

## Sangfielle 35: Marrow in the Field

Transcriber: robotchangeling

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

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

**Austin (as narrator):** Now, I am not what you might call a stickler for rules. Don't get me wrong, I appreciate a good copyedit, and I understand that mutually agreed upon accords are oft designed to push us towards becoming our better angels. But I am a fan of leeway in the little things and living life in a sort of ad hoc way, you know? Sometimes you need to walk on the lawn, and I can think of a great many meals that were improved by eating with my hands instead of lifting up silverware. The point is that circumstances are more important than axioms. Or maybe said more completely: the stronger the rule being written, the more perfect one's understanding of the situation needs to be, and perfect understanding is a rare thing. In fact, I can count on a single hand the number of categories of near perfect understanding that exist in life on the Heartland. First, in my experience, a person knows the tune of their own body in a way that even the greatest doctors of Sangfielle can only gesture at. Now, I'm not saying that I want to write all my own prescriptions or that I refuse to take my medicine before I say my prayer to Slumbous at night. But I am saying that I had it real bad in the gut once, and my doctor, well, she did not accept my account of the pain that I was in. So, number one: bodies and the havers thereof. Now, two, three, and four is easy: trains, guns, and horses. I defer to expertise. I'm not trying to cross anything that can kill me so swiftly. So I don't know, you go ahead. You tell me them rules; I'll keep 'em. Fifth, well: my house, my rules. I know it's a cliché spoken too often by parents slow on time, patience, or confidence, but the fact of it is, you live or work in a place long enough, and it gets into you. You can feel the termites in the walls, the pipes aching, ready to leak. So when I'm in someone else's abode or factory or riverboat, I listen to them. Maybe Hazard, Lye Lychen, and the Cleaver Chine should have done the same.

**Austin:** Welcome to *Friends at the Table*, an actual play podcast focused on critical world building, smart characterization, and fun interaction between good friends. I'm your host, Austin Walker. Today we are playing *Heart: The City Beneath* by Grant Howitt and Christopher Taylor. And joining me, Andrew Lee Swan.

**Dre:** Hey. You can find me on Twitter at [@swandre3000](https://twitter.com/swandre3000).

**Austin:** Sylvi Clare.

**Sylvia:** Hey, I'm Sylvi. You can find me on Twitter at [@sylvibullet](https://twitter.com/sylvibullet) or you can listen to my other show *Emojidrome* wherever you get your podcasts.

**Austin:** And Keith Carberry.

**Keith:** Hi, my name is Keith J. Carberry. You can find me in space where I'm a spaceman shootin' other spacemen in *Halo*, playing *Halo* all the time now! [Sylvia laughs]

**Austin:** You just (??? 3:21)

**Dre:** Mm.

**Keith:** It's all I do.

**Austin:** Is that where people can find you, is *Halo*?

**Keith:** You can find me on *Halo*, yeah.

**Austin:** All right, go look for Keith on *Halo*.

**Keith:** You can find me playing *Halo* on [youtube.com/runbutton](https://youtube.com/runbutton).

**Austin:** There it is.

**Keith:** And [twitch.tv/runbutton](https://twitch.tv/runbutton).

**Austin:** There it is. That's where you can do those things. As always, you can find us [twitter.com/friends\\_table](https://twitter.com/friends_table), and you can support the show by going to [friendsatthetable.cash](https://friendsatthetable.cash). As I said before, we're playing *Heart: The City Beneath*. Our goals are to ask questions instead of planning; to evoke an atmosphere of wonder, horror, and humanity; to build and break tension; to pay attention to what everyone at the table wants, both long and short term; and to play to find out what happens. Can we begin by going over character names, pronouns, and Beats? Dre, let's start with you.

**Dre:** Yeah, let me pull that up. I am playing Chine who uses he/they pronouns. Chine is the Cleaver. My active Beats are to "Receive a strange surgical implant or heartsblood transfusion."

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Dre:** Which is Minor.

**Austin:** [amused] Uh h— oh, Minor. Okay, sure.

**Dre:** Uh huh. Yeah. [laughs softly] Just normal everyday shit, Austin.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

**Dre:** And “Gain information on why you have been chosen by the Course,” which is also Minor.

**Austin:** Yeah. Okay. Uh, Sylvi.

**Sylvia:** So, my character is Hazard. Pronouns are they/them, but they will answer to any. My Beats currently are “Enlist someone in your plot for revenge,” and “Destroy the personal property of your target in spite.” Those are both Minor. [Dre laughs softly] Should I go over Fallout really quick, too?

**Austin:** Yeah, let's go over Fallout really quick.

**Sylvia:** I have one Fallout called “Don't worry about it.” It's an Echo Major.

**Austin:** Mm, mm, mm.

**Sylvia:** Description: It's fine.

**Austin:** It's fine. Don't worry about it.

**Dre:** Yeah, don't worry about it.

**Sylvia:** I've been assured by the GM that it's fine.

**Austin:** Yeah. It's fine.

**Sylvia:** So, don't know what that's about, but figured I'd mention it.

**Austin:** Uh huh. Real quick, Chine, do you have Fallout still?

**Dre:** Yes, I have Minor...I think it's Echo Fallout?

**Austin:** It's Mind, I think.

**Dre:** Minor Mind Fallout, which is Vulnerable.

**Austin:** You can't use Mind Protection, right? Okay.

**Dre:** Yeah, I cannot use Mind Protection.

**Austin:** Great. And then Lyke.

**Sylvia:** I said that my one is Echo, right? I wasn't sure if I mentioned that.

**Austin:** You did. I believe you did.

**Sylvia:** Okay.

**Austin:** Yes. Major Echo Fallout. Don't worry about it. It's fine. And Lyke.

**Keith:** Uh, my name is Lye Lychen, pronouns he/him, and what else are we going over? What are the...

**Austin:** Uh, Beats and Fallout.

**Keith:** Oh, Beats and Fallout. My Beats: "Have at least three Havens know your name for good or ill."

**Austin:** We're at two now, as a reminder.

**Keith:** I'm at two, yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** And then "Claim a resource of at least D10 from a dangerous location."

**Austin:** Mm.

**Keith:** Hope we find a dangerous location soon.

**Austin:** Yeah, sure. Definitely not this place that everyone on the boat is saying "Don't get off the boat, whatever you do."

**Keith:** Yeah. And for Fallout, I just have the Ravening Call, Minor.

**Austin:** Right.

**Keith:** I believe.

**Austin:** Yes, that is correct. So, it's only the three of y'all today, and we didn't necessarily set that up in a major way at the end of the last session, right?

**Keith:** Yeah, we didn't know.

**Austin:** We didn't know. Well, we knew that some people wanted to get off the boat, probably. We knew that there was a weird town. I guess, as a reminder, y'all were on the *Jade Moon* or are on the *Jade Moon* boat, this kind of steamship, and you had arrived at a place that you—that was not on the schedule, that was not on the itinerary, and was not in the right place. You're

far to the west in a town called Marrowcreek, which is like beyond the mountains and beyond even Vish, north of the lake where Erlin the wet god's temple was when you visited that, many, many, many, many adventures ago now. Anyway, you're at Marrowcreek now. And everyone on board—I think I told this through Hazard—all of the kind of the people working for the *Jade Moon*, the people reporting from the captain are like, "No one should go outside. Everyone should stay aboard." Nevertheless, my understanding is the three of you do not want to listen to that advice. Is that true?

**Keith:** I mean, look at what's happen— look at this.

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah.

**Dre:** Yeah, we're in a place where we're not supposed to be.

**Austin:** You're in a place not supposed to. I mentioned that— two things that would maybe compel you to do this. One is, Keith, you recognize this town. Lyke recognizes this town as the one seemingly conjured in Lyke's mind when Lyke was asked by the kind of gate guard, interviewer, interrogator back at Sapodilla about arriving at a town with no people in it. It looks a lot like what Marrowcreek does from the windows: dusty and clay built and a little denser than most towns of this style normally are. But empty at the— you know, in your mind when you saw it, when it was described to you, it didn't have any people in it. And then, and then, for you, Hazard, you saw a devil with one horn walking down the street, down a kind of broad dirt road, kind of a dirt avenue. From the deck you caught this in the morning, and you're pretty sure that that is your target of of ire. So I think that gives us two good hooks. Chine, what motivates you here?

**Dre:** Um, I think there is just the natural instinct of like, oh, there's some weird shit going on. I should go see what's up.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Dre:** But I think if Hazard tells Chine that they are going out specifically, like for any reason, Chine would probably feel obligated to go with Hazard.

**Austin:** Mm.

**Dre:** Because Hazard went with them.

**Austin:** Right.

**Dre:** For that outing that went very well last time, so. [Sylvia laughs]

**Austin:** Oh, yeah. Uh huh.

**Austin:** Yeah, wow, here we are again, huh? You three, getting off the fucking boat again.

**Sylvia:** Let's go, train gang.

**Dre:** No, listen. I'm not leading this one, so it'll be fine. [Dre and Austin laugh softly]

**Austin:** Hazard, do you attempt to recruit these folks? Is there, uh...we don't have to zoom in on— eh, you know—

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** If we want to zoom in on the conversation, we can, but I'm not gonna make you roll to like escape the boat. I think the story is here—

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** —and I would rather you not like fail and get caught and like, I don't know, put in a brig or— like, that does not— [Sylvia laughs] that's not interesting. That's what the story is here.

**Dre:** I did that last big arc, Austin. Not again. [laughs softly]

**Austin:** Yeah, exactly. Uh huh.

**Sylvia:** I think that like— I can see it coming up, like, if like they saw Hazard suddenly leaving, even like getting ready to leave, even though they technically work on the ship.

