

Bluff City 27: Extracurricular: Out Of Time Pt. 1

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[Music: [Extracurricular: Out of Time](#) by Jack de Quidt starts playing]

Austin [as unnamed character]: Hey. So what'd you have? [Pause] Oh, yeah that's—that's cool. [Pause] No, it's fine. They're fine! I just don't like their—their soup. Yeah, I—(defensive) so what? Who cares about egg rolls? Egg rolls aren't even the *meal*. Soup is not a side! Hey—I'm allowed my personal freedom.

[Pause]

Oh my god, Ollie, this—this *extremely* doesn't matter. What matters is MY STORY—the comic? *Extracurricular*? So, as I was saying before your early dinner interrupted me, the comic. Kept. Going. And here's the good part. Finally, I can get to the good part. *I* have the entire collected *Extracurricular* already. My uncle gave it to me after he got it on clearance at the Big Bluff Buffet Gift Shop after [Bluff City Studios](#) went bankrupt, and they had to like move all their old merch and stuff super cheap to cover costs or whatever—[pause] Yeah, yeah, when they sold the old space. Anyway, I have it! It's one of those big heavy hardcover omnibus type things, and it's like all eighty issues, and—[pause] Yeah, yeah it's really good—(annoyed) yes, yes, you can borrow it. Anyway, the point is, there is NO issue or arc where half the characters get sent back in TIME! But in the comic I found...the weird one...they do. There's this whole arc called "Out of Time," and—you know it's only like half the crew, [Paternoster](#) and [Mr. Good](#) aren't there...[pause] Yeah, his name's Mr. Good, I—yeah, it's like sort of ironic—Anyway, it's about [The Champ](#) and [Grouse](#). The Champ is like, she's like a boxer. She can store kinetic energy and—

[Pause]

—*kinetic energy*. It's like the opposite of potential energy. Didn't you pay attention in Science? God...Anyway, Grouse is there too, and she can like talk to birds, and like she's like a detective, she's like—she's like what if Batman could talk to bats, or like—she's like I guess Aquaman, but if Aquaman talked to birds instead of fish—which would be way cooler IMO. Anyway, they get sent to this really weird place, it's called [warping noise, unintelligible] and they meet this woman there—[Caitlin Key](#)—who's like this underground street hero, and she helps people get away from this like oppressive regime, and they're getting into fights and they're doing all the normal stuff but...everything is *weird*...and I don't mean that—I don't mean that's it weird for them—I mean it is weird for them. No one knows what day it is, and they don't understand how to get around the town, and everything seems just like a little off, like everyone's forgot what really happened here. But I—Ollie...I can't remember what happened here. I've read this issue like SIX TIMES now, and every time I keep losing track! It doesn't matter,

what matters is if this exists, who knows what else exists? We should go to Bluff City Studios. We should go dig around and find some more cool shit.

[Music ends]

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

Ali: Hi! You can find me [@ali_west](#) on twitter.com, and you can find the show over [@friends_table](#).

Austin: Janine Hawkins.

Janine: Hey, you can find me on Twitter [@bleatingheart](#).

Austin: And Arthur Martinez-Tebbel.

Art: Hey, you can find me on Twitter—and if you're listening to this, I bet you like Bluff City. Go see if you can get some of the last of the [Bluff City winter Snowfari merch](#) on—

Austin (overlapping): It's true!

Art (overlapping): —[friendsatthetable.shop](#).

Austin: Uh, you know, I think—I think winter merch only gets more funny—I think comedy winter merch on gets more funny the closer to the spring and summer we get, so I think [Ali hums agreement] it's actually gone up in value even though the price has stayed the same.

Art: [Pause] Uh-huh, yeah. Uh, it's—a bigger and bigger bargain and yeah, the summer solstice is the best day to wear it.

Austin: (Laughing) A hundred percent.

Art: June 21st.

Austin: (Laughing) That's the day a Bluff City character would wear it, so...

[Ali laughs]

Janine: We're—we're joking but like—

Austin: I'm not.

Janine: —a hundred percent, I can imagine like...in universe the Bluff City Zoo having a bunch of leftover—

Austin (overlapping): Yes.

Janine: —winter merch, and being like “Ok, well let’s do winter in April. That’s a thing we can do, right?”

Austin: Yeah, uh-huh. Just write “sun” in front instead of “snow” [**Janine** chuckles] but leave the rest of the shirt the same. [Laughs] *Winter Sun-fari!* [**Janine** laughs] Um...[laughs] today we’re playing—

Art: If you see any of us on [**Austin** laughs] June 21st [**Ali** laughs]...we will, with a sharpie, cross out “snow” and write “sun” on your shirt.

