the door door that you'd pull down normally is, that those engravings are actually grooves, that you could get something in there and kind of like...like a needle or something, and you have one of these in your supplies. And if you run it along, it makes music play. It's like a...it's like you're running a needle through a vinyl groove to produce sound, and you have to do it all the way around the entire thing. And using the magnifying glass, you can see...you're able to figure out what the like pathway— it's almost like a— it's almost like a labyrinth. It's almost like a maze that you have to play music on to open the door the right way. At least this is how it works for you, maybe not for the person who lived there. [chuckles] But you do this, and a sort of like rising— it's a recording of someone singing, and you get all the way around it, and it's a very intimate singing. It's not someone in a record booth. It's someone like singing to someone else in a small room. You can hear the sound of the...like, the quality of the recording is such that you can hear the empty space of the room. And at the very end, just before it stops playing, you can hear someone like clapping.

And then the door clicks open, and you're able to quickly go upstairs as you see a sort of housemaid walk— come your direction from the stairs below or maybe the end of the other hallway. And Sylvi, Virtue, the last thing that you see before you climb this ladder—and you don't know if this is because of Hex Eye, you don't know if this is because you're in tuned with the Residuum—is this housemaid changing ages as she walks down the hallway. Sometimes very young, sometimes much older, sometimes dressed in ways that make it look like she might not be from— this isn't Sapodilla at all. Are you seeing different times? Are you seeing different potential histories? You don't even know. And then you manage to get upstairs into this little attic, just in time. You're in the attic. And again, from the window up here, you can look down and you can see the fire of the old music hall. But there is—as soon as you get up here and kind of like are able to take account of the place, seeing both the modern version of it that has been half emptied and the version of it there that night—there is a rumble. The ground below you begins to shake and shudder. And that seems like it's happening here in the modern version of time, not the— not just the ghastly past. And Duvall, it doesn't take you much time at all to find what you're looking for here. There's a painting on the wall. There it is, the Zahir, at least you think that's what it is. [Art laughs softly, incredulously] There is something missing.

Art: I would have thought it was what it is before, if you didn't say that.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah, well, I'm just gonna give you this. There's something missing from it. This is the painting of the Zahir, except the person walking in the background is missing from it. There's just the person sitting, you know, for the portrait basically. So it's like half of the whole. And maybe there's some other details that aren't finished in this version of it. But you know this painting predates this moment, so something else is happening here. Like, this is not a...this is not a, oh, you've gone back so far that the painting hasn't been complete yet. This painting's been complete for well before this. So, something strange is happening.

Art: Yeah, I have two ideas. One, something about the painting is causing the fire.

Austin: Mmm.

Art: Like, whatever that is has come out of the painting and gone and caused a fire.

Austin: That's fun. I love that.

Art: Yeah, that's what it would be, I think, in the Stephen King book about this.

Austin: Yeah, yeah. Totally.

Keith: Uh, yeah, it's called *Duma Key*.

Austin: Oh. [laughs]

Art: Mmm.

Austin: That's not what's happening here.

Art: Or that something is about to happen. We're like going through—

Austin: Mmm.

Art: —a moment in time that does something here.

Austin: Probably also a Stephen King book that does that though, right? Both of those seem possible.

Keith: Well, what is this? What was the second one?

Austin: This is—

Keith: I didn't get it.

Art: Oh, I guess it couldn't be that, because the painting's finished. There's no...or I guess this is a— because this isn't, quote unquote, "real," that there's something—

[1:50:07]

Austin: Yeah.

Art: That my idea that they were storing the painting in their ghost past just isn't right. And this is some sort of like, bad copy.

Austin: Right, sure.

Keith: Like when you're dreaming, and you look at your hands, and you have the wrong number of fingers, 'cause your brain is wrong— is bad at drawing hands, just like your— like during the day, when your also bad at drawing hands? [Austin chuckles]

Art: I don't— I don't relate to the specific thing you're saying—

Keith: Oh.

Art: But I get it, yeah.

Keith: It's true. If you're dreaming, if you can look at your hands, a lot of times it's one of the ways people trigger like realizing that they're dreaming while they're dreaming—

Austin: Mmm.

Keith: —is you count your fingers, and you'll have like six or seven fingers on each hand.

Art: Mmm. By the time I'm at like, checking if I'm dreaming in a dream, I'm pretty sure it's fake.

Austin: I'll note there's some other stuff here, if you fucking thieves want to steal stuff. [Sylvia laughs] There is like some old jewelry here. There is a bottle of wine. There is like a really nice bottle of wine.

Sylvia: I'll take that.

Austin: That's a D10.

Sylvia: Ooh.

Austin: Pre-Panic vintage.

Sylvia: Ooh.

Keith: Wow.

Austin: A vintage red. And there is a D8 worth of...this is in the actual room now, tarnished jewelry that's been left in place.