**Austin:** Right, right.

**Sylvia:** Right? Where it's like, “Where are you going?” It's like:

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** I just really gotta find this guy that I saw, and—

**Austin:** Let's do— yeah, let's...

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** I don't know if I'm ever gonna get another chance for this.

**[0:10:00]**

**Austin:** Yeah, that— let's call that an in-character statement.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. I do think that they specifically use that language too, where they don't say like specifically— they're not like, “I gotta kill this guy.” [laughs]

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Sylvia:** They're like:

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** I just saw someone that I need to go after.

**Dre (as Chine):** Oh, so...what does "go after" mean? Like...

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** [stilted] They took something from me, and I'm trying to get it back.

**Dre (as Chine):** [interested] Okay. Okay. So you're gonna rough 'em up a little bit?

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** Yes. You know what? Yeah, yeah, I think that is— that is a factual statement. That is probably going to happen, yeah.

**Dre (as Chine):** Excellent. Okay, count me in.

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** [pleasantly surprised] Oh! Hell yeah, okay, awesome! Great to have you along.

**Austin:** Lyke, are you here for this part of the conversation? Or are you already off board?

**Keith:** That's fun. I like that.

**Austin:** Okay.

**Keith:** Yeah, I was so— hmm, let's see. Maybe...maybe a slight tweak to that. Maybe I'm like, going to be asked, and I'm already packing up my stuff. Like, I'm...I'm intercepted headed off ship.

**Austin:** Yeah. That's good.

**Keith:** Being like, "Hey, do you want to come off the shi— oh, okay." [Austin, Dre, and Sylvia laugh]

**Austin:** All right. You know, I'm gonna say that you manage to kind of sneak off board. I'm not gonna, again, make you roll for that part of this. I guess I should ask, actually, are you sneaking off board? Or are you telling people you're going and you'll be back? Like, what is the...I should actually— we should actually like agree to terms on that, you know?

**Sylvia:** Um, I was planning on just sneaking off—

**Austin:** Okay.

**Sylvia:** Because I don't have as strong ties to the rest of the group yet.

**Austin:** Right.

**Sylvia:** Like, I'm friendly with them, but I'm not part of the Blackwick Group technically.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** As of right now, at the very least.

**Dre:** Uh...Chine probably leaves a note.

**Austin:** Okay.

**Dre:** In their room.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Just says, you know, "Off boat, be back soon."

**Austin:** Yeah. Okay. [Sylvia chuckles] Lyke, gonna let Chine's note work for you?

**Keith:** "Gone to shore for normal time." [Dre and Sylvia laugh]

**Austin:** Great. Fantastic. Fantastic.

**Sylvia:** The regular crew, off to adventure.

**Austin:** Yeah. Uh huh. The regular crew, yeah, the regulars. That's the three of you motherfuckers.

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm. Just normal people and their super standard dog.

**Austin:** Uh huh. [Austin and Dre laugh] Yeah, okay, so.

**Keith:** One dog, boring style. [Austin and Sylvia laugh]

**Austin:** So you manage to get off board. You know, you wait until whoever is, uh, working the front of the ship to have their back turned, and you sneak off. It seems like they have let Teak, who has been like the first mate this whole trip, off board to kind of investigate what's going on, and that Teak seems to be the only person who's left. But that means that the kind of plank, the stage is down, so you're able to get off the boat easily, and...you know, I guess I've already given you a little bit. I've said that the...it's a dusty clay-built city. You can see, to the north, are a bunch of trees. It kind of becomes a forest up there. And there's a scattering of kind of warehouses and kind of dockside open air— there's like basically like an open air marketplace



that, at this time of day—it's very early—has not been filled with people or merchandise yet, but you can see that there are tables nearby to be set up. There's also a lot of like fishing tackle around and little fishing huts and stuff like that, where you might like put up your nets and rods and stuff for the day. There's definitely also some, you know, little smokehouses and places where you could, you know, kind of sun dry fish and other stuff. And there's a big, you know, kind of bold road heading inward to town. This kind of broad dirt track that has been basically just stamped on enough times that it's been turned into something more like a traditional street, but it's not paved or anything like that. And something I think that strikes all of you pretty quickly— y'all are people who've traveled around the world. Normally, when you build a town near a river, the town is near the river. And it strikes you that this town is denser the further you get away from the river. It's not like a little river town that has sprouted around fishing and other stuff. It seems as if it's growing out this direction more recently, that like these are the newer buildings, not the ones further in. The ones further in feel like they might be older and more densely arranged and et cetera. What do y'all do? You take this main avenue? Do you look around? Like, what's your...what's your play here?

**Keith:** Um, can I get a sort of, you know, vibe of the layout here? I know that we're getting denser. Is it—

**Austin:** Are you— I mean, from where—

**Keith:** Is there...points of interest, maybe?

**Austin:** From what you can see, there's a main road that goes into town. From here, from the ground level, it's not particularly easy to see, like, what the layout of the town is, you know? It is, uh...there is some distance off to the southeast where you can start to see some more trees. And I guess I would say, you know, this is kind of an abstract drawing that I've done, but like, you know, there are— the same type of forest that's to your northwest also picks up to your southeast a little bit. And you can't quite see what's beyond that, but it's almost as if the town is surrounded by trees in this way. And it's almost like it's, um...like it's been built into a...not an alcove, but a clearing in a vast woodland, you know? Or they've cleared land out, you know, for the purposes of the town, if that makes sense. So I can reveal a little bit more. Y'all are seeing this map now, right?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Okay. So yeah, so you could see that, like, here, there's more of the trees here. And maybe like off in the distance in the hills, you can see that there are some more trees up here. So like, those are the things that dominate the skyline. But like, it's...I would say that it's kind of hard from where you are right now, with the sight that you have to make out what the bulk of the actual town's layout is, you know?

**Keith:** I mean—

**Austin:** Outside of, again, there being a main road in.

**Keith:** I don't hate the main road. I mean, I'm definitely cautious, but I'm not, you know.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm. Uh, you know, I would say, if it was your impulse to try to get a layout, you could climb a building, maybe and try to try to get a vibe.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** But, you know, you'd be climbing a building at that point. So like, that's a choice, you know?

**Keith:** The, uh...what if, instead of hitting the main road from here, we were to like take a look at through this bit here.

**Austin:** Sure.

**Keith:** Like, sort of a little bit out of the way.

**Austin:** Yeah, it's—

**Keith:** Not really trying to sneak around.

**Austin:** Yeah, you're totally fine to cut through this kind of area. Keith has been poking at areas where there don't seem to be too many buildings or anything. And the answer is— oop, I went the wrong way. I hid area, instead of revealing it. Wait, is this not revealing?

**Keith:** Oh no! [Sylvia chuckles] We're falling into this void! [laughs]

**Austin:** You're falling deeper in. [Dre and Keith laugh] Here we go.

**Sylvia:** It's like one of those *Advance Wars* maps with fog of war.

**Dre:** [imitating falling] We shouldn't have left the boooaaat!

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** [laughs] It's—

**Keith:** And the darkness of this area swallows you. Game over.

**Austin:** Game over. That's it.

**Keith:** Create new characters.

**Austin:** No, it's mostly— it's mostly that that area's just like, there's just not much there, right? It's dirt.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** It's probably dirt and low grass and, you know, wildflowers and...it's just it's not been built yet, you know?

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** The trees kind of wean off there, the forest kind of ends.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** But that's about it. You can start to see from that angle, as you start moving in, that there are like other houses and there's another major avenue down this way. And you even think you catch the edge of another sort of body of water, deeper, deeper into the southeast.

**Keith:** [intrigued] Mm.

**Austin:** I would say that that's a couple of miles away, and it's— there aren't— again, it's not very dense in terms of structures down there, so.

**Keith:** Gotcha.

**Austin:** And to the east, northeast, you can start to hear the beginnings of the day, as people start to move out of their homes and into workplaces.

**Keith:** Is it early? Like six, seven?

**Austin:** Yeah, if I recall where we left things off last time, it was the very beginning of the day, and the boat stopped because it came here. Like, the sun was just rising, and that's when Hazard saw a figure with the one horn walking down as the sun kind of hit the street. So yeah, similarly here, I would say that like people are starting to go about their days, as you start to make your way closer and closer to the denser parts of the town.

**Keith:** What do I notice about— do I notice anything about the people here?

**Austin:** Yeah. I mean, a freebie for you—

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** —is there's too many of them. You get the sense—

**Keith:** Too many people.

**Austin:** You get the sense pretty quickly— and like, maybe it just gets denser and denser. But like, you know, this town is about the size of Blackwick, maybe? And it feels like there's more people than there should be.

**Keith:** Right.

**Austin:** Is what I would say. That's my freebie. If you want to do a Discern check, this is Discern Haven, I would say? Um, let me see if you have anything else here that would work. At this point, I think yeah, Haven. You have Haven. So yeah, Discern Haven.

**Keith:** Discern Haven. Okay, so there's—

**Austin:** You're just trying to like vibe out people. You're trying to get the sense of like, what the people are up to and what sort of...

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah, sure.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And this is...Discern is just Standard. Ooh, look at that critical success.

**Keith:** Ten.

**Austin:** Absolutely.

**Keith:** Yeah, wasting an early on the inconsequential things. [Austin and Dre laugh] Yeah.

**Austin:** Uh, you know, I'll— I can give you a little bit here. Um, I think...you're the one who notices first that you're having a hard time keeping track of numbers and time. You're like, wow, there's too many people on the street. I count one, two, three, four, one two, six, two, three, four, five— there's at least 20 people here. And you realize, "Wait, how did I arrive at 20? I think 20 is right."

