

Sangfielle 29: Hark! The Citadel Beneath Pt. 2

Transcriber: robotchangeling

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

Jack (as Pickman): There's something going on with Sapodilla and trains. I intend to get to the bottom of it. Trains don't seem to be interacting with this place in the way that they do outside. And I suppose Plan B is that, uh, I see if I can invite them in.

[Music begins: "**Sangfielle**" by Jack de Quidt]

Ali (as Marn): And that helps Chine how?

Jack (as Pickman): Well, it gets Blick out of the picture.

Austin (as crowd): A message for the Marquis! You must open these gates in three days hence, or suffer the consequences!

Jack (as Pickman): You need to come with us to get us into the prison?

Austin (as Blick): Mm-mmm. Night after tomorrow, big party, Open Gates. Half the Macula leadership will be across town at a concert. Rest'll be busy, uh, keeping the party safe. Yeah? You slip under headquarters. Go right to the cells. Free your friend. See if I care.

Austin: You've dug yourself a hole here. What I will say at this point is you could be in your little shrew hole instead of being in the room the next time someone comes in, right? For instance.

Dre: Mmm.

Austin: However, you've been digging yourself a hole nonstop. You've made real progress on escaping this place by yourself, effectively. But I think at some point it does just get to be too exhausting.

Jack (as Pickman): Our goal is to go in there, identify where Chine is, get them out. If they're still alive, which I'm sure they are.

Janine (as Es): I have an additional goal. They're doing something here that's separating my kind from their hosts.

Jack (as Pickman): Hmm.

Janine (as Es): And then...I don't really know. I know they're still around. I can tell they aren't gone. And they're concentrated. So, I imagine they're being kept much like China is being kept.

Jack (as Pickman): Once we're in the building, are we planning on moving quietly or loudly?

Janine (as Es): Well, the party should give us some cover, whatever our choice.

Austin: Alright, then, are you doing this during Open Gates? Is that the plan?

Jack: Yeah. I think so. You know, like...like the, uh, going out for the heist, except instead we're trying to get our friend back.

[song plays out]

Austin: Open Gates happens across the entire city. There are, you know, people playing music, like I said before. And there's, you know, you know, kind of open doors everywhere. The smells and sounds and sights and everything of celebration throughout especially the Sunflower District. This is a real Sunflower District place or Sunflower District, uh...celebration, like event, holiday. Because it's about a shift in power from the Hibiscus District, from the nobility and the aristocracy and the kind of moneyed interests of old Sapodilla, with the rising kind of quote unquote, middle class and merchant class really of the Sunflower District. Those folks got a lot of power, and it's tied to this moment of opening the gates and bringing in a bunch of new people and a different kind of shift in who ran things. The main gates...traditionally, Open Gates is held in such a way that all of the gates of Sapodilla completely open up. The party spills out into the outside districts also. You know, people all in the entire area are celebrating. But the Macula has closed those outside gates, but it's keeping its tower gates open as is the sort of promise.

And I think as you approach this, you get the...you understand kind of where you're at, as you start to kind of examine the tower in front of you. You're in a plaza, but you realize the plaza is actually built on or is the roof of a building, a building that has sunk into the ground. And the tower in front of you, where—which now has this huge, you know, it's open but it would have been this huge gate that would have shut down on top of it or shut down in front of it and that is open now—is actually like a castle tower, right? Like, you can look up and see the battlements and parapets and stuff at the very top. And it would have been, if this castle was on the ground level, would have been way up in the sky, you know? But instead...this is sort of like, you know, where the crown jewels would be kept or where like, you know, you go hide Rapunzel at the top of this tower, you know? But it's almost as if you're standing on top of a building that is no longer aboveground but is below it, and then this tower emerges above that.

This area around you is now filled with people. Again, half of...let's say half of the amount of the Macula is elsewhere in the city, because there's parties happening everywhere

and so they're just kind of everywhere trying to like keep stuff, quote unquote, "under control." A lot of Macula leadership is across the city in the Hibiscus District attending the oratorio of Davia Pledge. I'm sure it'll go fine for them. And the remaining people are kind of stretched thin here, some of whom you can even see up in the balcony looking down from the second floor of their tower, looking down on this plaza. The plaza is filled with people, hundreds of people, many of them costumed, many of them in masks. Speaking of masks, one person you see towering above others is Dyre Ode, here wearing a new mask as they are wont to do. This mask is like hundreds of little blue and turquoise and teal like stones, like mosaic, like almost like it's a mosaic mask. And as he turns, the light catches it differently, and it's like you're looking at like ocean waves almost on their face, on their mask. And, you know, I imagine this smells a lot like roasted pork and, you know, tropical drinks. And there are people playing guitars, and there are dancers up on a stage, and that is the vibe out here.

As you can see in front of you again, it's a tower. There are kind of three floors to that tower that you can kind of estimate, at least. What do you, uh, what do you do? And again, just one more thing, is like the party blends into the first floor of that tower. Part of what is symbolically happening here is that you have this bottom floor, which is kind of big and open and cavernous, that is traditionally like, you know, there are supplies for the Macula and like some tables, and it's normally kind of like a staging room for the Macula, a big staging area. Is today, has been converted to this kind of party space, and that's kind of one of the symbolic things that happens during Open Gates is the Honorguard gives way to the people, right? In any case, that is the situation. What do y'all do?

Jack: I don't really want to drag Dyre Ode into this. They seem like they're having a good time.

Austin: [hesitant] They are...you know, actually, I think that they...none of you are like disguised, right?

Jack: No. Oh, I mean, I'm—

Austin: Well, I think that—

Jack: Pickman's not.

Austin: Right. Marn or Es?

Ali: No, I don't think so.

Austin: I guess—

Janine: Es is wearing her hat on a fun angle.

Austin: Great. [Ali laughs softly] I think he then moves towards Es, because he knows you. And they approach and say like:

Austin (as Dyre Ode): The lady Es. I'd heard that you were here in town.

Janine (as Es): Oh, hi. Don't always love hearing that. [laughs softly] Doesn't always bode well.

Austin (as Dyre Ode): Word travels, and I do too. Are you busy tonight?

Janine (as Es): It's a little hard to answer that question right now, to be honest with you. Uh, hopefully not.

Austin (as Dyre Ode): Walk with me a moment.

Janine (as Es): Okay.

Austin: And like turns—

Ali (as Marn): [quietly] The answer's yes.

Austin: Uh huh.

Ali: [laughs softly] The answer's yes. [Jack laughs] Marn just whispering from, [Janine laughs] you know, three feet below them.

Austin: [laughs] I think turns and kind of moves his cape in such a way as to like draw a line between the two of you and people around and looks down, and you can see the waves, the mosaic waves on their face, kind of taking a slightly frown-like shape. And he says:

Austin (as Dyre Ode): As you know, I'm limited in speaking on matters like these, though your handling of...my last part...gives us special dispensation to some degree. I have a favor I need done, and I've seen you do them well. Do you have any interest?

Janine (as Es): Well, I can certainly try, but I should tell you there are other...favours, I suppose, that I'm working towards that I may have to prioritize, should push come to shove.

[0:10:11]

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

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

Austin: The mask turns towards a grin.

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

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

Austin: He nods and tilts his hat towards you and says:

Austin (as Dyre Ode): I do hope you'll get to enjoy the party some.

Janine (as Es): Me too. [sighs]

Janine: And I want to make sure that I...I want to underscore that Es does not sound optimistic about that.

Austin: Yeah. Uh huh. Yeah, no, I—

Janine: I think she very much wants to, but—

Austin: Yep.

Janine: She does not think that's gonna happen.

Austin: Mm. And I think before you leave, he says like:

Austin (as Dyre Ode): A shame about Sapodilla.

Austin: And then just walks away.

Jack: Was there something that prohibited Dyre Ode from getting their skull from...

Austin: Yes. Dyre Ode seems to neither be able to say outright what it is that he needs or claim it by his own hand.

Jack: Okay.

Austin: He can be—

Jack: And this is consistent with his appearance in Roseroot?

Austin: In Roseroot, they seemed to do everything they could to lead the party towards retrieving his skull and getting it back but could not approach it directly. In some ways, it's an echo of the conversations we had around the party in Blackwick not— or, not the party, but the people of Blackwick not being able to talk about the curse.

Jack: [overlapping] Oh, the curse, right.

Austin: But said really plainly, I mean, this is— I'll just tweet it out. [someone snorts] The, uh...as established, Dyre Ode...Dyre Ode's skull was given to the tribe of Dyre Ode's home village, as a sort of, um, boon, as a sort of trinket, a sort of magical fetish that helped keep Aterika'Kaal in check, right? And shifted their relationship to it from agonistic—this sort of like competitive, dangerous, but still fundamentally productive relationship—into something a lot less risky and a lot more balanced. And, it seems, you might extrapolate from that, that Dyre Ode is...Dyre Ode is going around Sangfielle and trying to get all of his bones back. It seems as if Dyre Ode has maybe scattered, as gifts, parts of his skeleton across the heartland, and they are in the process of getting those parts back. Those parts all seem to have some sort of magical properties, so.

Jack: Hmm. We could definitely give it a try.

Austin: Yeah, uh huh. [Janine makes amused sound] Might could.

Jack: Into the first level of the tower?

Austin: I guess so, right? You go in, and you're...you know, it's open air here, right? Like, you just go up, and like there is just like food on a long table. You know, someone hands you a plate instinctively. [laughs]

Jack: Hm!

Austin: There's a trio of guitarists. Or it's like two guitarists and an acoustic bass player, you know, up on stage playing music. Someone sings and dances to it. You know, we're really in festival times right now. It's a blast. It's very stressful also, for you, because you know that things are— that you're about to go other places. There is, in this room...but also just fun, 'cause it's like this is absolutely like a war table. You can see the, you know, in some corner, the big map of Sapodilla has been rolled up and put to the side. Like yesterday, this would have been a table that was used to like assign patrol routes, and today it just has like a big roast pig—

Jack: [amused] Hm!

Austin: —and like a huge fruit spread on it, you know? Anyway, there is a stairwell up that's guarded and also a stairwell down that is guarded. You assume the stairwell up goes up to the second floor of this tower, where there are...where you saw that balcony and some members of the Macula looking down. In fact, you specifically saw a person none of you would know but the camera would recognize as Emma Serchilde, who was the head of that guard group that the other party ran into in a library the night— literally the night before. Or maybe it was two nights before now. And you can see that, you know, in fact maybe... [amused exhale] The camera shows that same crew of people minus Felix Hollowfield—who now is actually dead, by the way—and they are still kind of battered and bruised from their fight with the other half of the

party but have been kind of bandaged up and are doing their best here at what's supposed to be one of the easier duties tonight, so. So yeah, stairwell up, stairwell down. You assume down, I guess. You don't— maybe you see it open briefly and you see a guard come up from the stairs, so we get the image of you knowing that there's a stairwell down here. I'll note, also, from the plaza, there are also other approaches to the tower. There's like a little side alley that seems to have some connection to the same core structure, because, again, you're effectively standing on top of a castle, right? It just doesn't seem like that, because you walked here from the rest of the city where there wasn't a castle. Like, you've just walked on top of a sunken castle, effectively.

Ali: Mmm.

Austin: And so you make the— you realize like, oh, some of these other buildings near here are actually part of the same structure, even if they are not necessarily like the...the part of the Macula's complex. But you don't necessarily know if you can find a way through those. That certainly would be a different approach than the signet ring.

Ali: It's time.

Austin: So, what are you doing? You showing the ring and dipping downstairs? You going upstairs first?

Jack: Did you have something, Ali?

Ali: No, I feel like we should just go down there and...

Jack: What, just get started? Remember in— ugh. Remember that door that Hella failed to open in the tower at the beginning of Hieron? [Ali cackles]

Austin: Oh, the first episode of *Friends at the Table*?

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah. [Dre chuckles]

Ali: I do, yep.

Jack: Huh. We should prioritize...we should prioritize Chine. There's two whole— there's— Austin has put two whole rooms up there. We're looking at a map.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: And visible on this map right now is the plaza and then three floors of the tower.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Going up.

Austin: I'll note, as we begin to reveal more of this map, this is a...there are...there are elements of this that are meant to be evocative of shape and structure. So, for instance, the plaza is a long, flat rectangle, and then it's adjacent to three Macula like tower rooms that are...that lift vertically above it on the thing, and that kind of makes it feel as if there's a height to it. But it's not, like...the rest of this is not like literally just like a cross cut of the place below, you know?

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Austin: This is...there's a lot of abstraction that's going to be happening here in terms of distances and sizes—

Jack: Mmm.

Austin: —but try to be evocative with the general layout, as we'll see.

