

Bluff City 32: To Be Young Near the Shore Pt. 01

Transcriber:

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[Music begins: [*To Be Young Near the Shore*](#) by Jack de Quidt.]

[Introduction]

Austin (as NARRATOR): Father's needed me at the shop more than I thought he would. At first, stretching the taffy was a pain—literally. My arms would hurt all *night*, and even though I'd finish before the sun had set, even though my friends were staying out late, I just wanted to go home and rest. Now it's better. My arms are stronger, and father says that's good for me—that it's good to be strong in this world. I know what he means, but I think I know it in a different way than he does.

The worst part of working, though, are the customers. Visitors from the big cities, visitors from the little train towns between there and here, and *all* of them are *rude*! They all ask us too many questions, and I can never tell when they want answers, or when they just want to insult us. "Do you also sell *freshwater* taffy?" I mean, yes—but I doubt that's what you mean.

It wouldn't be so exasperating, except... everyone is already so worried about how the Golden Fortune, that new pier, is changing things. We knew it would be an amusement pier, but we didn't know everything else it would be. Yes, there are games, and rides, and shows, but there's an *entire* shopping arcade. They've got a haberdasher, and a bookstore, a hardware supplier, and, yes, a candy shop too. Father's worried about that—what it will mean for the "holiday numbers".

In the single month since it first opened, it seems like it's become everyone's favorite *everything*. I used to wanna be everyone's favorite everything—but now, looking at something like that from the outside, seeing how it shakes the world... I never wanna be that. As shocked as Father and I are, I cannot imagine what those working at that little pier across from us must feel. We have felt the impact, but... they are falling apart.

[Narrator's voice begins slowly fading out.]

Austin (as NARRATOR): Must this be the way? Is this what it means to be young near the shore? To see the familiar replaced with bigger, and better, and bolder? To see silver turn dull next to gold? To be told that the sound of the waves are not good enough to

dance to anymore? To watch them lay out the polished wood one board at a time, until it past the shore and into the sea.

If this is what it means—that to be young near the shore means to grow old by it—then I don't want to be young anymore.

[Music fades out and ends.]

[Episode begins]

AUSTIN: Welcome to *Friends at the Table*, an actual play podcast focused on critical worldbuilding, smart characterization, and fun interaction between friends. I am your host, Austin Walker, um... [while chuckling] joining me today, Sylvi Clare.

SYLVIA: Hey, I'm Sylvi. You can find me on Twitter at [@sylvisurfer](#)¹ and listen to my other show, *Emojidrome*, wherever you get your podcasts.

AUSTIN: Andrew Lee Swan.

DRE: Hey! You can find me on Twitter at [@swandre3000](#).

AUSTIN: Jack de Quidt.

JACK: Hi! You can find me on Twitter at [@notquitereal](#), or buy any of the music featured on the show at [notquitereal.bandcamp.com](#).

AUSTIN: And Keith Carberry.

KEITH: Hi, my name's Keith J. Carberry, you can find me on Twitter at [@keithjcarberry](#), and find the Let's Plays that I do at [youtube.com/RunButton](#).

AUSTIN: Today, we are playing *Tales from the Loop*, based on the universe by Simon Stålenhag, designed by Nils Hintze [pronounced 'Hint-zuh']—or Hintze [pronounced 'Hintz'], maybe. Um... And, uh, we made characters last time, which is... which was fun. And today we're gonna jump into it.

Tales from the Loop has a... a pretty, um, straightforward—actually, you know what we should start with, is that same set of, um... of, uh, principles that we talked about, kind of at length last time. [quoting] “Your home is full of strange and fantastic things. Everyday life is dull and forgiving.” “Unforgiving,” rather. [chuckling] “Adults are out of reach and out of touch. The land of”—for us, the Tunnel—is dangerous, but the Kids will not die,” and “The game is played scene by scene,” and “The world is described collaboratively.”

¹ T/N (Ida): This episode was, presumably, recorded before Sylvia changed her Twitter handle to sylvibullet, so while I've left the words as is, the URL links to that instead.

Before we get further, actually, I would love to just go over characters one more time. If you could give me name, pronouns, and then, uh... work through your Drive, your Problem, your [enunciating] Pride, your Anchor, uh, your PCs and NPCs, and then your Item, that would be great. We don't need to go over Skills and stuff like that, but the rest of that stuff would be great. [pausing] Uh, let's start from the top: Cory is up first on my... on th— my list.

SYLVIA: *Okay!* So, my character is Cory Curtis, also known as CC. Pronouns are she/her, uh, she is twelve. Her Drive is that she wa—oh, her type is the Rocker, forgot to mention that.

AUSTIN (overlapping): Right.

SYLVIA (overlapping): Her Drive is that—

AUSTIN: Yeah, type doesn't show up here anywhere, does it? Or... where... where would that be here?

SYLVIA: [uncertain] Uhh...

KEITH (overlapping): Uh, it's right next to— It's right next to "Name".

SYLVIA (overlapping): It's right at the top. It's next to "Name".

AUSTIN: Oh, I see it, I see it, I see it. Yeah, great.

SYLVIA: Yeah. So, my Drive is "I want my big brother to think I'm cool." My Problem is that my family is about to move. My Pride is that I can play guitar. Um, and my Anchor is, "The cool lady at the music store who lets me prac— lets me hang out there after school." Um... My Relationships with other PC—should I go through those, or do we wanna wait until we have everyone... [trailing off, muffled]

AUSTIN (overlapping): Uh, go through them now. Let's go through them now.

SYLVIA: Okay.

AUSTIN: It's fine.

SYLVIA: So, with Frankie, it's "Frankie's lived next door for as long as I can remember." With Ronny, it's "I'm worried Ronny is going to replace me." Uh, with Nolan, it's "Nolan's annoying, but he makes me laugh."

[Austin chuckling.]

SYLVIA: And then, with my big brother, it's "My big brother has been sneaking out at night ever since Mom said we were moving." And my N—

AUSTIN: Do you have a name for your big brother, by any chance?

SYLVIA: I— I've been trying to think of one, and I... I... can have one by the end of character introductions, for sure.

AUSTIN (overlapping): All right, sounds good. Sounds good.

SYLVIA: Um... And then the last NPC one is "Mr. Garrett keeps calling my music 'noise'," in quotes.

JACK: Hah!

AUSTIN: Perfect.

SYLVIA: Um... Anything else... [muffled] I'm missing somewhere...?

AUSTIN (overlapping): Uh, Iconic Item...?

SYLVIA: Oh, yes. My Iconic Item is a beat-up electric guitar, um... I think we said it was like, a Squire, uh, Stratocaster [**Austin:** Yeah. Totally.] or something last time.

AUSTIN: Love it.

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: All right, Frank.

JACK: Um...

AUSTIN: Can you tell me your... your stuff?

JACK: I'm playing Frankie, uh, Already, who goes by the name Frank. Her pronouns are she/her. She is a bookworm, uh, she's eleven years old. Her Drive is that she wants to be in a magazine. Her Problem is that she keeps appearing in television ads that she knows she has not recorded. Um, her Pride is that she was on *Jeopardy*. Her Anchor is that her Mum and her watch television together. She thinks that CC is going to be a star.

She doesn't care for Nolan, but her dog, Tiny, loves him. Uh... Ronny and her are building a treehouse. She thinks Pastor Hest has been replaced by a double. And Ms. Maxwell, the librarian, keeps talking about "inter-library loans," with some sort of weird hint that there's something strange going on there. Um...

AUSTIN: Um, a think that we didn't... um... a thing that I guess came up during character creation, really quick, 'cause we're talking about Relationships, is—you're gonna be the one character who does not have a Relationship with Mr. Garrett, who is like, the band teacher at school.

JACK: Yeah, the sort of mean band teacher.

AUSTIN: Um... I have a question, which is like—do you still hang with the— that crew, if they like... do you still go to the concerts, for instance? Do you know what I mean?

JACK: Yes.

AUSTIN: Like, the school— Okay, cool.

JACK: Like, the— I think that the... the thing I keep thinking about for Frank is like, "What if a... bookwork was like, obsessed with, um, magazines," [**Austin:** Mhm.] and, like... um... You know, there's like, [cheerfully] "Collect these magazines and you can build a pirate ship! The first magazine costs 2 dollars and every other one costs 10!" or whatever.

AUSTIN (overlapping): [while chuckling] Right, uh-huh. Yeah.

JACK: And I think that, like, there's some level of Frankie that's like, "I'm gonna be a manager when I grow up," [**Austin:** (understanding) Riiight.] "so I'm gonna go to all the shows and, like," [**Austin:** Right. Okay. (muffled)] "take photographs with my Polaroid," or whatever.

AUSTIN: Perfect. That's perfect. Awesome.

JACK: And... her Iconic Item is Tiny, who is an irascible dog, [**Austin** chuckling quietly] who loves Frank very much, but sort of expresses her love by—I dunno [mumbled], biting? I don't know. [chuckling]

AUSTIN: [chuckling] Great dog.

[**Keith** laughing.]

AUSTIN: All right, Nolan is up next on my list.

KEITH: Uh, hi, my character's name is Nolan Pearson. He is the Popular Kid, he's also ten years old, the youngest here. Uh, his Drive that— is, uh, "My friends in class love stories about my outside friends."

[**Austin** and **Jack** chuckling.]

KEITH: Um... My— [chuckling] My Problem is “Grounded,” quote, “‘until further notice’.” Uh... My Pride is that I know the fastest way to all the best spots in the neighborhood. Um... What else are we doing? We’re doing... Relationships and Anchor?

AUSTIN: Correct. And Item.

KEITH: Item is... “An especially large, but not *too* large, rare marble.”

JACK: [laughing] A rare marble!

AUSTIN: Uh-huh! Yeah.

KEITH: My Anchor is my cousin George. My Relationships are, um... “CC didn’t like me, but I’m really good at finding dropped picks.” [Someone chuckling] “For Christmas, my Grandma got me a subscription of encyclopedias, and Frank likes to borrow them,” [**Austin** chuckling] “and sometimes trades me snacks for them.” Uh, with Ronny it is, “Ronny is still outside—”

AUSTIN (overlapping): [chuckling] Love to be a ten-year-old, by the way, and just getting fucking owned. [chuckling]

[**Keith** and **Jack** laughing.]

AUSTIN: In trades... I guess snacks are good. But...

KEITH: *And* encyclopedias *aren’t*! Uh—

AUSTIN: [disagreeing] Mmmm, aren’t they though?

KEITH: Not when you’re ten!

AUSTIN (overlapping): [muffled, in a resigned tone]

KEITH: “Ronny is still outside when everyone else has gone in, so I can always go there.” And my NPC ones are, uh, [indignantly] “Mr. Garrett took my cassette player and is using it for himself.”

[Someone sighing in sympathy.]

[10 minutes]

KEITH: And, uh... And then also, “Old man at the pawn shop knows my Mom, and she said he’d call if anything cool came in, and if it’s not fragile I can play with it, but sometimes he charges me a dollar.”

[Austin chuckling.]

JACK: [distrustfully] Wohhh...! [chuckling]

[Dre and Jack chuckling.]

AUSTIN (overlapping): Um... Finally— Oh, [drowned out/cut off]

KEITH (overlapping): Oh, and my iconic— Oh, no, I did Iconic Item.

AUSTIN: Yeah, you did that. Uh, Ronny.

DRE: Uh, I am Ronny Lee Highsmith Jr. He uses he/him pronouns, his type is the Hick, and he is eleven years old. My Drive is “I just wanna make some friends.” Uh, my Problem is that “Dad is sick and he doesn’t want to admit it.”

[Someone exhaling heavily in sympathy.]

DRE: My Pride is that “I ain’t stupid.” [Someone chuckling quietly] Uh, and my Anchor is my Dad. My Iconic Item is my Leatherman multitool. Um... and, for Relationships: For Frankie, “Frankie was the first person who didn’t look at me funny because of my accent.” Um, “I want to learn the trumpet to impress CC.”

[Sylvia chuckling quietly.]

DRE: “Nolan is teaching me the lay of the land.” And, for my NPCs, uh, “Mr. Garrett, the band teacher, let me eat lunch in the band room before I made any friends.” And “My Aunt Jozy that I’m living with has asked me to help out around the house more because her new job makes her work weird hours.”

AUSTIN: Mm. Um...

KEITH: Okay.

JACK: Classic.

AUSTIN: Did you say your... your Item? I missed it, if you did.

DRE: Uh, yeah. My Iconic Item is a Leatherman multitool.

AUSTIN: Right, okay. Cool. As a reminder, those— All those Iconic Items are things that you can use to get a +2 to... a thing that you are doing, basically. Um, all Items can give bonuses, but your special Iconic Item, uh, is especially... good, basically. [chuckling] Uh, so... So keep that in

mind. Likewise, your Pride is very important mechanically, because it can solve something for you once per mystery—once per scenario, basically.

So you can just be like, that's a s— Or, you know, not *solve* things, but like, it's an automatic success on any roll, basically. And you can use that even after a fail. Um... Likewise, Luck Points are important, and you— uh, you have different Luck Points based on how old you are.

Uh... Your Attribute Points go up as your age goes up, but your Age Points go down, so Nolan who is ten has 5 Luck Points, which is quite im— quite a lot of Luck Points, means that Nolan can re-roll up to five failed rolls—whereas our twelve-year-olds... um, which are Cody, and... uh, I think Ronnie?

JACK: It might just be...

AUSTIN: Oh, maybe just Cody. Or Cory, rather. CC. CC is the only twelve-year-old. CC has, uh, slightly higher Attributes overall, but only has 3 Luck Points, so she can only, uh, re-roll three times. Right?

Okay, um... So, the thing I was going to say before, is that... A little bit more than some other games we play, *Tales from the Loop* has a very kind of... I don't wanna say a *strict* structure, necessarily, but there is a... a sort of... skeleton of the way— of the phases of the mystery. And I think it's worth saying this up-front, because it'll keep all of us in that... that mode, so to speak. That's on page 81 of the book, but also, I can just move us over... to this map of the area that I have, and if you scroll down, there are some sheets... also.

JACK: Oooh!

AUSTIN: And you can see on the... I wanna say it's the... right sheet? Or, it's on the— It's under the "Mystery" section of the left sheet, here. Um, which these sheets come from... [typing] If you do a search for "*Tales from the Loop— from the Loop* rules cheat sheet," I think you'll find, uh, a post from *The Alexandrian*, which is a, uh... a site run by this person named Justin Alexander, who gives a lot of, like, GMing advice and stuff like that, but who puts together cheat sheets sometimes and occasionally provides them, and so this is kind of a system cheat sheet. Um... because, some games provides those, and some games do not. [chuckling]

But as you see, there are... there are sort of six phases to every kind of mystery, every scenario, every, um... not session, necessarily, 'cause sometimes you'll record for multiple sessions—but you know, each kind of, um... arc of a game of *Tales from the Loop*. The first is that you introduce the Kids—um, and I'll read from the book here, not from this cheat sheet—but, "Each Kid give— gets a scene of their own from, uh, inside of Everyday Life with or without Trouble."

Then, the next stage is to introduce the Mystery—uh, "The Kids encounter or discover something, that they then want to begin to investigate." Then, on stage 3—or phase 3—they

begin to solve the Mystery. The Kids visit Locations, Discover clues, overcome Trouble, while at the same time having to manage Everyday Life. This is the core of the Mystery where most of the scenes take place.”

Then there is the Showdown. “The Kids have solved the Mystery, and must try to stop what’s happening, often in a dramatic scene where everything is at stake.” Then there is the Aftermath: “The Kids, uh, have—” Sorry, “The Mystery has been solved, and even if the kids are successful, their lives are mostly the same as before. Each Kid gets one scene from Everyday Life.” And then 6, Change: “The players may, if they like, change their Kid’s Problems, Iconic Items, Prides, Relationships...” et cetera. The Kids get Experience Points, which can be used to increase Skill Levels. We will probably not do Change, because that’s how *Bluff City* goes. You know, we don’t really stick around too often.

Uh, over on the cheat sheet, it does note that at many of these phases— or, a number of these phases, there can be Countdowns that happen, which you can think of as, like, clocks ticking. This is a game where clocks tick in the background, where, um, the bad guys are trying to do something to get in the way of what the Kids are trying to do, or are trying to do something on their own that, um, the results of which could cause Trouble for the Kids.

That word of “Trouble” is a capital T word in this game. That is kind of how we talk about conflict and conflict resolution. Trouble is what you roll against in this game, whether that is a, uh... a bad guy, a— you know, a misprogrammed robot causing chaos in the street, or if it is, um... you know, a lecture you’re getting that makes you feel bad. Or is a, you know, trying to climb into, um, you know, an abandoned facility, and climb over the fencing or something like that. Trouble can be a lot of different things there.

But... [exhaling] As it says, we should start by introducing the Kids. And, I think the place I want to start, is... [exhaling] I— You know, even though there *is* this big overlap with everyone, um, where there is— you know, you’re all part of band, or connected to the band in some way. I still wanna start separate.

And so, um... I’ll just read from the book a little bit. “The Mystery always starts with each of the Kids playing a scene from their Everyday Life, with or without Trouble. This scene helps the player get to know their Kid, and shows the other players what their Kid is like. The Game Master may set up a scene on their own, or ask the player for a suggestion. The GM can get inspiration from the Kid’s Problem, Pride, and Relationship. A general piece of advice is to choose the most obvious scene. Don’t overthink it.” Um, and then, that’ll be a quick scene, and then we’ll wrap it.

I guess, if I have an opening shot before we get into individual scenes, I guess what I would say is we do get a shot of all of you, on a school bus, coming out of a tunnel. In some ways, I suspect it’s very similar to the shot that nearly closes, um, the end of... um... *Bluff*... uh, *Bluff City* season 1, at the end of *Lacuna*, coming out of the tunnel to see Bluffington—to see Atlantic City. And it’s very similar, except this time it is a school bus coming out. Um, and, you know,

there is... I think, you know, that scene is probably scored with... with something, and then we kind of see inside of the bus.

And inside the bus, everyone is— has headphones on. It's like, the bus is silent. And Mr. Garrett, who is this kind of like... I think skinny, you know, upper thirties, um... kind of, uh... very kind of conservative-looking face and haircut. Uh, I don't even know what to call the haircut I'm imagining him having, but just, like... It's just very... [chuckling] white dude in his late 30s trying to look professional, do you know what I mean?

[Someone chuckling quietly.]

JACK: Mhm!

DRE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Has on a red, uh, sweater vest, and, uh, a tie, and is like, watching everyone from the front of the bus as the bus pulls up out of this tunnel. And everyone has one those, like—do you know those, like, fuzzy, bad headphones that... that used to be the headphones you would get?

JACK (overlapping): Hah! Uh-huh!

SYLVIA (overlapping): Oh, yeah.

DRE (overlapping): Mhmm.

KEITH (overlapping): Yeah.

AUSTIN: Like, the *tiny* little fuzzy, like, over-the-top, silver band...

SYLVIA: Like the type they used to give out on planes.

AUSTIN: A hundred percent like that.

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah, exactly. It felt like they would break. So, everyone has those, um, and you're all coming back from a concert from out of town, [**Keith:** Ooo...!] and are listening back to the concert that you were... that you were... uh, performing in.

KEITH: Bootlegs? Oh, b— Uh, r— Uh, *performing* in!

AUSTIN: Perf... [amused] Performing in, yes. You're— It was basically, like, you went off for... uh, you're basically, like... [chuckling] there's like, a competitive band...

KEITH: Like travel soccer but it's travel band?

AUSTIN: It's travel soccer but it's travel band.

SYLVIA: Yeah!

AUSTIN: It's exactly that, Keith, yes. It's *exactly* that.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: You're on the... the travel, uh, band team—or most of you are. Again, Frankie—Frank—is not. But Frank goes along with you all. And, um... I think the thing that I want the camera to focus on as we kind of zoom through—slowly walk through, not zoom through, but... you know, kind of, move through—this bus, is that we get, like, we can hear what's being played. I don't— What type of music does this band play? Is it playing, like, classical? Is it playing, like, jazz? Like, what does competitive band [chuckling] play at... at places?

[20 minutes]

SYLVIA: Okay—in my experience, every school band has to learn how to play the *Pirates of the Caribbean* theme.

[Jack and Dre laughing.]

AUSTIN: [amused] Great. Good.

KEITH: We— We do also have, um, down that, um...

AUSTIN (overlapping): Like, you're not a marching band, right?

KEITH (overlapping): Frankie...

AUSTIN: That's part of the thing that's important, right. You're not doing, like... drumline shit.

SYLVIA (overlapping): Oh, sure, yeah.