**[0:20:06]**

**Keith:** Mm.

**Austin:** But that seems like too many people. And then you—

**Keith:** Am I dreaming?

**Austin:** And then you—

**Keith:** Are we dream— is this a dream?

**Austin:** You feel like that, right? There is a sense of like, I feel like I might be dreaming. That is a hund— like, there is a dreamlike quality as you begin to move through these streets that gets enhanced the deeper into town you get.

**Keith:** Can I— can I read the signs on the shops or whatever?

**Austin:** A hundred percent. You can totally read the signs on the shops.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** You see that there— you know, you've walked past a butcher. You've walked past a florist. You've walked past a general store. Those are all opening up at this moment. And you...on that 10, I think you see— someone notices you looking around. There's like a...someone who is on his way down to the river with a bunch of fishing equipment. Not enough to be like...this is someone who's just getting into fishing, maybe. You know, this is not like a big professional net and a bunch of gear. This is someone who— or maybe this is someone who like, on his day off, goes down to the river to do some fishing. And he notices that you've...you're kind of looking around and trying to get the kind of sense of things, and he comes over, and he says:

**Austin (as fisherman):** Well, howdy. Y'all visitors?

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** [cheerful] Sure are. Good mornin'!

**Austin (as fisherman):** Good mornin'. Do you need help with anything? I see you're a little confused looking.

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** Well, we're new (??? 21:34)

**Keith (as Lyke):** Just having a look around for now.

**Dre (as Chine):** Mm-hmm.

**Austin (as fisherman):** You need help directions or, uh, anything like that? Welcome to Marrowcreek, by the way!

**Dre (as Chine):** Thank you.

**Austin (as fisherman):** We don't get too many visitors, all the way out here.

**Dre (as Chine):** It smells great out here.

**Austin (as fisherman):** You know what that is? Can I tell you?

**Dre (as Chine):** Yeah?

**Austin (as fisherman):** You know why they call it Marrowcreek?

**Dre (as Chine):** Uh huh?

**Austin (as fisherman):** It's 'cause of the marrow fields out east.

**Dre (as Chine):** Like you...like you grow bone marrow?

**Austin (as fisherman):** No. [laughs] Oh, we get that— we get that sometimes. You know, people get confused about the words.

**Dre (as Chine):** Mm-hmm.

**Austin (as fisherman):** Nah, the little green gourds. They're like zucchini, little green things.

**Dre (as Chine):** [understanding] Oh.

**Keith (as Lyke):** Mm.

**Austin (as fisherman):** They're sour because of the soil, you know, but that's why it smells so good, 'cause of—

**Dre (as Chine):** Ah. I meant the fish.

**Austin (as fisherman):** Oh, no, that's not— no. I'm sorry about that, if the fish smell is getting to you, you know.

**Dre (as Chine):** No, it's great.

**Austin (as fisherman):** You don't happen—

**Austin:** And looks close at you, Chine.

**Austin (as fisherman):** You don't happen to have a cousin or a sibling out this way, do you?

**Dre (as Chine):** Uh, not that I'm aware of.

**Austin (as fisherman):** Uh, you see, I...this fishing rod, this is just a little— I do this for fun. I'm a tracker normally, a hunter and whatnot. And I was out near the farm, the marrow farm out east, a couple days ago, and I saw someone just like you out in the forest.

**Dre (as Chine):** Hmm.

**Austin (as fisherman):** Right near the farm, so I don't know if they worked there, they lived there, I don't know the people who run the farm. You gotta try some of the marrow. Let me tell you, it is...mmm. When it's just in season, just before the flowers hit, it is plump and delicious. Again, a little sour 'cause of the soil, but, um, you know. You gotta be careful. You don't ever eat one after the flower has bloomed. It's dangerous then, the poison and whatnot.

**Dre (as Chine):** Ah.

**Austin (as fisherman):** But right before it is delicious. It's just east.

**Keith (as Lyke):** Is it in season now?

**Austin (as fisherman):** Well, it's right on the edge, isn't it? And that's what makes it... [exhales] You know, it's a little bit of a dare. And some people, I think doctors and whatnot, might wait until it has some of the more toxic qualities, 'cause they put that to work in medicines and whatnot, burn away the infestation and so on and so forth. But to eat, you want it right before right, before the bulb of the petals and all that opens up. And I think we're right about on that line right now. So again, you just go east, and then— you take this road east, and then you go south a little bit, and then the next big road headin' east. After that, you keep on going, you'll hit the farms. Y'all need anything else?

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** Well— sorry, I didn't catch your name?

**Austin (as fisherman):** Oh, my name? My name's Reuben.

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** Nice to meet you, Reuben.

**Keith (as Lyke):** Hi, Reuben.

**Dre (as Chine):** Hey there, Reuben.

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** You mentioned your being— you're a tracker, which is such a lovely coincidence, 'cause I just so happened to be *tracking* someone.

**Austin (as Reuben):** [chuckles] Oh.

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** Have you seen any devils about this tall—

**Sylvia:** And Hazard like reaches up to try and do their height.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Sylvia:** It is established that Hazard is a funny little guy, not that tall.

**Austin:** Uh huh, not that tall.

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** —wandering through here? I, uh...

**Austin (as Reuben):** Ooh...

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** I've been led to believe they've been through the area, and it would be a big help if you could help me point— point me in any direction, you know?

**Keith (as Lyke):** [hushed] How many horns? How many horns?

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** One horn. One horn. I thought I said that. One horn.

**Keith (as Lyke):** Okay.

**Austin (as Reuben):** [sighs slightly] You know, I...being a tracker and whatnot, I understand how you think I might know that, but the truth is I'm kind of a solitary individual.

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** But you're so friendly!

**Austin (as Reuben):** It's a...it is a paradox, isn't it? [Dre laughs] I think I tend to use this energy early in the day when I first awake, and by noontime I just don't have it in me anymore. And so I tend to like to work alone, you understand.

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** Okay.

**Austin (as Reuben):** In any case, you might want to find someone else. You know, the stage is over yonder.

**Austin:** And points to a stage where some people are starting to gather, just like an outdoor kind of wooden stage. You can kind of see on the map here at this kind of fork in the road up northeast of you by a little bit. And he says:



**Austin (as Reuben):** There's also the theater a little bit east of that. People tend to gather at places like that. And a fountain, there's a fountain. You could ask around there. I bet people like that might've seen your— you said a devil with one horn, huh?

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** Yeah, those are the two defining features.

**Austin (as Reuben):** [contemplating] Devil with one horn. Tall. Tall fella. I saw you put your hand all up.

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** Taller than me, at the very least.

**Austin (as Reuben):** [sighs] Yeah, I'm not, um...you know, I...nothing like that strikes me. But I'll keep my eye out. Y'all stayin' for a bit?

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** Uh...

**Sylvia:** Hazard like looks at the other two.

**Dre (as Chine):** Unknown.

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** I think we're passing through, probably.

**Keith:** Yeah, I'm giving a face that I don't know.

**Austin (as Reuben):** Okay. Well, you know, if I happen to bump into y'all...or you'll find me down by the river, if you have any other questions. Name's Reuben, again.

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** Yeah, you take it easy.

**Dre (as Chine):** Thanks, Reuben.

**Austin (as Reuben):** All right.

**Austin:** And begins to keep going down, down the way. So yeah, so just to summarize that a little bit, Reuben kind of pointed out that there are— that there is the stage to the east a little bit and then also a theater somewhere, a theater and a plaza like a fountain, further east also. And both of those are— or all three of those are places where you might find more people gathering as the day continues. Scale is weird, but, you know, imagine both that this walk is dreamlike. And so people are beginning to move out and move about, and also like the amount of time it takes you to get from point A to point B is increasingly hard to kind of, you know, add up in your own heads. So. So, what are you doing?

**Sylvia:** I'm kind of curious about the—

**Austin:** And again, I've also revealed this farm far to the east. You can see that here, and there's like, just imagine this is a big farmhouse, you know? Right here.

**Sylvia:** So, I'm kind of curious about the stage, if other people are.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** But if you guys have anything pulling you, like, I just want to get further into town to talk to more people, so like, I'm flexible going to the farms if you want to go to the farms first, too.

**Dre:** Uh, I think Chine is pretty comfortable following Hazard's lead.

**Keith:** Uh, Lyke has no itinerary and is just mostly confused about this whole place in general [Dre chuckles] and interested in kind of taking it all in.

**Austin:** Mm, mm-hmm.

**Keith:** So, I'm fine with going there first.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, it seems like there— people are like gathering. Is there like something going on here?

**Austin:** Yeah, people are gathering, and there is a person on...there's a person—I would say 20, 22, 23, somewhere like that—up on stage, starting to strum a banjo. And the crowd is just kind of in a lull. There's probably 20, 30, no, there's probably more than that. 40 people? Again, it's hard to count—gathered on the kind of south and eastern sides of this stage, leaving the kind of bigger— there's this big open area, but they're all kind of crammed in like next to the road. Do you know what I mean? It's as if there are people on their way somewhere, and they've stopped to gather to hear this person play this instrument.