Jack: Hey, if—

Austin: You're not like— yeah, go ahead.

Jack: If I show Blick's signet ring to the upstairs guards...

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Will they just let me go upstairs?

Austin: Tell me. You gonna do it? [Dre, Jack, and Ali laugh] Like, you don't get to know the answer to that without doing it.

Ali: Jack, I...I just want— interjecting here.

Jack: No, please, please.

Ali: While I respect your completionist nature in this moment, [Dre laughs] I invite you to compare what we see now to the sneak peek that Austin gave us previously.

Jack: Yeah, that's a— I was thinking about this— well, hang on. Let me pull up the sneak peek. [Ali laughs] Austin pulled a Jon Bois tweet. You know when John Bois does those great—

Austin: Uh huh. [Austin, Dre, and Jack laugh]

Jack: —where he's like, "Ah, you should see what Obama tweeted," it's just like extremely low resolution? Austin gave us a version of this map that—and I'm not kidding—is exactly 204 by 209 pixels. [Austin and Ali laugh]

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: Twice a LiveJournal icon.

Jack: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Uh huh.

Jack: Okay.

Austin: I should have made it smaller, you're right. [Ali laughs] You can kind of read some words here.

Jack: Nah. I mean, I can see "plaza," but the—

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Okay, yeah, fine. Fuck it. What if there's good stuff up there, though, is the thing? Here's the thing.

Ali (as Marn): Chine could be hurt.

Jack: It's Chine.

Ali: I switched to in character somehow, [laughing] because I guess we know what Chine's situation is, but like...

Jack: Yes.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Chine's in a little shrew hole.

Dre: Yeah. [Ali laughs]

Austin: But in other words, in other words, is this Marn—

Dre: Cozy.

Austin: Marn is recognizing that—

Jack: Mmm. There is timing.

Austin: —that there is some trepid— yeah, that there is some ambivalence here on... [Ali laughs] Pickman's like, what's up those stairs, though? The crown jewels could be up those stairs.

Jack: No, I mean, the thing is Jack's like that. I don't think Pickman's like that at all. So, let's—

Austin: Okay.

Jack: Let's go to the down— yeah, let's play the character. [Ali laughs]

Janine: Hang on. Am I getting any vibes?

Jack: Oh, yeah. Good shout. Do a vibe check.

Ali: Ooh.

Austin: Like heritrix vibes?

Janine: Well, I got this thing that like is leading me around and giving me vibes.

Austin: Yeah, that's below you.

Janine: So I'm asking what the vibes are.

Austin: The vibes are— those vibes are absolutely below you.

Janine: Okay. Okay.

Austin: Yes. Stronger here than you've ever felt them.

Jack: That's a good sign.

Janine: Alright.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Janine: That's more or less what I expected, but it's always good to confirm the vibes.

[0:20:00]

Austin: Absolutely.

Jack: Real quick. Ali, I'm just making this as a proposal. [Ali laughs] And I can't support this in character, so this is mostly just a proposal.

Ali: Wow, okay.

Jack: What if we go to the enforcers by the stairs up to Macula floor two, and I show them the ring, and I say, "I just need to go upstairs for a moment," and I literally stick my head at the top of the stairs and see if there's anything good up there. [Jack and Ali laugh]

Dre: [laughing] God.

Ali: There's just gonna be a bunch of like...there's gonna be a break room with a bunch of signs that are like, "Here's how you incapacitate a weird person," [Dre laughs] like it's just gonna be a bunch of cop shit.

Jack:

Okay. What I'm saying, though, [Ali laughs] is like, if we go up there and I show them the ring and they say no, [Ali laughs] we just turn around and we go downstairs.

Ali: Mmm.

Jack: If I show them the ring and they say yes—

Austin: [doubtful] Mmm....

Jack: —I just go to the top of the stairs—

Ali: But then—

Jack: —have a quick reccy, go down to the... [Jack and Ali laugh softly]

Dre: Excuse me? [Austin laughs]

Ali: If they say no, they're gonna be like, "What are you doing with that ring?" and then we're not gonna be able to go downstairs.

Jack: You do make a—

Janine: Okay.

Dre: I'm— [Ali laughs]

Janine: So, I just—

Dre: Hey, what's a quick reccy mean? [Ali laughs]

Austin: Reconnoiter is my read on this one, Dre.

Jack: Yeah.

Dre: Okay.

Jack: Yeah, that's it.

Dre: Okay.

Austin: A quick...

Janine: Oh. I thought it was recreation, a quick recreation. [Austin laughs] Upstairs.

Dre: I thought maybe it was like recon.

Ali: ??? 21:22

Jack: Yeah, like reconnaissance.

Austin: Yeah, recon's the same—

Jack: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Janine: Yeah, yeah.

Austin: Yeah, sure.

Dre: Yeah, fair.

Austin: That's all the same word.

Dre: Alright.

Janine: Um...I mean, so...you know, in my scary kill things mode, I can kind of like fly and stuff, so you know, if we...if stuff goes bad and we're like—

Jack: I don't want to break bad.

Janine: —running, I could just like...I'm just saying, I could like maybe like hop up there and take a peek in a window and be like, "Yeah, it's full of cop stuff," and then we leave.

Jack: If we had Duvall here—

Janine: If that makes you feel better. I'm not saying I'm gonna do that, but it's...

Jack: No, no, no. No. Let's just do it. Let's do it. Let's go downstairs. [Dre laughs]

Austin: Sure.

Jack: You fucker. You tr— [Jack, Dre, Ali, and Austin laugh]

Ali: We're sure. We are sure.

Austin: Okay.

Jack: But Ali, what...

Ali: This is two against one.

Janine: [imitating a GM] You smell a mysterious scent wafting down. [Ali and Austin laugh] You can't quite place what it is.

Ali: We're doing a dungeon delve. We're going downstairs.

Austin: Yes.

Ali: There's still gonna be things to steal down there.

Austin: Uh huh.

Jack: He drew this fucking map for us, though. He wouldn't have put those rooms there.

Ali: Its a trap. [laughing lightly] It's a trap.

Austin: It's not a trap. It's not a *trap*.

Ali: It's a distraction.

Austin: You've ne— well, it's not a distraction either. I can tell you what it is, once you commit to not going there.

Jack: There's' something in the room.

Austin: What I will say is, [Ali laughs softly] think about playing a game, a video game—

Ali: Mm.

Austin: —where you do a side quest to get the key that you need.

Jack: This is what I'm saying!

Austin: But Jack, you've already done the side quest to get the key, which means maybe you don't need to go get the key on site at this point.

Janine: Or maybe there's a better key up there. [laughs softly]

Austin: There might— I mean, listen. I'm not gonna lie to you. There's stuff up there. [Janine and Ali laugh softly] Of course there's stuff up there.

Ali: It's all billy sticks and weird locker rooms. [Jack laughs] Can we please go downstairs? Please?

Janine: Billy sticks.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Billy clubs, you know. [Janine, Ali, and Austin laugh]

Austin: In this world, they're called billy sticks

Jack: I'd like a pack of billy sticks please, and I'll take, uh... [Ali laughs]

Janine: It's william twigs, thank you.

Jack: Pack of crisps.

Janine: This is an old timey setting, so it's william twigs, thank you. [Austin and Jack laugh]

Jack: Uh, Austin has now added...

Austin: Blick is actually short for blilly stick.

Jack: Oh, for billy stick— [laughs]

Austin: Yeah, uh huh. Yeah, so you're gonna go down is what I'm hearing.

Jack: Mm-hmm.

Austin: This is happening?

Janine: Let's just go down.

Austin: Okay. Alright.

Jack: Shows the ring to... [exaggerated] Yeah, it's fucking stairs. I bet there'd have been something more exciting upstairs. Fucking stairs. [laughter]

Austin: Alright.

Janine: It's a giant ring that needs three people to carry it. [Austin and Ali laugh]

Austin: You flash the ring. The person doesn't— the Macula person like barely even gives you a second look, seeing the ring. I mean, at first you're approaching, and they're like, "Ope, here we fucking go. People want to see behind closed— oh. Mm." Does a little salute, having seen Blick's ring, and just, you know, stands to the side as you open the door and begin going down a kind of spiral staircase deeper into...again, you're like, you're walking down the tower basically, right? Like, you're going into a tower and then walking down it. The tower was already poking up into the sky. You're kind of going down floor by floor. And it's a fucking long tower. It's like...you're on that staircase two minutes, three minutes, four minutes. You don't come to another door still, you know? It's lit by some like old sconces. Five minutes, six minutes. You're just walking down these stairs. This is a long time to walk down some stairs.

Jack: What happens if we turn around and go... [laughs]

Austin: Yeah, what's up?

Dre: Should have taken the Shinra elevator, but then you would have more random encounters. [Austin laughs]

Jack: We might be in like a...yeah, we might be in like a *Super Mario 64* type situation.

Austin: You turning around and going back up? [Ali laughs softly]

Jack: No 'cause then I'm worried that we'll just maybe walk up the stairs for five minutes again. [Jack and Ali laugh] You've really thrown me with this intricate map, Austin.

Austin: I know. We don't do dungeon dives very often.

Jack: Can we...Es, can you sense any magic? [Austin laughs softly] I mean, you know.

Austin: Is that a thing that Es—

Janine: I don't—

Austin: Es, do you have magic sense?

Janine: I have Discern, but it's really better for emotions.

Jack: Hmm.

Austin: Well Discern, Discern Occult would work for something here, maybe.

Janine: Okay, I have Occult.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Janine: I have Occult and Cursed. That's all I got.

Austin: Big ones to have. Give me Discern Occult. And I will say this is still actions trying to get to where you're getting to, so this is not Risky for you according to that Fallout.

Janine: Okay.

Austin: So, Discern Occult.

Janine: Um.

Austin: Ayy!

Jack: Oh, lovely.

Austin: Eight. Look at that.

Janine: Alright. Nice.

Austin: It takes you a second—I mean, it takes you a few minutes—but you realize very quickly, you are...you know what it is, actually, and you're gonna get a little resource for this, if you...I mean, if you want it, I guess. You pass a...this broken scone that's on the ground. It's a D4 pre-Panic scone, Desolate. This is like from the castle from before the Panic happened. And you're like, this is the same...we are going...this is the same. And when you go to pick up this scone, you like skip a step. You like jump down to like, "Uh, let me just go grab this," and when you skip that step, you've skipped two steps. You only skipped one step, but you look back up at Pickman and Marn, and you've jumped— you've gone further away from them than you actually went, you know what I mean? You jumped from one to three, from step one to step three, except actually now you're at step five for some reason, away from them. And so you realize you have to skip every other step. You have to walk on every other step to get down this thing

successfully. That is like the way you get past this strangely warded tower going down. Going up, you would've just climbed stairs, but going down it...

Janine: Okay. That was better than the mechanic I assumed was happening there, which was you had to be walking towards a sconce to move faster. [Janine and Jack laugh]

Austin: [amused] No.

Janine: And I thought we were gonna have to chuck the sconce down there. It's fine. This is better.

Austin: No, you're good.

Janine: Mm-hmm.

Austin: And you emerge to a...or you get to the bottom, and there are two doors, effectively. Not effectively. There are two doors. [laughs] One of them opens up— both of them open up into hallways, basically. One of them is a—you kind of peek through the door—one of them is a new type of hallway we've not seen. Not a new *type* of hallway. I mean, I guess there is something [Janine makes amused sound] kind of new type about it, which is that like, the...you look in, and it's not as even as it should be. The stonework is kind of sinking in some places. Things are a little askance, you know? Again, the sconces are not all even. They're not level across the entire...the entire hallway. And so this is...on our map, it's just gonna be called “underground halls.” The other room is another hallway, but this one is...the kind of of room itself is kind of well furnished and well appointed. There's like a nice carpet here. There are some...some chairs, and is lit with— instead of the regular sconces here, it is lit with this sort of blue fire. The torches here emit this kind of blue fire that, Es, you're getting like, the alarm bells are kind of ringing on it a little bit, in terms of there being weird magic shit happening and maybe even weird heritrix related stuff happening here. You're not quite sure what to make of it at this point, but yeah. Also, in the underground halls in the distance, you hear people in those hallways moving around, walking, going about their business. You don't hear that in the guest— what I've marked as “guest wing” in quotes. In the guest wing, from where you're looking, you can also make out three doors. There's kind of three, you know, guest rooms. I'll reveal those too.

Janine: How are the vibes now?