AUSTIN: It's like, competitive orchestra or something, right?

KEITH: I think it was Frank who was talking about, um... always playing the wrong kind of music and getting yelled at it [sic] 'cause it was, like— it was, like, contemporary music. And we were, I think— I *think* that it was supposed to be we were doing jazz stuff.

AUSTIN (overlapping): Okay. Well, I think in—

KEITH (overlapping): That was my memory from character creation.

AUSTIN: I don't think that was Frank, 'cause Frank is the one who...

SYLVIA: Yeah, it was probably me, who got yelled at...

AUSTIN: I think that was probably CC.

KEITH: Oh, CC. Right, sorry. Yeah. [mumbled] That's right.

AUSTIN: Um, but the—and Mr. Garrett keeps calling her music noise. Um, which makes sense. I suspect for the— *for* the event, you... you know. You know how is to be a kid, which is, in class you will fuck around, but you know that the consequences for throwing the competition would be so high that you wouldn't get to see your friends for a year.

So you, like, played the stuff you were supposed to play, it went pretty well, um—so yeah, let's say that it's some sort of, like, jazz. But, like, jazz standards, right? We're not talking about, like, free bop here. [chuckling]

KEITH: Yeah. [chuckling]

AUSTIN: But we— You listen through, and as the camera moves through the bus, the— you're picking up what's being played. And then it does come to stop on the headphones of Ronny, um, and it takes a second, but there is something different, Ronny, about what *you* are hearing—um, which is, there is an additional sax part.

There's, like, a saxophone solo that you have, that no one else has. Um, and you are listening to the same stuff as everyone else, except you are listening to it on, um... a personal recorder that was given to you by your Aunt Jozy, who... who, you know, works a long time at the airport.

DRE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Uh, works late hours, and in fact, has recently asked you to start helping out around the house. And I think this was, like, a gift from her, to be like, "Thanks for doing that. Here is, like, a slightly better— Here—" This has like, a digital face on it, do you know what I mean? [chuckling]

DRE: [impressed] Ooo!

AUSTIN: And, in fact, maybe it's even... maybe it's even, like, a MiniDisc type player, versus everyone else who has cassettes. Um, and the thing that everyone is listening to is literally a cassette that *they* recorded. Like, I just have this image in my mind that Mr. Garrett makes you

all put down a tape recorder next to your feet while you play, so that you can hear yourself and everyone else playing, and review the tape on the way home.

JACK: [sighing] Ohh.

AUSTIN: Like, reviewing footage in a foot— for a football team or something, do you know what I mean? But yours has this solo that no one else’s has. Um and that’s... that’s kind of, the first little weirdness that enters. But the bus continues into Atlantic City, um... On the map in front of you, you’ll see that the school—the high school—is far in the southwest on this kind of little island connecting the mainland to the island of... of— where Atlantic City is.

Um, and drive— drops you off there, which means that *most* of you—and I think *all* of you live *all* the way up in Bluffington Beach at the kind of north end of the city—um, have to then get onto [amused] a *different* school bus [**Jack** chuckling] and... and drive home from there. And so, we get the, like, you know, the opening credits... um, are, you know, playing while, you know—again, I’m— for me, this is a very Belle and Sebastian-vibed thing, so it’s like, *Seeing Other People* or something is playing, or *The Stars of Track and Field*.

And, uh, you know, you’re all saying bye on the bus, and going back into your houses. Who does the camera stay with as we see... [mumbled] Like, I mean [exhaling]—it’s probably the last person off the bus, um... Who gets our first “Introducing the Kids” scene? Who has something in mind for, like, how they want their character to be introduced? What their— What their, kind of, home life... you know, mundane life stuff looks like.

DRE: Sure. Um... I think, like... maybe Ronny walks home, and he walks in—it’s... the TV is on, and that’s kind of the only light that’s on [**Austin:** Mm.] in the apartment. The apartment is very cluttered. There’s just a lot of stuff [**Austin:** Mhm.] everywhere. Like, there’s probably, like, two or three different laundry hampers full of people’s different clothes, like, in the middle of the living room.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

DRE: And I think his dad is asleep on the couch.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] That’s... a hundred percent... what I thought, yeah.

DRE: Probably... watching some kind of, like, uh... I’ll— I’ll say, I don’t... We don’t have to worry about how authentic this would be to timeline. I’m saying Dad is— his dad is watching a University of Kentucky basketball game.

AUSTIN: Sure.

DRE: Um, and you can tell he’s sick because he’s sleeping through it.

AUSTIN: [overlapping, in understanding] Mmmm. Yeah.

DRE: He would never do that before.

AUSTIN: Um... So yeah, he's watching— he's watching that. But I think, as you come in, the—the—and you close the door—you try— you probably try to do it quietly, [**Dre:** Mhm.] but it still startles him and wakes him up. Or, it doesn't startle him, but the noise wakes him up. And you can see that he kind of, like... looks over to see if he can just go back to sleep or not.

And then there's a moment of recognition, when he sees it's you. And, he kind of, like, straightens himself out—you know, moves the covers off of him, maybe puts a plate [chuckling] over to the side instead of on the couch that it was next to him on.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Um, you know, and... uh... and says... you know, um...

Austin (as RONNY'S DAD): [generally speaking in a sickly, tired, quiet voice] [slightly surprised] R— Ronnie. [more collected] Ronnie. [inhaling and holding, as if stretching] How'd it go? [exhaling]

Dre (as RONNY LEE HIGHSMITH JR.) [sincerely] Uh, good. How are— How are you doing? How's the game?

Austin (as RONNY'S DAD, overlapping) [interrupting, hiding being tired] Good. You guys— You guys— Did you guys win, or, uh...?

Dre (as RONNY): It's not... It's kinda... [pausing] It's not really one of those.

Austin (as RONNY'S DAD): Oh, yeah. [feigning having known] Yeah, yeah. Um... [inhaling] Well, I'm just glad you made it back okay, um... [inhaling, exhaling while speaking] You, uh... What do you, uh— What do you— What do you... uh... Have you heard from your Mom today? [pausing, short inhale]

Dre (as RONNY): N... No.

Austin (as RONNY'S DAD): All right, let me make you— Let me make—

AUSTIN: And like, gets up and starts to move into the kitchen, to... figure out dinner.

Dre (as RONNY, overlapping): No, I can— Listen— Um, there's probably something I can—

Austin (as RONNY'S DAD, overlapping): Oh, we could just— I—

Dre (as RONNY, overlapping): I could just make, like, a sandwich.

Austin (as RONNY'S DAD): You know what, that's—I was just gonna heat up some mac & cheese, so... that's probably... that's probably, uh... uh, you know, an improvement. Um, but I'll—let me come in with you.

AUSTIN: And turns on the light, and like, opens the fridge, and pours you a glass of iced tea. Um... and pours himself a glass of iced tea. [chuckling]

(as RONNY'S DAD): I always forget, do you like ice? Or do you just... is it...

Dre (as RONNY): Yeah, ice is good.

Austin (as RONNY'S DAD): [quieter] Okay, ice is good. Yeah. [short inhale] Um... [sighing heavily] [ashamed] I'm sorry, Ronnie, I— I meant to be up and have everything ready, before you got home.

Dre (as RONNY): [sincerely] Oh, it's okay. [pausing] How's the... how's the game? How are they doing?

Austin (as RONNY'S DAD): Oh, um...

AUSTIN: Like, peeks over your shoulder.

[Dre laughing.]

Austin (as RONNY'S DAD): Looks— It's looking good. It's looking good. You know. I still don't know that... [short sigh] those boys know how to pass the ball, but... they'll get there. Early in the season.

Dre (as RONNY): Yeah.

Austin (as RONNY'S DAD): Be ready for March, you know?

[Short pause.]

Dre (as RONNY): You can, um... [gently] Hey, you can go lay back down if you— if you need to, Dad. It's okay.

Austin (as RONNY'S DAD): [sighing] You know what, I'm— I'm gonna take you up on that, but I just... want you to know I'm... I'm real proud.

Dre (as RONNY): Thanks.

Austin (as RONNY'S DAD): I'm real proud of you. You know, this was— I— I didn't never tell you this, but, uh, your old man used to be in band, when he was a kid.

[Short, quiet chuckle from **Jack**.]

Austin (as RONNY'S DAD): Um... And, uh, it was— It was—

Dre (as RONNY): Really?

Austin (as RONNY'S DAD): [perking up] Yeah! Yeah. You didn't know about that, did you? [self-assured] See?

Dre (as RONNY): No, what did you play?

Austin (as RONNY'S DAD): Uhh, I played trombone. Uh, it was loud, and I was never any good at it, but I had a great time, and, uh... You know, you're following in— in— in... my footsteps, almost, you know? Not that— Uh, I don't... You don't play trombone, right?

[**Austin** chuckling quietly.]

Dre (as RONNY): No, I play— I play trumpet.

DRE: And I think he, like, probably holds up his case. [chuckling]

Austin (as RONNY'S DAD): Right, trumpet. I— I— Yeah. Mm. All right, I'm gonna go back... I'm gonna go back. But, um... Again, I'm really proud of you.

AUSTIN: Picks up the iced tea, takes a sip of it, and, uh... and says...

(as RONNY'S DAD): This weekend, you and me—we should... [pausing] we should get some us time. When I get some sleep, and I'm... [mumbling] you know. [pausing] [searching for words] This weekend.

Dre (as RONNY): Yeah. That sounds good.

Austin (as RONNY'S DAD): All right, give your old man a hug.

AUSTIN: Like, arms out. You know, arms out all the way to hug you.

DRE: Yeah. [laughing]

AUSTIN: Big hug.

DRE: Um...Ronny pretends to be embarrassed, [**Austin** chuckling] but is... is not.

AUSTIN: You know, does the hair tussle, and to— and pushes you, [**Dre:** Yeah.] you know, [mumbled] from down—uh, down the way, and then just goes back to the couch. Lights are still—you know, turns the lights off in the kitchen, [chuckling] [**Dre:** Mhm.] and then... and then back, back into bed. Um... doing his best.

[pausing] And, uh, I think, like, the camera stays on the—as this scene comes to an end—stays on the fridge, and there's a mag— there's a... a, uh, paper magnetized to it, a note, on a magnet—behind a magnet—that says, um, "Ronny, call Aunt Josie when you get home."

[**Dre** chuckling.]

AUSTIN: But I don't think you or... or your dad notice it, um, and you... we cut from there. Who's up next? Who else wants to show us some of their daily life?

JACK: Um, I think that, like, on the way back from, you know, walking back in, a... a fire hydrant has burst or something—or like, a water pipe has burst.

AUSTIN: Mm. Mhm.

JACK: There is water coming out from the ground, uh, and doing that thing where it, like, saturates the grass so totally that the grass has a really weird texture. So, Frank sort of explores that for a bit, [**Austin:** Mhm.] and then follows the flowing water.

You know, down the street, and then down a series of steps, with a kind of, like, rusting handrail—like, it's like a little waterfall—and then down to the... the front of their house. And their front door is open, and uh, their dad is on the front porch, uh, like, brushing water out of the hallway.

AUSTIN: [short, quiet chuckle] Mhm.

JACK: And, uh... You know, uh, Frank goes inside, and the television is on in the kitchen, and it's playing the news. And the television is on in the living room, and it's playing, like, some, um... It's playing, like, a... like, a cowboy movie, or like, a film from the... [**Austin:** Mhm.] the 50s or the 60s, that my older siblings are watching. And I think I— I kinda, like, shrug my bag off, and begin to head upstairs to turn the television on... in *my* room.

[**Sylvia** laughing.]

AUSTIN: What do you, uh... What do you go watch in your room? What is the... Oh, also, also, I should— I should— While this is happening, I should introduce another element of just, like, where the city is at.

[30 minutes]

AUSTIN: And I think maybe it's as we come in to your bedroom, we can see out from your window, um... you know, further south, down into, kind of, the main strip of Atlantic City. And this is something I meant to set up while you were coming out of the tunnel, um, [chuckling] because it's... ridiculous.

I mean, there's— there's... two steps here. The first is, um—the city is kind of desolate, compared to when we saw it at the end of *Lacuna*. Again, we are... we are taking place in some near future from where we are. Um, you know, it has that Stålenhag-esque combination of kind of... um... [choosing words deliberately] high branding and quiet emptiness. [chuckling]

And to emphasize that, you know, I think, from your window—or, coming through that tunnel at that opening shot—what you see is a lot of abandoned, um, buildings. A lot of apartment buildings that, uh, you know, only one light is on even though it's night time now. And you know that, like, the other— And you can, like, see into the empty... empty, you know, apartments and stuff. Lots of unfinished construction throughout the town.

But also—above... everything now is a new casino, and it's part of a... it's part of a new... uh, a number of new expansions to the city, that were meant to... you know, bring [short sigh] [disapprovingly] more gamblers to town, and bring more tourists. The first version of that is this place called The Cove, which is not a cove, actually. It's just— It's just a— It's actually called "The Shops at the Cove"—but, um, it's not a cove, and yes, there's shops, but it's basically a str— a fancy strip mall on a second boardwalk that's again— that's across the bay instead of being across the ocean—or the shoreline—it's on the— kind of on the north—

KEITH: Is it the cove just because it's— you can see the ocean? And like, "they'll get it."

AUSTIN: Yeah, well, and it's a fancy— It's a fancy... word.

KEITH (overlapping): Right, it's— feels like an upscale...

AUSTIN (overlapping): It feels *cool*, and so like, that means we can put in an Apple store there. Do you know what I mean?

KEITH (overlapping): Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah, exactly. The bigger, more... gauche...

KEITH: CBS by the sea.

[Austin and Jack laughing.]

AUSTIN: The bigger, more gauche, uh... addition is The Upper Crust, which is... [short exhale] which is a pizza themed casino, um, that...

[Sylvia, Keith, and Jack laughing.]

AUSTIN: It's— What if Pizza Hut was a casino, [Jack chuckling] [Keith: Yeah!] and the thing that makes it stand out is, you know, eighty stories in the sky—which is *very high*—uh, maybe it's more like fifty stories in the sky, which is still *very high* for Atlantic City—is a giant pizza... like, pie, that is the kind of restaurant...

KEITH (overlapping): Whole pie?

AUSTIN: Uh, it's a *whole*, round pie. Uh-huh! Above the other other casinos, lit in bright lights, um...

[Jack chuckling quietly.]

AUSTIN: And, uh... It's— It just— It is just what it sounds like. It's a casino in the shape of a giant pizza on top of a, uh, a tower. You know what I mean? [chuckling] Yeah, you've seen tow—you know what it reminds me of in my mind, is, you know the World's Fair, uh, New York, um... things, the... those towers, have you seen those? One second, I'll link you. I forget what these are actually called. Also, that— The fucking '64 World's Fair... *really* looks bad these days. Um...

JACK: [understanding] Ohhh. Uh-huh.

AUSTIN: [typing] Here, let me just... paste... this. These sorts of, like, long, thin towers, and at the top, there's just like, a circle.

KEITH: Mm.

AUSTIN (overlapping): Uh, imagine that that's—

KEITH (overlapping): Rotating restaurants, is that like what that is?

AUSTIN: Yeah. Or, rotating restaurants, right, that's the sort of vibe it is.

KEITH: [quietly] Okay.

AUSTIN: Um, except that it's *way* wider than that. It's like, bigger than other buildings here. And from a distance, you can see the side of the pizza, and on the side of the pizza there is a mascot, which is basically the... a big, thin, like, person-shaped thing with a big pizza face—but it's a si— It's like looking at the— It's like looking at a pan pizza, like, from the side. Do you know what I mean? It is not—the pizza face is not a *round* pizza that you'd be looking down on the pizza.

KEITH: Ohh.

AUSTIN: It's like looking at the *crust* of the pizza.

JACK: [confused, chuckling] What?

AUSTIN: But then, there's like, a *tongue* coming out of it, and big cartoon eyes.

[Jack laughing.]

DRE (overlapping): Eugh! [chuckling]

AUSTIN: You know what it looks like?

SYLVIA (overlapping): It's like a Mayor McCheese situation, almost.

AUSTIN (overlapping): It's like a Mayor McCheese situation! That's *exactly* right, yes.

SYLVIA (overlapping): Yeah.

AUSTIN (overlapping): Yes.

KEITH (overlapping): If you— Okay, so if— If this character bowed, would you then see the face of the pizza?

AUSTIN (overlapping): You would then see the top— You would then see the top of the pizza, yes.

KEITH: Got it.

AUSTIN: Yes.

JACK: And this mascot, is this like, a... just like, a painting of the mascot, or is this like, live video on the side of the... pizza or something?

AUSTIN: Oh, I think it's like— I think it's like—hologram, on the side.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: You know what I mean?

JACK: Well, then— Yeah. So, I reckon that I... I come into my room, and I turn the television on with the, uh...

AUSTIN: Oh, the name of the casino is The Upper Crust, by the way.

JACK: [amused] Of *course* it fucking is! [chuckling]

[Dre laughing.]

AUSTIN: Just for people who can't see the map. [chuckling]

KEITH: Um... If you— So, is... is this city more into pizza than the real world?

JACK (overlapping): *Great* question! [chuckling]

KEITH (overlapping): Or is this a little bit weird of a choice? In this world too?

AUSTIN: This... is a strange choice... *period*. [chuckling]

KEITH: Okay. No one is like, "Yup, that makes sense."

[Dre laughing.]

KEITH: "Pizza themed restaurant, got it. Love that, what a good idea."

AUSTIN: I mean, is it— Is it weirder than the Taj Mahal that used to exist in Atlantic City? Or the Wild West—

SYLVIA (overlapping): [amused] Okay... I'd just like to say there *are* a lot of pizza themed restaurants.

AUSTIN: See?

SYLVIA: Pizza themed casino's the weird part. [chuckling]

AUSTIN (overlapping): [chuckling] Yes. Yes.

JACK: [amused] Yeah, that's true, the casino bit is... "I love to gamble at the pizza place."

DRE (overlapping): [ironically] I don't know... I'm into it.

[Austin and Jack laughing.]

AUSTIN (overlapping): Um...

JACK (overlapping): Um...

AUSTIN (overlapping): So yeah, you come into your room...

JACK: Yeah, I reckon I click the television on, and on the screen is, like... like, a w— It's almost like, a weird double view of the view from my window.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: It's like, looking up at the side of The Upper Crust, and on the side of The Upper Crust is the mascot, and the mascot says some— What's, like, the catchphrase? Of this mascot...

AUSTIN (overlapping): God, I had one earlier today, and I lost it, and I'm so mad, 'cause it was like, the most... *absolutely*, like, insipid *nothing*.

JACK (overlapping): Like, garbage? [chuckling]

AUSTIN: Yeah. It was basically "Pizza is good," like, but, *worse*.

[Dre laughing sharply.]

AUSTIN: It was like [obnoxiously cheerful] "*Everyone loves pizza!!*" Like, it was one of [breaking into laughter] those, do you know what I mean?

[Several laughing.]

JACK: Yeah, so—I mean, I think— Yeah, I think, on the television, through the television speakers, the mascot says, like, "Wahey! Everyone *loooves* pizza!" and then makes a gesture with his hands, and because this is going out live on television, the mascot on the side of The Upper Crust makes the gesture at the same time.

AUSTIN: [chuckling] Mhm!

JACK: As though, like, this is synced with the television advert or whatever. And, yeah, I think I just call downstairs, and I say,

Jack (as FRANKIE "FRANK" ALREADY): *Has my package come?*

Austin (as FRANK'S FAMILY MEMBER): *Which one?*

Jack (as FRANKIE): *It's addressed to me!*

AUSTIN: Um...

JACK (overlapping): Oh, no no— [chuckling]

Austin (as FAMILY MEMBER): *I think I left it in the bathroom!*

[Jack and Keith chuckling.]

JACK: Clatter, clatter, clatter into the bathroom, the, um... [Austin chuckling quietly.] The shower is shut, and somebody is taking a shower at the time.

[Austin chuckling quietly.]

JACK: And, uh, like, yeah—like, there's a television playing on, like, a... a condensation-protected TV in the bathroom.

AUSTIN: [amused] Uh-huh!

JACK: It's playing, like, a talk show or something that the person in the shower is clearly listening to. And, yeah, there's a package addressed to "Frankie Already."

[Austin chuckling quietly.]

JACK: "Ms. Frankie Already." On the, like... I dunno, like... [amused] What is a storage surface in a bathroom?

AUSTIN: There isn't one, they just brought it—

JACK (overlapping): Like, a closed toilet or something? [chuckling]

AUSTIN (overlapping): They must have brought the mail in to the bathroom— Right, yeah, it's on top of a closed toilet seat, yes.