Keith: I'll take that.

Austin: Uh huh. And then yeah, there is this half of the painting, D question mark. This incomplete Zahir.

Sylvia: The wine is a haven tag I'm assuming? Or...

Austin: That is a haven tag, yes.

Sylvia: Cool.

Keith: Same with the jewelry?

Art: I'm gonna take this painting, but I don't—

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah. That's the right call.

Keith: I bet there's a second painting somewhere else that has all the missing bits.

Art: That sounds like it could be right. Where do you think it is?

Keith: Sounds like it could be in the present.

Sylvia: I—

Art: I didn't find it looking around here. It could be in the concert hall. 'Cause I don't want to like...I don't want to use outside of the game knowledge too much, but I think Austin wants us to go see the concert.

Austin: Mmm. I don't need you to go see the concert at this point. It's already happening. Virtue, what were you gonna say?

Sylvia: I was thinking about maybe entering the Residuum here.

Austin: Ooh, okay, yeah. This is a fun place to do it.

Sylvia: Yeah. If— do you two want to come along?

Austin: Have either of you done the Resid—

Art: Um...

Austin: You've never— neither of you have done the Residuum thing, right?

Sylvia: No, neither of them have done this.

Keith: You said Residuum. Like—

Sylvia: Yeah.

Keith: Virtue says Residuum, and Lyke is like—

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Keith (as Lyke): I don't know what you're talking about.

Keith: Unless I do.

Sylvia (as Virtue): Right.

Austin: No.

Keith: Okay.

Sylvia (as Virtue): [sighs] I'm trying to think of a quick way to explain it, because I don't think we've really got the time for everything.

Keith (as Lyke): Is it like my tunnels?

Sylvia (as Virtue): No— [thoughtful sound] So, okay. You know how when things die, their spirits and stuff go places usually, typically? What if there was an in between where there's just a bunch of sort of ephemera from life, I suppose?

Keith (as Lyke): Mmm.

Sylvia (as Virtue): This is...it's a lot easier if I just show you.

Keith (as Lyke): Sure. I'll go.

Sylvia (as Virtue): Okay.

Austin: Let's do it.

Art (as Duvall): Yeah.

Sylvia: So, this is delve plus religion.

Austin: Love it.

Sylvia: It's gonna be risky because of my Ringing Head.

Austin: Your Ringing Head, yeah.

Sylvia: But that'll resolve this after that.

Austin: Yes, yes, totally.

Art: And I would offer to help you, but I have no idea what you're doing, so it feels hard to help.

Keith: I'm occulty. I could help.

Austin: Is there a way for them to help, Virtue?

Sylvia: I mean, like, I think the...because I have it as like a quick, like, I have the Sudden Death skill that lets me like, enter it without...

Austin: Oh, right, right, right.

Sylvia: Like, instantaneously.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: But—I'm reading this now—doing that with other people makes it risky.

Austin: Ah, makes it risky.

Sylvia: Which would make it into dangerous, probably?

Austin: I think it would probably make it...yeah, yeah.

Sylvia: So, I think this would mean we'd have to do like part of a ritual to do it.

Austin: How long does that— is there a...?

Sylvia: It says it takes around ten minutes of preparation.

Austin: That still makes sense, though. I think that makes sense.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: In terms of the pacing of this night. It's a long—

Keith: And so instead of dangerously, we can just...

Austin: You're doing it risky.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: Right. Yeah. Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: And then there's more like, I can...like, here hold this thing while it burns, and like...

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Sylvia: Other shit like that if someone wants to help, you know?

Keith: I can help.

Austin: Yeah, sounds good.

Sylvia: Okay, cool.

Austin: I think— I definitely think that Lyke has the experience doing ritual-y enough things for this, so.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: Alright.

Sylvia: Okay, so that's delve religion, plus one from help, and risky.

Austin: You got it.

Art: So, I can't help, but I'm supportive.

Sylvia: Thank you.

Austin: Yeah. I appreciate it, yeah.

Art: I'm on the team.

Sylvia: Means so much. I got an eight.

Austin: Eight, eight, five, eight, two. Get rid of one of those eights. Keep the other eight. Success, no stress. [Sylvia sighs in relief]

Keith: Success no stress.

Austin: Wow, what an incredible—

Art: Success no stress.

Sylvia: Okay, I'm gonna get rid of Ringing Head.

Austin: Get rid of Ringing— yeah, absolutely. What an incredible version of the Residuum this is, because it's already so close to bleeding through, you know? It's so bright and vivid here. For those of you who've not been here before, this is the place where...I mean, the version of this that Sylvia's always used that I love is that, you know when paint fades over time? The Residuum is where that color goes, right? And so this is it. Like, this is...you're in the most vibrant and loving and amazing version of this place there is. In some ways, you're in three versions of this place at once now. You're in the version of it five years before the fire, you're in the version of it at the fire, and you're in the version of it a decades later. And as you move through the Residuum, where you're safe, because it's just kind of echoes of the past. It's not— there aren't ghosts here in the same way. I mean, sometimes someone will look at you, but you know, Virtue is able to navigate in such a way through the Residuum where unless a roll fails, you're gonna be safe as you move through here.