Austin: Still bad. What do you...uh, I mean, the direction—

Janine: Down bad or like— not down—

Austin: You still got— [chuckles] down bad? Yeah, Es is down bad. [laughter] Damn, Es had two conversations with Dyre Ode, down bad. [Janine and Dre laugh] The big heritrix vibes are still further below, but as you, again, look into the guest wing, and those torches specifically are

kind of throwing them off a little bit as you are like, there's something heritrix happening with those torches. You don't know what. But the bulk of the cry is from deeper down below still.

[0:30:11]

Janine: [suspicious] Mmm.

Austin: Chine, what are you up to?

Dre: Oh boy. Um...anything changed in my room? Has anybody come by?

Austin: No one has come by. And it's been a day, you know?

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: They are starving you, effectively. They gave you that piece of bread, and they've not fed you since.

Dre: Mmm. Okay.

Austin: There's a particular strategy at work here, which is they were hoping that by feeding you, you would try to use your energy, and then they would stop feeding you, and you would anticipate that more food would come, and it hasn't. Do you know what I mean? You wouldn't restrain—

Dre: Sure.

Austin: You wouldn't save your strength, basically.

Dre: Mmm.

Austin: Which is why you're still tired, by the way.

Dre: Cool. I mean, I can eat dirt, so.

Austin: That's true. You can eat dirt. That's a special thing you can do.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Austin: It's not a resource, though.

Dre: No, I, yeah.

Austin: Which is something I realized in retrospect we played...we've played wrong a number of times here, where I've let you— you can eat it fine, but it's not gonna give you the Desolate domain—

Dre: Sure, sure, sure, sure, sure. Yeah, yeah.

Austin: —without it being a resource.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: So, yeah.

Dre: [thoughtful sigh]

Austin: Anyway.

Dre: Okay. Man. So, since I am tired, does that— I mean, I know...I know the mechanical of that is not using skills.

Austin: Yeah.

Dre: But is the flavor of that, then, that like further tunneling probably isn't gonna happen?

Austin: You can make the roll, you know?

Dre: Right, yeah, but it would be really hard.

Austin: It'd be very hard to do, correct.

Dre: Okay.

Austin: Uh, I guess, remember you already cleared— you haven't cleared Ringing Head, but it's down to Risky now.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: And then you'll clear it on the next one. The...there was something else too. I think the other thing to just think about is like, you just haven't been able to sleep well. And I think the reason you haven't been able to sleep well is not actually the food thing, it's that you've been separated from the Course in this room.

Dre: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

Austin: And so like, you're having dreamless sleep whenever you sleep here.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: And for you specifically, the dream— dreams are important, you know?

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: I've also noticed— I've also— sorry. There is also another— I said that there were three rooms attached to the guest wing, and that's true, but there's another door at the far end that you would have also seen peeking in here, Es. So I don't want to...I don't want to deny you knowing that there is that room there, it's just that I...it's not to a cell, and so I didn't write, I didn't reveal the door, but I should have.

Dre: Gotcha. Huh. Um...man. I guess I want to try and...I mean, I guess I'm gonna keep tunneling. I'm guessing that like I, as Chine, probably don't know that there's like other rooms down here.

Austin: Um...I think in your bad sleep...you're tired. You couldn't, you know, bring yourself to do anything at the moment, the kind of peak of your tiredness. You actually did overhear another...two, basically two doors down from where you are, you heard someone removed. There was someone else locked up here who was taken away.

Dre: Okay.

Austin: While you were trying to sleep.

Dre: Alright. Then, yeah, I would like to try to like tunnel over to their room.

Austin: Good idea. Give me a...give me a Delve, uh, Desolate.

Dre: Okay. Can I not use Warren again?

Austin: [sucks air through teeth negatively]

Dre: I guess—

Austin: Maybe that first roll.

Dre: Right.

Austin: You're still...mmm. You know, I—

Dre: This is going back into the dungeon. I think Desolate makes sense.

Austin: It is, going back into the dungeon, not trying to get out, not trying to connect to another thing. So, again— wait, what are you rolling before you roll these dice?

Dre: Woof. Uh, nothing? 'Cause I...

Austin: Is it nothing again? Yeah.

Dre: I can't use skill.

Austin: Uh huh.

Dre: I don't have Desolate, and it's Risky. So...

Austin: Oh my god. So that means you're rolling zero dice. One die, but you lose the die, so it again would be that. Yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: Uh huh. Do you have any— you don't have any of your stuff.

Dre: I assume I didn't. I guess I never asked—

Austin: You don't have it.

Dre: —but I assume I do not.

Austin: You don't have any...you don't have any of your stuff. I know where your stuff is. Unfortunately. 'Cause—

Dre: I'm also guessing there's not anything back in that room that I...that is a resource per se.

Austin: No, no.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah, they've been very careful. I mean...no.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: I don't— [conflicted] mmm. Is a bed a resource? I guess a bed is a resource. It's just a bad one.

Dre: Yeah, like—

Austin: It's like a D4 Haven resource if you ate the whole thing, you know? [Dre laughs] 'Cause it would be like, whatever the tags are for like, hard to move around. You know what I mean?

Dre: Yeah, yeah, yeah. I mean, basically what I'm looking for is if there's something in there that I could use to acquire the Desolate domain.

Austin: If you ate that bed, you would get the Desolate domain.

Dre: Okay. [Austin chuckles] Um...yeah, sure.

Austin: Have you been, for the last few hours, eating the mattress?

Dre: Yeah, 'cause I think the...especially when I heard them come and get somebody, maybe the plan was to like—

Austin: Yeah.

Dre: —both sleep in the hole but also be like, okay, maybe somebody will come in, and then I can jump them.

Austin: Yeah.

Dre: Or they'll leave my door unlocked if they think I'm gone.

Austin: Uh huh.

Dre: And then I got really hungry, and it seemed like, okay, they're definitely not coming.

Austin: Yeah.

Dre: So.

Austin: I think that this is...this is a D4 res— there's no minimum on the resource, right? 'Cause in my mind, this is like a D4. So, a resource is something that has value in this game.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: It's something consumable or tradable item of value. The most fundamental resource is coin, but valuable merchandise can be traded for goods and services too. I can imagine this being a D4 Desolate bed that has the, you know, the tags like Hard to Move, 'cause it's so fucking big, and Gross, I don't want that stupid stinky bed, for instance.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Austin: But that doesn't mean you can't eat it, you know?

Dre: Yep. Yep.

Jack: Food bed.

Ali: Mmm.

Austin: Yeah, it's a food bed. Literal— [Austin and Dre laugh] It's a literal food bed. So yeah, go ahead and take that Desolate domain.

Dre: Great.

Austin: There's no roll on this, right? 'Cause this isn't...

Dre: No.

Austin: I don't think— no, this is not...

Dre: It's just when you eat a resource, yeah.

Austin: That's— and this is not a tough or noxious or cursed type thing.

Dre: No.

Austin: So yeah, you've eaten it, and...or you're...let's say you've just finished eating it. Does this make noise? Could people hear you eating this bed?

Dre: Probably. I mean, does it—

Austin: Hey, Es?

Dre: Are there like springs in the mattress? [laughs]

Austin: Yeah, probably. Es, you definitely hear someone scarfing something down in the guest wing. [Jack laughs]

Janine: Only I hear this?

Austin: Well, you're the one who peeked in the doors as we framed it previously.

Janine: Okay.

Austin: As you kind of lead the party down the stairs and all of that, but anyone listening can hear this

Jack: By God, that's—

Janine: I turn around to... [laughs] Okay. I was gonna say I turn around to Marn and Pickman and say:

Janine (as Es): I think someone's eating a bed down here.

Ali (as Marn): Chine!

Jack (as Pickman): Oh, Chine.

Janine (as Es): I hope. [Ali laughs] Otherwise things are worse than we thought. [Ali laughs]

Austin: Uh huh. [laughs]

Jack: Okay. I mean, let's...let's do it. Let's, you know. Pickman draws draws her weapon and proceeds into the guest wing.

Austin: Give me a Discern as you step into this room, Pickman. Discern Desolate.

Ali: Do you want an assist on that one?

Jack: I would like assist on that one. [Ali laughs]

Austin: Uh huh.

Janine: I could assist.

Jack: Okay.

Austin: Alright. This is...yeah. To assist means to open yourself up to harm is what I will say again, but.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: But maybe Pickman needs the dice.

Janine: I only have three...

Austin: Okay.

Janine: I only have three Stress right now is all.

Austin: Fucking fair enough.

Jack: Desolate.

Janine: Yeah.

Ali: I recalled Pickman not having Discern.

Jack: Thank you.

Austin: Yeah, that is correct.

Jack: So, that's Desolate?

Ali: Do you want to be like pushed?

Jack: [confused] Hmm?

Ali: [laughs] No, it's fine. I was like, do you want to be pushing the door open with your gun while I'm like ahead of you Discerning?

Jack: I mean, yeah, like why not, right? I don't know if Austin would let us...let us take that back.

Austin: I have no problem...I have no problem with y'all just— yeah, go for it.

Ali: Okay.

Austin: We're doing a fucking dungeon delve, baby. Like... [Ali laughs]

Jack: Yeah, what the hell is this?

Austin: Power game this shit. Let's go.

Jack: Is this...

Ali: Okay.

Jack: Is this was tabletop games are? [Ali laughs]

Austin: This is what— yeah, uh huh. [Ali laughs]

Jack: What's going on here?

Austin: Yeah, this is what everyone's been talking about all this time.

Jack: [feigning disbelief] A game without combat? Sorry. [Jack and Austin laugh]

Dre: Jesus. [laughs]

Ali: Discern what?

Austin: Desolate. Discern Desolate.

Ali: Desolate. Okay, I don't have Desolate, but then I'm getting the two assist from my dear friends.

Austin: Yeah. And no one has Discern and Desolate in this group, right? Before we...okay.

Janine: I have Discern. I don't have Desolate.

Austin: Yeah, then we're just gonna add all this stuff up.

Ali: Okay. Discern Desolate plus two. Standard?

Austin: Mmm. Mm-hmm. Uh...

Jack: Oh, lovely.

Austin: Yeah, Standard, correct.

Dre: Nice.

Austin: Look at that nine. Okay.

Janine: Nice.

Austin: So yeah, who is opening the door first here? Is it Marn? I guess you're rolling, so you open this door, you know, with Pickman and Es kind of backing you up. And you put like the slightest foot on this rug, and you...you know when you go into a room, and you're like, ope, static electricity, it's a problem in here. You know what I mean?

Ali: Mmm.

Jack: Mm-hmm.

Austin: And you're like, oop, wha-ba-ba-ba-ba-ba! [Ali laughs] And so you back up a second, and you see arcing across bits of the...through the waves in this room— [laughs]

Ali: Oh.

Austin: There are little arcs of tiny little strands of lightning. You'd almost blink and miss it, you know what I mean?

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Every— but every seven or eight seconds, there is like one of those...you know if you go to like Spencer's Gifts and get one of those little Tesla balls.

Jack: Mm-hmm.

Austin: You know what I'm talking about?

Ali: Yep, yep, yep.

Austin: But like, way thinner in terms of the line. Jolting across the room, like little strings of it basically. And that is...that's a...it's originating from the blue torches, the blue torch light here. You notice, actually, I guess you succeeded at this Discern roll. There is some sort of bone. This is not the Dyre Ode bone. You know enough that this is...Es, this is not what he meant. [Ali laughs softly] But there are—

Janine: If it looks like a normal bone, then I'll assume.

Austin: Yeah, exactly. Regular bone tr— these are kind of—

Janine: It's not like a cube bone or anything.

Austin: No, no. This is like bone trinket, trinkets that have been kind of put into the kind of center of the kind of torches here, are burning with this bright blue flame. And I'm gonna say at this, Es, you realize that this is like...it's like they've captured an element of a heritrix's true form. Some heritrix somewhere could turn into like living lightning, right?

[0:40:22]

Jack: Hmm.

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

Janine: [dismay] Hmm.

Austin: Which is like kind of a nightmare.

Janine: I don't like— yeah, that's awful.

Austin: Uh huh! And yeah, so you know that that's where it's originating. And you can hear Chine eating a bed in cell— over in cell one. [Janine laughs softly] I think it's cell one. Let me double check. Yes, that's correct. But like, if you step in any further without dealing with those torches somehow, you will get electrocuted.

Ali: Mm-hmm. And these are hallway torches, not like in the room torches.

Austin: These are hallway torches, correct.

Ali: Okay.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: And they're— it's tied to the bone?

Austin: Tied to the bone— well, it's, yeah, the torches each have...there's three of these torches, and each of them has like one of these bone trinkets in it.

Jack: Oh, like attached to the...right, I see.

Austin: Yeah. They're like in the middle of the— like, it's actually sort of like at the top of the torch where the flame is emanating. You know, it's not like just like attached by a string or something. Like, it is actually a key part of how the flame is being cast.