JACK: Um...

AUSTIN: And whoever's behind there is like,

Austin (as SHOWERING FAMILY MEMBER): [stammering] A little *privacy!*

JACK: And Frank—*too late.*

[Austin chuckling quietly.]

JACK: Frankie has taken the thing and gone, door slammed.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: Packet opened, and inside is a... a, uh... It is, uh, a VHS, that she goes back into her room and plugs it in, and it's a load of commercials from... like... [short sigh] like, it'd be, like, retro commercials, or whatever. Um... I don't know when that would be from. Probably the 90s, actually. And... yeah, Frankie just sort of, like, flops down in front of the television with like, a notepad.

AUSTIN: [very quietly] Yeah.

JACK: And, is just, like, taking notes on, like, "What is compelling adverts from the 90s?" or whatever.

DRE (overlapping): [chuckling] [very quietly] God.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: You know, like—11 year old handwriting, "Really into cars," she writes down, [Austin laughing] like, [chuckling] underlines it or whatever.

AUSTIN: [amused] "Bright colors."

KEITH: What is this for? Why are you doing that?

JACK: [matter-of-factly] Project.

AUSTIN (overlapping): [chuckling] Good.

JACK (overlapping): Gotta have a project.

KEITH: Just a... just a self-assigned...

JACK (overlapping): It's like, you're learning.

KEITH (overlapping): ...commercial project?

[Austin chuckling.]

JACK: [matter-of-factly] Yeah.

AUSTIN: All right. Uhh, who's—I think that's where we leave you. You're writing— You're taking these notes. Who's next? Who wants to introduce their Kid?

SYLVIA: I have an idea for one.

AUSTIN: All right, what's up with CC?

SYLVIA: So I think, like... the way it is—like, CC's just, like, got home, and there's, like... a pizza, probably, [amused] from this fucking Upper Crust place, [**Austin:** Yeah. Yeah.] like, on the kitchen table, while her parents are both, like, in the basement or whatever, packing up shit.

AUSTIN: Mhmm.

SYLVIA: Um... And she just sorta, like... [chuckling] This has kind of clearly become, like, a regular thing. So she's just kinda like,

(as **CC**): [resigned] Yeah, okay...

SYLVIA: Takes a bit and then goes up to her room. The house has, like, got a bunch of stuff in boxes right now.

AUSTIN: [sympathetically] Mhmm.

SYLVIA: But... she very clearly has not been take— like, packing up her stuff. Um, like... her room is basically the only things that's, like... untouched right now. The only thing that hints to the fact that she'd be moving is that there's an empty cardboard box in the corner that she needs to put stuff into.

AUSTIN: [chuckling] So, if you're at that stage, are you like, a week out?

SYLVIA: I think it's, like, um...

AUSTIN: Like, later-this-month type... thing?

SYLVIA: Yeah. Like, end-of-the-month type thing. It's not quite, like, next week, but it's like—this is start— this is officially, like, happening soon.

AUSTIN: Yeah. [more somber] Yeah. Um, did we decide where you're moving to? Was it Blough?

[40 minutes]

SYLVIA: I *think* we just said it was somewhere through the tunnel. [**Austin:** Okay.] I dunno if we decided it was Blough or Bluff.

AUSTIN: Okay. Um...

SYLVIA: Also, I do have a name... [**Austin:** (inviting) Please.] for, um... Cory's brother, who is not home right now [**Austin:** Okay.]—okay, I have *two* names. One of them— I kinda wanna name him [amused] Ian Curtis.

AUSTIN: [chuckling] [amused] Okay! Good!

SYLVIA: Um... But... [amused] I feel like that might be too much. The other one is Theodore, [Dre chuckling] which I just think is a nice name. So...

AUSTIN: Theodore is a good name.

SYLVIA: Let's just do Theodore.

AUSTIN: Okay.

SYLVIA: I don't wanna– I don't wanna... piss off any goths right now.

AUSTIN: Ya know, but shout outs to Ian Curtis [SYLVIA: Shout outs] in this moment. You know what I'm saying? Umm.. I saw New Order was trending today so that of course made me think about Joy Division... [SYLVIA: [dismayed] Oh god] uhhh... alright, I'm gonna write that down real quick. [slowly] Theodore... Is Theodore a [emphasis] Theodore or a TeDREy or a...

SYLVIA: I think a Theo.

AUSTIN: Theo! I like that.

SYLVIA: Yeah

AUSTIN: Theo.. Curtis... CC's brother. [pause] Okay um so um uh [sigh] So what are you doing– so now you're home. You're not packing. What are you doing instead of packing up?

SYLVIA: I think she's uh she's like hanging out on her bed listening to like music. Probably, especially after having to play like jazz all day [AUSTIN: yeah] she's- [chuckling] listening to like uh some CD that her big brother gave her...

AUSTIN: Right totally you have one of those like big chunky CD players [SYLVIA: Yeah] that are like the round ones that have like the quote-unquote skip protection [SYLVIA: [gleeful] oh my god] that like if you drop it it will.. [SYLVIA: [excited] Yes! Absolutely.] it doesn't actually prevent it from skipping but it does maybe prevent it from doing damage or something you know? ummm..

SYLVIA: Yeah it was like.. umm it was her Christmas gift a couple years ago.

AUSTIN: [satisfied] Perfect. Yeah. Ummm... [chuckles] God...

SYLVIA: There's so- There's a couple dents.

AUSTIN: Right uh.. so I think um... What type of– what type of– Are you in a house? Are you in a- an apartment? [inviting] What is the...

SYLVIA: I– so I– I– I– So I picture it as being a house [**Austin:** okay] but that's probably just because of my suburban childhood [**AUSTIN:** yeah that's fine] sort of just defaults to that.

AUSTIN: For what it's worth Atlantic City is this weird mix of both houses [**SYLVIA:** Yeah.] and apartments because it's [**SYLVIA:** I figured] blends. Um but [**SYLVIA:** Yeah] I think you get a knock on your– your window which has happened before, and it's Theo coming back home trying to sneak in without getting into trouble. Umm and.. How old is he?

SYLVIA: Ummmm I'd say he's like sixteen, seventeen [**AUSTIN:** Okay yeah]. Like four or five years older uhh..

AUSTIN: Then– Then– Then you hear the sound of a car door being closed as quietly as possible but not quietly enough. Umm and then you know the car drives away and then you hear like ya know... I don't know if he's climbing a lattice or he's put a– a ladder up [chuckle] next to your window...

SYLVIA: [chuckling] Yeah I feel like this is like so- they–they've sort of figured out like a ladder system [**AUSTIN:** Yeah totally] of some sort [**AUSTIN:** totally] here this is not like a new thing

AUSTIN: Totally... So I think the camera sees him climbing before maybe you hear... hear him and then like a knock on the window gets your..

(as **THEO**): [stage whispering] CC! CC!

SYLVIA: I just like hurry over. Ta– like toss my headphones or no wait I'm playing this not without– I'm not using headphones–

AUSTIN: You're just– you're just using speaker [**SYLVIA:** absolutely]. Yeah yeah yeah [**SYLVIA:** yeah]. You have it plugged in–

SYLVIA: -just like pauses it real quick and just runs over.

AUSTIN: You have it plugged to like one of those old PC speakers that like don't- [**SYLVIA:** [mock horror]: oh my god] that are just like miserable tinny–

SYLVIA: I used to actually do that.

AUSTIN: Me too!

KEITH: [overlapping] Those horrible little beige ones with the one inch drivers.

AUSTIN: Yeah, uh huh, yes.

AUSTIN: You open the window, and he comes in, and notices the box is empty and I think he says like

(as Theo): you haven't started yet either huh?

SYLVIA (as CC): I mean it's (sigh) one it's not like i have that much stuff anyway **(ooc:** she gestures to a lot of stuff that she has) **[AUSTIN:** yeah uh-huh] and I don't know I figured dad'll do it if I wait long enough

AUSTIN: um, uh.. Also I think, I wanna- I'm gonna cast Theo as like extremely 90's grunge vibes **[SYLVIA:** yeah] right? Um uh today is like ya know red plaid shirt with some sort of band tee underneath.

KEITH: That doesn't sound 90s grunge, that sounds timeless

AUSTIN: It's- well it is. It is timeless ummm [laughs] we can all be so lucky to still look like 90s grunge umm.

SYLVIA: I'm trying.

AUSTIN: [laughs] He says

(as Theo): Listen, I don't wanna do it anymore than you do. You gotta keep up appearances right? So.. get a couple things in the box um and if they ask you, you know, say you're having trouble prioritizing. **[KEITH:** oooo] They'll love that you used that word.

Sylvia (as CC): Wait one sec.

(ooc) Uh I think CC moves it like writes it down on like a sticky note or something? It's spelled wrong too **[AUSTIN:** yeah of course]

(as CC) [defeated]: Yeah sure. I'll try that next time. I guess. Uhh You havin.. Where- **[AUSTIN (as THEO):** ahh] You've been goin' out a lot. You- everything cool?

Austin (as THEO): Yeah everything is good. I'm just- you don't worry about it Ceec.

Sylvia (As CC): The concert went really good today

Austin (as THEO): Oh hell yeah! Nice. **[SYLVIA (as CC):** Yeah] Would you-

Sylvia (as CC): I mean Mr. Garrett is still like a total dork **[AUSTIN (as THEO):** Yeah dude's a dweeb] but like it went pretty good.

Austin (as THEO): Yeah don't let him give you shit, okay?

(ooc) [laughing]: and like really enjoys that he said "shit" to his younger sister

SYLVIA: Oh! CC loves it. She's like wow!

Austin (as THEO): Anyway I gotta go do some stuff. But if you- if Mom asks I was here the whole time. We were just here hanging out, listening to music, alright?

Sylvia (as CC): Yeah for sure. [remembering] Oh, dad got pepperoni down- **[AUSTIN (as THEO):** (sighs, exasperated) it's fine] yeah I know it's fine.

Austin (as THEO): If I wanted to eat pizza we would just stay— (sighs) it's fine. If you need anything I'll be down in my room.

Sylvia (as CC): Yeah for sure. (calling out) See you Theo!

AUSTIN: Doesn't even, is- just is gone. You know what I mean? He has to be some degree-

[SYLVIA: yeah] he clearly loves you, but he has to be a little cooler than thou still, right?

[SYLVIA: absolutely]. So leaves.

SYLVIA: He goes by Theo!

AUSTIN: He goes by Theo and calls you "Ceec" so.. **[SYLVIA: yeah]** umm. Alright. Uh which leaves us with Nolan I believe. **[KEITH: yeah]** 10 years old, back from the band uh competition

[KEITH: Uh hmm] show. What's your night like?

KEITH: Ummmmm my night. Well I had-

AUSTIN: Is your bedtime earlier than everybody else's?

KEITH: Eyuhhhhhhhhhh **[SYLVIA: sharp laughter]** No- **[AUSTIN: Are you past bedtime at this point?]** Nolan might be a tough kid to give a bedtime to-

AUSTIN: Yeah, fair.

KEITH: Like I'll say, yes there's a bedtime. But also 10 year olds get tired [pause] sooner than it would be a real problem that it's maybe a little too late.

AUSTIN: Gotcha.Yeah.

KEITH: Ya know? May- so I had two angles on it. Umm I was considering maybe doing the scene where Nolan gets grounded?

AUSTIN: Ahhhhh.

KEITH: Or doing something that would, would lead Nolan to be grounded were he not already grounded, if he got caught doing it.

AUSTIN: Let's go with the former, or? [**KEITH:** Okay] No I think, let's go with the latter because the problem is that you're grounded until further notice and so that should be established at the point of hitting play on this game. You know what I mean? [**KEITH:** Right] So let's do like, let's do the like your grounding gets extended thing.

KEITH: Right. This is the— [**AUSTIN:** Another week] another right, or another week, when is that? I don't know. I don't know when another week is. [**AUSTIN:** Now we take your privileges away, on top of that.]

AUSTIN: So what is it? What is the thing that you do to get in trouble? To get yourself grounded again?

KEITH: [sighs] Yeah so, I think that- my idea was that I got caught operating a rival school store.

[**Sylvia** laughing in the background.]

AUSTIN: [amused scoff] Like selling pencils and— [**KEITH:** yeah] books and candy:

KEITH [continuing]: juice boxes and sticky hands [**AUSTIN:** yeah] tops. Umm stuff that was— they didn't have good enough stuff at the school store. They got rid of the sticky hands and *banned* sticky hands [**AUSTIN:** uh hmm] from the school store. And so I was like so if I got some of that and some soda? [**AUSTIN:** yeah] I could make a killing. People need- kids need sticky hands.

AUSTIN [laughing]: You know, it's true. So that already happened you're saying? Or are you saying that the— umm that there would then be a—

KEITH [interrupting]: This would be like a phone call from— from Mr. Garrett or whoever.

AUSTIN: Right. So yeah. How about this? What if Mr. Garrett gives you a— a letter to give to your parents when you get home. But what you didn't know is that he also called your parents and said [**KEITH:** okay] and said you know—

(**as MR. GARRETT**): Nolan has a letter to give you when you get home.

(**ooc**): You know what I mean? [**KEITH:** Right. Ugh the worst.] You get this- you get trapped here. Because if you don't give it to them [**KEITH:** Which I won't] then you're in trouble. Right. And so. I think your mom—

(as NOLAN'S MOM): So how did the show go?

Keith (as NOLAN): Umm... yeah we won.

[Austin and Sylvia laughing.]

Austin (as NOLAN'S MOM): Good. Good. How was— how did your part go?

Keith (as NOLAN): I didn't—

AUSTIN: Like hands— what's your mom like? Tell me what your mom's like before I just start assigning qualities.

KEITH [slowly, as if thinking out loud]: Ummm she is uhhh nice and you know like there's— I think there's a kind of mom that's like— not lax. Like uhh.. To a point. Like there's a point where you crossed the line of like— this is what you've done with the freedom that I gave you?

AUSTIN: Yeah uh huh Yes. So I think she's like big hair, big glasses [**KEITH:** Yup], pink denim shirt tucked into jeans [**KEITH:** Curly], curly hair, yeah etc. So yeah, says-

[50 minutes]

(as NOLAN'S MOM): So how was your part?

Keith (as NOLAN): I did good. I recorded it.

Austin (as NOLAN'S MOM): Oh? Can I hear?

Keith (as NOLAN): Yeah they make us record it. It's fun too.

AUSTIN: Umm yeah and hands out— puts out her hand as if to give me— as if to receive the cassette. [pauses]. Puts it in her pocket and then puts her hand back out.

(as NOLAN'S MOM): [with a leading tone]: Is there anything else you want to give me Nolan?

Keith (as NOLAN): [scoffs] Fine.

(ooc): And I give her a hug

[Sylvia and Austin laugh.]

AUSTIN: And then she says-

(as NOLAN'S MOM): Anything else?

Keith (as NOLAN): No. I was gonna go to my room and read.

Austin (as NOLAN'S MOM): Alright you go to your room and read. [with a leading tone] But if you can think of anything else you're supposed to give me in the next ten minutes, you better do it.

Keith (as NOLAN): Uhhh...

Austin (as NOLAN'S MOM): I have- dinner will be ready soon.

Keith (as NOLAN): Okay.

(ooc): I can tell that she knows now. That was too much of a hint.

AUSTIN: Uh huh. [everyone laughs] Again, she's giving you the opportunity to **[KEITH: Yeah]** (laughing) take responsibility.

KEITH: Yeah. Uhhh I have- I wonder what the note is. I wonder if I can rewrite the note to be like, [laughter from other players] less bad.

AUSTIN: That sounds like you wanna introduce trouble to me.

KEITH: Yeah

AUSTIN: Uhh so I say that because scenes, umm, I believe it's the case that like mundane scenes do not by default have trouble in them. **[KEITH: Right]**. When you're in this kind of mundane space it is supposed to be fundamentally safe for you. **[KEITH: Yes]** I mean I guess it's possible that we can- maybe that's not true. Maybe that's only in your kind of recovery scenes actually now that I think about it. In any case, it does sound like you're introducing some basic trouble here. So **[KEITH: Yeah]** you wanna try to rewrite this to make it-

KEITH: Or to like white-out a key word or something. I guess it depends on how much trouble I'm in for doing this.

AUSTIN: Yeah I mean the the note basically says- In my mind this is a note saying "You've continued to run your illicit school store and this time you brought it into another city [widespread laughter from the cast] and the- the other-"

KEITH and DRE [in unison in mock-seriousness]: Crossing state lines!

AUSTIN: Yeah, basically across state lines. **[KEITH:** Crossing town lines is unacceptable!] "Unacceptable! You could've got us in trouble with the other team. There are rules and regulations about concession stand operations." **[Sylvia laughing.]** Mr Garrett is very pissed about this. **[KEITH:** Contract violations] Yeah exactly.

KEITH: Umm that sounds like...that sounds like a rewrite. It sounds like I can't just white-out something.

AUSTIN: Yeah this is a bigger thing. So I think this is a- I think this that is a- we should do a roll anyways? **[KEITH:** Yeah] Just to see how it goes. So the way that the dice work in this game- I'll just read from the book here. "So trouble is something that prevents kids from doing something. It can be a bad thing that's about to happen or a possibility fraught with danger. It is the game master's job to create trouble, but the kids can also get themselves into trouble," **[laughing]** which is what we're doing here. **[KEITH laughs].**

"Trouble is woven into the conversation described by the game master as people and creatures doing things or as something happening. The game masters asks you uh how to- how you react and you may try to overcome it somehow or ignore it and let it happen **[KEITH:** Oh]. The dice roll- you describe how you try to overcome the trouble and what you're trying to accomplish. The game master may ask for more details if they think the situation is unclear, or may ask you to change your mind if you're trying to do something that is impossible. Grab a number of dice equal to your score in the attribute you use then add more dice equal to your level in the corresponding skill. If there isn't any suitable skill, only roll for the attribute. Every six rolled is a success, and in most cases only one success is needed to overcome trouble."

I do think that this is an overc- a single success thing. This is not- **[KEITH:** Yeah] you're not up against the weird or something with a special attribute or anything like that.

KEITH: I do ha- I do have an angle rewriting- forging a note sounds really hard for a ten year old to do. **[AUSTIN:** Uh-huh] So my new angle is maybe I can find an old note that I never gave. In my backpack full of papers and stuff.

AUSTIN: Yeeeeeaaah. Huh, what would that be? What type of roll would that be? Ummm...that to me feels like maybe it's, hmmm investigate? Find hidden objects? Yeah. **[KEITH:** Yeah, well it's not quite hidden]. Find hidden objects, understand clues. I mean you specifically said find an old note **[KEITH:** Sure, yeah, yeah]. So that's... 'cause there just isn't another- I guess have right piece of information or be able to find it at the school library? Kind of close for comprehend? Um I'm not even looking at what your skills are so this is not me being like "what do you have good at?" **[KEITH:** Yeah] You do not have any Comprehend. Umm...it's not Tinker. It's not Program. It's not Speak. It's not Move. It's not Lead. It's not Force. It's not Calculate. It's not Charm? I guess it's sort of Charm. It's lying.

KEITH: Charm would be- **[AUSTIN:** Charm li-] if she is still suspicious but- **[laughs]** **[AUSTIN:** Yeah. **[more assured]** Yeah.] That would be Charm.

AUSTIN: Umm...that would be Charm. That would be the- that would be the like [exaggerated confusion] "Hmmm I don't know about this."

KEITH: But if I don't have— **[AUSTIN:** Umm.] But if I don't have a skill that makes sense then it would be just a straight attribute right?

AUSTIN: Right, but I guess- I guess— here's the question. What's the- what's interesting to the camera? Is the thing that's interesting for the camera whether you find an old note or whether you're able to pass an old note off? Which to me I think it's passing the old note off, right?

KEITH: Yeah. Yeah.

AUSTIN: To me that's Charm. Heart, Charm then, right? **[KEITH:** Yeah] So you find an old note. What's the old note say?

KEITH: Consistently late. Consistently late both to class and to practice **[AUSTIN:** Mm-hmm.]. We don't understand where he is when he's late. We give him ample time to show up. Band practice takes place a full half hour after the end of class. Whatever.

AUSTIN: And he doesn't show up on time! **[KEITH:** [mumbling] Doesn't show up on time] [laughing] And every time he's late! So then— so then yeah, you find that note. You switch it out. You somehow make the date right on it. It's like one of those things where you turn the— a one into a nine. **[KEITH:** [overlapping] to a nine.] Yeah whatever it is **[KEITH:** Or a seven]. Or a seven **[KEITH:** [overlapping] One is great. You can do a lot of stuff with that.]. One is a great—you can do a lot with a one [laughs].