You're in a version of this place where you get a very clear image of what life was like for Zizi and Davia. And I mean, the answer is it's exactly the thing that you think it is, right? Like, they were two powerful women in a city who understood how to try to bring joy to the place using the resources that they had. Davia was a renowned composer and the kind of heiress to this powerful family. Zizi was also the heiress, but—and here is maybe where you find something else—you get an image. You see the two of them walking together hand in hand in the Residuum, or you see the kind of echo of them walking hand in hand. But where Zizilliana is, you see echoes of echoes of echoes, color kind of spiraling into rainbow shadow. And you realize that Zizilliana is a heritrix. And a lot kind of comes into place for you in this moment. For those of you who've been thinking about or looking into the history of the Esterházy family, the thing that happened for the Esterházy family is they enlisted a heritrix, hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of years ago, who could help them raise their family status from struggling merchants to well established pseudo noble house. And it seems as if that person, that heritrix, passed from generation to generation and stayed with and helped whoever the head of house was.

And so, not only was Davia in love with the host who publicly was called, you know, Zizilliana, there was also this kind of the relationship with the heritrix who lived alongside the host, inside of, along with the host. And it was this loving relationship between them that lasted for years, into their— you know, at this point you're looking at Davia in her 30s, right? Adult, you know, successful member of Sapodillan kind of the upper crust. And as you move through the Residuum, it is just like image after image of a life well lived. Dinners together, cooking for each other, holding events with people coming to explore the house. At this point, you get the sense that the house is being mostly operated by Davia and maybe a handful of people that she employs, but this is long past the Pledges being a sort of house that is attended to. Davia has taken to loving the house and won't give up the property but wants to work it with her own hands. And at some point you— you kind of follow the kind of echoes of what they're doing, and you see on the ground floor— you kind of follow your way back to the ground floor. You see them working together over some sort of...kind of in an art room or kind of a workshop room, working on little kind of pet projects they have. Zizi herself is a painter. And it seems as if, on top of being a composer and musician, you see that Davia is also a bit of a tinkerer, working with small devices of metals, making little toys to delight Zizi by. Often— you know, at some point you pass through the foyer, and you see her give a bunch of little tin kind of windup toys to kids on a holiday. It must be something like our Halloween. But kids go kind of door to door and get little toys, and here she's made them little kind of windup figurines, and they walk away.

And finally, you get the burst of darkness here, maybe two at once. First, above the kind of echo of these kids in the Residuum, there is the Macula, there is the blue candle light of the Macula at the door, and it just holds there, and it kind of bursts this kind of the bubble of this moment. The second darkness is, again, from below, this hard groan, this dark sound, as something below you in the real material world begins to shake the entire ground. And from the east, you now hear screaming, and you cannot tell, is it coming from the past fire or from something happening now? You need another roll here, but— actually you don't, because

Duvall, you already know where— you actually do know and have a good idea of where that painting could be being held that is not the concert hall. 'Cause there is one place you have not visited yet here, and it is that...not grate. The door in the ground, the door that goes below the house.

[2:00:55]

Art: Mmm. Sure.

Austin: And maybe it's something about the Residuum view. Maybe here...you tell me, Virtue, but can you sense— I guess you could potentially sense that there is, in fact, a lack of...like, if there's a place that has been up kept so well that it hasn't faded yet. Does that appear as like a void in the Residuum? Do you know what I mean?

Sylvia: I feel like part of it would be like there's...it depends. Like, if something was like kept in shape to maintain the original materials—

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia: —then like I think there would be like sort of a void there. And if not, I think you'd be able to find just like remnants of people having worked on stuff and trying to repair it.

Austin: Right, right. That makes sense. Yeah.

Sylvia: So like, the things that have been replaced are more noticeable in here.

Austin: Yeah. Okay, well then, I think...you basically can find your way, then, to this latch that you can open up a sort of door in the ground to the northeast of the kind of groundwork here, the framework here. And you haven't opened it yet, but you can all tell something dark and pulsing is coming from there. And for one moment— you're still in the Residuum or you're still like grounded in the Residuum, because you're there until Virtue brings you out. But you snap back to the reality of the moment, the reality of a night here in Sapodilla. You can hear clearly, people are screaming from the music hall to your east. And you can see that— it's kind of far from here, but you can see the doors are being pushed on, as if people want to escape there. But the doors will not break. They will not give.

[Music plays: “Sangfielle”]