Jack: I could shoot it out, but it would make sound. I think my gun is explicitly loud.

Austin: It is explicitly loud. You're right.

Ali: [laughs] Can we just put them out, like...you know those little candle caps?

Austin: Uh, you—

Jack: If we go in, we'll get electrocuted, right?

Austin: You'll get electrocuted if you approach them at that...yeah.

Ali: Oh, right, right, right.

Austin: Like, the whole...that whole kind of hallway is now— is like protected by this, effectively. But you could find something to throw. Like, I don't think you... This is why you have supplies, right?

Jack: Oh right, yeah.

Austin: A failure could mean maybe you threw something you didn't want to throw, or like...

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Austin: But you have little pebbles or whatever, you know what I mean? You have some coins that are old and no one uses anymore or whatever, like.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: I'm not gonna say you don't have a thing to throw, you know? So, you want to do that? Who— was that Pickman, you wanted to do that? Or is that...you just saying theoretically you could do that?

Jack: That was saying theoretically. I don't know that, uh...

Austin: I see.

Jack: Let me see.

Austin: Does anyone have Hunt?

Ali: Would this be like a back— oh, I have Hunt. Or a backwards Mend?

Austin: I don't think it's backwards Mend. [Jack laughs]

Ali: Okay.

Austin: 'Cause it's not...you're not going up. If you were going up to it to like defuse it, that would be a Mend, you know?

Ali: Okay.

Austin: I think it's a Hunt to throw. Maybe a Delve, 'cause Delve is like doing shit you do what on a dungeon delve, but [Ali laughs] I would say it's probably...it's Hunt Desolate Standard.

Ali: Um, yeah, I'm willing to do either of those unless somebody wants to.

Janine: I don't have either of those.

Austin: Alright.

Ali: Okay.

Austin: Sometimes you gotta throw some rocks at magic lightning things. [Dre laughs]

Jack: Oh. I have Desolate, so I could help with that.

Ali: Sure.

Austin: Oh, do you have Desolate?

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: That's good.

Jack: I was also just thinking, um, would the electricity effect my armor?

Austin: Yes. It's magical electricity.

Jack: It would conduct me through— conduct through my armor? Okay.

Austin: It sure would. Well, again, what I should have said there was like, I don't know. You wanna find out? [Ali laughs]

Janine: Mmm.

Jack: But you played your...you played your hand.

Austin: I did. I did. [Ali laughs] It would hurt you. Yes.

Jack: Okay.

Austin: You get— you know, you succeeded on that previous Discern roll.

Jack: Oh, yeah, sure.

Austin: You know this, you know? You were part of that roll, so I'll give that to you happily.

Jack: 'Cause I'm sure that like there are trains that, you know, they've had to build armor that can withstand some electricity, but this is magical...

Austin: Right. Right.

Jack: ...heritrix business. But yeah, I'm helping, Ali.

Ali: Okay, cool. That's a critical success!

Austin: Look at that crit.

Jack: Ah!

Austin: There you go. [Ali laughs softly] Bop! Bop! Bop! [Ali laughs] These torches fall, the bones fall out of the torches. The light...it gets dark in here now, 'cause there's no light in the guest wing anymore, these kind of hallways. But the, uh...you have your own light, obviously, that you can use. But the, yeah, the electricity kind of falls to a stop, and these heritrix bones come out. I don't know that anyone wants to go touch those things, but they are there on the ground.

Janine: Why wouldn't I?

Austin: Okay. Well, go for it. They are...take D6 heritrix bones. These are definitely Cursed, taboo.

Jack: Hm!

Janine: Yeah, that makes sense. [Ali laughs softly]

Austin: Mm-hmm. You get the sense, as you touch these...we've talked about like, it's, the ways in which heritrixes can communicate with each other, that there is sort of a picking up the phone, putting down the phone, you know, like a dial tone, but not really a dial tone? We've used that metaphor before.

Janine: Mm-hmm.

Austin: When you pick it up, there is a sort of resolved putting the phone down. You can f—

Janine: Mm-hmm.

Austin: There's almost like... [relieved sigh] Like, there's...I don't know if there's more of this person somewhere, but these bits of it, at least, these bits of them get put to rest as you take them.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: Which is nice. Which is something.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: And you can hear, coming from cell one, the sound of Chine chewing on a— finishing up a bed. [Ali laughs] [Janine sighs, amused]

Jack: Yeah. I'm gonna go up to cell one and put my head to the window.

Austin: Um, there's actually not a window in here.

Jack: Oh.

Austin: There's not...these aren't...these are guest room doors. These are rooms for guests of the castle that have been converted into cells, and so they don't have the like window situation, you know? But you can just hear the voices there, and the door is locked. Y'all want to try to...I mean, you could just say words, and Chine could hear you.

Ali: Yeah, we could just call out.

Jack: Yeah.

Jack (as Pickman): Chine.

Ali (as Marn): Hey Chine, you in here?

Dre: Can I hear that?

Austin: Oh yeah, totally.

Dre: Okay. Uh, yeah, I guess [laughs] you hear from a weird somewhere in a dirt wall somewhere:

Dre (as Chine): [calling out] Hello?

Austin: Wait, so you carried the bed into your little dirt wall hovel? [Ali laughs]

Dre: Oh. No, no, no, no. No.

Ali: A very shrew thing to do.

Dre: Oh, okay.

Austin: Okay.

Dre: I was getting the timeline mixed up. So, okay.

Austin: Oh, okay. No.

Dre: So, I'm still eating the bed. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: Finished— you've just wrapped it up. Yeah.

Dre: Okay. Yeah, so no, you hear with my mouth full:

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

Ali (as Marn): Sounds like Chine.

Jack (as Pickman): Chine, we've come to get you.

Janine (as Es): [sighs]

Dre (as Chine): [mouth still full] Erying erecric— [swallows, clears throat] Everything's electric. Don't...don't touch anything.

Jack (as Pickman): We've turned off the electricity. It was some sort of heritrix magic. We just need to get the door open.

Dre: Uh, I throw a brick at my door again.

Austin: No electricity.

Dre: Cool.

Austin: It does get that black film on it though, as it hits the door and like falls.

Dre: Oh, man. [sighs]

Austin: But that's on the inside, you know?

Dre: Yeah.

Dre (as Chine): I...you could probably just break it.

Jack: It's noisy, but I'd...are any of us good at lockpicking? This is out of character. Um, can...Marn.

Austin: Now that could be a Mend.

Ali: Yeah, I feel like I could do that.

Jack: Seems like it's under Keen...are you taught how to pick locks?

Ali: I know how to get out of places. [laughs softly]

Jack: Lets do it.

Ali: Let's push the three critical successes that I've gotten today. [laughs]

Austin: Oh my god.

Ali: Again.

Austin: So that's, uh...

Ali: Mend Desolate.

Austin: Mend Desolate, yeah.

Ali: Uh, can I get assist on this?

Jack: Yeah, I can help you with Desolate.

Austin: How are you...yeah, how are you helping here?

Jack: Ah.

Ali: Um, maybe I'm like working on the lock, and then I'm gonna give Pickman a signal to like give it a hard push. [Jack laughs]

Austin: Yeah, there we go. Sure.

Jack: Marn is on the skilled level of pick a lock and has charged Pickman with trying to open a door. [Ali and Austin laugh]

Janine: Mm.

Austin: Give me the roll.

Ali: It's either that or have Es like zoom through the door in some sort of weird... [Jack laughs]
Okay. I'm rolling.

Jack: Oh!

Ali: Ano— what is happening? [laughs]

Janine: Wow!

Austin: Unbelievable.

Janine: What?

Austin: Another— *two* tens, actually!

Ali: Wow.

Austin: You rolled two tens.

Janine: That should be a bonus. That should be...

Austin: I think it—

Janine: I'm saying, I've said before, I feel like if you—

Austin: I think it is.

Janine: If you crit extr— you gotta get something for that, right? [Ali laughs]

Jack: Oh, yeah.

Austin: You rolled two tens.

Jack: Give us something really great, like what we'd find in the tower. [Ali laughs softly]

Austin: I mean, critical successes succeed dramatically and increase outgoing Stress dice by one step. So like, you're gonna do...you necessarily do get a— this is literally a crit, but the idea that you got *two* tens on this roll is unbelievable. [Ali laughs]

Janine: The door cracks in half, and there's a cubic pelvis inside. [Jack laughs]

Austin: That's not what you're looking for.

Janine: Done and done.

Austin: No. [laughs]

Janine: Okay, fine.

Austin: Unfortunately.

Dre: A what? [Ali laughs]

Austin: [as if obvious] You know, a cubic pelvis. Come on, Dre. [laughter]

Dre: [sarcastic] Yeah, alright. Yeah, I'm the idiot.

Jack: You know, it's the volume of a pelvis, one cubic pelvis. [laughter continues]

Dre: Yeah, no, fair. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Janine: Sangfielle.

Austin: Uh huh, Sangfielle. Welcome, everybody. So yeah, you pick this open. Here's, this is...two crits, two tens is so good. [Ali laughs softly] And it's just like to open a door. I like, what am I supposed to—

Dre: I'm so happy to see my friends all my Fallout goes away. [Ali and Dre laugh]

Austin: I will...I mean, I'm not gonna take it all away, but between them opening it and the dispersal of the...of the heritrix, you know, corruption magic, I'm gonna let you get rid of a Minor Fallout.

Dre: Oh. Do I get to pick?

Austin: You have three to pick from. Yeah.

Dre: Um. I guess I should get rid of Tired.

Austin: You should get rid of Tired.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: Tired is the worst of these by far, so.

Dre: Yeah.

Janine: Also makes the most sense in terms of like a morale boost. (??? 49:40)

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Yes, exactly. Yes, exactly. So you like see your friends, and you're like, "Oh my god, I'm getting out of here," and the Course flows back into you as the door opens.

Dre: Yay!

Austin: Right? There is something about the way they opened it as a group that like overcomes the the film that's covered you, and it pushes it away, and you feel nice and fresh. Feels like you just took a shower. I mean, like, or whatever Chine's version of a shower is.

[0:50:02]

Dre: Hey, I—

Austin: Dirt bath. I don't know.

Dre: I...you know.

Janine: It's eating a showerhead.

Austin: Yeah. [laughter] Exactly.

Dre: I'd probably...I'd probably jump in a river, in a lake every now and then.

Austin: Yeah. You know what, that's fair. That's fair. And yeah, there you are. And the other thing I'm gonna say is like, you know now how to pick the rest of the locks in this room. You can open up all these cells without rolling again.

Ali: Ooh!

Austin: And what you find is an empty cell in cell three, which is where the other person had been, the person who was taken away. And then you find a...I'm on the wrong document here. In the—

Ali: Yeah, can I have some stuff?

Austin: You do get some stuff here.

Jack: Ah!

Austin: There is in the— well, there's one thing here.

Jack: [disappointed] Oh.

Austin: There is a D6 thing of prayer beads, Religion. There— it's like a Boundless Conclave rosary, basically, right? It's prayer beads, where each of the beads is a different god in the Boundless Conclave. Clearly someone was praying in that cell, and they'd been left to have that...to have that there, so yeah, you can go ahead and take that. And then that fourth door opens up to the like second floor of a...it's not even the second floor. You open that room, and in that room is sort of a tall, narrow, circular room, like another tower almost, that is like three or four floors tall. And you're on where like the second floor of height is, but there's no room there. It's just, it opens into empty air, and it is at the bottom a sort of like bubbling tar pit.

Dre: Gross.

Austin: So that's what that fourth door is here. Actually, there's— and, sorry, there's actually another door in here that I forgot that's actually here too, and this one is locked, and I'm actually gonna say...I forgot this part of a thing I should have told you earlier, Dre. The...one of the guards, when they were taking away that person who was in cellblock three—or cell room three—said to the other one:

Austin (as guard): Remember, don't go through the ballroom later. He's having one of his things, and we just don't need to get involved while Open Gates is happening upstairs. It's just not...let's just stay away.

Austin: So, to give the audience a set of like, what do we got? What's explorable and in front of you right now? You have a guest wing with these three cells. You've explored those three cells. One cell's empty. One cell had the rosary, had the prayer beads in it. One room— then there's two other rooms attached to that guest wing. I guess there's three other rooms: the stairwell you came in, a tar pit, and a room that was referred to as a ballroom. You're guessing that that's the big—

Jack: Where “he” is, and he's having a thing.

Austin: Where, quote unquote, “he” is, and he's having a whole thing.

Ali: Mm.

Janine: [apprehensive] Mmm...