KEITH: You can do a lot with a one when you're ten.

AUSTIN: You can turn a one into a "t" if you need to and [laughing] then write "it's the date." You can write whatever date you want!

[Cast laughing.]

AUSTIN: So, so yeah! So you go to your mom. What do you say when you give her this note?

Keith (as NOLAN): (sighs) Okay mom, I had time to decompress.

AUSTIN: Hand back out the same way.

Keith (as NOLAN): I have this note that Mr. Garrett gave me to give to you

Austin (as NOLAN'S MOM): [exhaustedly] Well I'm glad you didn't lie about it. It takes a big man to step up and admit that—

Keith (as NOLAN): [interrupting] Mr. Garrett's annoying.

Austin (as NOLAN'S MOM): Well, you're gonna learn that a lot of people are annoying honey, and being a grown-up in this world means dealing with them and being polite and civil anyway. So, let me see this note.

(ooc): Takes a look at the note. Give me your roll.

KEITH: Clearly like three month old paper.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. "You describe how you try to overcome the trouble and what you're trying to accomplish. The game master may ask for more details if they think the situation is unclear, or may ask you to change your mind if you're trying to do something that is impossible. Grab a number of dice equal to your score in the attribute you use then add more dice equal to your level in the corresponding skill. If there isn't any suitable skill, only roll for the attribute." So this is actually a really high thing for you. 'Cause you started with what? You started with a four in Heart? **[KEITH:** Yeah] Is that even— one second. I just wanna make sure of a thing.

KEITH: I thought it was one two three four.

AUSTIN: Is that right?

KEITH: I think that was what everyone has is one, two, three, four.

AUSTIN: Oh is it? Is that true? Does everyone else have one, two, three, four? No. Oh, it can't be that because everybody has up to their age, right? **[KEITH:** Right] So you have the right total for sure **[KEITH:** Okay]. I just wanted to make sure you can start with a four. Does anyone else have a four to start with?

DRE: [hesitantly] Yes. **[AUSTIN:** Okay we're fine] I believe I have a four in body.

AUSTIN: Then fuck it, we're good. Um, so yeah ,give me four from Heart plus— what's your Charm, two?

KEITH: Two.

AUSTIN: Damn, roll six dice. You just need a six on six die. So 4d— 6d6? 6d6? You just need one six.

KEITH: I just need one six. Although that's— I mean that's a one out of six chance six times. So it's only just like —

AUSTIN: No it's— you should get this is the- the **[KEITH: Yeah]**. You know? Not getting it would be wild.

KEITH: One six. There we go.

AUSTIN: Wow you got the one six. That's math for you. So she looks at this. She looks back up at you. She says—

(as NOLAN'S MOM): Mr. Garrett really made it sound worse than this. You're just— hmm you have to be on time.

Keith (as NOLAN): He's always said that "timeliness is next to godliness."

Austin (as NOLAN'S MOM): [sighs] He's not supposed to talk about God in school.

Keith (as NOLAN): I agree, I told him that.

Austin (as NOLAN'S MOM): [overlapping] I'll have to talk to him about this. Where are you going between classes and band practice, honey?

Keith (as NOLAN): Um.. bathroom and me time.

[JACK laughing.]

Austin (as NOLAN'S MOM): Me time's important.

Keith (as NOLAN): Yup.

Austin (as NOLAN'S MOM): Anyway why don't you go get yourself a little me time before spaghetti's ready?

Keith (as NOLAN): Thank you. I love Spaghetti's Ready.

Austin (as NOLAN'S MOM): (singing tunelessly) "Spaghetti's ready. Spaghetti's ready."

(ooc): The hot song right now. **[KEITH laughs]** It's like a kid's song. It's like a song from some sort of show you watched when you were six. You know what I mean?

KEITH: Right, like some like Raffi shit.

AUSTIN: Yeah exactly like that **[DRE: Oh yeah]**. And it's like a thing that like the two of you bonded over. "Spaghetti's ready." You like to say "spaghetti's ready" back and forth even when it's not spaghetti night.

JACK: Yeah it's just..there was no spaghetti tonight.

AUSTIN: No.

KEITH: Yeah it was just that food's coming.

[1 hour]

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Yeah, dinner's ready.

KEITH: [overlapping] Any food.

AUSTIN: Yeah, exactly. [singsong] "Spaghetti's ready!," [laughing] she'll say, calling down the hall.

KEITH: It's like a pudding cup [laughing].

AUSTIN: It's a pudding cup, yeah.

JACK: All your friends are just like, "does he eat spaghetti all the time?"

[**AUSTIN** and **KEITH** laughing.]

SYLVIA: "Yeah, I think Nolan's Italian or something, I don't know."

AUSTIN: [laughing] Yeah.

JACK: "He's always eating spaghetti."

AUSTIN: "Always eating spaghetti!"

JACK: [laughing, singsong] "Spaghetti's ready!"

AUSTIN: [laughs] Um, uh, and so the night comes to a close. Um, the next day is Saturday, which means you all know that you can go hang out in your headquarters, uh, your, your little, your little hangout club. Um, you'll note that the way that this map-

KEITH: I'm going to sneak out. I'm still grounded.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Right. You do have to sneak out.

KEITH: [overlapping] I didn't get more grounded just then. But.

AUSTIN: You didn't, you didn't, and I'm glad we didn't commit to that because the way it turned out was even more fun. But you're still grounded, you're not un-grounded now. **[KEITH: Right.]** Um, you'll note- so, so there's this area that's been marked off by- in red, that's Bluffington Beach. Um, fictionally we know that this is tied to some stuff that's come up in previous intros, um, that like basically there was an old guy who owned some land here and bought more land and eventually...basically like, established it as its own, like, its own township, um, that had slightly different laws than Atlantic City? Um, but it is functionally part of Atlantic City. Um, and, uh, the, the inside of that zone includes where your headquarters are.

There's this kind of marshland, um, that is the kind of green area, uh, that you can see kind of to the northwest of the like, lighthouse and all that other stuff. And in, in that marshland- and it's also kind of like swampy, there's like, you know, there are some trees there. Um, I think in my mind, what's basically happened here is ever since the...god, what was the name of the...Dre, you were in that game. What was the name of that- also, Sylvi was there too, you both were in that game. The Bluff City-

SYLVIA: [overlapping] The, uh, Chase the Devil game?

AUSTIN: Yes, the Chase the Devil game. What was the name of that arc?

DRE: Ooooo.

AUSTIN: We had a name for it, because all these have arc names...

DRE: [in background] Uhhhhhhh. I forget.

AUSTIN: "Moving Pictures." **[DRE: Oh, okay.]** Ever since the "Moving Pictures" stuff, um, that area has like become almost more like a nature reserve? Um, there are still some of the old buildings from Bluff City Studios, which we talked about last time, that have been abandoned, um, uh, but have been- um, many of them have been retrofitted or have been removed. Um, I've left it on the map entirely so that we know like that's basically where some of that stuff would have been. Um, uh, some other stuff kind of near you, so...we talked about your HQ being a little, like, um, uh, what, what do you call that in a- in the trees, when there's like a, like a [sighs]...an opening inside of a forest, there's a name for that, why am I blanking on this? **[DRE: Oh.]** Like a clearing basically?

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Um, uh, uh, a glade, I guess is what I meant? Um, where there's like an old building that was like a prop storage facility, that you've transferred into your hideout, and there's also a treehouse that you have near there. Um, through the marsh, up to the north, beyond the old Bluff City Studios' uh, structures, there is a secret tunnel en- entrance, which we talked about that you've gone up there and seen some of the tunnel, um, some of like the, the support facility,

uh, areas, in the tunnel, these kind of old empty offices? You haven't gone deep there yet, but that stuff's up there.

And then across the way there's kind of a- so there's kind of a highway that splits the island you're on in half, um, and on the other side of that highway there is an old creepy boathouse, that is like in the middle of the marsh, and it's higher than the water at this point, it's like up on stilts. Um, so it's higher than even the marsh water. Um, but there is like a boat there, and you try to stay away from there, because it's old and it's creepy. Um, but I'm sure you've had nights where you've dared each other to get as close as possible, you know? Um, what are you doing this next day in the HQ? What is the...what is, what is the hang out like? Talk to me about- about what a Saturday is with your group of friends.

KEITH: Uh, I'm picturing some like scattered, like not just yard games but like, like different-different activities?

JACK: Mhm.

KEITH: Like maybe there's a darts thing or some other game- like loose games sort of all- all over the place.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

KEITH: Um.

[pause]

JACK: Smash.

KEITH: Oh, we got an N64 here?

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Yeeeaah.

[SYLVIA laughs.]

AUSTIN: You're playing Smash Brothers?

JACK: Yeah.

DRE: Oh hell yeah.

AUSTIN: Um, okay but then-

DRE: Who's Nintendo 64 is it?

AUSTIN: That's exactly it-

DRE: [overlapping] That's an important question.

JACK: [overlapping] Yeah.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] It has to be N64 Smash, it can't be- your, your like-

JACK: [overlapping] [laughs] It's not Switch or whatever.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Uh huh. It has to be that, that- maybe it's like a remake of the '99 Smash, you know, of the N64 Smash?

KEITH: It- I- just throwing it out there, since you know we are talk- we are in sort of like, uh, we are playing a game that is ba- like 80s centric?

AUSTIN: Yes.

KEITH: This could also be a uh, uh, a non-existent like, um, like Super Nintendo, uh, like Super Nintendo Star Fox but it's like a Smash that doesn't actually exist.

AUSTIN: Yeah. I like- **JACK:** Oooh yeah.] It's like that style, it's like Smash Zero, and it's meant to be, it's basically like multiplayer um, SNES but like uh, like Star Fox graphics, you mean, right? Like that style of like 3dfx-

JACK: Ooooh man!

AUSTIN: ...super low poly. The rules actually...

JACK: [overlapping] I mean, I want to play this!

DRE: Yeah. Uh huh, someone should make that.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Yep! [laughs] Um, uh. So yeah, you're all hanging out there, um, uh... Yeah, I, I would just love to hear y'all interact a little bit and get a vibe for like what it's like. Um, is everyone playing? Is anyone just kind of goofing off, etc.

JACK: Uh, I think Frankie uh, says, um...

Jack (as FRANKIE): Are you still grounded, Nolan?

Keith (as NOLAN): Yeah, still grounded. I don't know.

Jack (as FRANKIE): Why?

Keith (as NOLAN): Probably like a long time.

Jack (as FRANKIE): For what- what did they get you for this time?

Keith (as NOLAN): Stuff that's just...I don't know, just...annoying. Just...I don't know.

Jack (as FRANKIE): Yeah.

Keith (as NOLAN): Like four things.

[**AUSTIN** laughs]

Jack (as FRANKIE): Like four things.

Keith (as NOLAN): Yeah.

Jack (as FRANKIE): [overlapping] Damn. I mean, da- dang.

Keith (as NOLAN): Yeah.

Dre (as RONNY): Wait, if you're grounded, how are you here?

Keith (as NOLAN): I left.

Jack (as FRANKIE): [overlapping] Cause he's cool as hell!

Keith (as NOLAN): Nah.

Jack (as FRANKIE): [overlapping] Yeah.

Keith (as NOLAN): Nah.

Dre (as RONNY): Wait-

Keith (as NOLAN): No, I just left from my window! You can just jump out your window!

Jack (as FRANKIE): I can't, I live on the...

Syliva (as CC): I got a ladder-

Keith (as NOLAN): Yeah.

Syliva (as CC): -sort of situation. Usually.

Keith (as NOLAN): Yeah, get like a fire escape, you know.

Dre (as RONNY): Wouldn't you get more grounded if you get caught?

Keith (as NOLAN): I'm already more grounded.

Jack (as FRANKIE): Oh, did you do that thing again? Did you change the one into like an "it's."

[KEITH laughs.]

Jack (as FRANKIE): As in, "it's the date."

[AUSTIN laughs.]

Keith (as NOLAN): No, I mean, I just, when you get grounded for- you can't, I can't be- there's no- I can't be any more grounded, I already am not supposed to do anything.

Dre (as RONNY): But...won't it end eventually, as long as you don't get in more trouble?

Keith (as NOLAN): [pause] What do you mean?

[SYLVIA laughs.]

Dre (as RONNY): But like, you're only supposed to be grounded for like, a set period of time, right? Like you gotta get ungrounded at some point.

Keith (as NOLAN): They said until further notice. So it's-

Jack (as FRANKIE): That means forever.

Dre (as RONNY): Oh.

Keith (as NOLAN): That means forever.

Dre (as RONNY): Okay. I see- I kinda, I kinda get where you're coming from now.

Keith (as NOLAN): They've think I've been- I mean, I've been mostly good. Mostly.

Jack (as FRANKIE): Yeah!

Keith (as NOLAN): And so...and they're not even mad at me anymore but I'm still not allowed to do anything.

Dre (as RONNY): That sucks.

Keith (as NOLAN): Yeah I don't even watch TV. I mean, I don't even watch TV when they're at home.

AUSTIN: Speaking of TV, the sound of static pervades the air from outside your clubhouse.

SYLVIA: [in background] Oh great.

AUSTIN: It sounds like maybe there's a speaker or something that is projecting the static, you're not sure.

SYLVIA: I think like CC just like assumes, like, cause she's probably like playing the- she just assumes it's like, her speaker from home that she brought?

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

Sylvia: And is like (**as CC**): Can someone turn that off? Yeah, I don't know why...stop touching my stuff, Nolan.

KEITH: Nolan just does whatever noise the speaker is making like "pksh pksh pksh" [static noises], just does it.

AUSTIN: Can Nolan make any sound?

KEITH: Um...no. Nolan is too young to make any sound.

AUSTIN: I see. He's not developed-

JACK: [overlapping] Ah. {indistinct}

[**Dre** laughs.]

KEITH: Nolan will try to make any sound.

AUSTIN: Good. Good. Yes. Good. I like this.

JACK: Um, I think like: outside shot of the door, and uh, Frank's head just peeks out of the door looking, looking at whatever is outside.

AUSTIN: [sighs] The thing that's outside is kind of hard to describe because it's uh, it's almost like there's a filter or an effect happening. Um, and it clears up for you pretty quickly but the static sound remains. And in fact you can only see the, the same effect kind of in the distance.

For a moment it's as if...it's as if the world around you is f...not flickering, not like turning on and off, um, but is, um, kind of wavering? It's like there's a second layer of reality and it's, it's not in line with-

KEITH: [overlapping] Like when it's hot? Like when it's hot in-

AUSTIN: A little bit like that. Yes, that's, that's a good way of- that's a good uh, analogy for what's happening here, yeah, that style of like heat mirage. You know in the distance you can see, kind of see the way heat waves, like the heat makes things kind of blurry.

KEITH: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Uh, it's similar to that, but it's in line with the static noise that's happening. And it clears up as soon as your, your door opens, except that in the distance you can see some elements of the, the what's happening like off in the distance, or some of what, what you're seeing, it's still doing that? So like over beyond the old creepy boathouse, maybe, maybe it's like all the way to like here, um, um, across from the cove, um, there are these big windmills, um, these big white windmills and those still have that same effect when you look out over them. Um, uh, and it's as if they are again like flickering or wavering in the distance. Um, and on top of that it's kind of an overcast, you know, wintery day, and for at least a second it feels like the sky has taken on the character of static. Not to bite William Gibson too much here but-

[1 hour 10 minutes]

[Jack laughs.]

AUSTIN: Like, that, that's the vibe.

[Dre laughs.]

JACK: Dang.

AUSTIN: And there's maybe something else, but I mean, I should emphasize something here, which is that you're in your hideout, and I can't bring trouble to your hideout, right? That's, that's- you're safe here, you really are. But I can certainly make it knock at the door, and entice you to follow it.

KEITH: Do we all see this, or just, um, just Frank-

AUSTIN: I think only Frank stuck her head out at this point. [**KEITH:** Okay.] Um, someone else can also stick their head out and see the same thing.

Jack (as FRANKIE): Guys, the sky! The sky is like...like...like goofed up.

[Keith laughs.]

Sylvia (as CC): What?

JACK (as Frankie): Like around the windmills.

Dre (as RONNY): Okay.

JACK (as Frankie): The sky!

Dre (as RONNY): You think it's going to snow?

Jack (as FRANKIE): Yeah, I don't know, maybe. It's, it's like... (laughs). Come on, come, come and look.

JACK: And I step out of the, of the HQ. I think I'm carrying like, I think I was playing like quoits or horseshoes or something, I think I'm like carrying a horseshoe or something. Uh.

KEITH: I think, um...

AUSTIN: I'm renaming HQ to hideout on the map because HQ is not what...it's a fucking hideout, right?

KEITH: Fort.

[Dre laughs.]

JACK: Yeah! Yeah, it's a f- it's a...yeah.

AUSTIN: Anyway. What do you do? Sorry.

JACK: [sighs musically]: It looks like it's-

AUSTIN: Does everyone come out at that point?

SYLVIA: Yeah, I'm going to run on over.

DRE: [overlapping] Yeah.

Jack (as FRANKIE): Yeah, it's like goofing up the windmills over there.

Sylvia (as CC): Huh.

KEITH: I think, I think Nolan is slightly suspicious, I think this is the sort of, I think this is the sort of prank that a bunch of 12-year-olds might play on a 10-year-old to making, uh- making him look outside when there's nothing?

Jack (as FRANKIE): Nolan! Nolan!

Dre (as RONNY): Nolan, come on! It's all higgledy-piggledy out here! You gotta see it!

Jack (as FRANKIE): (overlapping) Nolan, come on, Nolan!

Sylvia (as CC): (overlapping) It's seriously goofed up out there.

Jack (as FRANKIE): Nolan, it's goofed up like a TV turned to a dead channel.

Keith (as NOLAN): [overlapping] Fine, I'll look, fine, I'll look, I'll look. If it's faked I'm going to be annoyed.

AUSTIN: [laughs] Uh, it's real.

SYLVIA: (laughs)

AUSTIN: Um, and at this point I would love for y'all to do a mind, um, check? I think it's mind plus investigate here. Uh, tell me what you're rolling before you roll it, and also let me just make sure there's not a, uh- I guess, I guess maybe what we should be doing is...let's see, "one kid may help another overcome trouble, kids may never get help," um, I trying to see if there's like a group roll...

KEITH: [overlapping] I've got, I've got a 3d6 here.

AUSTIN: Actually, you know who should be doing this, actually there's only one person who can do this [**KEITH:** Okay.] right, I think. Who is actually Ronny, probably. Mmm? You know, let me do it the other way. [**KEITH:** overlapping Okay.]

AUSTIN: Ronny, take a plus- take an extra die on this.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: But everybody else- everyone can roll, again, it's mind plus uh, plus investigate. [**KEITH:** Alright.] So tell me what you're rolling and then roll it.

KEITH: I'm rolling three.

SYLVIA: [overlapping] I think I have, uh four?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

SYLVIA: Cause I have a three in mind and then one in investigate.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: I am rolling seven?

AUSTIN: Jesus Christ. No successes from- nope, none from CC, none from Nolan, oh my god-

KEITH: Three! Whoa!

DRE: Whoa!

KEITH: What do you get from that?

DRE: Uh-

AUSTIN: [overlapping] We'll get there, we'll get there. Frank, Frank got three successes-

DRE: [overlapping] Did you say I have a plus one?

AUSTIN: [overlapping] You get a plus one, yeah, you get a plus one.

KEITH: [overlapping] Oh, I actually think I do know what you get from that.

DRE: [overlapping] So that's four...

AUSTIN: And no successes from...from uh, from Ronny.

DRE: [overlapping] From Ronny.

SYLVIA: It's fine, Frank got enough.

KEITH: So is the thing that we get from this that it goes towards a counter and then later we might be able to give ourselves a little like bonus pool if we get too many sixes?

AUSTIN: No, you in fact can cash that in basically immediately. So let me, let me actually just read again from, from the book on how, how good successes like this (laughs) fucking work. Um, there- you can, you can- so let's say, let's say you'd failed this roll, you could push yourself by taking a condition and rerolling, conditions are sort of like HP. Right? Um, but you can also um...you can also uh, get a- get like an extra bonus on any roll when you get more successes than, than you needed. Um, and I'm, I'm just double checking something else, one second. Um. Okay. "If you roll more successes than you need, leftover success can sometimes be used to

'buy' beneficial bonus effects. Such effects are described for each skill. The same effect can be bought several times. The gamemaster decides which effects, if any, are suitable in any given situation." Um, uh, "If there isn't any risk of collateral damage you cannot choose 'you avoid any collateral damage.' You shouldn't need to buy effects to achieve what you set out to do," uh, "they are a means of getting more than you asked for." So, the um...ba ba ba...the bonus effect for, what was this, this was investigate, right?