**Keith:** What kind of instrument?

**Austin:** It's a banjo.

**Keith:** Oh, banjo. Sorry, I missed that.

**Austin:** Yeah. And they, um...it's, you know, there is something about this place that's making it hard to say, like...I don't know if this is just true, that it's like hard to do a judgement of how well this this playing is going, but also it's just like, it doesn't sound like a particularly bad song or a particularly good song or a particularly well played or poorly played. It's just playing is happening. Music is happening. And there's this crowd kind of watching. And there is something in their eyes that is like...strange, I guess is what I would say? There's an attitude. This is—you've seen live music. You just saw live music. There was just live music on board. This is not

the attitude most people have to live music. Which is like, there's something almost...again, it's hard to place, but it's not appreciative, is what I would say. The attitude is not appreciative.

**Keith:** I have definitely seen unappreciative attitudes toward live music before. [Sylvia laughs]

**[0:30:00]**

**Austin:** No, but I don't mean it's...I don't mean that it's a...maybe this is a different way. It's not evaluative in the same way.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** It's almost like looking at...uh...again, the dreamlike nature of this place is hard. I'll just say: it's almost like looking at people who are looking at a— less like people watching music and evaluating it and more like people looking into a lobster tank.

**Sylvia:** Oh.

**Keith:** [sighs] Can I...

**Dre:** Hmm.

**Keith:** I'm still...I want to continue discerning this feeling that I'm having about the reality of this place and of the nature of the people here.

**Austin:** Yeah. Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** I'm...so I had, what? Discern Haven was what I rolled first. I was looking at this place as a town.

**Austin:** Yeah, yeah.

**Keith:** And now I want to roll Discern Occult and look at this place like there's something occult happening.

**Austin:** Occult will not add to this roll.

**Keith:** Occult will not add to this roll? Okay.

**Austin:** Yeah, there is...I mean, I'll let you— I will let you roll it— or, I won't let you roll it, 'cause Occult will not add to...

**Keith:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** There's not like a spell happening here.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** I guess I could let you do it...here's what I'll do. I'll let you roll Occult, but it will be Risky. Which is a trade, but you'll get— you will get something Occult-ish. You'll get something supernatural-ish if you succeed. It's not Occult, because there's important lines drawn—

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** —between our domains, that are like, you know, Religion, you know, Cursed, et cetera. There are lots of ways to be supernatural. And there are— and the way that domains work is that places have domains and you get to roll the ones that you have.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** I'll check (??? 31:42)

**Keith:** Is it Religion?

**Austin:** It is...it is not Religion, no.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** You don't get the sense that there's much— in fact, a thing you note is I don't think that you see a church here. You don't see a temple. You don't see, um...

**Keith:** Wow. Okay.

**Austin:** [rethinking] Um, mm...you haven't gone deep enough in yet. So maybe, maybe there will be religious elements here, I guess is what I should say. Actually, you know what? I'm thinking through a thing. I'm thinking through a thing.

**Keith:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Roll what you want to roll.

**Keith:** Standard?

**Austin:** Risky. What are you rolling? If you're not rolling Haven—

**Keith:** I was gonna roll Occult.

**Austin:** If you're not rolling Haven, it's Risky.

**Keith:** Okay. Ooh, that's rough. Can I get— can I get some help? Can I just get some eyes on this to maybe catch something that I'm missing?

**Austin:** How are you—

**Sylvia:** I do have Occult. I could help.

**Austin:** How are you communicating this?

**Keith:** Um, I'm being like:

**Keith (as Lyke):** Something is going on here. Something weird is happening. Like, I feel weird about this place. Not...and not the sort of weird that I'm...that I'm used to.

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** Okay. Yeah, and I just...this just seems weird. [laughs softly] My whole thing is just the crowd here is really dead, and that doesn't...this doesn't make any sense to me.

**Sylvia:** And so Hazard's gonna help—

**Austin:** Okay.

**Sylvia:** —by like, I think, surveying the crowd is kind of a thing I could think of doing.

**Austin:** Sure.

**Sylvia:** Or like, I don't know. I have Occult. I don't have Discern. So.

**Keith:** Okay. So plus one but Risky.

**Austin:** But Risky. Hey, that's a success at a cost. You're both gonna take D6 Mind. Lyke, take six. Hazard, take five. And give me Fallout tests.

**Keith:** Huh.

**Austin:** No Fallout— wait, that's not...uh, that still would have been—

**Keith:** That's me, is Minor.

**Sylvia:** Oh, wait.

**Austin:** Oh, so...uh, Hazard, that would have been Minor Fallout also.

**Sylvia:** Mine would have got Minor, yeah. I just— I didn't click off.

**Austin:** You both would get Minor, right?

**Sylvia:** I think this happened last recording with someone, too. [laughs softly]

**Austin:** Yeah, it's—

**Keith:** You know, one day, one day I'll have that four Mind Fallout that gives me Mastery. It's never happened, the whole game. I've ne—

**Austin:** Wait, what's the four Mind Fallout that gives you Mastery?

**Keith:** Oh, I have had a move— I have a core move.

**Austin:** Oh, four or higher.

**Keith:** To where, when I have four Mind Fallout, I give Mastery on any spell that I roll.

**Austin:** Right, yeah.

**Dre:** [impressed] Mm.

**Keith:** I've never been able to do it.

**Austin:** But you keep getting Fallout when you would get that, instead of getting to keep it. I see what you're saying.

**Keith:** Yes, and there's...there's also been times where I've had four Mind Fallout for a while but never had a usable spell to cast.

**Austin:** Yep, uh huh. Um...so, you're each gonna take different Fallout here. You're both taking Minor Fallout, right?

**Keith:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** [thoughtful breath] Okay. Lyke, you're taking Shaken: "You panic and fall back on your primitive impulses. The GM chooses one: fight—attack the problem in an attempt to destroy it; flight—get away from the problem by any means necessary; or freeze—do not act, putting yourself in danger. At the end of the situation, remove this Fallout." I'm choosing for you. You are fleeing. You're still succeeding, which means you're learning something about this place, right? And so I will give you that success when you— after this like finishes, effectively. Lyke...you lose Lyke in the crowd, Hazard and Chine.

**Sylvia:** Oh shit, okay.

**Austin:** Lyke is like, “Oh, I see—” And Lyke, something like, the hair on the back of your neck goes up, and before you know it, you have like felt yourself moving through the crowd to get away from something or to get towards something, you're not sure what. And when we come back to you in a second, you will be somewhere else in this city, in this town.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** And then, Hazard, um...I mean, this is easy. Fascination, right?

**Sylvia:** Okay.

**Austin:** “You become obsessed with a strange topic, usually whatever caused the Fallout. You must try to learn more about it first, firsthand if possible. Whenever you attempt to learn more about your weird fascination, roll with Mastery. If you have the opportunity to learn about it and refuse, mark D4 Stress to Mind.” You have got to find the person you're looking for. You know, you begin...once you're like, “Oh, I'm going to look through the crowd,” you find yourself counting horns on the various devils that are here. There's, you know, it's a mix of people, like most places, and there are a number of devils here. And you find yourself unable to stop, like, looking at the devils specifically. You're like, “Okay, I need to look at the devils. I need to look at the—” and so now you're fascinated. So, so, it is...what had been a sort of like overall goal is now an immediate need to find this devil. Lyke, your success here, though, reveals a couple of things to you. You rolled Occult, right?

**Keith:** I did, yeah.

**Austin:** So, you end up finding...you end up popping up somewhere else in town, you're not sure where, outside of a small home where you hear numerous voices harmonizing and singing together. They're— I'd say it's more like a chant. It's like [singing drawn out notes, alternating lower and higher pitch] “Oh. Oh. Oh. Oh,” over and over again.

**Keith:** Sounds like the chorus to an 80s pop hit.

**Austin:** Sure. And—

**Keith:** Jack, put it in! [Austin and Sylvia laugh]

**Austin:** And it is...from what you can tell, it's just a house with kind of like a door that's kind of loose on its hinges, swinging in the air. And you get the sense, also, you realize this in this moment, that like you're on a street where there aren't other people suddenly. All that density seems to have disappeared. But as you kind of like peek, you know, in that front door, you can sense that there is— there's like a cou— it's a shop in there. It doesn't have like a storefront. It doesn't have windows or anything like. I mean, it has windows. It doesn't have like shop

windows. But inside, you can see that there is a kind of a countertop and then a shelf behind that with a bunch of different, you know, reagents and bits and bobs. It's the sort of place that you would have...you would have yourself run if you opened up a shop somewhere. Maybe you've run shops like this before. And you don't see anyone behind the counter, but there is a curtain separating this kind of front part of the shop from the back part of the shop or from some back room, which is where the singing is coming from.

**Keith:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** And this is an Occult place. So you're not quite sure what's up with this place or where you are, but you do get the weird sensation of like, "Oh, I was— huh, this didn't seem like the sort of town that would have a place like this, and yet here it is."

**Keith:** Am I still like afraid of something? Like, am I...

**Austin:** I would say we carry— yes, it specifically says that it carries on until the end of the situation. Let's see. "At the end of the situation, remove this Fallout." So you don't have to write that down. You can...you can...you no longer have panicking and falling back on your primitive impulses is what I would say.

**Keith:** Okay. I guess what I mean is like...

**Austin:** I think it's scary.

**Keith:** Do I know what scared me?

**Austin:** Um...

**Keith:** And do I feel like I've escaped something? Or am I like, "Why did I do that? Why did I run?"

**Austin:** [thoughtful sigh] You don't know what scared you.

**Keith:** Okay. Something scared me, and I ran, and I'm here.

**Austin:** But I think that there is still— when you think about that crowd, it still scares you. Maybe that's what— there's a kind of— it's knitted together with the experience you are having, and you can feel your pulse kind of heat, like speed up, when you start to think about being in that crowd again. But there is this— again, and what I will say calms you is looking into this place that looks familiar to you.