Austin: Then there's...attached to the stairwell, there's also underground halls, and those underground halls have three doors also. I actually think more than that, there's another door here. I forgot about this. Also has— there's actually another door beyond that too. There's a bunch of doors in the— in fact, you couldn't see it, 'cause the underground halls again are not just a long hallway as I've shown it here. It's like a collection of hallways, right? Like, it's a bunch of different halls that are...that basically make up this sunken castle, right? I guess I actually...the name of this...the name of this dungeon, the name that appears on your *Dark Souls* screen, is the Interred Citadel.

Ali: Ooh.

Austin: As you as you step into this place. And so yeah, there's a bunch of stuff you could explore in the underground halls, there's the ballroom, and now there is the tar pit also.

Jack: And now we've got Chine, so we can just...we can just go room by room.

Austin: And now you've got Chine. Uh huh.

Jack: Is there anything to pick up in the tar pit?

Janine: What could go wrong with that?

Austin: There's tar. You could get some of that tar. You could like lower a bucket down to get a bucket of tar.

Dre: Mm.

Jack: That sounds...

Ali: I would love to get a bottle of tar.

Janine: Eugh.

Jack: Can we all get some tar? [Ali laughs]

Austin: You could all get some tar.

Janine: Uhhh...

Austin: Yeah, totally. Give me a...give me a roll to get it. Give me like a Delve roll from someone, Delve Desolate, to safely collect this tar.

Janine: I think this is a bad idea.

Austin: Mm-hmm! [Ali laughs]

Janine: Wasn't there are a bunch of horrible black stuff on the inside of Chine's cell? And there's just a pit of tar? You—

Austin: That horrible black stuff was more of a film than a tar, but, you know.

Dre: Mmm.

Janine: Uh huh.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Janine: I don't know. It just seems...

Jack: Can you do this?

Janine: Can I get a vibe check real quick?

Jack: Yeah. [Ali laughs]

Austin: Give me a Discern.

Janine: Well, I meant...I meant the heritrix vibe check.

Austin: There's no heritrix stuff in the tar. [rethinking] Well, low.

Janine: No, no. I meant more...I meant like, you know how you were like, "It's mostly downstairs, but there's a bit of it up here."

Austin: It's still—

Janine: I want to make sure that...have we resolved the bit of it that was up here?

Austin: Uh, there's still a bit of it up here in a broader sense. You know, you don't have a...I guess [thoughtful exhale] some of it is coming from rooms connected to the under— out in the underground halls. But it was...the big ping was the...was the blue torches up here.

Janine: Okay.

Austin: So I'm saying there's minimal amount in the tar pit. A heritrix may have died in the tar pit.

Janine: Alright.

Austin: But that's not the same thing as heritrix magic, you know?

Jack: From a kind of rules lawyer-y perspective, Austin, [Dre chuckles] are you allowed to give us a resource, say there's something to get here, and then be like, "and it was a trap!" or... [Ali laughs]

Austin: I can do whatever I want, Jack.

Jack: Oh, okay.

Dre: Wow.

Jack: Oh, I see we're playing Dungeons and Dragons now.

Janine: I mean, the thing is, you know—

Austin: But if you succeeded...

Janine: We roll, and yeah—

Austin: Right. Yeah.

Janine: If we roll well, then hooray. If we roll poorly, then—

Austin: Exactly.

Janine: —it's poison bottles for everyone.

Austin: Exactly. Yes.

Janine: [amused exhale]

Austin: Janine has it.

Jack: It's Schrodinger's tar.

Austin: Yeah, exactly. [Dre laughs] I know what the tar is, because I wanted to throw you into it.

Ali: Mmm.

Austin: And you— but instead, you kidnapped William Blick. [Ali laughs]

Janine: See, this is why it's good we didn't go upstairs.

Austin: Upstairs would have been fine, probably.

Ali: I want just a little bit of it.

Janine: There's not a big silly slide that leads into the tar pit?

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: No, that was the alleyway. That's the— here, watch. Ready?

Janine: [softly] What?

Austin: Let's do this. Boom. See?

Jack: Ah.

Janine: Oh.

Austin: There's an alley off to the side of the plaza that would have led you into the tar pit.

Jack: Ohh.

Austin: But you wouldn't have just done that by yourself, probably.

Janine: Mm.

Austin: There was a whole other...there's a whole other way that you could have gotten, quote unquote, into this place that would have left you in the tar pit.

Janine: Gross.

Jack: You want to try and get us some tar, Marn?

Ali: I do.

Jack: Can you get enough for three?

Ali: I study materials.

Austin: You can get enough for four. This is a big pit of tar.

Jack: Oh yeah, I forgot we have Chine now.

Austin: You got Chine now. Yeah. [someone chuckles] This is Delve, uh, Delve and...I'm guessing Delve. Delve makes sense to me here, you know?

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Delve Desolate again.

Jack: I'll help you.

Ali: Thank you.

Jack: I'll like be a support so you can like lean over the edge. [Ali laughs]

Austin: Yeah, love it. Great.

Janine: Oh, god.

Austin: Let's see if we can get those— keep those tens rolling! [Ali laughs]

Janine: Really pushing it. [sound??? 56:51]

[simultaneously]

Ali: Success at a cost.

Jack: Success at a cost.

Austin: Success at a cost. [Jack and Austin laugh] Ah, roll this D6. Hey, only one Stress for Marn.

Ali: Wonderful.

Austin: And two for— these are both Fortune, I think, as you lean over a pit of tar.

Ali: [typing] Bottle of tar.

Janine: Tar in the fur, that's a tough one.

Austin: Uh huh.

Ali: What domain is that?

Austin: Oh, the tar?

Ali: Uh huh.

Austin: Is, uh, Occult.

Ali: Nice. See, I'm good at this.

Jack: And it's, uh, what resource?

Austin: Right...right now, put “tar, question mark, question mark, question mark?” ‘cause you don't know what it does. It does something special.

Janine: [sound of dismay and concern]

Ali: I wrote “bottle of tar,” and then I’m gonna add these question marks.

Austin: Nope. Write “tar, question mark, question mark, question mark.”

Ali: But I have—

Austin: Please. [Ali laughs]

Jack: [laughing] D...D...?

Austin: You can write bottle of tar.

Janine: [overlapping] Will it like eat through the bottle?

Ali: Okay, thank you. Okay, but I have the question marks. I have the question marks, so it's fine.

Austin: Yeah. Mm-hmm.

Ali: I just know that I keep empty bottles on me.

Janine: Are the—

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Jack: And it's D what?

Austin: Oh, you know what? Actually, Marn, take that as Supply Stress, not as Fortune Stress.

Ali: Okay.

Austin: That makes more sense to me, because it's the bottles, right?

Ali: Right.

Austin: It literally is that you...you drop a bottle in there by mistake as part of this process.

Ali: And now I'm doing a Fallout test on this?

Austin: You both give me a Fallout test.

Ali: [laughs] Wonderful.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: I'm so...

Jack: Oh no!

Austin: Hey, there's Major Fallout for Marn.

Ali: Major Fallout. Thank you.

Austin: Uh huh. Mm-hmm.

Janine: Oh, boy.

Austin: And then...hey, no Fallout—

Janine: Wait, why is it ten versus nothing?

Ali: Oh, it's ten versus ten.

Austin: Ten versus ten. Yeah.

Ali: Another ten.

Jack: Yeah, that's a cr— [Ali laughs]

Austin: Hey, yeah, in many ways, you've rolled another ten. Yeah. That's not really what you meant.

Janine: Congrats.

Austin: But... [Ali laughs] Alright, well, Major Supplies Fallout. I knew you needed Minor Supplies Fallout today, but we're gonna say Major. Um.

Ali: Let's do it.

Austin: Uh.

Ali: [softly] What's better than this?

Austin: As you're being...you're being...this is very funny. [Ali laughs] God.

Jack: That's a Major Fallout. You want to— do you *want* to put someone in the tar pit, Austin? 'Cause... [Ali laughs]

Austin: No. I know I could.

Janine: If it's Supplies Fallout, does it have to be like, your wholeass backpack falls in the tar?

Austin: Yeah, it's a resource— well, it's a resource you're carrying is destroyed, it degrades into uselessness, it's revealed to be fake, it— oh, it's revealed to be fake! That's fun. [Ali laughs] Uh, what was one of the things that you got?

Janine: Fake tar.

Austin: No, the tar is fine. Um...

Jack: Oh, from the fucking the charlatan.

Austin: For the fucking...yeah, the charlatan.

Ali: Oh, is my bottle of—

Austin: Your D6 Occult ink.

Jack: The ink!

Austin: The ink.

Ali: It really just is an empty bottle?

Austin: It really is just an empty bottle.

Ali: Damn.

Austin: And you know how you learn this? Is you fill it with tar, and you're like, "Oh, shit, no!" Then you're like, "Wait a second. There's nothing in here." [Ali and Jack laugh] There's nothing. You like tap it to feel the ink. Do you know what I mean?

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Like yeah, maybe it's invisible ink, but it's not...invisible ink is still liquid. You'd still be able to see it and feel it.

Ali: I've changed my resource.

Austin: And he was just like, it's very— the bottle's very full. [Ali and Austin laughs softly] The reason you can't see an air bubble is it's very full right now.

Ali: Great.

Austin: So yeah, that's...that's a fake. Sorry. RIP. [Ali laughs] RIP to that bottle. Alright. But everyone else should take that D6 tar.

Jack: Tar???

Austin: Occult. Question mark, question mark, question mark. Yeah, thank you.

Janine: Question mark, question mark, que—

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: Oh, wait, is it Occult question mark, question mark, question mark?

Austin: No, no, no.

[1:00:00]

Janine: Or tar question mark, question mark, question mark?

Austin: Occult is the domain. The domain is Occult.

Janine: Okay.

Jack: Oh, I bet...god, I bet this will do something really weird if I power on my armor with it. [Ali laughs]

Austin: Oh, I bet. Alright, so where are you going? We got these underground halls to explore. We got a ballroom, question mark, question mark, question mark?

Janine: If we find a ribbon and a wicker basket, I'm gonna put a gift box together for Lye.

Austin: Oh, good. Yeah, great. [Ali, Jack, and Austin laugh]

Jack: Is there a...is there a...is there a window? Is it just another guest door onto the ballroom, or...?

Austin: It's a— no, it's a big pair of double doors onto the ballroom.

Jack: 'Cause, I mean, whatever's in there is awful, but— like, clearly. But...you know. Or maybe fine!

Austin: Or maybe fine. And then there's also the underground halls.

Janine: I kind of feel like maybe that's a last stop.

Austin: Mmm.

Janine: Because we do have dynamite, but I feel like there's no going back once you've used dynamite.

Jack: Yeah, no, that's what they say about dy—

Dre: Yeah.

Jack: In fact, that's dynamite's slogan.

Austin: They always— they are always saying this.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah, they're always saying this.

Janine: And also it does seem to connect to the underground hall, so.

Austin: Mm-hmm. Yeah, one of the—

Janine: You know.

Austin: You saw those same double doors, basically, going to the ballroom from the underground halls as you did from the guest wing, from your like limited Discern sneak around.

Jack: Let's make for the underground halls?

Austin: Yeah. I think we are also technically on a Delve here now, so I'm gonna...I'm gonna let y'all know that as you begin to explore the rest of this dungeon, we're gonna make some exploration rolls and do some Stress damage to this place, as you are wont to do. So. Uh, go through those underground halls. Who's taking the lead here?

Dre: Hoo boy.

Austin: Who wants to make a Delve or a Sneak roll? There are...you'd heard voices coming from here. You've also seen shapes moving in the dark. And it's like lit down here, but it's not that lit, you know?

Janine: What's the domain?

Austin: Uh, we are still Desolate.

Janine: Okay.

Austin: This is— oh, but as you pass into the underground halls from the guest wing, we do move into tier two.

Ali: [intrigued] Mmm.

Dre: Yay.

Austin: And actually, wait, it's Desolate. It is...ba ba ba ba ba. Okay, no. This part is Desolate and Warren, just as Chine had hoped, because kind of the walls give way here to collapsed tunnels. You know, whether intentionally or otherwise, the old Sapodillan citadel that this was was swallowed by the earth here. And it is kind of twisted and crumbling, and it's underneath the city, and it becomes kind of increasingly clear as you move through these halls that the Macula have kind of moved in here, using it as a base of operations. But that doesn't mean that they've like maintained it, and so you just...there are just like, you know, walkways or like hallways that go to nothing, that go to dirt and rubble. And then other, you know, you find yourself like, "Wow, I'm getting tired," and you're like, "Oh, I'm going uphill." Like, this hallway is just going uphill at a slant, and I'm realizing I'm lifting my knees really high. [Dre laughs] it's just a mess down here. And there are just like holes in the walls and et cetera. Again, even though it says underground halls and it's just a left to right long horizontal rectangle, imagine that this is a bunch of twisting hallways, you know? So yeah, who wants to take the lead here on this first kind of Delve exploration roll?