JACK: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Uh, this was, this was...I don't think, I don't think attributes have bonus effects, I think only the skills do. Uh, and so the investigate bonus effects...sadly, are not listed on this cheat sheet that we have so I have to check-

JACK: Oh, they're here. Uh, it's...**AUSTIN:** Oh, are they?] Oh, they're just on the- in the book, I'm reading the book.

AUSTIN: Oh okay, gotcha gotcha gotcha, yeah, it's basically you get to ask an additional question and then, and then, yes you get plus one die, uh, when you use the information, up to plus three. So that means yes, you're going to get, uh-

JACK: Plus two, right?

AUSTIN: With three successes, you get plus two, yeah, up to, up to plus two uh, when you use the information. So the questions that you have here are: "What is hidden here and where?" Uh, you're asking two of these questions. Um, now I guess three because you're getting one additional question. "What is hidden here and where is it?" "What does it mean?" "What has happened here?" "How can I get into, out of, or past something?" "What threats can I perceive here?" "Where is it?" Uh, and so I'm going to basically say we shouldn't start narrating the scene and you can kind of come to those questions as you want, as you want to ask them **[JACK:** Yeah.] based on your, your perceptivity, your perception. Um, uh, and...um, the thing that you notice that no one else does is you go like "shh shh shh." Because underneath the static you hear the sound of a saxophone.

JACK: Ooh.

AUSTIN: Um, and you can follow that if you'd like to, to get closer to where, to what's going on.

Jack (as FRANKIE): Is someone playing the saxophone? Is someone playing the saxophone in the boathouse?

AUSTIN: I mean, you're not near the boathouse at this point, that's pretty, I mean-

JACK: [overlapping] No. No, I'm just taking a punt, I'm asking the, the other kids.

AUSTIN: Oh, okay.

Keith (as NOLAN): I'm not.

Jack (as FRANKIE): Can anyone else hear, hear a saxophone?

Sylvia (as CC): Uh I...

AUSTIN: Now that you've pointed it out if everyone's very quiet they can hear that.

KEITH: Hmm.

DRE: I assume-

Sylvia (as CC): Oh yeah, like a little!

DRE: I assume this is the, the solo that I heard?

AUSTIN: Correct.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: From your performance that no one else, no one else's tape picked up.

Dre (as RONNY): Oh yeah, this is, this is the, this is the piece that, that Jimmy played at-

AUSTIN: [overlapping] It's not.

Dre (as RONNY): -at the concert.

AUSTIN: Give me a, give me a- just roll- roll me a raw d6 real quick.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: Actually wait, there's an actual roll for this. There's an actual roll for this actually, Ronny. Give me a...hmmm, this is going to be...I think that this would be...heart? And empathize. [**DRE:** Whuh-oh.] Which I don't think you're particularly good at. [**DRE:** All right.] Right?

DRE: Nope, I got one in each.

AUSTIN: So give me a 2d6. No. Okay.

KEITH: Oh!

DRE: No.

SYLVIA: Oof.

AUSTIN: You can't quite remember the name of the person who played this.

DRE: Mmm.

KEITH: But you do know that it was on your tape.

DRE: I could still remember hearing it on the tape though right?

AUSTIN: You can remember hearing on the tape, you can remember hearing it at the performance because you could remember it on the tape.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: You don't - you can't quite remember who played it.

KEITH: Can I remember that it wasn't on my tape?

AUSTIN: [overlapping] No. Ah- no. I mean you know it's not on the tape, you don't remember ever hearing this before in your life.

KEITH: Okay. Um. I, I, I guess I mean would I, would I know that is, that it's- that that's- is it worth mention- like I listened to my tape and I didn't hear this.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Totally.

KEITH: So if you heard it, then what are you talking about.

AUSTIN: [laughs] Uh huh.

[Dre laughs.]

Dre (as RONNY): No, but like [sighs] I don't- I don't remember who had it, but like somebody had like a sax solo.

AUSTIN: Do you have the tape with you?

DRE: Ummm? Yeah probably.

AUSTIN: Do you wanna hit play on it?

DRE: Yeah, yeah. Let me-

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Um, you- remember you have that, you have a special recorder that your aunt gave you so it probably has a built-in speaker? It's not very good-

DRE: Mmm.

[**Jack** laughs.]

AUSTIN: But you can just play it, if you wanted to.

DRE: Yeah.

KEITH: Can we play both of them at the same time so that we can hear another one of the tapes, if someone has theirs, not have the solo at the same time?

AUSTIN: Totally. If you want to.

KEITH: I want to do that.

AUSTIN: I'm not going to stop that. Um, the thing that, that it sounds like what happened, happens, right? In fact, there's one special thing, right, which is when Ronny hits play on his tape, it just syncs up immediately to the sound of this sax solo in the distance.

JACK: Oh no.

[**SYLVIA:** {indistinct noise of "I don't like that" in the background}]

AUSTIN: Um, and then when you try to find that stop on someone else's tape, that sax solo is not there.

Jack (as FRANKIE): Okay this is like, this is like freaking me out. Um.

Keith (as NOLAN): Yeah.

Dre (as RONNY): No, you guys are just, you- I know- you did this just to mess with me.

Jack (as FRANKIE): No.

Keith (as NOLAN): No, this is goofed up.

Jack (as FRANKIE): No, something here is goofed up. Um. Do you- do you hear it, CC?

Sylvia (as CC): I mean, I hear it now, but I don't remember this at all.

Jack (as FRANKIE): This is like, this is some like serious crap. Um.

Sylvia (as CC): Yeah, it's not that good.

Dre (as RONNY): Whoa, hey.

[Keith laughs.]

Sylvia (as CC): Sorry. It's just not my thing, you know?

Dre (as RONNY): No, I meant like...that word. You know.

Jack (as FRANKIE): Sorry, sorry. Sorry. I- People keep saying to me, they say, "Frank, you better watch your mouth."

[Keith laughs.]

Sylvia (as CC): {indistinct} saying this.

Jack (as FRANKIE): But I don't mind being rude. Um? I think- I think we should- like, track it down? You didn't see what I saw. Well, maybe some of you did, I don't know if Nolan saw-

Keith (as NOLAN): I saw the sky.

Jack (as FRANKIE): But it was pretty messed up. And then, there's this, and like- And I didn't feel too good about that show anyway, I kinda got- I felt like the vibes weren't right, you know? Maybe it's something that you have to get from being in the audience, and I don't mean to like-

Keith (as NOLAN): We won, though.

[long pause]

Dre (as RONNY): It's not that-

Jack (as FRANKIE): (overlapping) No, it's not really something you can...

Dre (as RONNY): It's not that kind of thing.

Jack (as FRANKIE): (overlapping) No, it's not really that kind of show.

Sylvia (as CC): I, I feel like we won.

Jack (as FRANKIE): Um. Well, good luck everybody!

[1 hour 20 minutes]

JACK: Uh, and then I go and get my, get my bike, uh, which is, uh, leaned up against-

Keith (as NOLAN): [overlapping] Good luck what?

JACK: -the side.

Dre (as RONNY): Wait.

Jack (as FRANKIE): I'm just offering everybody good luck.

Sylvia (as CC): Wait, hold on!

Dre (as RONNY): No, come on, you're not going to come with us?

Sylvia (as CC): [overlapping] I'm going with!

Jack (as FRANKIE): No, I'm saying good luck cause I'm going with and I'm saying like, I'm like, I'm-

Sylvia (as CC): [overlapping] Okay.

Jack (as FRANKIE): It's like he says in the show, before he goes, before he gets on his motorcycle-

Dre (as RONNY): Ooooh.

Jack (as FRANKIE): -he says "good night and good luck."

[AUSTIN laughs.]

Jack (as FRANKIE): You know?

Dre (as RONNY): Sure.

Keith (as NOLAN): I don't know what show that is.

AUSTIN: {indistinct} ...to be clear

Jack (as FRANKIE): [laughing] Before he gets on his motorcycle. Um. No I'm not-

DRE: Yeah, when Dan Rather gets on his motorcycle and says "good night and good luck."

JACK: I'm, I'm leaving to go find the sound or whatever. I'm going to, I'm going to go and track it down. Um, and I think uh, uh...this might be...can I ask the question "where is it" at this point?

AUSTIN: Totally, totally. So. The- as you, you all start going as a group then, presumably.

SYLVIA: Yeah.

KEITH: Yep.

JACK: How is this- I, I have to ask, if we're like on bikes or some of us are on bikes-

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: -how is this cooler than "Stranger Things?" Cause something that's very important to me is making a show that's better than "Stranger Things?" Um.

AUSTIN: The vibe is better. I like, I, it's hard to explain that.

JACK: [laughing] The vibe is better.

SYLVIA: [overlapping] I'm on a scooter.

DRE: Oh yeah.

JACK: [laughing] Oh yes!

AUSTIN: Yeah, uh huh.

JACK: Instant improvement.

KEITH: Um. I'm not on anything but I do have a hard plastic wiffle ball bat.

AUSTIN: Okay.

[Jack laughs.]

SYLVIA: Oh, is the dog here too?

JACK: Yep.

AUSTIN: Good question.

SYLVIA: Okay.

JACK: Absolutely.

AUSTIN: Okay. So.

KEITH: Do you have a little basket for the dog?

JACK: Nope.

AUSTIN: Oh in front of the bike?

JACK: One of you's holding, one of you's holding him. Or he's in a basket.

KEITH: [overlapping] Alright, I'll hold him.

JACK: Will not tolerate being held by me. I tried it. It did not go well.

[Austin laughs.]

KEITH: I can, I can hold him.

AUSTIN: Yeah, loves you. Tiny loooves you, Nolan.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Licking your face too much, do you know what I mean?

[Keith and Dre laugh.]

AUSTIN: It's kind of annoying.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Um, you get here, about like you know, south of the boathouse by 100 yards, uh, let's say. Um, and you can tell that the saxophone is coming from beyond the old creepy boathouse. Um, not from within it. Um, and as you get closer, that effect, that static, or not static, but the kind of like, the distant um, um, kind of the, the, the kind of wavering effect on objects in the distance, seems to halt as you get closer to it. Um, and the sound of static has been- it's like you've adjusted to the static such that you don't even hear the static anymore unless you actively try to listen to it. It's just become background noise. Um, um, and then to the north beyond that, is where you can hear the, the sax coming from. Um, you know I would say you

said "where is it coming from" and it's coming from like, a dense um, area where the marsh turns into a, a more dense like, you know, um, kind of coastal woods area to the northwest of the boathouse. Um, and the sun is setting behind it, by the way, uh, so it's getting, it's starting to get a little dark out.

JACK: It's scary.

AUSTIN: Not, not um, it's not aided by the fact that it's already an overcast day. And that you spent a lot of time playing Smash today.

KEITH: Who's everybody's main?

[Dre laughs.]

JACK: Uh, my main is uh, Rico Rodriguez from the Just Cause series.

[Keith and Sylvia laugh.]

AUSTIN: Of course, good. Classic.

DRE: Fair.

JACK: Who's yours, Sylvi?

SYLVIA: Sora from Kingdom Hearts. If we're just adding characters. I was going to say Samus before that.

KEITH: Adding characters to the Super Nintendo Smash Brothers.

SYLVIA: Yeah. It's just, it's, it's the sprites from uh, Chain of Memories. That Sora.

AUSTIN: Oh, of course, of course.

JACK: Dre and Keith?

DRE: Uh, Ronny doesn't have one because he hasn't played enough video games before to like, know who anybody is.

JACK: Ooh. Uh huh.

AUSTIN: So you just try out- do, do you pick random or do you pick a different character manually?

DRE: Yes. I think I- yeah.

AUSTIN: Just having a good time. Y'all play with items on, obviously, right?

SYLVIA: Oh, duh.

JACK: Mhm.

KEITH: Yeah.

JACK and KEITH: Duh.

KEITH: Yeah.

JACK: It's not fun otherwise.

KEITH: It's not fun unless you can pick up the hammer that smashes everything.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah, fair.

JACK: That's why it's called Smash.

[**Austin and Dre** laugh.]

AUSTIN: God.

Sylvia (as CC): My big brother told me that.

Dre (as RONNY): Oh, I get it!

AUSTIN: Mhm.

KEITH: Smash?

SYLVIA: No, that it's called Smash cause you smash things with a hammer.

KEITH: Oh, okay. [laughing] I thought you said that your big brother calls you Smash.

[**Dre and Jack** laugh.]

SYLVIA: No, he told me that.

JACK: Keith, who's your, I don't know if you said who your main is.

KEITH: Oh, it's just Ness.

JACK: [laughing] Oh, okay, sure.

AUSTIN: Okay, you, yeah, classic.

JACK: A classic.

KEITH: Yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: Um, so yeah, so you know where this is, you see the boathouse in front of you. Um, there is, this is probably, have you been closer than the boathouse to this before? Again, I imagine it up on old like uh, thick timber, like- it just looks like tree trunks holding up a, a little boathouse, basically.

JACK: It's like some real "Hunt Showdown" shit.

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah, yeah, 100 percent, yes.

JACK: I don't think I've gone any closer than this.

KEITH: [overlapping] Wait, I'm changing my answer.

DRE: Oh.

JACK: Oh yeah.

KEITH: It's Waddle Dee.

AUSTIN: [sighs] Okay.

JACK: [laughs] Oh.

DRE: Good choice. I think that Ronny has to try and show that he's not afraid.

AUSTIN: Okay. So he's-

DRE: To like show off.

AUSTIN: So you're saying that in the past he's gotten closer than this.

DRE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Okay, then yeah, then you've, you've been closer than this. Um, the difference between now and then uh, because you've been closer you can kind of just spot this, the, the screen door is open tonight. There's a screen door and then like a regular door, and it seems as if the screen door has been left open. Um, the main door in is closed, but it is kind of creepy to see that, that uh, screen door swinging in the wind. Also, it's a little chilly cause it's winter, you know?

DRE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: And also I should say that that's like the sound of the bikes through- and I'm guessing these are bikes with like big heavy tires and you know- uh, but you're going through a, a mix of like snow and ice and marsh and like you're going over dirt paths that are high enough to like support you and stuff, but, but it's a precarious situation. If this was not your hideout, you'd be rolling to get in and out, you know what I mean? But you know how to get there now and that's part of why it hasn't been discovered, is there are a lot of ways to it and out of it where you'd just get like soaked, you would fall into the water, etc. So.

JACK: Um, I think Frankie is wearing uh, uh, like uh, rainboots and a uh like puffy bright pink jacket? Uh, like a, like a, uh, coat. Um. And I think has like blonde hair in a high ponytail? Um, and is wearing like a yellow scarf or like something really um...like really, really bright. Um, and I think she says-

Jack (as FRANKIE): I'm not going in there. I'll, I'm going to get- if I go in there I'm going to get like, like killed or something.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

Keith (as NOLAN): That'd be scary.

Jack (as FRANKIE): But one of you should.

Dre (as RONNY): Uhhh...

Keith (as NOLAN): Which one?

Dre (as RONNY): I'll, I'll go. I'll go!

Jack (as FRANKIE): Dang, that was like quick. You just agreed.

Keith (as NOLAN): [overlapping] Yeah, that was quick.

Dre (as RONNY): Yeah. Listen, uh, yeah.

AUSTIN: So.

Dre (as RONNY): I used to do...

Sylvia (as CC): [overlapping] I'll go too!

AUSTIN: Who else-

Dre (as RONNY): Yeah, I used to do stuff like this all the time back home.

Jack (as FRANKIE): Damn.

Keith (as NOLAN): Go into scary boathouses?

Jack (as FRANKIE): [overlapping] Uh, dang!

Dre (as RONNY): Yeah. No, it was like abandoned mines and stuff.

Keith (as NOLAN): That's wicked scary.

Jack (as FRANKIE): Whoa! What's in an abandoned mine?

Keith (as NOLAN): Sounds like nothing.

Jack (as FRANKIE): Yeah.

Dre (as RONNY): [overlapping] Yeah, it's nothing really, cause it's been abandoned. But-

Jack (as FRANKIE): Why did they abandon it?

Dre (as RONNY): Um.

Sylvia (as CC): Nothing in there.

Dre (as RONNY): Yeah, there's nothing left.

Jack (as FRANKIE): They got it all out?

Dre (as RONNY): Yeah, I guess so.

Jack (as FRANKIE): Good for them! That's gotta be tricky, going down there?

Keith (as NOLAN): It's impossible to get it all out.

Jack (as FRANKIE): Nah, they got it all out, they're like good right, Ronny?

Dre (as RONNY): Um. Well, they also started like, instead of going down they just go like to the top and they kind of- they, they like, they blow it up.

Jack (as FRANKIE) and Keith (as NOLAN): Whoa!

Jack (as FRANKIE): *taps head three times* That's how it done. I think.

Dre (as RONNY): Um. Okay.

Keith (as NOLAN): Do you think we should just blow up the boat instead of going in?

[Dre laughs.]

Jack (as FRANKIE): We can't blow it up, like, we're like- you're ten. And you shouldn't be doing things like that.

Keith (as NOLAN): Oh what, you'd blow it up if I wasn't here?

Sylvia (as CC): Is that how you got grounded, did you blow something up?

Dre (as RONNY): Yeah.

Keith (as NOLAN): I didn't blow anything up. I didn't blow anything up.

Jack (as FRANKIE): He's not cool enough for that.

Keith (as NOLAN): They took it away before I could.

Dre (as RONNY): Hey, that's not, that's not cool, come on.

Sylvia (as CC): Blowing stuff up is super cool, hold on.

Dre (as RONNY): No, but saying, saying that's, that he's not cool. That's...that's mean.

Jack (as FRANKIE): Somebody braver than me go in the boathouse!

Keith (as NOLAN): I'll go in the boathouse.

Dre (as RONNY): (overlapping) Okay, I'm going, I'm going!

AUSTIN: You're going into the boathouse at this point. I, I- I want to- I'm being clear, the, the sax comes from *beyond* the boathouse. But you're going in.

KEITH: *Beyond* the boathouse.

DRE: Yes.

AUSTIN: That's also fine. That is also fine.

DRE: You said, you said this door was doing weird stuff.

AUSTIN: Yeah, it is blowing around in the wind, that is correct. I did, I did say that.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: You can go in the boathouse, there's stuff in the boathouse cause it's on the map, right? Um.

JACK: I mean, Austin, from like a practical perspective, you have given us a hand drawn map-

AUSTIN: I have.

JACK: -with "old creepy boathouse" written on it.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: You've described the boathouse in detail.

DRE: Mhm.

JACK: You've described how there is a strange screen door. And you're expecting us to go and explore something beyond and behind the boathouse?

AUSTIN: That's fine, no, this is- we can go into this creepy boathouse-

KEITH: [overlapping] Maybe it's got a back door.

AUSTIN: So, you get to- there is not a back door, there is just this one front door- but there are some windows here. Um, so who's, who specifically is creeping up now, this sounds like Ronny and CC?

SYLVIA: Yeah, I'm going.

KEITH: I'm also going.

AUSTIN: Okay, so it's thr- okay, so Frank, are you staying back then?

JACK: I'm staying back and I'm, I'm looking through a pair of um, I'm looking through a pair of binoculars that are branded with the pizza, with mis- what's he called? [laughs] Mister Pizza?

[Keith laughs.]

AUSTIN: We didn't name him, but Mister- yeah. Mister Pizza.

DRE: {indistinct in background}

JACK: These are Mister Pizza-branded binoculars for looking out at Atlantic City from the top of the- [AUSTIN: Uh huh.] -uh, uh, the Upper Crust.

[1 hour 30 minutes]

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: Uh, they are all right binoculars, they do superimpose the mascot onto anything that you look at.

[Dre laughs.]

AUSTIN: Amazing.

KEITH: That's so funny.

AUSTIN: Um, can they be flip open binoculars, do you know what those are?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Like, like folding binoculars, have you ever seen those before? They're like little ones and then they kind of click open? Um, I'm going to see if I can find a picture here. Um...[**JACK:** Ooooh!] Maybe, maybe folded. [**JACK:** Uh huh.] Not like, not they fol- not that they fold inwards, but they fold down- they close into like-

KEITH: Yeah. Like this.

AUSTIN: - almost like a closed DS or something.

KEITH: Like this?

AUSTIN: Do you know what I mean? Uh...yes, like this.

JACK: Oh shit.

AUSTIN: Yes. This pair of Arrow binoculars is, is what it is, or this set of- set? Pair? I don't know.

KEITH: Set.