**Keith:** Got it.

**Austin:** This sort of like, you know, occult bits and bobs shop, you know?



**Keith:** Yeah. Yeah.

**Austin:** What do you do?

**Keith:** Uh, can I peer into that back room?

**Austin:** So you go inside the— you go inside to begin with. You go into the shop?

**Keith:** Yeah, yeah.

**Austin:** Okay, yeah. Go into the shop. You can still hear that chanting in the back room. And you kind of look and peer, and you can see...there's a person in what seems to be an empty room. Like, you don't...do you move the curtain aside? Are you just kind of like trying to move your head in such a way that you can kind of see without touching anything? Is it one of those?

**Keith:** Hmm. Is there a bell on the front desk?

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Then yes, I peek— I like, I'll move the curtain.

**Austin:** All right. So, you're not ringing the bell, just to be clear.

**Keith:** Right. I'm not ringing the bell.

**Austin:** Okay.

**Keith:** I just wanted to see, have these— have they given themselves the opportunity to be interrupted by a customer.

**[0:40:01]**

**Austin:** I see. Yes.

**Keith:** They have, so.

**Austin:** Uh huh. So, you open the back— or you slide the curtain just a little bit, and you see a woman—you know, maybe 30, 35, light hair, a kind of black pants with a purple shirt, like a deep purple shirt—holding up a mirror and singing into it. And there are all these other voices that you don't see where they're coming from. There must be a dozen voices in here. As if— and they're not coming from her. Or from the mirror.

**Keith:** Does it smell like magic?

**Austin:** Yeah. Sort of? It smells like...I think we've talked about this before in some ways. It smells like...I mean, it smells sour. It smells sour.

**Keith:** Hmm.

**Austin:** Like the soil. Do you sneak back away? Are you...you know.

**Keith:** Does she notice me doing this?

**Austin:** We could roll. Or we could just have her notice you.

**Keith:** Let's have her notice me.

**Austin:** All right. I think, yeah, she catches you in the mirror. And she says:

**Austin (as shop woman):** [hushed] Hup.

**Austin:** And everybody quiets. All the voices stop. And she turns and looks at you and says.

**Austin (as shop woman):** Excuse you.

**Austin:** And then like, tut—

**Keith (as Lyke):** Oh, sorry, I didn't mean to—

**Austin (as shop woman):** Tsk-tsk, tsk-tsk. I'll be right with you.

**Keith (as Lyke):** Okay.

**Austin:** And she like fixes her hair, and she closes the mirror like a fan, like a hand fan, and puts it—

**Keith:** Hmm.

**Austin:** —and like, puts it through her hair, like a, you know, like a stick to hold her hair up.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And steps out and says:

**Austin (as shop woman):** [sighs] How could I help you?

**Keith (as Lyke):** Ah, I didn't mean to interrupt. I just wanted to, you know, check it out.

**Austin (as shop woman):** We have a bell for a reason.

**Keith (as Lyke):** I saw the bell. That's why I looked.

**Austin (as shop woman):** [slight sigh] Well, we should get a sign.

**Keith (as Lyke):** I figured if you didn't mind me ringing the bell you wouldn't mind me taking a peek.

**Austin:** She just kind of like squints at you. [Keith laughs quietly]

**Austin (as shop woman):** [sighs] You're not from here, are you? I can hear it.

**Keith (as Lyke):** No, not at all.

**Austin (as shop woman):** Do you come for the doctor?

**Keith (as Lyke):** Uh, no, we didn't come here on purpose at all.

**Austin (as shop woman):** Oh.

**Austin:** And she like, a smile across her face.

**Keith (as Lyke):** Does that mean something to you?

**Austin (as shop woman):** A lot of people come here by mistake.

**Keith (as Lyke):** Why?

**Austin (as shop woman):** [deep breath] Some places have a way about them. Maybe because it's near the river. Maybe because it's near the dunes. Maybe because of the smell in the air. What are you looking for?

**Austin:** And like a serious look suddenly, as if you've said something you don't remember saying or as if she can read something on you that you don't think is legible.

**Keith (as Lyke):** When I come to a new place, I look for a place like this.

**Austin (as shop woman):** I see. You're a practitioner.

**Keith (as Lyke):** Mm-hmm.

**Austin (as shop woman):** Hmm. Are you in need of any reagents or supplements are anything like that?

**Keith (as Lyke):** Mm... [sighs] I am broke. But I like to browse. [Sylvia laughs]

**Austin:** She smiles and says:

**Austin (as shop woman):** I understand. There's much to collect near here. If you go into the woods, there are little mushrooms. And down near the lake, near the clinic, you can find fish and other little things that squirm. You know, the town is named for the clinic.

**Keith (as Lyke):** Marrow?

**Austin (as shop woman):** Well, it's a derivation or a perversion, perhaps. You know, the town was named for its founder, Dr. Yersa Mallow. She came from, I think, a line of gardeners and chemists. (??? 43:58) name for the flower, I think, the mallow flower, and people here must have misheard her, thought it was marrow, and ran with it. She's like you, I think.

**Keith (as Lyke):** [overlapping] A trappist named Reuben told me it was named for the marrow fruit.

**Austin (as shop woman):** He must be confused. The mallow flower, perhaps. Again, the doctor came here.

**Keith (as Lyke):** Well, the gourd?

**Austin (as shop woman):** I don't know the gourd. The doctor, she's like you. Unschola, yes? Republica?

**Keith (as Lyke):** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** She turns and starts to look through little shelves of things, little like tiny little drawers she starts to open and shut and is preparing something. You don't know what. You can't see what she's doing with her hands, necessarily. And, you know, she's reaching and up to higher shelves and higher cubbies and pulling things out of little, you know, tiny slots and stuff and kind of almost muttering under her breath as she talks.

**Austin (as shop woman):** You know, the...I'd always heard that the Republica was supposed to be a bastion of knowledge, but apparently whatever research the doctor was doing was disallowed, and so she came here to create this clinic by the lake, where no one would disturb her. She brought people with her, and other people came, people called untreatable, people who...who could not find the right medicine to be

administered to them, and so she became their minister. And she helped. She fixed a lot of people, and over time, it became clear there was no one she couldn't help. She might even be able to help with your sickness, I think.

**Keith (as Lyke):** Oh, I don't have a sickness.

**Austin:** She turns and hands you a cigarette she's been rolling. This is a D4 Occult magic cigarette. [laughs softly] It's a Mend tool, actually.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** You can—

**Keith:** So, the Course smoke, and now I have the “of course, smoke!”

**Austin:** Uh huh. Yeah. [laughs] She says:

**Austin (as shop woman):** No. No, you're sick. I can...I can smell it on you, deep inside. Copper. Copper and fur. You should see her. Head east.

**Keith:** Do I smell copper?

**Austin:** You don't smell what she smells.

**Keith:** I just smell sour.

**Austin:** You just smell sour.

**Austin (as shop woman):** Head east on this main branch, and then head south. Follow the road to the lake. She'll take care of you. And you could trade her the cigarette, if you wouldn't like it.

**Keith (as Lyke):** Is this place weird? [Sylvia laughs]

**Austin:** She smiles again and says:

**Austin (as shop woman):** What place isn't?

**Keith (as Lyke):** Are you weird like it's weird outside?

**Austin (as shop woman):** [laughs softly] I think I'm weird like I'm weird inside.

**Keith (as Lyke):** [heavy breath] Okay.

**Austin (as shop woman):** How about you?

**Keith (as Lyke):** I think I'm weird like I'm weird inside.

**Austin (as shop woman):** Hmm. Well, if you need anything else. My name is Zofina, with a Z. Zofina.

**Keith (as Lyke):** Lye Lychen. With a CH.

**Austin (as Zofina):** [overlapping] K.

**Keith (as Lyke):** With a K— well, with a...

**Austin (as Zofina):** Lyke.

**Keith (as Lyke):** It's Lyke with a K, but Lye Lychen with a CH.

**Austin (as Zofina):** Hmm. I'll call you Lyke.

**Keith (as Lyke):** Okay.

**Austin (as Zofina):** It's true about you.

**Keith (as Lyke):** Mm-hmm.

**Austin (as Zofina):** I'm going to go back to my task.

**Keith (as Lyke):** What was it?

**Austin (as Zofina):** Mm...a ritual...(??? 47:35) for those—

**Keith (as Lyke):** Where did the voices come from? The mirror?

**Austin (as Zofina):** No. From inside.

**Austin:** And another quiet smile, and she ducks away, going back behind the curtain.

**Keith:** All right.

**Austin:** And the chanting kicks up again. [Sylvia laughs softly] Back at the crowd. The...you've lost... you lost Lye in the crowd. And somewhere along the line, someone has started to feel dissatisfied with this set. And the people begin, one at a time, picking up and throwing fruit at the banjo player, who keeps playing through it. Most of them, most of the fruit begins to land at

the player's feet, but a couple of them hit against the coveralls this person's wearing, the overalls, rather, this person is wearing. And they hit with a thud.

**Keith:** [distantly] Boo.

**Austin:** Yeah. No, there's no booing. There's no booing. This is a silent—

**Keith:** Just silently picking up fruit and throwing it.

**Sylvia:** Ugh.

**Austin:** There is a banjo playing, and then people are slowly picking up fruit, and one at a time throwing. The fruit are like, sort of like peaches. They're stone— they're various stone fruit. They're fruit that have pits in them. Very ripe, overripe, I would say. Like, you can see someone reach to grab one of them in their hand. Their fingers depress into the flesh of the fruit very easily.

**Keith:** Ew.

**Austin:** You know what I mean? Like, without much force. And you get the sense that the pit inside is bigger than it should be.