Dre: I can.

Austin: Okay. Yeah, you got Delve and you got...and you got...

Dre: Warren.

Austin: Warren and Desolate actually now, so.

Dre: Oh yeah.

Austin: Or is that a...is that a situation or is that a...how's that work? I always forget.

Dre: Um, let's see. Until the end of the situation.

Austin: So I think this is now that we started the Delve— ah...

Dre: Yeah, this is a different situation.

Austin: This is a different situation.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: You'll have to eat another different Desolate resource.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: That seems so unfair. He ate that whole bed.

Austin: He did eat that whole bed.

Dre: I was...I got a fast metabolism. You know, it just...

Austin: Let's say you finished it—

Janine: A bed is so big.

Austin: You didn't cash in on it. You didn't cash in on it. Let's say...let's say that's the start of this dungeon Delve, was you finishing that bed and getting rescued. [Ali laughs] So, you can keep it through the Delve part of this. [Dre chuckles] If we like, for instance, stop and get into a fight, it will end at the end of the fight, 'cause that would be a situation.

Dre: Okay.

Austin: You know what I mean? But as we do these kind of little vignettes, that will all still be the bigger situation of being the Delve.

Janine: If you think about it, getting out of the cell was the beginning of the situation.

Austin: Exactly.

Janine: For Chine.

Austin: Yes, for Chine. Yeah.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: So, go ahead and give me that, and is anyone helping?

Jack: I will help. I have, uh, I have Delve.

Austin: Yeah, sounds good.

Jack: And I also have Desolate.

Dre: Oh, this is Risky for me, isn't it?

Austin: It is Risky for you.

Dre: Okay.

Austin: But you'll clear that Risky.

Dre: Yep.

Austin: So.

Dre: So, it's Delve Warren, and then I get the plus one from help?

Austin: Yep.

Dre: Okay.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Nice.

Austin: Hey, seven. Success at a cost. So, let's see, where do you...where do we go first?

Dre: Clear my Ringing Head.

Austin: Clear your Ringing Head. That's first. Two, take a, uh...take one Fortune Stress, Chine.

Dre: You said we're on tier two now?

Austin: We are now on tier two, yeah.

Dre: Okay, so I don't take any.

Austin: Oh, no, sorry. No, this is still tier one.

Dre: Okay.

Austin: Tier two would have been the ballroom and below, so it's tier one.

Dre: Okay. Gotcha.

Austin: But I still think that you still take none, right?

Dre: Yeah. Mm-hmm.

Austin: Because of the way your stuff works. And then, likewise, take two Fortune, uh...Pickman, for helping here. And I'm guessing you're helping just by keeping an eye out and being the lead a little bit?

Jack: I think actually what like, what Pickman does—

Austin: What are you doing?

Jack: —is just, you know, says like:

Jack (as Pickman): I'm glad we found you. Are you okay?

Jack: And just like checks in with Chine.

Austin: Mm.

Dre: Um, I think Chine says:

Dre (as Chine): No.

Dre: And when they say it, it just, it sounds different, because I think part of this reconfigured physiology is like—

Austin: Yeah.

Dre: Their...the way that their voice comes out of their throat is just different. It sounds like three different people are talking at once.

Jack: Hmm. Yeah.

Jack (as Pickman): [deep breath] Okay. We're gonna get you out of here. You're doing great.

Dre (as Chine): We have to...I have to get the egg first.

Jack (as Pickman): Hmm. Yeah. Uh, yeah, okay. We got some stuff to do down here too. I don't think that's gonna be a problem.

Jack: Like, meaningfully looks at Marn and Es to be like, "We're getting the egg as well, huh?"
[Ali and Dre chuckle]

Austin: Mm.

Ali (as Marn): Yeah.

Janine (as Es): Oh, god, after everything? Yes, we're getting that egg. [Austin chuckles]

Jack: Um, okay, I'm gonna do a Fallout test.

Austin: You are.

Dre: Do I also need to do it if I didn't take any Stress?

Austin: Nope.

Dre: Okay.

Austin: 'Cause you did not take any Stress. And look at that. Pickman, no Fallout. Nice. So, you manage to get a pretty good understanding of these hallways and like what's going on. There are kind of four places you can kind of figure out if you want to dig into them from here. There is another hallway that is...if you think, if you thought *this* hallway was sinking, [Jack and Dre laugh] this next one is sinking much more. This one is just like falling the fuck apart. And you can hear strange like groans from things in that direction, in a way that's like, uh oh, that's no good. There is a room that is absolutely just straight up marked as an armory, and that has a pair of portraits, one to the left, one to the right of it. That's kind of one of the weird things about it as you approach. There is a—and this is where you hear a lot of noise coming from, or not a lot of noise but you hear some noise coming from—a barracks, and you kind of get the sense...I'm not gonna...you succeeded on this roll, so I'm not going to...you're not getting caught here, but, you know, there are people, you know, Macula guards here who are kind of turning in for the night, effectively. They just finished their shift above, and they've come down. They've done the swap and are going into their bedrooms or into their barracks to sleep. Maybe they have like another...I think the bulk of Macula people just live in the city, but because of it being Open Gates or because of maybe the way that their particular shifts are scheduled, they come down here to sleep. And then the final place is like a laboratory. From peeking in through a...this

one does, this room does have a window in the door, it seems like it's some sort of laboratory. You know, you see like one of those like tabletop distillery type things. And you're guessing maybe this is Felix Hollowfield's lab. And then, yes, of course, there's also the double doors that lead to the ballroom.

Ali: What's in that lab?

Dre: Yeah, that's probably also where I am drawn as well.

Jack: I...

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Can we hear anybody in the armory?

Austin: Armory seems quiet.

Jack: Two paintings.

Austin: Two paintings: a painting on the left, a painting on the right of the armory. One of them is of...I mean, the camera would recognize one of them as Marcos Soto who the...

Jack: Huh.

Austin: Was in the last episode, was part of a thing that happened in the— or I guess two episodes ago now, briefly. And the other one is...it just, I mean it also just says Marcos Soto on it. And then one of them is Franchessa(???) Hollowfield, who looks like she could be Felix Hollowfield's mom or grandmother when younger or something. Franchessa. Franchessa Hollowfield.

Jack: I would be up for temporarily splitting up as well, 'cause I want to...I want to poke in that armory, and I'm not very interested in the lab. So if we wanted to divide and conquer, or we could all just go together.

Ali: Um, seems low risk enough at the moment to split. [laughs softly]

Dre: Sure. [laughs]

Ali: I'm willing to...

Austin: Alright.

Ali: ...say that out loud.

Austin: Uh huh. Please do. [Ali and Jack laugh] I love to...love to...love to write a check with my voice.

Jack: We're physically close enough to each other that...

Austin: The— okay. Again, I want to be clear.

Jack: Ah, okay.

Austin: They're not like next to each other. This is an abstraction. There are— there is—

Jack: How close are they to each other?

Austin: They're a three or four minute walk from each other through these underground castle hallways. Also, let's just say, there are other little rooms, right? Like, there are other little, you know, rooms with like food in them, for stored food, or like closets where brooms, are and probably other individual bedrooms. You know, it's a castle, you know? But these are the ones that stand out on that last Delve.

[1:10:22]

Jack: I think I'm still up for splitting up.

Austin: Splitting up.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah, okay. I just wanted to be clear that you couldn't like look down the hall, the single hallway and like wave.

Jack: [overlapping] No, and be like, "How you doing down there, Es?" [Ali laughs]

Austin: Yeah exactly. Alright, so armory. Or, sorry, Hollowfield. Who's going to the lab?

Dre: Me.

Ali: Me.

Austin: Es?

Janine: I don't...I...mmm. I don't want to leave Pickman alone.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Janine: And also, lab initially to me felt like an egg place, and then you asked me if I wanted to go, and now I'm not sure. [Ali laughs softly]

Austin: I was just asking, because I didn't know where you were going.

Janine: [slowly] I think I'll go to the armory then.

Ali: Seems safe.

Austin: Okay. Um. Let's start at...mm. There's the way I would film this, which would put the camera actually on the lab people first, and what I'll say is, lab people, you're looking at the door. The door handle does not just open, and there seems to be a strange...there is a lock where the actual like...there's like a padlock, but where the metal kind of loop, like the little U would be on the padlock—

Ali: Mm.

Austin: —there is instead sort of a rope or a fuse of some sort that is there, and that is what you're looking at when...armory people, what do you do? Just walk in the armory?

Jack: We could do a Discern.

Austin: You could do a Discern.

Jack: I think—

Austin: I don't— yeah, go for it.

Jack: The fear of getting electrocuted in the guest wing has definitely made Pickman wary of traps.

Austin: Mm-hmm. This makes sense. Yes, I agree with this. Give me a Discern and then Desolate or Warren.

Jack: How would you feel about rolling Discern, Janine? [Austin laughs softly]

Janine: I don't have either Desolate or Warren. I only have Discern.

Jack: I have Desolate.

Janine: Okay.

Austin: How are your various Stress pools looking? I guess it doesn't matter. If you're both helping, it doesn't matter, so. Or if you're— if the other one's helping, then it doesn't matter, rather.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: So. So, yeah—

Janine: I'd be fine rolling.

Austin: Combine your stuff here. Give me your...give me Discern plus Desolate or Warren. Then, if you're helping, plus one. Or if you're getting help.

Janine: Okay.

Austin: Alright, hey, success, no Stress. As you go to open the door, you sense the eyes of the paintings on you.

Janine: Well, I could have seen that one coming. [Ali laughs]

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: That's what I get for a nine on Discern, is the painting eyes move? I would've notice that. [Dre laughs] Who wouldn't notice that? [laughs softly]

Austin: No, you wouldn't've. You wouldn't've, because you would've gone in the room.

Janine: [disagreeing] Mmm.

Austin: If you'd failed the roll, you would have gone in the room, and something would have happened. Instead, you notice them looking at you. You're in a poorly lit underground creepy tomb castle.

Janine: Show them the ring?

Austin: They don't seem— um. Hmm. Okay, you've shown them the ring. [Janine laughs softly]

Jack: Hmm. I was thinking we could also throw some tar at them. Tar??? We could throw some tar??? at them. [Austin laughs]

Janine: Okay, well that's a less courteous move, but I understand the merits of it.

Jack: Also, what the hell are these? Have either of us seen this thing in Sangfielle before? Like, does this seem to be an entity disguised as a painting or a painting that has had a spell put on it? Like, what sort of spooky paintings have we encountered in the world commonly?

Austin: You tell me, bud.

Jack: Is this the kind of thing—

Janine: Is it like a real painting with eyeballs in it?

Jack: Yeah, is there someone standing behind it? [laughs softly]

Austin: It does not seem to be a real— [Dre laughs] there does not seem to be eyeballs behind the paint, the portraits, no. Uh, you are getting again an echo of heritrix magic here.

Janine: [sighs] Um, I don't suppose I can like communicate with them, though. They're not like that there, right?

Austin: No. They're not— these have been—

Janine: It's just like a shadow, sort of, of the...

Austin: Yeah. Yeah.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: You know.

Janine: If it's heritrix magic, I don't think covering the eyes would make a difference.

Jack: Mmm. Right, yeah.

Janine: Like, the...you know? Like, it's...that...but I don't know if that's true. That just like feels like the logic of it.

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: Um.

Jack: Do you have Compel?

Janine: Oh, I...uh, yes. Yes, I do.

Jack: I mean, we could go for it. We could show the ring and make it a Compel something roll and assist each other there. I'm a little worried about how they'll respond to the ring, but...

Austin: What is the...what is the...besides showing—

Janine: Yeah, that's...

Austin: Yeah, I see what you're saying. Yeah. So wait, did you show the ring or did you not show the ring? You— at this point we've rewound. We're at the point where we're like trying to figure out what we want to do, right?

Jack: I think we're about to...we're strongly considering showing the ring.

Austin: Okay.

Jack: How do you feel about it, Janine?

Janine: I mean, I don't think they would have them in front of the armory if showing Macula stuff made them mad. That seems like a...it seems like the definition of self sabotage. [Dre chuckles]

Jack: Yeah.

Janine: Right?

Jack: Yeah.

Janine: Unless there's like tiers of shit we're not aware of.

Jack: But I feel like that could be contained within a Compel roll.

Janine: Yeah.

Jack: Are you worried about opening ourselves up to consequences by rolling?