AUSTIN: Um. Yeah. I don't know if it's a pair cause it's a, a binocular. [**KEITH:** It's one. Yeah.] It's one binocular. Um.

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: Anyway. So they do that and they have, they have Mister Pizza on the top and-

KEITH: Did you bring your two connected mono-noculars? [laughs]

AUSTIN: [laughs] Your pair of monoculars, yeah. Um, so yeah, you're, you're continuing to watch, which means you can continue to ask questions cause you, you succeeded at that roll.

JACK: Yeah, I'm gonna...just right away I'm going to ask uh, like "what threats can I perceive here?" Or maybe it'd be better to narrate them getting closer, I just want to be able to act on that roll. Um.

AUSTIN: Yeah, sure. Well let's, let's wait until they get closer cause right now the answer is no threats are visible-

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: -at this moment, right? Um, uh, the rest of you go up to the old creepy boathouse. Uh, the screen door is open but the main door is locked. You kind of climb up onto like a porch that's on the front of the boathouse. You know, there's a net, there's an old bike, um, that's been chained to um, uh, to one of the kind of like porch uh, uh barrier, what do you call those? Um. Like, you know, the fencing around a porch.

DRE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: What is that called, why am I blanking on that? You know what I mean [sighs]. Um.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And then there are windows that are closed and dirty but you can kind of peek through. Um, there's an old CRT TV on, um, that uh is turned to uh, it's playing music videos inside? Um.

KEITH: Old to us or old to them?

AUSTIN: Old to y...old to you...old to us. Old to even us, right? It's an old CRT TV, right?

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: Um, uh, and it's hard to even make out. It's like wood paneled walls, um, there's a kayak on, like leaning up against the wall inside, through one of the windows. Um, that's basically what you get from here. The front door is locked currently. Um, what do you do?

DRE: Um, I wanna try and check and see if- is that? Wait. I guess we wouldn't know if that TV is normally on, would we?

AUSTIN: No, you haven't been that- you have not- this is the closest any of you have been-

KEITH: [overlapping] Like if it's been on forever?

DRE: Right.

AUSTIN: Yeah, you have no idea.

DRE: Um. I wanna try to um, see if any of the windows are open.

AUSTIN: Well-

DRE: Like if I can get in through one of the windows.

AUSTIN: You find one that's-

KEITH: [overlapping] Did we knock? We didn't knock, did we?

AUSTIN: No one knocked, no. Do you wanna knock? As, as-

KEITH: So TV's on, someone could be in there.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

DRE: Oh.

KEITH: Right?

SYLVIA: I'm okay with knocking. {indistinct}

KEITH: It's says "creepy old boathouse" but it doesn't me- it doesn't say "creepy old unoccupied boathouse."

DRE: Uh, yeah. Yeah. We can just knock.

AUSTIN: Alright, you knock. And you give it a few seconds, no one responds. You knock again, no one responds.

Sylvia (as CC): HELLO!

SYLVIA: I yell really loud.

AUSTIN: Do you do that?

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: You don't-

Sylvia (as CC): Are you playing saxophone in there?

[Dre laughs.]

AUSTIN: [laughs] It's clear the saxophone is coming from *beyond* the boathouse and I, I mean-

SYLVIA: She's still asking it.

AUSTIN: And now, now that you're, now that you're up to the boathouse you can definitely tell it's coming from even- you can even identify that it's like really, it's like almost up against the shoreline here.

SYLVIA: Okay.

AUSTIN: Um, um, and no, no response from that yell that you can, that you can sense at this point.

KEITH: Mmm.

AUSTIN: Uh, let's go really quick though, let's go over to Ronny who is looking for a window?

DRE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: There is one window that is a little loose, um, that you could maybe force open.

DRE: Um, yeah I'll try to do that.

AUSTIN: Alright, are you-

KEITH: I just want everyone to know, before we go in-

AUSTIN: Mm.

KEITH: It's- and I know this- it's bad to go into people's houses like this.

[**Austin** snickers.]

DRE: It's, it's not a house, it's just a, it's a creepy old boat shack.

KEITH: Mmm. I see you changed the name of what it's called [laughs] -

JACK: [overlapping] What are you doing?

KEITH: [still laughing] -on the map.

[**Dre** laughs.]

KEITH: In order to not say house.

AUSTIN: I haven't- oh. [laughs] Um, you can, uh...are you, are you trying to force this open or are you trying to tinker it open, these are the two skills that I think work.

DRE: Um. Uh [sighs]...I think just force it open.

AUSTIN: Okay, there is, there's important distinctions here, which are about what bonus successes would look like?

DRE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: And also what main attribute you would use, right? Tinker uses uh...mind, I believe? No, uses tech- [**DRE:** Yeah.] And force uses, uses, uh body. You're much better at force I think all said, you're a six in force, whereas- no, you're a seven in force [**DRE:** Mhm.] whereas you are a five in tinker?

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Uh, tinker plus, plus, uh- the differences though are what those bonus effects could be. If you succeed, um, with this um...with a force check, um, I would say that you, you, you have the option of "not needing to overcome the exact same trouble in the future, avoiding collateral damage," um, I think those are the big ones here? I mean, "impress, frighten, or humiliate," you could impress [laughs] the rest of your friends from doing this [**Dre** laughs.]. Um, whereas if you tinker, "you're able to do it quickly or quietly, show off," and then the same thing, so, so quick and quiet is maybe more available to you if you tinker. Um, ah, you know what? I'm,

I'm going to say that's not necessarily true, I think forceful almost gives you quick by default. But I guess it would not necessarily be quiet, is what- is worth saying.

DRE: Yeah, for sure.

AUSTIN: Um, so yeah, so what are you going to do, force it open which is just like lifting it or are you going to break out that Leatherman?

DRE: Um.

AUSTIN: Oh, that's the thing, is the Leatherman would actually help you here-

DRE: Oooh. Yeah.

KEITH: [overlapping] Yeah. You get two.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] -if you use tinker, right?

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: So that would actually even it out. It's seven with tinker also.

KEITH: You get two die, yeah.

DRE: Okay, yeah, let's do, let's do tinker then.

AUSTIN: Alright, so you bust out the Leatherman, give me seven die. Looking for a six, is anyone helping? I should note, I should ask.

DRE: Oh whoops, already rolled.

AUSTIN: Ah, you got your six, let's just see, is anyone helping anyway? "When two or more kids" uh...that's when fighting happens, that's not what you want. "Helping each other: one kid may help another to overcome trouble if it seems plausible in the situation. To help you describe what you do" uh, "and then your friends gets one extra die to roll. A kid may never get help" uh "from more than one of her friends for a single dice roll. Gamemaster has final say on" uh "when helping is possible." Um, uh, "and when you help someone you're bound to the outcome of the roll. If it fails you suffer the same effects," blah blah blah. You, you know how this shit goes.

SYLVIA: If uh...if it's a window I can be like giving you a boost or something.

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: Um, so then yeah, so, so uh, so roll one more die really quick, Dre.

DRE: Sure.

AUSTIN: Let's see if you get a bonus success. Alright, you did not [**DRE:** Close.] so you get your one success, this is with tinker which means, um, you do manage to uh, uh open it, uh, uh, by, uh- how do you do it, what's it look like?

DRE: Um, you said it's kind of like loose?

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yes.

DRE: Um, I think actually it's not locked, what's holding it in place is like, inside there is that like plastic film that you put over windows when it's cold [**AUSTIN:** Yeeaaaah.] to like, seal them? And so I think I just kind of like, I whip out the like knife part of the multitool and just kind of like slide it um, between like the window and the window sill and just kind of like cut that.

AUSTIN: Ensuring that there will be a draft later and so if anyone else who's used to being here comes in here, they will notice that this window has been opened.

DRE: Eh, it's fine. Listen, we yelled, nobody answered.

AUSTIN: Nobody- yeah, no one answered, yeah, sure. So you go inside, uh, go inside this, this house. Um, it's basically one big open area? Um, and the area where there would have been, you know, if you're inside of a, uh, of, of an actual boathouse you kind of have that um, that area where you could have like the boat be there in the water? That has been covered over with like...[sighs] basically with like big wooden planks and then a carpet has been thrown over th- or a rug has been thrown over that, do you know what I mean?

DRE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: So like normally a boathouse interior has the part where the boat is, that has been covered, and is just a, a rug. Um, and then you know there's a couch on one side, a TV, there's like a bed, uh, in the corner. Um, it's basically what if a boathouse was a studio apartment, right? Uh, there's like a, a shower curtain around an area that's been designated as the bathroom, basically? (laughs) Where there is a shower and then also like a toilet in that same basic vicinity. Um, uh, it kind of smells in here? Not like gross, just like, like outside? Like outside has been inside for too long, you know? Um, there are some muddy boots, um, in, in one corner, um, and you can see next to those are a set of slightly cleaner boots, so this someone who has multiple pairs of boots. There's some fishing gear, um, there are, there's posters on the wall, and, and some photos here and there. Um, it's hard to judge when anything from here is from, because it feels like...it feels like this is an old boathouse that someone moved into, and didn't get rid of the old stuff, they just added their own shit to it.

DRE: Mm.

AUSTIN: Um, what are you looking for or doing in here?

[1 hour 40 minutes]

DRE: Um...I think like Ronny like, like- not even like is through the window but like pokes his head in and then turns around and goes like-

Dre (as RONNY): Somebody's living here!

AUSTIN: Oh, you've not climbed in, you're just peeking in, I see what you're saying.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

DRE: Yeah yeah yeah.

AUSTIN: I assumed y'all had climbed in, that's on me. But yeah, you're able to get a- uh- everything I said still stands. {indistinct}

DRE: We can also make it where it's like Ronny like has gone in and then like pokes his head at- like, over the windowsill [**AUSTIN:** Oh yeah [laughs] totally.] to everybody's that outside and is like-

AUSTIN: Totally up to you if you want to be in or out, I don't, I don't mind either way.

DRE: Eh, I'll put myself in, that's, that's more fun.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Okay. Yeah.

SYLVIA: CC's saying like-

Sylvia (as CC): I don't know, I've read the Wikipedia page for "Texas Chainsaw Massacre" and this is giving me some really bad vibes.

[Austin and Jack laugh]

DRE: Yeah. Yeah, I'm going to...check-

Keith (as NOLAN): Well, there's no saxophone! We wanted to find the saxophone, right, we don't want to bother, you know...

DRE: Um.

Keith (as NOLAN): [quietly]...bother anyone.

DRE: There's- is there anything like noticeable, you said the TV's just playing like music videos?

AUSTIN: Yeah, uh huh.

DRE: Okay.

KEITH: They left MTV on?

AUSTIN: Uh, no, in fact, they did not leave MTV on. But it is playing music videos.

DRE: What...what is it playing?

AUSTIN: It is playing old VHS cassettes of music videos.

DRE: Oh.

AUSTIN: It's like playing old recorded MTV.

Keith (as NOLAN): Is there a ghost?

Dre (as RONNY): Uh, they got a, they got a VCR!

Keith (as NOLAN): Who puts on a VCR, who puts on a VHS and then leaves?

Sylvia (as CC): Maybe they just forgot to turn it off?

AUSTIN: Uh, at that, at that moment we cut back to uh, Frank, who uh, through her binoculars sees someone start to move through the woods in the back, walking towards the old creepy boathouse.

JACK: Uh-

AUSTIN: Uh, this is a figure who's like mid-20's maybe, maybe a little older than that, it's hard to say- mid-20's but rough is actually the way to think about it. Um, at this distance with these binoculars you can't make out a lot of close facial details? Um, but um, yeah, there's a figure moving towards the boathouse. Uh, probably about as far from the boathouse as you are but from the other direction.

JACK: I think, uh, I'm going to try and whistle? And I like can't really. Um...like...uh.

[Austin laughs.]

[failed whistling sounds]

AUSTIN: Yeah. Whee-ow!

JACK: Whee-ow. Um, I think, I think- so I think just like at the top of her lungs, she just shouts-

Jack (as FRANKIE): GET OUT OF THERE! GO GO GO! SOMEONE'S COMING!
EVERY- EVERYBODY ROLL OUT!

[Dre laughs.]

AUSTIN: Great.

JACK: Um.

KEITH: Does this alert the man?

AUSTIN: The figure in the distance does seem to hear this, um, and breaks into a run towards the old creepy boathouse.

Jack (as FRANKIE): GO GO GO! HE'S RUNNING, HE STARTED RUNNING!

[pause]

JACK (as Frankie): I WARNED YOU ALL!

[Keith laughs.]

Jack (as FRANKIE): I TOLD YOU WE'D ALL GET MURDERED!

[Everyone laughs.]

Sylvia (as CC): Aw man, I'm too young to get Chainsaw Massacred, I'm outta here.

JACK (as Frankie): EVERYBODY GO!

KEITH: I'm go- I'm gettin'. Am I- I didn't go in, it was only Ronny that went in, right?

AUSTIN: It was only Ronny that went in [DRE: Yeah.] which means I'm not making, I'm not going to make CC or Nolan uh, roll to get back to where uh...where, uh, Frank is? Um, but Ronny. Um, you got some choices to make here, what do you do?

DRE: Um. Yeah, I mean I think I just try to like jump right back out the window.

AUSTIN: Alright, you're going to need-

KEITH: [overlapping] I think we should-

AUSTIN: Go ahead.

KEITH: I think we should run to the shore. We're going- we're going to do this saxophone thing still.

JACK: Yes, yeah.

KEITH: I presume.

AUSTIN: Also, the figure is coming from where the saxophone was. The saxophone sound was-

KEITH: [overlapping] Was. Oh, did it stop?

AUSTIN: Is. No, no, I'm saying you knew the saxophone was up here where I'm pinging, that is the direction the figure is coming from.

KEITH: Ooooooh.

Jack (as FRANKIE): EVERYBODY GET OUT AND HIDE!

AUSTIN: Oh, okay, that's fun.

Jack (as FRANKIE): HIDE FOR YOUR LIVES!

AUSTIN: Um, so yeah, in fact, in fact that's- [laughs] -that's what we're going to do, then. Um, uh, is that what's happening, are people hiding?

KEITH: I'll hide. I'm good at hiding.

AUSTIN: Where are you hiding?

KEITH: I'm the best hider in the 3rd grade- 5th grade. 5th grade? Yeah, 5th grade. I'm the best hider in the 5th grade.

SYLVIA: I...hmm.

KEITH: I'm going to go up a tree.

JACK: [laughs] Have you still got Tiny?

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Okay. Who else is hiding?

KEITH: [to JACK] Yes.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Yeah, uh huh.

SYLVIA: I'm going to keep running back to where Frank is.

AUSTIN: Okay.

SYLVIA: I'm not a hider, I'm a runner.

AUSTIN: Um. You're a runner, okay. Uh, so then, so then, um, give me- actually I do think maybe all of you are going to have to run, are going to have to roll for this, I think you're all in trouble in a sense. So. Um, it sounds like what, what is happening here is uh...Nolan is going to roll uh to, to sneak? Uh, which I think is body? Body sneak, to try to hide? Um, and then, um, both, uh, CC and Ronny are going to have to make um, move checks to try to get away? Um. I think, I think that it's going to be a lot harder here for Ronny-

KEITH: [overlapping] Can I make an argument for body move, in that-

AUSTIN: Not to hide.

KEITH: Not to hide? Not even if it's- cause I have to quickly get up a tree.

AUSTIN: No, sneak is the ability to hide, sneak, or steal.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: That is it. It's sneak, yeah. Um, um, but sneaking will give you a different outcome than the people who are running who are getting further away from this [**KEITH:** Yeah.], this person which mean you'll have- there will be a- this is a- there will be a different outcome because of this, right? Um, uh, anyway, so yeah, Nolan um, uh, I think, yeah, you'd be running- you'd be doing body plus sneak. Uh, uh, for CC you'd be doing body plus move, and the same for Ronny except Ronny, you need two successes because you're- you have to get out of this house [**DRE:** Okay.] also. And uh-

JACK: [overlapping] Is there any way I can help-

KEITH: [overlapping] And the only- only six is the success.

AUSTIN: Six is the only success, correct. Uh, what were you going to say, uh, Frank?

JACK: Is there any way I can help?

AUSTIN: It's hard to- it's hard to see a situation in which you making more noise or something actively helps here?

JACK: That's...yeah. Uh huh.

AUSTIN: Um, there's a person chasing them, you know what I mean? Uh, so. Alright, who wants to roll first? What do-

JACK: [overlapping] Mmm.

SYLVIA: [overlapping] I've got mine typed out so I'll just do it. So yeah, I've got 5d6 here, cause I got a two in move **[AUSTIN: Mhm.]** and a three in body. And that's one success.

AUSTIN: Alright, that's a success. So you get back to where Frank is, um, which is far enough away that, that presumably this person will, will leave you be. Um. Ronny or Nolan, who wants to go next?

KEITH: I got mine typed out, I can go.

DRE: Sure.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

(low whistle)

KEITH: No.

AUSTIN: No. Okay. Uh, do you want to push and spend one of your...uh, either your, your luck points, of which you have five, to reroll, or take a condition and reroll. Uh, I guess we- I should- let me just read actually what happens when you fail a roll, cause this is our first true failure with like, with cir- with uh, uh, consequences. "If you roll no or too few successes your action fails. An unsuccessful attempt to overcome trouble must never mean that nothing happens. Somehow the situation changes, probably for the worse. What happens is up to the Gamemaster to decide.

You may need to check a condition, you may end up" uh, "in new trouble, you may suffer a complication (see the boxed text)," um, "some examples follow: you're caught or detained, the robot you built becomes hostile, your parents get angry and give you a curfew, a time machine sends you thousands of years back in time instead of forward." [laughs] Um, "pushing the roll. When you fail a roll you may choose to immediately retry the task by mentally or physically pushing yourself to the limits of your abilities. This is called pushing the roll and can only be

done once immediately after the failed roll. You must describe what you do to push yourself, you may push a successful roll," uh, "to be able to buy more effects."

So yes, you can push a successful roll if you ever want to, to get one of those bonuses. I, I thought that was the case but good to read it again. "When you push a roll, you must first check a condition. Choose any condition that you feel fits the story, then you reroll the dice except those showing sixes. If the reroll is successful the Gamemaster describe what's hap- describes what happens, if the reroll also fails, you may not push again but you can use a luck point or your pride. If the trouble came with a threat of condition" uh "you may have to check two conditions if you push the roll, but still failed after the roll you can push a die- a dice roll before or after using a luck point."

So. You could tell me right now, "I'm going to use a luck point to reroll that," which would be again, uh, three points because you have zero in sneak and three in body, or and, and- or you could say "I'm gonna take a condition." The conditions are upset, scared, uh, exhausted, injured, and broken. Broken is a special condition that is like, the high level, really rough one [laughs].

DRE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Um, that is the one that you should not- you basically, you- getting, getting uh the broken condition is a special thing that kind of takes you- not out of the game, but damn near...damn near, you know?

KEITH: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Um. Um. I'm trying to find the bit that explains broken. Um, "the kids cannot die but they can suffer from conditions. When you try to overcome trouble but fail or if you push your dice roll, you may be forced to take a condition." There are the five ones I just said. "The exact interpretation can vary and may be adapted." Um. "If you take a condition, you get minus one on all dice rolls until it's healed. Additional conditions are cumulative, two would give you a minus two on dice rolls. If all four are marked, you then take broken. If you get broken, something really bad has happened. You're mentally or physically hurt and you'll automatically fail all dice rolls until healed. The conditions are also an indicator for how to play the kid. You decide how much you want to play your condition in those scenes. The Gamemaster can help you by asking questions: how do you feel? In what way are you upset? You should never be forced to play your condition if you don't want to do so." So, do you want to take a condition or reroll with luck?

[1 hour 50 minutes]

KEITH: I do have one more option, which is once per mystery you can use your pride...

AUSTIN: You could use your pride. Totally.

KEITH: ...for an automatic success.

AUSTIN: Totally. And your pride works here [**KEITH:** It does work here.], "I know the fastest routes to all the best stops in the neighborhood." But that's the last time you'd get to use this.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: In this whole game.

KEITH: So I don't think I'm going to do that right away. I am not going to push myself, but I think that I am going to reroll with luck.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Alright, so mark that you'd spent one luck.

KEITH: [overlapping] Also it would be an option to take this, take the consequence of-

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Totally, could just take the consequence. A hundred percent.

KEITH: [overlapping] Yeah.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Which would be, which would-

KEITH: [overlapping] We don't know, we don't know this guy is bad.

AUSTIN: Um, yeah.

KEITH: The figure.

AUSTIN: The consequence, I should- this is a, this is a bit of a failure on my part, which is getting caught is the consequence here. Um, um, and I suspect it's getting caught and taking the consequence...taking the consequence "scared" or "upset." Um, uh, that's what the consequence for failing this roll would be.