**Sylvia:** I think like when someone near me starts doing this, I'm just like:

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** [outraged] What are you doing?

**Austin (as crowd person):** Shhhh. Shh. Can I help you?

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** [quieter] Why are you throwing fruit at them?

**Austin (as crowd person):** Because they're doing a poor job. Are you okay?

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** [loud again] I'm fine. I'm apparently the only person here who has—

**Austin (as crowd person):** Shhh.

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** [hushed] I am apparently the only person here who has a normal reaction to not really liking music that much!

**Dre (as Chine):** [hushed] Hey! Hey! Do you have a— do you have an extra fruit?

**Austin (as crowd person):** Yeah, of course.

**Austin:** And hands you the one in their hand.

**Dre:** Okay.

**Austin:** I mean, there's a box— there's a crate filled with these things.

**Dre:** Cool.

**Austin:** Like, on top of a barrel not too far away.

**Keith:** They do this a lot.

**Dre:** Yeah, no, I'm gonna— I'm gonna throw it directly at the person.

**[0:50:00]**

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** Chine!

**Austin:** Directly at the person.

**Dre (as Chine):** [quietly] I'm blending in!

**Dre:** Yeah, I wanna hit...I wanna hit the banjo out of their hands.

**Austin:** Ooh. Okay, give me a, um...that sounds like a Hunt to me.

**Dre:** Sure.

**Austin:** Give me a Hunt.

**Dre:** What's—

**Austin:** You don't have Haven, do you?

**Dre:** No, is the domain—

**Austin:** Again you could use any domain you want. If it's not Haven, it's Risky, but— and that's a bad trade on the math, for what it's worth. So I would just use Hunt, if I were you. Without help, Risky— I mean, Risky's always just very scary, but...

**Dre:** Oh, so Hunt and then just leave the domain blank?

**Austin:** Yes, yeah. Yeah.

**Dre:** Okay.



**Austin:** Which means it— and it shouldn't be Risky if you aren't trying to call on something else. I mean, you can try to call on something else, and that will color what happens, is what I will say. I...Chine, you can use Cursed.

**Dre:** Hmm. That's probably fine. It's probably fine.

**Austin:** Yeah, it's fine. Don't worry about it.

**Dre:** Yeah, don't worry about it. [Sylvia and Dre laugh]

**Austin:** Uh huh. You got a six, which is success at a cost.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** You, again, are gonna take D6...

**Keith:** That's lucky that you had that, by the way.

**Austin:** Oh my god.

**Dre:** Whoo.

**Austin:** Take six to Echo, here.

**Sylvia:** Boy.

**Dre:** What's the, uh...what's the tier that we're at?

**Austin:** Oh, we're on tier three, my friend.

**Dre:** Okay.

**Keith:** You have rollen— you have— “rollen,” Jesus Christ. You've *rolled*—

**Austin:** Uh huh?

**Keith:** —18 possible damage and hit 17 of them for stress.

**Austin:** That's true. I'm killing it tonight.

**Keith:** Us. You're killing us.

**Austin:** I'm killing you. Go ahead and give me that Fallout test. [Sylvia laughs] No Fallout. And guess what, Chine?

**Dre:** Mm-hmm? Yeah?

**Austin:** You knock the banjo out of his hands, and doing so fills your chest with a sort of warmth and confidence. Clear Vulnerable.

**Dre:** Ah.

**Austin:** You've wandered onto one of the Haunts of this place. And I think the person who gave you that stone fruit...and again, if you picked it up, you could tell the pits in these, it's like they've been bred to be bigger than they should be. [Keith and Dre laugh] Like, it's big, heavy, like... [Sylvia laughs] The banjo clatters, and one of the strings breaks, and the person who handed it to you puts their hand on your back, like "well done," you know?

**Dre (as Chine):** It's called deescalation, Hazard. [Austin laughs softly]

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** Wh— [frustrated but resigned] fine.

**Austin:** I mean, people are continuing to throw at this point, and the person is just standing there.

**Keith:** You said that Chine stumbled upon a Haunt. Does that mean that the Haunt is having hit this person with a fruit?

**Austin:** Mm-hmm. This is a place you can heal.

**Keith:** You can heal at hitting with a fruit.

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Austin:** Yeah. It's a Mind Haunt.

**Dre:** Feels good to break things.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm. You feel yourself, as you throw it, Chine, connecting to something— and you used Cursed, right?

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** You feel yourself connected to something here in a deep way. Not just the people around you as you let go, but like, you feel rooted. You feel good. You feel like this is...this is a good town. [with unnerving conviction] This is a good town.

**Keith:** We are having very different times.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** What are y'all doing at that point? I mean, this person, I think, again, uh...they put their hand on your back, and they're like:

**Austin (as crowd person):** Ah, damn good throw. Here, you should throw another one.

**Dre (as Chine):** Yeah, yeah.

**Austin:** And they pick one up and throw another one and, you know, hit the person. The person is just standing there, just taking these hits at this point.

**Dre (as Chine):** Hey, uh, you haven't seen a tall demon with one horn anywhere, have you?

**Austin (as crowd person):** Demon, mm...

**Austin:** There's like a little bit of, um...they look arou— they like shake their head, but there's clearly something being hidden here, or there's currently being held back.

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** [quickly] Hey, hey, hey. Hey. You know something. What have you seen?

**Austin (as crowd person):** [stammers]

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** You've seen the— hey, tell me.

**Austin (as crowd person):** Hey.

**Dre (as Chine):** Listen.

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** Tell me, and I will throw as many fruit as you want at this guy.

**Dre (as Chine):** Listen, you tell us where that person is? I'll—

**Austin (as crowd person):** Shh.

**Dre (as Chine):** [hushed] Hey, hey. I'll nail this guy wherever you want me to.

**Austin (as crowd person):** It's not about what I want. It's about what you want.  
[hesitates] Quiet. Come with— come— you stay here.

**Austin:** Pointing to you, Chine. And looking at you, Hazard, and saying like:

**Austin (as crowd person):** Come with me.

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** Okay, yeah.

**Austin (as crowd person):** We need— we can't talk right here.

**Dre (as Chine):** [hushed] Hey, I'll cover for you.

**Dre:** Chine hurls another fruit. [laughs softly]

**Austin:** Uh huh. [laughs] Yeah.

**Sylvia:** The least enthusiastic thumbs up in the world. [Sylvia and Austin laugh]

**Austin:** Uh huh. And pulls you down the road a little bit, further to the east, to this...to this building I've colored green by mistake, which was a mistake. You see this green building just east of the stage? Past the fork, right here? I didn't mean for that to be green, but it's green, so.

**Sylvia:** Oh I didn't see that that was green, even.

**Austin:** Me either, until I zoomed in on it very close.

**Sylvia:** Ooh.

**Austin:** And this is like a...let's call this a hotel. Let's call this the green...The Green Hotel. And comes inside, and this person, they are wearing— what are they wearing? Oh, I know what— I know exactly what they're wearing. They are wearing work, like work pants. You know, like heavy, you know, Dickies or something style, Carhartt style pants with a dark colored shirt. And they say:

**Austin (as crowd person):** I had to run back and get the rest of my work outfit anyway. I was so excited about the stage, I left everything else. Will you give me a moment? Wait in the lobby, please.

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** Fine.

**Austin (as crowd person):** I'm on the first floor. I'll be right back.

**Austin:** And there's a radio playing slow music here and someone working at the desk. A small woman, small round woman looks up over the reception desk. She's seated right now. And she says:

**Austin (as receptionist):** Can I help you?

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** I'm j—

**Austin (as receptionist):** Are you looking to check in?

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** Oh, no, I'm just waiting for the...

**Austin (as receptionist):** We have hourly, nightly, and weekly available.

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** No, no...

**Sylvia:** And there's like a moment where Hazard's like clearly like thinking for a second, is like:

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** You know what, good to know, but we're not sure if we're staying overnight yet, so.

**Austin (as receptionist):** Lobby services are only available for guests. I would ask you not to drink the water or the coffee.

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** Oh, no. Don't worry about it.

**Austin (as receptionist):** Okay.

**Austin:** And she—

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** Hey, you haven't seen any devils with one horn come in here lately, have you? Any guests like that?

**Austin:** Give me a Compel, Haven.

**Sylvia:** Okay. I'm good at that. I got both of those.

**Austin:** You are. This is the thing you do, in fact, right?

**Sylvia:** Yep.

**Austin:** It's one of the things you do, anyway. Do you have anything else special that you can call on here?

**Sylvia:** I think those are both—

**Austin:** I don't remember.

**Sylvia:** No, I don't think for Compel, because I think these are the starting skills for, um...

**Austin:** Right, right, right, right, right.

**Sylvia:** For Incarnadines.

**Austin:** Yes, I gotcha. Yeah.

**Sylvia:** So I don't think there's an ability attached to Compel.

**Austin:** That makes perfect sense. Yeah.

**Sylvia:** And this is Standard?

**Austin:** Uh huh. [sympathetic] Ooh.

**Sylvia:** I got a four!

**Austin:** You got a four.

**Keith:** Oh, that's not...that's low.

**Sylvia:** It was a one, a four, and a one.

**Austin:** Yeah, that's a low roll. Take four Fortune Stress.

**Keith:** Still really hitting the damage, huh?

**Austin:** Uh huh. Trying to stay on this— and I'm rolling a D6 each of these times, so.

**Sylvia:** Take Minor Fallout.

**Austin:** Unbelievable. Truly unbelievable.

**Sylvia:** That's the second time someone's rolled a one for a Fallout check today, by the way.

**Austin:** Yeah. Uh huh.

**Sylvia:** Just to keep up with our stats.

**Austin:** Yeah, just keep up with how this is going, right?

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** This is not a lucky crew.