Janine: Um, no, I'm just...I'm like too in my head about like what it means for...to like...is it bad to approach them with kin, with like a kinship kind of angle? Is it better to go with the ring angle? Is it...

Jack: Mmm.

Janine: Like, I'm in that sort of stage of it, which is like, doesn't matter as much as the roll does anyways.

Jack: Let's roll Compel, uh, what domain is this, Austin?

Austin: Again, you're still in Desolate. Desolate and Warren is the area.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: So we're gonna roll with that.

Jack: Okay. I would be up for rolling Compel Desolate.

Austin: And what are you doing with that roll? This is showing them the ring, and are you saying words? Are you...

Jack: Um, I wonder if Pickman just says, you know, like...I don't know. Is it just like, we ent— please give us...please give us passage on Macula authority? Or, um...

Austin: The door clicks.

Jack: Oh, whoa, we just do it? No roll?

Austin: You did the thing.

Janine: [suspicious] Mmm...um...

Austin: Like, it like unlocks is what I mean.

Janine: Yeah. Still don't trust it.

Jack: Well, the thing is, I could just— I could shoot stuff on the other side, and I'm doing pretty good for Blood. [Jack, Dre, and Austin laugh]

Janine: Okay. [laughs softly]

Jack: I'm doing pretty good for Blood. I'm sure I've killed a painting before. [Ali laughs]

Janine: Can...can I like nudge the door handle open with my fan and like...

Austin: Yeah, the door opens.

Janine: Okay.

Austin: There's an armory in there.

Jack: Alright. Still holding the ring, I'm gonna step into the room!

Austin: You've done it. You've solved the painting puzzle. [Jack and Janine laugh]

Dre: What a devious dungeon master you are.

Jack: The dungeon master.

Austin: Uh huh. You've done it.

Jack: What's on your DM screen, Austin?

Austin: Do you really want to know?

Jack: Yeah, what is that? Is it Drizzt?

Austin: Screeching— it's Drizzt. Oh, you mean on that side of the...

Jack: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: The like, the outside of it. Hahaha! It is a...it's...no, it's probably like, it's like Dyre Ode stepping across like a sandblasted, you know, uh...

Jack: God, I would love to see art for this.

Austin: Heartland, and then like a bunch of bugs are crawling out of a skull, and then like a...

Jack: Ah, sick!

Dre: Sick.

Jack: There's lightning in the background?

Austin: You know? There's a train. Yeah, the lightning's hitting the train, and the train is howling.

Dre: Alright.

Austin: And there's a city on fire. And then in the middle of it, there is in the distance, there is Zevunzolia, the city of paradise.

Jack: Ah, wow.

Austin: So the seventh sun.

Jack: Is this Sangfielle branded or is it the Interred Citadel branded?

Austin: Oh, oh, the Interred Citade.. No, this is Sangfielle branded for sure, for sure, for sure. Right?

Jack: Ah. Okay. Alright.

Austin: Yeah. It's a broader Sangfielle thing.

Jack: Well, what's in it for us to take?

Austin: Um. Oh, there's so much stuff for you to take here. I think most importantly is Chine's stuff minus the egg.

Jack: Ah! Yes!

Dre: Alright.

Austin: No egg.

Dre: Alright.

Austin: But Chine's stuff is in here, which Chine isn't here to take it at this moment, but you know.

Jack: We can convey it back to him.

Austin: They'll get it back. Yeah, exactly. Beyond that, there is just...there's, you know, there's a bunch of like...you could just take like D8 varied Macula arms.

Jack: Ha!

Austin: You know, that it's like for flipping, you know what I mean? [chuckles] Like, none of it's...the stuff that's included in D8 varied Macula arms is like daggers and clubs and things that are individually not worth a lot—you know, crossbow bolts—but together is like a lot, you know?

Jack: We could just be like, "Oh, this fell off the back of a truck. Does anybody want to buy some?"

Austin: Exactly. And that is...that is awkward. It is hard to carry around varied Macula arms, you know? But if someone wants to like carry a sack of knives, they can do that, you know?

Jack: I mean, why...what's the...I'm huge. You know.

Austin: This is true.

Jack: I'm not saying that it's not difficult for me, but I'm saying yeah, let's go for it.

Austin: Uh huh.

Jack: Uh, what domain is this?

Austin: Um, Haven.

Jack: Great.

Austin: Then—

Janine: Could I maybe grab like D4 varied Macula arms?

Austin: Well.

Janine: Just like a pursefull or something? [laughs]

Austin: There's also...there are also other like literally like individual things that maybe you'd want to do.

Janine: Okay. Alright.

[1:20:00]

Austin: So, there is a gilded hand cannon, which you might recall from that's what Blick had.

Ali: Ooh.

Jack: Oh!

Austin: So this is that gun. That is D8, point blank, reload, expensive, which is fun. I'll tell you what those things mean. D8 is obvi— it's a Kill D8. It's a gun. You know, you shoot people with it. Reload means that you have to like reload it between shots basically, like you have to spend a action reloading it. Point blank means that if you're close with it— it's ranged, but if you're very close, it increases...instead of doing D8 Kill, it does D10 Kill. And if you're far away, it does D6 instead.

Janine: Oh, wow.

Austin: And it's expensive, which means that if you inflict maximum Stress, you have to mark D6 Stress to Supplies, 'cause it's expensive to replace the bullets that you fire. [laughs]

Janine: Mmm.

Austin: Or to maybe repair the damage of firing it, you know what I mean? It's just, it's an expensive tool. But hey, it's very valuable.

Jack: This is great, 'cause we steal this guy's gun—

Austin: Uh huh.

Jack: —and if he tries to do anything about it, a train will eat him. [Ali laughs]

Austin: Uh huh. And then there is, um...a grappling hook, or I guess it's a capture hook. We saw these used by the Macula against the other team, and that is D6 debilitating ranged. And this is like a bolo slash grappling hook thing that is both a D6 Kill or a D6 Delve thing that like wraps people up.

Dre: Oh, that sounds fun.

Austin: Then you also find...yeah, it's great. Then you find these Hollowfield bombs. They are D6 ranged spread one-shot.

Jack: Oh, more bombs.

Janine: [amused exhale]

Austin: They are little handheld like explosives that you kind of throw a collection of and they all *ba ba ba ba ba ba ba ba!* right? And there's two of those, so you can each take one of those. I wrote D6, but that's D6 Kill specifically. And then, finally, there is a handheld like...again, in the previous arc, Felix Hollowfield had this like backpack that had sort of a flashlight made of a candle—a blue flame candle—plus a bunch of mirrors that like he wore on his backpack. Here you have kind of a handheld version of that. You kind of have a flashlight or like a torch that is this sort of flame plus mirrors that produces a blue, like a blue beam of light. It's a blue light torch that is a good Delve tool, a D6 good Delve tool, but it's also a D8 Kill tool to anything, quote unquote, “supernatural,” which is anything that is a Cursed or Occult domain being. It burns them, like, you know, like a UV light in *Blade* or in a vampire movie. You know what I mean? So, all sorts of shit here. I don't know who's taking what, but...

Jack: How do you want to divide this up, Janine?

Janine: Um, I don't think I want the torch, because I'm Cursed and Occult.

Jack: Oh.

Austin: [laughs] Uh huh.

Jack: In that case, I'll take the torch. You want to take...

Janine: Yeah. So, that seems like a bad one for me.

Jack: You turn it on and go, "Ow! Ow!" [Janine laughs]

Austin: Yeah. To be clear, it's not anyone who has those domains, but Janine? Yes, you're right. A hundred percent.

Janine: It just...it just seems risky, you know? [laughs]

Austin: Yes. Yeah, it's absolutely a tool made to hunt people like you.

Janine: Yeah, when it's an "or" but you're an "and," it's...that's a sign to stay away.

Austin: Uh huh. Uh huh. [laughs softly]

Janine: I'll take either the hand cannon or the capture hook. I can imagine some very fun things to do with either of those. [Austin laughs] I don't know if you have a particular attachment—

Jack: No, no, no. You go for...

Janine: —to the hand cannon.

Jack: You go for— oh, in that case, it would be fun to take the hand cannon, if you don't have a preference either way.

Janine (as Es): Do you— yeah. Do you like shoot stuff?

Jack (as Pickman): Yeah.

Janine (as Es): Is that like, you're a shooter?

Jack (as Pickman): I am, yeah.

Janine (as Es): I haven't...we don't hang out a lot, so.

Jack (as Pickman): No, no, that's fine. [Austin and Janine laugh]

Janine (as Es): So, if you're good with shooting, then you should take the—

Janine: [laughs] I was gonna say the shooter.

Austin: Take the shooter. Shooters shoot.

Janine: You take the hand cannon, and I'll take the capture hook here.

Jack: Amazing. I'm gonna write down "Blick's hand cannon." [laughs softly]

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Jack: D8. Gonna fucking sell this to Solaire.

Austin: [softly] God. Solitaire, please. Solair is from *Dark Souls*, [Janine laughs] and he would never take Blick's gilded hand cannon. Unless it had some sort of sun, you know, emblem on it.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Jack: We want to do anything about these paintings before we go, or are we sort of content?

Dre: I mean, they let you in.

Janine: [sighs] I'm not...I'm not quite sure what to do about them. I would like to do something. Are they on canvas?

Austin: They are on canvas.

Janine: Could we like take the frame down and roll them up or something? [Jack laughs] That seems quite risky. I just...after taking, after picking up the bones, I feel like...I feel a strong desire to—

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Janine: —retrieve the components of heritrixes. Although, on the other hand, when I— mmm. When we broke the lamps and then I touched the bones, that seemed to do the thing.

Austin: Yeah, but it was...it was really about stopping them from being used in the way they were, right? So.

Janine: So we should...no, that's bad.

Austin: You couldn't just touch these to put these at ease. Do you know what I mean? It really is about de-instrumentalizing them.

Janine: I was gonna suggest something, but it's like horrible. It just makes me sad. I was gonna be like, what if we cut the eyes out of the paintings? I hate that, but it does de-instrumentalize them.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Janine: Right? I...but it's...

Austin: So it would be a Mend roll to me, I feel.

Janine: Well, I don't have that, so.

Austin: Or you tell me if there— if you have something else. I guess it could be a Kill roll, but that doesn't feel like in tune with what you're saying.

Janine: Mmm. That doesn't feel like the spirit of Kill.

Austin: That's what I'm...no, no.

Janine: Spirit of— there's no benevolence in that move.

Austin: Eh. It could be Sneak to get it done without being seen, I guess? Though that's a reach.

Jack: Also, it seems impossible, because I'm literally cutting the eyes that are looking at me out of the thing, like, uh...

Austin: Mm-hmm. No, I meant other stuff, you know?

Janine: Oh. Sure. [thinking] Um...mmm.

Austin: To be clear, they are not real eyes. They are painted eyes.

Janine: No, it's like— it's a— yeah.

Austin: I just want to be a hundred percent clear.

Janine: Yeah. This is— I'm defacing a painting.

Austin: Also, yes, Jack in the chat notes, yeah, are you okay with the eye stuff? Ali, I also have eye stuff. As long as it's just canvas stuff, I'm good with that.

Ali: [laughs] Yeah, this is...

Austin: But Ali, if you're...

Ali: Yeah.

Janine: Yeah, this is like I want to cut like a rectangle out.

Austin: Yeah, yeah.

Janine: Um...could I pitch it as Endure because it's very upsetting? [laughs]

Austin: Um, the thing is—

Janine: That's tenuous. Or like they have some sort of protective...

Austin: The thing is, it...the thing...they don't have a protective thing. They have— I mean, they're going to react when you begin doing this, and the question is if you can do it effectively enough without being caught doing it.

Janine: Well, mmm. I do have Sneak, but as you mentioned, like, I don't know how you angle it to be Sneak.

Austin: I think it's about can you do it before someone shows up? And get out quickly, because they're going to...if you do this—and I'm giving you something here.

Janine: Is this gonna render the hallway a problem, basically?

Austin: I mean, the hallway's already...basically, yes. If you fail.

Janine: Right, okay.

Austin: You know?

Janine: Okay.

Austin: There's a way in which maybe you do it quickly enough and in a way where they have like...you've just boom boom boom, doon doo doom, done, out. The noise they make is not a big enough deal.

Janine: Okay.

Austin: But a failure will have a thing, you know?

Jack: What would the domain for this be, again?

Austin: It's still Desolate and/or Warren 'cause of where we are.

Janine: Okay, um, would...Pickman, would you be willing to help on this? I feel like if we...if it was like, there's two paintings, you know?

Austin: Yep. Flip those knives open, go to work.

Jack: Yeah. I have Desolate.

Janine: I have Sneak.

Jack: Ahh.

Austin: Let's do it.