KEITH: And that's again, those are conditions.

AUSTIN: Those are conditions, yeah yeah yeah yeah.

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: So you would take a condition for, for failing this roll, for sure.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: I think it's "upset" cause I think I know exactly what would happen for you [laughs].

KEITH: Probably get...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] But we'll get, we'll get there.

KEITH: ...tattled on.

AUSTIN: Could be.

[Keith sighs.]

[Dre laughs.]

KEITH: Six.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] So you're going to spend luck and reroll, there's a six!

KEITH: Yep.

AUSTIN: Okay! So you're able to hide, you hide up this tree. Ronny, comes down to you.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: And then yeah Nolan, go ahead, you got it, you marked it.

DRE: Ugh, only one success, you said I needed two?

AUSTIN: You needed two, yeah. So you could spend, you could push yourself here or you could, you could spend luck...

KEITH: Could I-

AUSTIN: "If you spend luck on a roll you already have success on," let's see...

KEITH: Could I help now that I'm successfully-

AUSTIN: No, this is the same [KEITH: Okay.], this is the same sequence, Keith.

KEITH: Got it.

AUSTIN: Um...ba ba ba. "You can spend a luck point after a failed dice roll..." um, "luck point lets you reroll failed dice, you cannot go back to an earlier result," so I think- it's, this is a failure here so you would, you would- oh, it's a failure so it lets you reroll failed dice.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: That to me makes it, makes me think that you would reroll- hmm.

DRE: Six of them and then keep the six I already have?

AUSTIN: "You cannot spend more than one luck-" it does say, it's, there's, it's a contradiction here and I'm going to be a fan of the player I think. "A luck point lets you reroll failed dice without needing to push. You cannot go back to the earlier result." That to me make- that second sentence makes me think...

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: You, you're fine- like you don't get to keep your good results?

DRE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Um. One second, let me just do a quick..."luck points"..."Tales from the Loop"...

[Dre laughs.]

AUSTIN: ..."successes"...let's see if anyone's...this says, this person says it's a free push, I'm going to treat it like a free push. Um, so I'm going to say you can keep your successes.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: I don't know that that's rules as written exactly, but uh, so you can keep your one success and reroll the, the dice that you- the, the other three dice. So 3d6- or 6, 6d6.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: Jesus!

KEITH: Doesn't matter.

AUSTIN: That's *three* successes! Um, uh, which is, which is damn good cause that means you even get an extra thing here for, for this. Um, and so this is the situation where, uh, uh, [laughs] this is the way in which you could have helped people, by the way, Keith, is by getting a bonus effect. One of the bonus successes could have been "give a success to another kid."

KEITH: Got it.

AUSTIN: Um, uh, but instead uh, your bonus effect here that's available for you, uh, uh, Ronny, is uh "impress someone or no one notices you." Um, I kind of like "no one notices *you*-"

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: In like by seeing the other folks run, this person's attention is not on you being in the house, and so you specifically don't get spotted at all as you get away, how's that work for you?

DRE: Yeah, that, that sounds good.

AUSTIN: Okay. Um. So as you leave uh, uh, and make some distance here, um, Nolan, you get a much better look at this person who's coming, who's coming up.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: Um, uh-

KEITH: [overlapping] Because I'm hiding and not running?

AUSTIN: I don't think you- 'cause you're hiding and not running, exactly, you're up on a tree. And she walks right under you. Um, she is a redheaded woman, um, with a, a kind of a watch cap on, like a knit cap um, with straight hair coming out, poking out from underneath the watch cap. Um, who is in kind of like a heavy like um, canvas jacket, like a work jacket. Uh, and then like big, big um, uh, boots for marching around in the, in, in the marshes in, so like very like high rubber boots. Um, almost like um fishing gear, right? Um, you know, she, she is also wearing flannel, um, like, like CC's brother but not necessarily as a fashion statement, this is a much more like **[KEITH: This is like a padded jacket.]** a heavy padded, it's- well it's like the padded jacket and then underneath the padded jacket is also this heavy flannel shirt. Um, and then, and then, probably also wearing like, you know, uh, overalls or something. Like this is like, she is, she is dressed to be walking around the swamp. Um.

KEITH: Do I recognize her?

AUSTIN: No, she's about, I would say she is, she is twenty five, maybe twenty six, but wears it very...bad. Um, you know, there is...[sighs]

[Keith laughs.]

AUSTIN: She is- her- she looks older than she is. She looks like she's carrying a lot **[KEITH: Right.]** emotionally right now.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And probably also has like, you know, um, um...the sort of face that has like, lots of like bags under her eyes, um, is, is certainly like, let's be clear, not wearing makeup living out in the marsh by herself. Um, uh, is uh- has, has um, uh, very little in the way of um...very little in the way of trying to present um, as like a warm or welcoming person out here? Like the way she moves around here is, is very much defensive, right? Um, there's a degree to which she's upset that people were here, that you can read clearly on her face. I think she's- under her breath she's like-

Austin (as EL): Stupid fucking kids, leave me alone.

AUSTIN: Um, and, and goes back into her- goes back up to her house, and like goes like-

Austin (as EL): Ugh, hm, fuck.

AUSTIN: Um, uh, and uh yeah. I think that there is...as she, as she leaves now, or goes back into the house, closes the door, closes her fucking window, um, I- before she closes her window, I think she says, she yells out into the, into the marsh, saying like, you know-

Austin (as EL): Stay the fuck away from here! This place isn't safe! (*slam!*)

AUSTIN: You still have one question left, correct?

JACK: I think- so I asked one, so I think I have-

AUSTIN: Oh no, you asked two, you asked two.

JACK: Oh, which is what threats, oh-

AUSTIN: You-

JACK: Yeah yeah yeah.

AUSTIN: Yes. Which was, which was giving them the heads up on this.

JACK: So I rolled um, I rolled three sixes.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: I think that gives me four questions, right? Cause like a success gives me two, and then one additional question from one success, and then one additional question from another success.

AUSTIN: Uh? One second, let's see, what's the actual writeup, what's it say? Um?

KEITH: Does Ronny have anything more from the three?

DRE: [overlapping] Or was I in a different scene.

AUSTIN: No that was- yeah. Yeah yeah yeah.

JACK: Uh, you get to ask two of these questions.

AUSTIN: Yeah, you're totally right!

JACK: Yeah, so I have- I actually have two questions remaining.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: Um? I think the first question that I'm going to ask, like scanning this place, um, through my, through my- [laughs] you know, Mister Pizza cavorting on the roof of this house.

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

JACK: Um, uh, what has happened here? Is there anything I can see from the way she has come or...

AUSTIN: Yes. The, that effect that you saw before is back, and it's back where she was. Um, the saxophone is still playing here. Um, in, in the distance. Um, and you see another figure, uh, moving back and forth between the trees. Um, and what you assume happened here is that this, this woman went- went back there to see what was going on, saw something, and then came back.

JACK: Hm.

AUSTIN: The matter-of-factness of the way she went back into her home tells you something about her familiarity what's there- uh, with what's there? Um, but. [sighs] I don't know that you, that you can- but she also seemed- (clicks teeth) so frustrated that it's actually hard to make out how she felt about what she saw back there, because of your presence.

JACK: Yeah. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Um.

JACK: Uh, but it wasn't like she was sprinting out of the woods, you know, in fear [**AUSTIN:** She was not afraid. Correct.], she was, she was moving at a comfortable pace

AUSTIN: She was, she was mad at you, not afraid of what was in the woods.

JACK: Okay. Well this is very compelling. Um. I think, I think, you know, like do, do we all regroup, or are we all- you know, like, like, you know, like giggling returning to the-

AUSTIN: You, you could- you, you still have one question here. I think you should- my gut says you should use those que- if you don't use those questions [**JACK:** Yeah.] here, you won't- the, the scene will come to a close and you will not have the opportunity to cash in that last question.

JACK: Hmm, okay. Can I ask how can I get past something, which is like, how can I get close to that figure without being seen?

AUSTIN: Totally, I will- yeah, you, you figure out the route, right? Like I don't need to- you don't need to come up with a special thing, right? You like, you walk far away from the, and like the edge of the creepy boathouse, you, you kind of chart a path for your friends, maybe you turn on a flashlight, you know? Um.

JACK: Oh, it's getting really dark, yeah.

AUSTIN: It's starting to get dark, um, and so, and so yeah, you're able to get to that kind of grove. Uh, if you want to go as a group, you can totally just do that by using that last question, which is how do I get there without being seen, right?

JACK: It's tough, right, cause what I want to ask is like, what does this mean? But I don't even know if I have like the vocabulary to parse- or, or to link these events meaningfully together, right? Other than that there was like she- like what you said, she went out, she saw something, she came back.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Mhm.

[2 hours]

JACK: Um. Yeah, let's, let's use it to get into that place safely and, and, kind of, kind of-

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Yeah.

JACK: -have the advantage of, of not crashing into that place.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Does everyone group up and follow...?

DRE: Mhm.

SYLVIA: I mean, I-

AUSTIN: [overlapping] ...Frank in?

SYLVIA: -yeah, I'm already with Frankie.

AUSTIN: Okay. Yeah. So you get there, you get to the edge of this grove, you kind of walked along the um, the western kind of, uh, edge of the marsh where it gives up to the bay. And something that's interesting is underneath the bay there is where the Tunnel is, right? The Tunnel runs from uh, kind of, the, the western center part of the island that Atlantic City is on, an island called Absecon Island, um, and runs north underneath a bunch of other islands, underneath the marsh, underneath everything else. Um, and uh, so, so you can almost- there are, there are moments when you can almost hear or feel the Tunnel and cars or trucks going through it. Um, uh, even uh, I think there's even a train line down there, it's a very big tunnel system that makes no sense.

Um, and so you can feel the rumble and see the water shake when something particularly large runs through it. And so that's like just off to the west, um, and, and you're able to like kind of walk across that kind of, the, the marsh line, where it, it kind of is almost like the shore of the marsh, uh, and begins to go deeper into the bay. And you find your way to the kind of grove north of the old boathouse, um, which I'll add, I'll add to the map now, why not? Um, let's get a green, let's get a nice dark green going...uh...

JACK: That's the color of trees.

AUSTIN: That's the color trees are, uh, in my experience.

[Dre and Sylvia laugh.]

AUSTIN: Um. So let's add that, uh, and then boop bop, and say "grove." Boom. Um, and so there's, that, that grove of trees there, um, and as you get closer and closer, um...the...the sound of the saxophone comes to a stop. Um, and it's- looking past the trees you can kind of see, um, uh, there's light coming from deep inside the grove. Um, and whatever's there is not able to look back at you because you've successfully made that roll to give yourself- to get you there safely, right? So you're- you've not been spotted at this point, no one's stepped on a loud branch, no one's coughed, no one's sneezed. Um, the saxophone comes to a stop and then you hear the sound of clapping, as if someone is like praising a performance. Um, and then-

JACK: [overlapping] Just one person clapping?

AUSTIN: One person clapping. Um, uh, you see the like- you see a skirt, um, kind of flutter out, as if someone is taking a bow. [laughs] But you can only see the skirt from beyond one of the trees. Um, and then Frank, um, you post your- you poke your head around one of the trees, because you got the success on the investigate roll I'm giving you this, um, you kind of like tilt your head out to get a better view, um, and it is two people. Um, they are both...in black and white. Um, they look like a TV, like projections from a TV screen. Like lifted out of watching Nick at Nite or something. Um, bright, bright black and white, as if they are just like free floating figures from the television. And the one on the left, the one who is clapping, is uh, a

middle-aged woman, um, with, um, dark hair, um, whose body is doing the thing that you saw in the distance from before. The sort of wavy- wavering effect? Um, and I don't know if you know, if your characters know this, but it's as if it's a tracking error on a VHS tape.

JACK: Hm.

AUSTIN: Her whole body is kind of wavering back and forth in that way, as if something is unaligned with reality and herself. Um, it's looking at two ghosts from the television, it's- uh, uh, uh, effectively. Except the one who is playing the saxophone, who is now taking a bow, is wearing the same, you know, band uniform that, that the rest of your friends were wearing earlier today, or just yesterday. Um, you don't recognize her at all, you don't recognize the other woman, either.

KEITH: And are, are they adults?

AUSTIN: The girl is a girl who's your age who is wearing the [KEITH: Okay.], the same uniform that, that you are, um, so a little older than you, Nolan, but in that- in the same grade as CC, Frankie, and Ronny.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: Um, the other woman is in her forties, you would guess? Maybe, maybe younger than that, it's hard, it's hard to say.

Jack (as FRANKIE): [whispers] *Television ghosts.*

AUSTIN: I have a very goofy image, uh, to, to, to indicate this-

JACK: I- no, wait, I'm not looking, I have a prediction, I have a prediction of what it is. I've covered my eyes.

KEITH: [overlapping] Of what the picture is?

JACK: Yes. Is it-

AUSTIN: What is the prediction?

JACK: It's, it's, uh, it is, um, Chancellor Palpatine.

[Sylvia laughs.]

AUSTIN: It is not that, but that's not that far off.

[Dre giggles.]

AUSTIN: It's not. Uh. [laughs] Um...uh...let me find it...real quick...

JACK: You know the image I'm thinking of right, Austin?

AUSTIN: Yeah yeah yeah. Totally. Yes, it's similarly goofy. Uh, the image that you're thinking of is the Chancellor Palpatine where the tracking is off and it makes him look like he got a big butt?

[**Sylvia** snorts.]

JACK: Uh huh.

AUSTIN: And he's all like tilty, he'll all bendy?

DRE: [overlapping] Ooh, I haven't seen that.

AUSTIN: Oh.

SYLVIA: Chancellor Cheeked-up over here.

AUSTIN: Yeah, uh huh. I don't even know how to find it [**DRE:** [quietly in background] "Palpatine big butt."], how to find that image.

[**Sylvia** laughs.]

AUSTIN: The image that I'm going to send you is this Chip Cheezum tweet, um...instead. It's in Bluff City now. Of Elaine from uh, "Seinfeld," um [**Keith** laughs.] being completely [**Jack** and **Dre** laugh.] like mouth agape but in a way that is like- if you saw a person like this in real life, it would be nightmarish-

JACK: Wait, yeah, hold on-

AUSTIN: -the way her mouth is twisted into-

SYLVIA: Oh my god.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

SYLVIA: New Podchan.

JACK: How do you-

AUSTIN: [laughs hard] New Podchan.

[Dre laughs hard.]

JACK: How do you, um, how do you put an image into chat?

AUSTIN: Sylvi, you need to, you need to quote tweet that right now so I can retweet it, [laughs] cause otherwise I'm stealing it.

DRE: Yeah. [laughs]

SYLVIA: I got you, I got you.

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

JACK: I love that Seinfeld is, is seemingly untouched by this problem [Austin: I love it, it's so good.] except for maybe on his arm?

AUSTIN: Right. And well this is what's happening in front of you. The child does not seem to have this same effect at this point.

JACK: Frankie just like, eyes wide as saucers, just like pokes back from, from around the tree and goes like-

Jack (as FRANKIE): [whispers] *Television ghosts! There are two- there are two black and white television ghosts. Wh- one of them's a woman and she's all goofed up, and one of them's a kid. I've never seen anything like it, it's, it's amazing.*

[Sylvia laughs.]

KEITH: I, I, I'm- I try the binoculars.

AUSTIN: Oh, you're, you're close enough to see- you're close enough to see.

JACK: [laughs] [overlapping] Are you looking through the binoculars anyway?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: [overlapping] Just Mister Pizza dancing through it-

KEITH: [overlapping] Well, I mean, it will still help, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally. You see, you see what I just described in detail.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: It's scary. Not scary enough to take a condition because, because, uh, I'm your friend, but [Sylvia and Dre laugh.] it's scary. Um, I mean, like it's hard for me not to- I said that out loud and I was like, hmm, should they have to roll to make- to not take a condition. If you, if you continue to persist here, the, the sheer presence of it will, will haunt you, in a way that will make me make you make a roll at a certain point.

KEITH: Uh, okay. We have to go.

AUSTIN: So be careful.

Keith (as NOLAN): I think we have to go.

Jack (as FRANKIE): Do we...do we...can we take a picture?

Keith (as NOLAN): [overlapping] I can't. I don't have a pic-

AUSTIN: [overlapping] That's risky.

Keith (as NOLAN) I don't have a thing to take-

AUSTIN: [overlapping] You could, you could do it.

Dre (as RONNY): Do we have a camera?

Jack (as FRANKIE): Of cour-!?

JACK: Turning to Ronny like very serious.

JACK (as Frankie): Of course I have a camera. How am I going to-

KEITH: [overlapping] Is it risky because of the shutter noise, or because of the flash?

AUSTIN: Who could say.

Jack (as FRANKIE): How am I going to-

SYLVIA: That just depends on how poorly we roll.

AUSTIN: Yes.

Jack (as FRANKIE): How am I going to be in the pages if I am not practicing my photography? [sighs heavily]

Keith (as NOLAN): Did you say "in the pages?" What is that?

Jack (as FRANKIE): That's what...ersk...in the...

Sylvia (as CC): Listen, Frank's going to be a big-time picture journalist or whatever.

Dre (as RONNY): [overlapping] Listen, I bet, I bet if you...

Jack (as FRANKIE): And CC's going to be a great band...player.

Keith (as NOLAN): And what is in the pages, what pages?

Jack (as FRANKIE): The magazi- look, shut up! I don't why you're gonna like, why you're here if you just keep saying things- there are ghos- there are freaking ghosts out there, kid!

[Austin laughs in background: Kid.]

Dre (as RONNY): Hey, I bet, I bet if you get a picture you could get that picture in magazines and you'd probably get a lot of money.

Jack (as FRANKIE): This- that's what I'm saying! I mean, it's, it's like, it's like freaking terrifying, but I'm going to do it. This is, see, this is why we're different but like we complement each other is like, you go in the spooky boathouse and I don't want to go in there because I'll get killed by an ice ax or something, but I'll take this scary picture.

Dre (as RONNY): I didn't see an ax.

Jack (as FRANKIE): Well good, we know that now, that's why you went in.

[Sylvia laughs loudly.]

JACK: Kay- bag opening, uh, what do you, what do you want me to roll to take this picture? Is this-?

AUSTIN: This is a good question. Uh, are you trying to do it- I guess, here's the thing, is it about being sneaky while doing it, or is it about getting a good photo?

JACK: It's about getting a good photo, Austin-

KEITH: It's always about getting a good photo.

JACK: -I can get mega bucks if I-

AUSTIN: Ah, I see. Um, I'm going to say if you don't succeed at a sneak check first, to do this, you're going to- oh, and don't get, *and* don't get extra successes, you're going to make noise while doing it.

KEITH: This is a two- you need- this is a two required.

AUSTIN: Or is you have to succeed at a sneak check first which is going to be hard because you're bad at sneaking. You're very bad at sneaking.

JACK: My friends are going to help me.

AUSTIN: Are they?

SYLVIA: I am!

AUSTIN: You get one help at most so that means you roll (laughing) three instead of two.

JACK: Alternatively...

AUSTIN: You get extra successes maybe.

JACK: Or I'm very lucky, or...

AUSTIN: Or you're very lucky. Yeah, totally, could be. Or [**JACK:** If they-] you use your drive, "I want to be in a magazine," right? Um.

JACK: That- yeah, but I can only use some of these at once, right? Like I can't stack 'em, can I?

AUSTIN: You could push and- you could, you can- I believe you can stack them pretty well.

JACK: Like I could-

AUSTIN: [overlapping] I might be wrong, but-

JACK: So I'd be rolling 2d6 from body, one body and one sneak? That's 2d6?

AUSTIN: That's to do a sneak, yeah, uh huh.

JACK: Uh-

[2 hours 10 minutes]

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Or again, you could instead just focus on getting the shot and hope to get two successes.

JACK: And what would I want to roll to get the shot?

AUSTIN: That's a good question. [laughs] What do we think that is?

JACK: [thoughtfully] Have I ever taken a photo of a ghost before?

[Sylvia laughs.]

AUSTIN: I don't think so.

KEITH: Tink...uh...tinker?

AUSTIN: I think that that's- I think it's either tinker or it's...

KEITH: It doesn't seem like tinker because it's a button.

AUSTIN: Or it's investigate again. "The ability to find hidden objects," that's not really what's happening, "understand clues, break puzzles, survey a place..." Eh? Um, "comprehend?" "The ability to have the right piece of-" p- da da da da da da...no, that's about information also. It's not empathize, I don't think it's mind, I think it's tech. I think we're talking about- I think- you know what, here's what I need to do, is I need to look at the attributes and just see the write-write-ups of the attributes.