**Austin:** It fundamentally is not. It fundamentally is not. [Sylvia laughs] You're gonna take Forboding: "Something bad is about to happen. GM, hint at an ominous future event: smoke in the distance, the tremors before a pulse, the frantic music of the carnival. This Fallout can be upgraded to Crisis—see below." She...when you say that, she automatically closes the guest book, as if to prevent you from looking at it, and takes it away. And in that moment, before you can say anything, the person you were talking to comes back out and is wearing a long black apron and is [laughs] carrying a knife, which they sheathe very quickly. Seeing that you see them carrying the knife, they sheathe it, and they say:

**Austin (as crowd person):** I know— I know just the person you're looking for. Come with me, up to the abattoir.

**Austin:** And...

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** O- okay.

**Austin:** Yeah, they are, uh, I think that this person is human, blond hair slicked back. And takes you by the arm, like in a hurry, and begins to pull you outside. When you come outside, you can...the thing that you see now, for whatever reason, the sight line is good. The group, or the the...I mean, I'll just say straight up. The other half of the [laughs] of the road where you were before used to have buildings across there, and in this moment, they don't seem to be where they were before. And so you can see north past the town for the first time. And this is your ominous moment. I mean, if the person coming out in a butcher's outfit [Sylvia laughs] and saying they want to take you through the abattoir isn't enough. To the north of town, there are sand dunes that just go and go and go, and in the middle of them all is this massive red brick slaughterhouse. And you begin to be led up that direction, on the main roads still. And, you know, before you can even get close to there, this person—who introduces themselves finally, like, they go:

**Austin (as crowd person):** I'm Delian, by the way. I'm sorry, I'm running late. I just have to hurry. [hurried] I came here recently, just like you. I'm a— I'm a transplant. I used to be from— from out east, and I've been working up at the slaughterhouse. Did you know? Did you know they named the town for the slaughterhouse? Lambs and—

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** I thought they named it for the plants.

**Austin (as Delian):** Which plants?

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** The gourds.

**Austin (as Delian):** Well, I don't know anything about gourds. It's the marrow from the...from the animals?

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** It makes sense.

**Austin (as Delian):** Yeah.

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** It's what you'd assume.

**Austin (as Delian):** That's...that's what I thought when I moved here, and I got the job pretty quick. You know, I don't think the meat is very good. The sweetgrass, you know, it's so strong, it gets in the meat. But it gets in the marrow too, and in the marrow it's pretty good. And it's a special taste, it's uh, it's uh, unique, you know? Anyway, I think I've seen the fellow you're looking for up in the slaughterhouse. Day worker like me. Gets job—you know, gets work when he can get it.

[1:00:30]

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** Huh.

**Austin (as Delian):** But I've seen him up there.

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** You don't say.

**Austin (as Delian):** Yeah, I can— I can introduce you.

**Austin:** And, you know, continues to lead you up ahead.

**Sylvia:** I'm going, but Hazard is like...

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** At this point, very suspicious of, uh... Delion, was that the name?

**Austin:** Delian, yeah.

**Sylvia:** Delian.

**Austin:** There is a...you pass by a number of animals being led up that direction, and you are struck by their shapes. You guess that it's— they're lambs and goats in a little like, a little...not a convoy, but a little line, you know, being led up that way. But there is like no meat on the bone.



It's like all bone. And in fact, it maybe is too much bone. You're pretty sure one of them had too many legs.

**Keith:** Is there a lot of marrow, at least?

**Sylvia:** Yeah, I was gonna say.

**Austin:** I mean, you'd have to check, right?

**Sylvia:** So, it seems like they're— yeah.

**Austin:** Uh huh. They've been they've very clearly been bred for this.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, I was actually gonna have Hazard ask, like:

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** So, you...you breed them for the marrow down here, then? Or...

**Austin (as Delian):** I mean, I don't. I just got here. Like I said, I've only been here a little bit—

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** Yeah.

**Austin (as Delian):** And, uh, the marrow is, it's...there's something about it. You know? Do you like it? Do you like the marrow here?

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** Can't say I've tried it yet.

**Austin (as Delian):** Oh, we gotta change that. Here, here.

**Austin:** And reaches into a pocket to produce a little like...um, imagine a peppermint in a little wrapper.

**Sylvia:** Okay.

**Austin:** But it's a candied marrow. It's like a marrow candy. It's like a hard candy shell, and inside is bone marrow.

**Sylvia (as Hazard):** You, uh, you mind if I save this for later?

**Austin (as Delian):** I'd love to see what you think.

**Sylvia:** [hesitates] I'm trying to be like, how do I say I can't take off my mask without saying I can't take off my mask? [laughs softly] Actually, this does give me a moment to introduce something, 'cause I had to think about this with one of...with the Frog's Doom move.

**Austin:** Mm.

**Sylvia:** Because it's about holding— you have to hold a resource in your mouth.

**Austin:** In your mouth, yeah. Uh huh.

**Sylvia:** So I figured out that Hazard's mask opens a little bit, like a puppet's jaw almost.

**Austin:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** And so they can like put things in there.

**Austin:** Uh huh.

**Sylvia:** I think it is mostly a symbolic thing.

**Austin:** Yes. Ribbadon recognizes this. Not everybody is born with the same type of body or winds up with the same type of body. The point is the ritual of it, and...

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** You know?

**Keith:** Ribbadon is nothing if not gracious.

**Austin:** Oh, yeah. Listen, [Sylvia laughs] Ribbadon just wants their fucking coin back. As a reminder, for people who don't remember, Ribbadon...there was a pair of brothers who borrowed a silver coin from Ribbadon and became very wealthy off of it and then never paid back that particular silver coin, and so they were cursed to not be able to hold onto things without them changing until they can return the silver coin, so. So yeah. They can hold onto things without changing if they can fit them in their mouths. They can hold something in their mouth to prevent it from changing. So yeah, you slide it in there, and it...

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Does it just rests on— what's—

**Sylvia:** It— there's like...it just rests in there. Like, it—

**Austin:** It just rests in there. Okay.

**Sylvia:** I think there's like a piece of ribbon or something in there to like be some sort of facsimile of a tongue.

**Austin:** Great. Love it.

**Sylvia:** But it just rests in there.

**Austin:** Okay. And soon you are finding yourself walking not just on a dirt road, but on a dirt road that's covered in sand that's being blown on by the sand dunes. And the dunes just like, they're big. They're like, you know, as tall as some of the buildings are, and this road kind of winds between them. But it's...it's a lot up here. And then, again, this big red brick abattoir, like this slaughterhouse, which smells sweet in the way that the candy supposedly is or the way that the marrow supposedly has an extra sweetness to it.

**Keith:** Sorry, did Hazard eat the...

**Austin:** No.

**Sylvia:** No.

**Austin:** Just put it in their mouth for storage.

**Keith:** Got it.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** You know, normal stuff.

**Sylvia:** At some point, it will become clear why they can't do that. [laughs softly]

**Austin:** Yeah, uh huh, I figured.

**Sylvia:** I was gonna ask, probably like out of character. Is it common— like, are the sand dunes like out of place for this like sort of region of Sangfielle? I know that Sangfielle is like a weird region specifically.

**Austin:** [thoughtful sigh] It's a weird region.

**Sylvia:** But...

**Austin:** Unless you've been here...

**Sylvia:** You wouldn't be able to tell?

**Austin:** You know, a dust storm might have hit yesterday that made these, you know what I mean?

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Austin:** It's not...it's not clear.

**Sylvia:** Okay.

**Austin:** Let's jump back to Chine, real quick.

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** Chine, how you doing back at the stage?

**Dre:** Uh, I feel great, apparently. [Sylvia laughs]

**Austin:** Yeah, you feel pretty good. What are you up to? What are you— you've now been separated from both of your companions.

**Dre:** Um...yeah, what— hmm. If I'm feeling this good, I've probably kind of forgotten about my companions.

**Austin:** I see, yeah.

**Keith:** How good are you feeling?

**Dre:** Apparently very good.

**Austin:** I mean, yeah, you cured your—

**Dre:** So good that a I cleared a Fallout.

**Austin:** You cleared a Fallout. It's much different than the Zevunzolia thing, because it's much more clear as to what happened. Do you know what I mean?

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** It's like what you said before, that like...you can, you can very clearly recognize, "I did this act, and this act felt good." And maybe there's something strange happening there, but you at least can see the cause and effect of it. Do you know what I mean?

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** And you did such a good job, so that's part of it. [Dre laughs] You like aimed to do a thing, and you succeeded at it, you know? So.

**Dre:** Glad my quarterly review's going well. [laughs]

**Austin:** Yeah. Uh huh.

**Dre:** Um, I ask somebody else in the crowd:

**Dre (as Chine):** Hey, where do you— where do you all grow these?

**Austin (as crowd person 2):** Oh, these are from the last harvest, a little while ago. Out east near the the fields.

**Dre (as Chine):** Yeah, okay. All right.

**Austin (as crowd person 2):** You should— you—

**Austin:** And someone squints at you and repeats basically what the other person said, like:

**Austin (as crowd person 2):** Aren't you from out there?

**Dre (as Chine):** No, but people...people keep asking me that. [shifts to a whisper] Sorry. People keep asking me that.