Jack: Okay.

Janine: Okay, uh...Sneak, Desolate, plus one.

Austin: Hey, eight.

Jack: Oh, lovely.

Austin: Success, no Stress.

Janine: Okay. Alright!

Austin: You see their mouths begin to open. You hear the first instances of a shriek, and then as the the rectangle cut is completed, there is again a sigh of relief.

Janine: Ugh.

Austin: These are not resources, though, to be clear.

Janine: No, no.

Austin: In this case.

Janine: I...no. These are—

Austin: This is just you've shut down these screeching portrait heritrix curse alarms.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: And yeah.

Janine: I think I keep them either way.

Austin: Yeah, I think that's fair. Yeah.

Jack: Screeching. I think Soto had a beautiful voice.

Austin: Oh, no, but yeah, but the portraits were going to screech.

Jack: Oh, right, yeah.

Austin: Is the thing. If you just walked in or tried to, they would have screeched. That's how they worked. Um. And then let's come back over here, and we'll see if y'all can open this door, and depending on if you do or not, we'll wrap up there.

Ali: Okay. [laughs]

Austin: Marn and and Chine. Weird fuse shaped lock or fuse built lock. How do you try to get into this room?

Dre: Like, you mean like a fuse box fuse?

Austin: No, no, no. I mean like a fuse on like a...like, you know, on dynamite.

Dre: Oh.

Austin: Or like a wick, you know?

[1:30:00]

Dre: Okay.

Austin: It's like instead of where a metal loop would be on the padlock, there is this sort of fuse.

Ali: Are we able to do like a poke test or is that the point at which we are doing a roll? [Jack chuckles]

Dre: Poke test? [laughs]

Austin: Yeah. What do you mean by a poke test? What's that look like?

Ali: You know, just poke it and see if... [laughs]

Austin: Yeah, nothing happens. You poke it. Doesn't seem to respond.

Ali: You know how Chine threw bricks at stuff before, just to see? [laughs]

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah. It doesn't seem to re— it doesn't zap you, but it doesn't give way either?

Ali: Sure. I mean I'm willing to try to lock pick again, but this seems like a, uh...

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Ali: There's something going on here. [laughs] But I guess if I did that and then— uhmm...had some sort of like container or something to like, absorb the blast, but this is so outside of...

Austin: [chuckles] Uh huh. [Ali laughs]

Dre: Yeah, I mean, unless you want to just try straight up breaking this thing with brute force, Chine is not gonna be...I don't know how much use I can be here.

Ali: Sure. Sure.

Austin: Well, you have the domain, which is the important part, right?

Dre: That's true, yeah.

Ali: So if I did like a Mend...

Austin: Yeah, Mend would totally be the thing.

Ali: Yeah. [laughs softly] Janine helpfully says I could spit on it.

Janine: Wet fuse, won't burn.

Ali: I was thinking of pouring tar on it, but that also is... [laughs]

Austin: Mmm.

Janine: That's...I think that's the...I think tar does burn. I think that's the opposite?

Ali: Does tar burn? I guess tar is the result of a...

Janine: 'Cause it's like a petrochemical thing, right?

Ali: Yeah. Yeah. I— [laughs] Can I do this Mend roll—

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Ali: —and then we'll see how it goes, and then depending on how it goes, we see what happens?

Austin: Of course.

Ali: 'Cause it's, I mean...

Austin: Yeah. I love it. [Ali laughs] Give me your Mend, Desolate, Warren.

Jack: I hate Hollowfield.

Austin: He's dead now.

Ali: I mean, 'cause at the end of the day, that's gonna be what the situation is, right?

Austin: This is true.

Ali: It's gonna be a Mend roll at the end of the day.

Austin: At the end of the day, it's gonna be a Mend roll, isn't it? [Ali laughs] And you're just trying to lock pick it, right?

Ali: [thoughtful noise] I suppose so. You know.

Austin: Okay.

Ali: It's a lock. There's a fuse in it.

Austin: Are you getting help here? I don't know how Chine's helping, but...

Dre: Yeah. I mean, I would like to, but I...

Austin: You doing the same thing where...just like Pickman did? Chine'll like, shove the door open when you think it's ready? [Ali laughs] Think it's a different situation.

Jack: It's honest work, Chine. [Ali laughs]

Dre: Yeah. Sure. [Austin laughs]

Ali: I'm just a little guy. I can't open the door and lock pick it at the same time. [Jack laughs]

Austin: I get it.

Ali: You know?

Austin: Uh huh.

Ali: Door's all the way up there. Um, yeah, let me just roll and then we'll see if it goes bad or not. [laughs]

Dre: Sure.

Austin: Okay.

Ali: And then Desolate, Standard, plus one.

Austin: Plus one from that help, right? Yeah.

Ali: [softly] Oh, god. Even if I described a thing right now, this is the roll that I would be doing, so just rolling it, and I'm just...

Austin: Right, but maybe you'd get mastery if you had like a good...

Ali: Sure.

Austin: Right, well, you got a seven. That's good. You're good.

Ali: I got a six technically, 'cause I...but it's the same result either way.

Austin: Wait, why is it a six? What's the...

Ali: 'Cause I accidentally double rolled.

Austin: Oh, I see. [Ali laughs] I see, I see, I see. Yeah, yeah, yeah. You're good. So, uh, the...you're gonna get this open successfully.

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Which is good. However—

Ali: Taking Stress.

Austin: You do get blasted, both of you. [Ali laughs softly] First, that two is for Marn. This actually worked out right. Marn, you're dazed as you get a bright blue light in your face from this, just like, prrrang! and then like, ah, I can't see. I guess that's probably Blood, because it'll end up being something like, you know, dizzy or something like that if it turns into—

Ali: Okay, sure. So, I only take one, because I have one Blood Protection.

Austin: You know what I mean? 'Cause of the... 'cause of the one, yeah. I guess that that's... that makes more sense than Mind, to me. Uh, shaken... yeah, it doesn't matter. You have the same Protection, right? Chine.

Dre: Uh huh?

Austin: You're gonna take— what did I roll, six?

Dre: Yep.

Austin: Yeah, six. That goes to your Echo.

Dre: Good. Great. Good.

Austin: But, and so what's happened here is you pick the lock, and then as the thing opens, it's still burn— the fuse burns, and there is a bright flash of that blue light.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: As we saw before. And that blue light hits creatures like Chine differently. So, give me your, uh...

Ali: I—

Austin: But you did get the door open safely.

Ali: No Fallout.

Austin: No Fallout. Unbelievable rolls here. [Ali laughs softly] Marn rolling twelve against eleven, getting no Fallout.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Chine rolling one against sixteen.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: Getting Minor Fallout. Just a little, just a little Minor. Just little taste of Fallout. [Ali laughs] Where is— what's your current... what's your current situation on Stress, Chine? Where's the bulk of your Stress? Ah, bulk of your Stress is Blood.

Dre: Yeah, I got ten Blood.

Austin: So it has not resolved there, unfortunately, huh? Yeah. Um...okay. Uh...you already have that one.

Dre: Oh, wait. Am I s—

Austin: Yes?

Dre: Do I resolve all the Stress when I take a Fallout?

Austin: Only when take a Minor Fallout. Or, sorry, a Major Fallout would clear everything. A Minor Fallout would get rid of your...

Dre: Oh.

Austin: The one that it's associated with. Why? What happened?

Dre: Well, I probably should've...

Austin: What did you fail to do?

Dre: Pssh, I probably should have cleared Blood Fallout earlier, then.

Austin: When you took...

Dre: Uh...

Austin: Tired.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: Yes.

Ali: Oh.

Austin: Correct. You should have cleared that.

Dre: Okay.

Austin: So what would have that been...so maybe you're fine.

Dre: No, I mean, I still would have rolled a one.

Austin: Maybe you're not fine, though. You're still...

Dre: So.

Austin: Right. The one here—

Dre: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: —still would have been under your current Echo, which would give you...yeah, okay. So that's still...that's an improvement. Oh, that one's bad. [Dre laughs] They're all so...like, Blood Fallout is just like, oh yeah, it's Blood Fallout. You're hurt. You know what I mean? Whereas the Echo ones are so distinct that it feels bad to go back to them, because they all feel so characterful.

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Austin: You know what I mean? Like, Deja Vu was such a big moment, and it's like, I don't want to give anybody Deja Vu again that isn't Duvall, because we've now done that. You know, we've brought a person back in such a cool way that to double dip feels bad. So maybe Echo's wrong. So maybe Echo's wrong. Maybe this isn't about doing Echo to you, 'cause in many ways it's about...it's about killing the Echo out of you, right? [Ali and Dre laugh]

Ali: Yeah, work through it.

Austin: I'm working through it right now.

Dre: Mm-hmm. External processing, yeah.

Austin: Maybe it is...this is what's happening, right? I'm try— I'm like talking through what I want from this. 'Cause I don't want to give you Hex Eye, which we've done so many times. You know what I mean? I don't want to give you...

Jack: It's a classic, but you don't want to overuse it.

Austin: ...Siren Song, because Es is using it. Exactly! Exactly. You already have Conduit going, right, Chine?

Dre: [hesitant] Yes.

Austin: Is that correct?

Dre: Yes, yes, yes.

Austin: So, wait, so here we go. Now...see, I'm talking through it a little bit here. Uh huh. Now we're fucking talking! Now we're talking!

Jack: [laughs softly] Now we're talking.

Austin: Chine, here's what's happening.

Dre: Alright, sure.

Austin: [laughs softly] How is this in a different one than that other one? That's great. I'm giving you another Minor. Let's say it's Hex Eye, but then I'm gonna tell you it's gonna combine with—and tell me if this works for you, because things are negotiations—but combining with Conduit. Conduit is cannot use Echo Protection.

Dre: Uh huh.

Austin: You can combine two Minors to a Major, so let's combine this new loose Minor into Blooded: “You show some mark of the Heart in your physical form—twisting fragile antlers of bone, fingernails that curve in fractal sharp patterns, bioluminescent veins, additional joints in your limbs, and so on. Your frail mortal form is not designed to be used as such a canvas. When you mark Stress to Blood, roll two dice and pick the higher. Ongoing.”

Dre: Great.

Austin: What do you think of that?

Dre: Okay. [Ali laughs]

Austin: Yeah. It's wild that you have—

Dre: So I get rid of Conduit?

Austin: Yes.

Dre: And take this Major.

Austin: And take this Major. We major. [Ali laughs softly]

Dre: I mean, sure.

Austin: That's what that song was about.

Dre: I mean, what this looks like is, like you said, it's the blue light like...

Austin: Yeah.

Dre: I go back to like the last time this kind of happened.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Dre: Where like the Course in me starts to mutate through my body as like...as a way to protect me.

Austin: Yeah. Yes. And it's also, I think it also reminds me of "At the Gates of Sapodilla," where the light revealed your...this other form to them.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: Do you know what I mean? But it is. It's also like the Reconfigured Physiology part of this, right? Where like, if that changed your inside, your organs don't make sense anymore. Now, this has now spread even further to your outside form, the shrew-like stuff. Maybe it's even changed differently. I don't— you can tell me what this looks like.

Dre: I mean, the initial thought is that I just have like the shrew snout, but it's just a skeleton.

Jack: Mmm.

Austin: Ooh.

Dre: Sticking out of my head.

Austin: Yeah.

Dre: And then probably like longer fingers and fingernails sticking out of my skin that are just skeletal.

Austin: Uh huh. Which again is different than your wereform.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Which, the chimeric strain, because like you don't have brutal and weird tags. You don't have, you know, this is just...you just changed into this other thing, this other version of you.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: Which Chine's changed a little bit in the new light, in the light, after the light flashed, Marn. But the door opens.

Janine: Shrews have cool skulls, by the way. You should check them out. They look like Xenomorphs.

Austin: Sick. Oh, wow! They sure do.

Janine: Right?

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Austin: That's a long skull.

Janine: They look like fucking Xenomorphs.

Austin: For real.

Janine: That's a lot of skull, for a little guy.

Austin: That's a lot of skull for a little guy. Well, Chine's a...Chine's big.

Ali: Large.

Austin: So.

Jack: Well, yeah, but, you know, the skull to guy ratio is... [Ali laughs]

Dre: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: I see what you're saying. Yeah, yeah. Well, I think that that ratio is kept, right? So Chine, big.

Dre: Yeah, this looks like a thing that would poke out of your skin. Mm-hmm.

Austin: Mm-hmm. Love it. The door opens, and we'll end on this. There are...you see a...you see an unattended-to lab. No one else has come in here since Felix died the other night, which means that like you come in, and you're like, oh my god, stuff is gonna overboil any second now.

[Music plays: "Sangfielle"]