JACK: Oh, sure.

AUSTIN: Do you know what I mean?

DRE: Mmm.

AUSTIN: Maybe that's where we start here. Um? Which of course are on page...? Up here. Uh..."body is the ability to jump high, run fast, fight, sneak and climb. Tech is the ability to understand machines and robots, program technological things, open locked doors and build things. Heart is the ability to make friends, lie, know the right people, create the right atmosphere, persuade others. Mind is the ability to find weak points, understand people, situations and creatures, solve riddles, understand clues, and have the right knowledge at the right time." That makes me think it's mind...

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: ...more than tech. You're not understanding the machine. You're not, like, "I don't-" fixing a camera would be tech.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I think using a camera would be mind. That's my gut.

JACK: Yeah.

KEITH: Uhh...I thi- well. I disagree [**JACK:** Now Keith.] only that it's really hard to be good at taking pictures. Sorry, wait, does it help you if it's mind? Sorry, I disagree from what I said.

JACK: [overlapping] Do not remind Austin about the homework that he has set.

[**Austin** and **Dre** laugh.]

AUSTIN: Again. Um, well no, the thing, the thing that's tough is that like, tinker- it would be tinker, manipulate, which would be "the tinker skill can be used to break, use or je- or jerry-rig mechanical things," so use there, right?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: "Pick locks, drive motor vehicles, sometimes you have to use calculate first."

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Uh, so it could be that. I don't think it's program, cause it's not a-

KEITH: No.

AUSTIN: - it's not an electronic camera. It's not calculate...or wait. Hmm, "the ability to know how technical objects work and how to use them: robots, machines," uh, "magnatrine ships, cyborgs, or an alarm clock?"

[**Jack** and **Sylvia** laugh.]

AUSTIN: "If you succeed you have to get to ask two questions..." Um...

KEITH: A camera is very much on the same level as an alarm clock.

JACK: And a magnatrine ship.

AUSTIN: Yeah...

KEITH: Um, I get-

AUSTIN: [overlapping] But is that also tinker, "do you know how to use mechanical things?"

KEITH: There's sort of a difference to me between like a point and shoot-

AUSTIN: Oh there's break {indistinct}...

KEITH: -like a disposable camera versus some like, like a bad- like, you have, which lens am I putting on this camera? Like at some point-

JACK: [overlapping] Oh, I'm not at that point, I don't think. I don't think-

AUSTIN: No, this is a point and shoot for sure, right?

JACK: Yeah, this is a...we had all these cameras for Partizan, these, [laughing] these are not those.

[Dre laughs quietly.]

AUSTIN: Yeah, so the thing is I don't think that this is a...I don't think that this is a...

KEITH: It's not a tech camera.

AUSTIN: -a fancy camera.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: This is not a, you know, there's not a, a, an...whatever, you know?

KEITH: Yeah.

JACK: It was like a Christmas present. This camera was a Christmas present to me.

AUSTIN: Mhm. And you're a child.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: This is not like a nice camera.

KEITH: This might not be tech.

JACK: It's a nice camera for a child, probably.

AUSTIN: That. [sighs] Yeah. I go back to mind then, and think it's probably [sighs]...probably investigate? Getting the pho- getting the photo? Or again, is it just sneak, because it's...you're trying to line up the photo without-

JACK: [overlapping] Because it's not actually about the camera, it's about this.

AUSTIN: It's not about the camera, it's not about lining up the shot. That's an easy thing to do, right? You're not trying to take a good photo.

JACK: [laughing] I'm, I'm actually beg- I, I'm actually beginning to think that that might be the case, right? Like what we're actually talking about-

AUSTIN: And it's just like yeah, you would succeed at- you're going to succeed at taking a photo. Lining up the photo and hitting the button is easy for Frank to do. This is not a difficult shot.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: This is not...do you know what I mean?

KEITH: Yeah, then it would be sneak.

AUSTIN: The thing that's difficult is, you're taking a photo of a pair of digital...of, of TV ghosts, of tele- of tele-ghosts, um, and you don't want...to...you want to resist the consequence that is you're going to get spooked by them.

JACK: Hm.

AUSTIN: Or haunted by them [**JACK:** Uh huh.] in some way, right?

JACK: Yeah. So. So what this actually means is that, like from the base I'm rolling 2d6?

AUSTIN: Mhm. Which is bad, which is body plus sneak.

JACK: And helping gives me a die, or it changes the result of a die?

AUSTIN: Helping gives you a die.

JACK: So it looks like the maximum I can get here is 3d6. With my base stats and someone helping me. And then depending on how that roll goes, we can work out, you know, how we might want to change that with luck or, or, with...

AUSTIN: Mhm. Or a push.

JACK: Or a push, yeah. Okay.

AUSTIN: Um, though I will say the, the consequence here, uh, uh, will be, being, being scared.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: As you're, as you're saying right?

JACK: That feels, that feels fine.

AUSTIN: Um. So.

JACK: But I mean, like narratively I'm interested whatever the outcome of this [**AUSTIN:** Yes.] of this roll?

AUSTIN: Totally.

JACK: Um.

AUSTIN: Totally.

JACK: So who's helping me?

SYLVIA: Uh, I can help. Um.

AUSTIN: How are you helpin'?

SYLVIA: I...wonder if it's like...did Frank, like, did Frankie, Frank have to get into like an awkward position and someone to help like, steady her while she's trying to take this photo or something? Like I'm just trying to think of like some way I can-

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Totally possible.

JACK: [overlapping] I think-

SYLVIA: -keep her from being revealed?

JACK: [overlapping] There is something- yeah, there's something really fun about like having to take a photograph of two television ghosts and it necessitating you like, being in a weird pose to do it? Um. And that being a risk.

SYLVIA: So I mean, maybe we can just like- [laughs] it's kind of a take on me giving um, Ronny the boost in the...at the shack.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

SYLVIA: But like whatever.

AUSTIN: Totally. Very similar. Yeah, that's fine. Take the, take the extra die.

JACK: Okay, I'm going to-

AUSTIN: [overlapping] So that's now what, three?

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: That's three?

JACK: Uh huh.

AUSTIN: 3d6.

JACK: You still want me to get two successes here or...?

AUSTIN: No, this is...whoooooof...

JACK: Ah, I didn't say what I just said.

AUSTIN: Let me check my notes on what this ghost has.

JACK: No, no, I didn't say it.

AUSTIN: I need to look at the special attribute for this ghost.

JACK: [laughing] Fuck. I wasted myself.

AUSTIN: Um. Sorry.

KEITH: For what it's worth it did say that it was, it, almost all things only need one success, is how the book phrased it.

AUSTIN: It does say that, but uh, but certain NPCs and creatures have a thing called "special attributes," in which case you roll against those? Um, and those start at two. Um, so let me just write- let me just check what I've written down for this [**JACK:** Don't like the start, there.] special attribute? I don't think this, I think the photo should be fine for this. I don't think this, this special attribute- so yeah, give me one success here.

JACK: Okay. 3d6?

AUSTIN: Yikes.

JACK: That's a three, a three, and a two. So.

AUSTIN: It sure is.

JACK: My options here are?

AUSTIN: So you want...yeah.

JACK: I spend a luck, which lets me [**AUSTIN:** To reroll.] reroll the whole thing?

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

JACK: Or I can push, which...does the same?

AUSTIN: Re- lets you reroll, uh, but, but you have to take a condition immediately.

JACK: So no.

AUSTIN: But it means there's a chance you, you don't take...a failure, yeah, uh huh.

JACK: I think I spent-

AUSTIN: Also, as a note, helping means at this point CC will also take whatever your failure..thing is.

KEITH: You could also use your pride.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: You could also use your pride.

JACK: To succeed instantly.

AUSTIN: To get a succeed. Yes, totally.

JACK: [overlapping] But my pride is that I was on Jeopardy! [sighs], [**SYLVIA** laughs] and I don't know how this is a...

AUSTIN: I mean, yeah. I don't think that helps here, sorry.

JACK: "So here we have um, Miss Already, and I do have an interesting story for you..."

KEITH: [overlapping] You could- if there's anything I know...if there's anything I know from kid-from media about children is that children are always allowed to clever themselves out of anything.

JACK: [laughs] Oh god. Uh, I'm going to, uh, uh, uh, use up one luck and reroll all the dice.

AUSTIN: Yep. Hey!

JACK: That's two sixes.

AUSTIN: That's *two* sixes!

SYLVIA: Hell yeah.

DRE: Nice.

AUSTIN: Good luck spend. That's what you want to see right there. Um, uh, so yeah, not only do you do that, you, "you also find something unexpected or more of what you're looking for." So you don't just get a photo of the ghosts, um, uh, you get a photo of, um...you get a photo of names. Uh, each of them has on a name badge of some sort. The woman, uh, in her forties, has like a, um...what you would...I, I, I, I guess I think of it as one of those- you know like those hard um, plastic name badges that like you would find on a...like, um, uh, like a, a, uh, host or hostess at an airline?

JACK: Mm, yes!

AUSTIN: Or a...um...

JACK: You can feel the letters if you touch them.

AUSTIN: You know, yeah, one of those. I don't, I don't even know what you would call that, or like someone working retail sometimes has those, right? Like, if you're working at a Best Buy you might have one of those. But this is that kind of like squared off, um, thing, um, and is, uh- but it is, it is, it's an airline, or it's uh, an airport, um, badge. And in fact I think it might even be from the airfield. In fact that is- that's what I think it says, it's from the airfield, the Atlantic City Airfield, which is just north of your school on a little island just past where your- where you go to school. Um, uh, and that one says, um, do I have a full name for this person? It says, um, uh, Oliva McGowen on it? So that's the older ghost, Olivia McGowen? And if someone wants to write that down, I don't know if someone wants to- can you write on the sheet, is that a thing you can do? Or can only I do that?

JACK: We have notes {indistinct}.

KEITH: [overlapping] There's a notes thing in our personal, um...

AUSTIN: No, I mean like on the screen, like below the, the **[KEITH:** Yeah we can do that.], the rules stuff. That way you can start puttin' together your, your kind of clue chart. If someone wants to write down, uh, Olivia "Ollie" McGowen? "Ollie" it says in, in quotes. Uh, and then the other, the other person, the younger uh, girl, with the saxophone, um, uh, you get a photo- uh, the photo is clear enough for you to make out her name- um, you take a couple of photos, maybe that's kind of how you, you manage to do this. Um, uh, and uh, it says...here it is. Um, Britney Namour. "N-a-m-o-u-r."

[2 hours 20 minutes]

JACK: Do either of these names mean anything to us?

AUSTIN: There is a flash at the name Britney. You're like "I..." [clicks tongue], "did a Britney used to go to our school? Yegh," you can't quite- you could, you could, you could make a roll-

JACK: Yeah. But that's something when we're not in ghost presence, you know?

AUSTIN: [overlapping] -uh, to, to kind of do it, but- actually, I would, I would- at this point, at this point I would say, just go ahead. I th- there's not a hard consequence to this, necessarily. Um, uh, but, what did we, what did we- what was that roll I made you do before, Dre? When you heard the music? Um, was it just two-

DRE: Oh.

AUSTIN: Was it, was that empathy?

DRE: I think you made me do like heart or...

AUSTIN: [overlapping] I want to say it was empathy. It was-

DRE: Yeah. It was empathy and heart maybe?

AUSTIN: Maybe. Um.

DRE: Hold on, let me look at my stats.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] 'Cause you, I had you roll two. Yeah, and I made you- I think it crossed over from heart to empathize cause that felt right? Um, in retrospect maybe it should have been heart and contact or something, which would have been...worse for you? [laughs]

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Um, so let's keep it this, this house ruled weird thing I've done that is heart and empathize.

KEITH: [overlapping] I guessed at the spelling of "Namour."

AUSTIN: Uh, I spelled it. I said it out loud.

KEITH: Oh you did?

AUSTIN: "N-A-M-O-U-R," yes. Um, "O-U-R" instead of "O-R." Uh, not like the superhero.

DRE: Aw man.

[Jack laughs.]

AUSTIN: Sorry. It's a, it is a Jordanian name.

SYLVIA: Uh, the fish people are in our- another season.

KEITH: Wait-

AUSTIN: In another season, that one was right there.

KEITH: -you said it was "O-U-R?"

AUSTIN: "O-U-R," you got it.

JACK: Heart and empathize gives me four dice.

AUSTIN: So go ahead and give me four dice, everyone roll heart plus empathize.

SYLVIA: Oh, okay.

JACK: No successes.

DRE: No successes.

AUSTIN: [overlapping] No successes?

KEITH: Oh! One success.

AUSTIN: Keith gets one success and CC gets- yeah, so, so Nolan and Keith, uh, sorry [laughs].
[KEITH laughs.] Uh, Nolan and CC both remember this. Um, uh. Nolan, of course, you

remember that there was a Britney in the um, in the band who played saxophone, who was like lead saxophone. Um, CC, you not only knew this person, but were friends with her. Um.

SYLVIA: Oh, okay.

AUSTIN: You like- there is, um, god, maybe even more than that. Uh, you know what I'll- here's, here's, heh, here we go. Um, CC, um, how old is your brother again? Fifteen?

SYLVIA: Uh, I think we said sixteen, seventeen, cause his friends can drive.

AUSTIN: Sixteen, seventeen?

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Um, uh. The...how do I want to do this? I think...not only, not only, um, are you...not only do you know Britney, not only were you friends with Britney, Britney's older sister was dating your brother.

SYLVIA: Okaaaay.

AUSTIN: Um, so then you have a direct connection here between the Namours and your own family. Um, uh, so you knew the Namours, you know what I mean? You and Britney were friends, uh, you would sometimes both tag along with your older brother and Britney's older, older sister. Um, uh, named Jessica. Um, and, and yeah. That's, that's, that's what you, you know. And like **[JACK: Weird.]** for both of you a bunch of memories come flooding back at like this point, and you're like "oh yeah, of course. Of course, Britney." Um, and that's very weird. Like, Britney was with you yesterday.

SYLVIA: [distantly] Oh.

AUSTIN: Uh, unfortunately for-

KEITH: Oh wait, she was?

AUSTIN: Yeah, a hundred percent. Played with you at the, at the, at the, uh, event.

KEITH: So it wasn't that **[JACK: Played saxophone?]** Ronny's thing was wrong, it's that all of ours except for Ronny's is wrong.

AUSTIN: That is correct.

JACK: Hm.

AUSTIN: And at this point we have introduced the mystery.

Jack (as FRANKIE): Should we just get out of here? Is this- we, we got the pictures. We can like...sell them or whatever? I don't, I don't see why we need to-

Sylvia (as CC): Shouldn't we help her?

Jack (as FRANKIE): Hm?

Sylvia (as CC): Britney? Like there's something going on.

Jack (as FRANKIE): She's playing saxophone! The woman was clapping-

Dre (as RONNIE): [overlapping] Wait, do you know, you know who she is?

Jack (as FRANKIE): Yeah, who's that?

Sylvia (as CC): She was in the band? She-

Keith (as NOLAN): Yeah, she was in the band.

Jack (as FRANKIE): No.

Sylvia (as CC): -came with us yesterday?

Jack (as FRANKIE): Nope. I don't know who you're talking about.

Keith (as NOLAN): No, she wasn't with us yesterday.

Sylvia (as CC): Brit- Britney.

AUSTIN: No, she was. She was, Nolan. I said yes to that.

KEITH: Oh wait, I thought that only, uh, I thought that only CC knew that.

AUSTIN: No no no, you both-

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: Now that you both know who it is- the only difference is that Nolan, you just don't know her as well because, because [**KEITH:** Okay.] CC is friends with her, and also has this connection through her older brother?

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: So it's more that like, you know, yeah, she was there.

KEITH: [overlapping] I thought that I had got that I had remembered her, but, but only CC remembered that- okay, got it.

AUSTIN: Gotcha. No, no, you both got it. You both remember, you both remember, remember her. Everything, any encounter you've ever had with her, you now completely remember her again.

JACK: We still have no idea who she is, right?

AUSTIN: Uh, no. Not even, not even now having been told about her.

Jack (as FRANKIE): I have no idea who she is. And she's-

Keith (as NOLAN): She used to buy from my store.

Jack (as FRANKIE): -all goofed up.

Sylvia (as CC): She went to my birthday party! You two hung out!

AUSTIN: [overlapping] Um, she's into Fr- she really loves Fruit Roll Ups, uh, Nolan.

KEITH: Who doesn't?

AUSTIN: Mm.

Jack (as FRANKIE): I'm- I'm not going...this is...you don't know who she is, right, Ronny?

Dre (as RONNY): I don't...it like...I don't think so, but if they both remember her?

Keith (as NOLAN): You don't remember the time that she made a Fruit Roll Up so long that it was a Fruit by the Foot?

Sylvia (as CC): It was so sick.

Keith (as NOLAN): [overlapping] It was like a double wide Fruit by the Foot.

Jack (as FRANKIE): No, that does sound really sick, though. Wait, you wan- you wanna help her? She's fine! She's like all goofed up, she's like some kind of-

Dre (as RONNY): She's not fine!

AUSTIN: "She's fine." In the background static plays as creepy saxophone music kicks back up, and a, a ghost as if taken from a late night television program, like-

Jack (as FRANKIE): She's like playing again-

AUSTIN: -leaks through the woods.

Jack (as FRANKIE): -for that lady! She's just playing again for that lady. I say, we can figure this out tomorrow. You, you wanna go out there and say, like, "what's up, Britney?" Absolutely not. We go home-

Dre (as RONNY): But-

Jack (as FRANKIE): -we sell these pictures for fifty bucks each, we can figure out what's been going on-

Keith (as NOLAN): Why isn't anybody else here?

Sylvia (as CC): [overlapping] WHAT?!

Dre (as RONNY): There's, because there's gotta be a reason that like, it was on my recorder. And that we're here and she's here. Like, there's, there's gotta be...

Jack (as FRANKIE): [overlapping] Yeah, but I'm not-

Dre (as RONNY): What if like, what if we're the only people that can help her?

Jack (as FRANKIE): What if we're the ghosts? And they're-

[Keith laughs.]

Jack (as FRANKIE): No, I'm not even dignifying this with, like...

[Austin laughs.]

Jack (as FRANKIE): This is something that we, we go home, we look everything up. We figure it all out, and we just, we, we, we...we come back.

Keith (as NOLAN): Look, maybe-

Jack (as FRANKIE): You all are in some like- it's like a mass delusion. Not the seeing the ghost bit, the believing that she's Britney bit.

Sylvia (as CC): [sighs heavily] She has been to my house so many times!

Jack (as FRANKIE): Shhhhhh!

Keith (as NOLAN): So you're s-

Sylvia (as CC): You live next door! You've seen this!

Keith (as NOLAN): You're, you're saying-

AUSTIN: As you start to get louder, the saxophone stops. And we see the ghosts start to look your direction.

SYLVIA: Baaaurh.

AUSTIN: Further conversation will continue to draw your attention.

Jack (as FRANKIE): [whispering] *She freaking heard you!*

Keith (as NOLAN): *We have to be quiet. If she's already a ghost...then...what can we do?*

Dre (as RONNY): *What...what if she's not a ghost?*

Keith (as NOLAN): *She's clearly a ghost!*

SYLVIA: Oh my god.

Dre (as RONNY): *What if we go back and ask that weird lady about this?*

Jack (as FRANKIE): *See? This is fine, yeah, absolutely.*

Dre (as RONNY): *Yeah.*

Jack (as FRANKIE): *She's like...she's like...peed off at us...*

Sylvia (as CC): Heh.

Jack (as FRANKIE): [whispering] *Shut up.*

Keith (as NOLAN): *But that's gross. She's not going to pee on us!*

Jack (as FRANKIE): *Sh- shut up!*

[Sylvia laughs.]

Jack (as FRANKIE): *You're making me laugh! They'll hear us!*

[Dre laughs.]

Keith (as NOLAN): *I am, I am ten years old, you are twelve, we're allowed to say piss.*

AUSTIN: The static grows louder.

Keith (as NOLAN): *Okay, run!*

Jack (as FRANKIE): *Okay.*

Dre (as RONNY): *Okay, we should go.*

Sylvia (as CC): Run!

Keith (as NOLAN): Just run!

Sylvia (as CC): We're coming back here tomorrow though!

AUSTIN: As you run, with each step you take-

[Music begins: [*To Be Young Near the Shore*](#) by Jack de Quidt.]

AUSTIN: -the static continues to grow. There's a point at which you can look at your friends and call to them, and can't make out what they're saying, so loud the static is.