**Austin (as crowd person 2):** [quietly] I appreciate it. Hell of an arm, buddy. Hell of an arm.

**Dre (as Chine):** Thanks. You all are really fun.

**Austin:** They smile at you and say:

**Austin (as crowd person 2):** We like to thank so. Here, you have mine, and I gotta go get to work.

**Austin:** And begins to leave. The banjo person is finally done and does a little bow, and people clap, and then another act steps on stage. It's a pair of twins, and they are some sort of magician act. One of them is in a bunny suit, and the other one is in a tuxedo. And they bring out like a, you know, one of those things where one person goes inside and gets sawed in half. They have all sorts of props.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** They have a table filled with props. And they begin going through like a traditional illusionist act basically, up on stage.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Are we just gonna lose Chine to the stage for the rest of this session?

**Dre:** No, no, no.

**Austin:** We get Chine just like— [laughs softly]

**Dre:** No, I think Chine's gonna take off towards the farm.

**Austin:** Okay.

**Dre:** They're gonna take the fruit with them and kind of snack on it as they walk.

**Austin:** Mmm, delicious. They're D4. They are a D4 resource. It is D4 overripe stone fruit. D4 Wild, Deteriorating. Also, it's a D6 Kill equipment. [Austin and Dre laugh] So.

**Keith:** Stone fruit, more like fruit stones.

**Austin:** Yeah, exactly. Yeah. If you're eating them, what did I say? I said that they were Wild. I mean, you already have Wild, right? Oh, no, you don't.

**Dre:** No, I don't.

**Austin:** How do you— damn, so take Wild if you eat this—

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** —instead of using it to...so yeah, go ahead and eat Wild. Don't even bother adding it to your resource. I mean, there's enough there for you to eat and also end up with some. So yeah, take the D4 Wild, Deteriorating stone fruit. Overripe stone fruit. Yeah, you had east. You pass this big...uh, you pass two things, I think, that come— three, I guess. One, you pass this place that we now know is a hotel, the Green Hotel here in the right to your east. And then further east, there's this triangular building, which is some sort of cinema? Which, I don't think you've ever seen a cinema before, a movie theater. They're projecting something inside, across the two long walls of the theater, some sort of...some sort of moving image.

**Dre:** Ooh. I probably don't like that.

**Austin:** Yeah, it's weird.

**Dre:** Got lights. Remember? I don't...

**Austin:** Yeah.

**Dre:** I had a bad time with somebody who was really into lightbulbs.

**Austin:** Had a bad time with— yes.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** Yeah. I think from here, during the day, it's not too overwhelming for you. Do you know what I mean?

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** You're in there. You're not in this dark space with the lights doing shit, right? And then you pass a little fountain, a little plaza with the fountain. You can see that's the little blue dot there. There's a single...I mean, I guess, two things. Not two things at once, but just regular two things. [Dre laughs] You recognize the smell of seawater when you approach?

**Dre:** Hmm.

**Austin:** And on this...in this fountain, there is a single little paper boat that is out of reach of a child's hands. But someone comes up and takes it and like hands it back to the child, a woman, and then goes about, goes on her way. And eventually you find your way through all this town, and at this point, it's hustling and bustling, and it could be five minutes, it could be five hours, how long it takes you to get through this place. You don't really...that joy that you have carries with you, and it's just one of those nice...you know those autumn days where the weather is still like just warm enough from the summer—

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** —and you could just go on a walk forever.

**[1:10:19]**

**Keith:** Hell yeah!

**Austin:** It's like that, my favorite time of year. And you make your way south as they said, then east to this farm. The center field does not have...there's three fields: north, south, and middle. The middle one does not have any crops growing in it right now, you presume because they're rotating them and it's being, you know, it's being left fallow so that it can get its fertility back, you know? In fact, you see someone plowing it now, maybe to help get it into condition. You wonder, perhaps, "Oh, did the stone fruit come from here? Is this where they're from?" you know? and there's a person, a figure, working it with a sort of, um...with a hoe or whatever, you know?

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** What do you do?

**Dre:** I guess go— I start walking towards that person, and I kind of start waving, trying to get their attention.

**Austin:** I think that they see you. They seem to be the only person in this field. There's some other people working some other fields, but here, it's just this person. And they look up and give you a wave and say:

**Austin (as farmer):** Well, hey there.

**Austin:** And you get the impression...this person seems familiar to you.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** And as they get closer and the sunlight hits them—the suns, multiple suns' lights hit them—you recognize them. And it's a little startling, but there's nothing scary happening here. I'm not making you roll dice for like Mind Stress or anything. This person looks like a *different* you. Not, not like you. In fact, like you in a purely human form. You recognize enough of the facial structure to be able to say, "Hey, if I had...if I had never done *this*, if I had never become a Cleaver, here might I be, a farmer." You know, working the field. The same nose, the same eyes. Maybe the muscles are in different places than they are with you now, in a real way, because it's a different sort of work that you do. [laughs softly]

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Austin:** And there isn't much of you here, to the degree that you're not sure how someone could look at the two of you and say that this person looked like you. And they say:

**Austin (as farmer):** Uh...welcome to the farm. How can I help you?

**Dre (as Chine):** Um...just had one of these fruits back in the square, and I had to...had to see where the magic happens.

**Austin:** They like reach their arms out wide and say:

**Austin (as farmer):** Oh, right around...right around here, I guess. Let me see that. Yeah, that one came from our fields. Are you looking for work, bud? Or are you just visiting?

**Dre (as Chine):** Just passing through.



**Austin (as farmer):** 'Cause I could use someone to help out, if you had time. I mean, I couldn't pay you much, but...you know, there's joy in the soil.

**Dre (as Chine):** Uh...yeah. Yeah, sure. What, um...what needs done?

**Austin (as farmer):** Well, we're trying to...you know, we just finished this, uh, the third or fourth cycle on this, and so we want to try to get everything, get this ground back to where it needs to be, you know? So we're going through with some tools and getting some manure in there and...to try to get some life back in it, you know what I mean? We...I don't have another... [hesitates] Well, come with me. There's a shed nearby. I can get you what you need to get started.

**Dre (as Chine):** Yeah, sure.

**Austin (as farmer):** We can give you a meal tonight, a place to stay, and, uh, if you'd like to take a couple more fruit from us, that'd be what we can offer. Is that all right?

**Dre (as Chine):** No, it sounds great.

**Austin (as farmer):** And you don't have to overwork yourself. We're not looking to kill anybody here.

**Dre (as Chine):** That's, um...a nice change of pace.

**Austin (as farmer):** [chuckles]

**Austin:** He smiles back at you and says:

**Austin (as farmer):** You do a lot of, uh...

**Austin:** He's kind of like walking with you now, towards the shed, right? There's a shed out near this big farmhouse. The farmhouse is a little bit elevated, but it's not on like a tall tall hill. And there's some sheds out near it, which is where he's walking. And they turn around and look at you, and:

**Austin (as farmer):** Ah, you do a lot of dangerous work, I take it, huh?

**Dre (as Chine):** Uh, yeah, I'm a Cleaver. Are you familiar?

**Austin (as farmer):** Oh, Cleavers, geez. I haven't thought about them in a little while. You know, when I was a kid, I... [amused exhale] For a little while there, I thought maybe that life was for me, but took a different path. Do you enjoy it? Is it good work?

**Dre (as Chine):** Yeah, it's, uh...you know, you see the world, meet new people. The pay's all right. It's never boring.

**Austin (as farmer):** Well, that's important. I would lose my mind if I had to do boring work, you know? Out here it's just, every day it's something different, you know? I know people don't think that that's the case with farming, but between me and you, the people who say that, they haven't actually really done it, you know what I mean? Maybe they've read a book about it or they've talked to some people and making some generalizations. But if you've done it, there's always some new work needs done. You know, there's a cycle, certainly. There are different patterns and different times of the day and different times of the year. But you can always find new work to do. And you can try out new things. You know, that stone fruit you got, that's— that's a newer crop for us. Only started that up a couple years ago. Anyway.

**Austin:** And starts to dig into the shed, looking for, you know, another hoe and maybe another, a big— looks back at you and is like:

**Austin (as farmer):** I think you can carry a big bag of the fertilizer.

**Austin:** And starts trying to pull out a big sack of the heavy, kind of heavy, smelly fertilizer. And while they're doing it, you catch movement in the trees.

[music begins: “Doppelgänger”]

**Austin:** It's a big figure out east.

**Dre (as Chine):** Oh, you got critters out here?

**Austin:** I think like, you know, does the thing of like looking up, like, oh, try to look over the shed. You're taller. You're much taller at this point than this person is. And, and they're kind of like struggling to look over the shed, and like:

**Austin (as farmer):** Oh, a little bit of this, a little bit of that.

**Austin:** And does the kind of bending down to try to untangle the hoe and give it to you. There is...the thing that moves is bigger than a critter is what I would say, Chine. Muscles changed into bulbous, tumorous growths. You're only catching glimpses of it in the shadow of the trees here, but you're having a hard time understanding where flesh ends and metal begins on the limbs. You think you see something like a tail. And this creature is like hurling itself through the trees, and the trees turn for a moment from brown to white and they seem to stretch up forever.

**Austin (as farmer):** Anyway, here you go. I'll bring you back over. We can just start getting some, uh, getting you set up.

**Dre (as Chine):** Get in the shed.

**Austin (as farmer):** What's wrong?

**Dre:** Poleaxe thumps on the ground as Chine loosens it from its, uh...

**Austin:** Its like sheathe or whatever.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Austin:** He jumps back and looks at you and like *sadly* steps into the shed. And it strikes you in this moment that the person who said that they saw something that looked like you was talking about the thing in the woods.

[**“Doppelgänger” ends, “Sangfielle” plays**]