Austin (overlapping): Yeah, and sign the shirt, a hundred percent.

Ali (overlapping): Wow...yeah.

Austin: Um...definitely. [Sucks teeth] Uh...

Art: June 21st *only*.

Austin: You can follow me on Twitter [@austin_walker](#). The show: [@friends_table](#). [Friendsatthetable.cash](#) you already know. Today we’re playing *Capers*, [**Ali** snorts] a superpower game of gangsters in the Roaring 20’s, designed by Craig Campbell, illustrated by Beth Varney. We’ll see how it goes. If you listened to our character creation episode—which, maybe you did, maybe you didn’t—it was, I think, indicative of our like degree of comfort and familiarity [laugh] with a game of the style. I can speak for Art and I and say I don’t think—well I guess I can’t speak for Art cause I don’t know what you did between college and now—but I think you and I have played a lot of games like this in college—

Art: Mhm.

Austin: —and then I didn’t play one of these for like a *minute* after that. Um...irony of ironies...there’s definitely a version of Friends At The Table that starts with us playing D&D instead of Dungeon World, and...whew this was like looking—looking into that world. There but by the grace of God go we. So...you know, stick with us. I have no idea how this is gonna go. I hope good. I think we’ll be fun no matter what. Does anyone have questions before I give the setup for this game and what we’re doing and...what the scenario is?

Art: Did anyone else have the experience when reading the rules for advancement in this game like you were trying to push [**Austin** laughs] your brain through a bowl full of Jell-o?

Austin: (Laughing) Yes!

Janine: Jell-o *skin*, but yeah.

Austin: Ew!

[Ali laughs]

Janine: Like something you know, like, tough.

Austin: Eww.

Ali: That top part of a—

Janine (overlapping): Something—

Ali: —chocolate pudding...

Austin: Mmm. Mhm.

Ali: —like, pie, you make yourself...

Janine (overlapping): Yeah, I—yeah.

Ali: ...and that's weird.

Janine: The thing with Jell-o skin is like sometimes you push your spoon into it and you think “Yeah, I’m making progress,” and then you realize you haven’t made any progress at all. It was just like—it was just like *bending*?

Austin: Y’all haven’t even seen the thing that is the most frustrating about this book to me, which is when I was looking for...NPCs to like base characters—like what’s an NPC look like? You know what I mean, for stats? If you jump in this book to page...84, you’ll see that they start to list off—or I guess 85 is when the NPCs start to get—86 is when they start to get listed out—mmh 86 is a map. 87 [laugh] is where they start to get listed [**Janine** laughs]...notable people in Atlantic City, ironically enough. And they list all these interesting characters, like some of them are real people, like [Nucky Johnson](#). Some of them are variations on real people. But none of them have stats until you (laughing) keep scrolling down, and then pages later you get the stat blocks for characters *completely* separated from their write-ups. And so, it would be like, “Wait, there’s a journalist here who seems like an interesting character who I could base an NPC off of in terms of their stat block. What is their name that I have to scroll down *five pages* and find the stat block—just put that shit together. Just put it together. And that’s how the book is laid out. Just in general. It’s very much that style of like...

Janine: I mean this is also a book where if you decide you want a hero that uses telekinesis and you perhaps Control-F the word “telekinesis,” it’ll pull up like one or two instances where it’s used in vague descriptions of possible characters you could play—

Austin: Yes.

Janine: —but it won’t actually turn up any results in the “Power” section unless you search for the Power-specific word “Puppeteer...”

Austin: [Laugh] Uh-huh.

Janine: ...which, again, should probably use “telekinesis” somewhere in it’s description, at least.

Austin: Uh-huh. The only—the ONLY instance of “telekinesis” or “telekinetic” is the description of Elizabeth Wathkins, Lady Death, who is a caper with telekinetic and electrical abilities, and that is on page...98 in the book. And then (laughing) her stat block is on page 101. So—and her stat block doesn’t say anything about telekinesis—all it says is “Puppeteer” too. So. Anyway. Anyway. [Pause] Point is—

Janine: It’s hard to make a large book of rules about a game.

Austin (overlapping): It really is, it really is—my heart goes out to layout people and to the writer and like, I get it, you have a—there’s some stuff in here that I fucking love. I’m really excited to start playing with this card mechanic. That sounds fun, we’ll see how it goes. But just—just giving y’all a heads-up as listeners that like “Hey, you know that we have not played very many games like this before, you know, on a—into a microphone. Let’s see how it goes! Stick with us.” [Laugh, **Ali** snorts] Any other things before we actually begin—before I give the set-up for what the situation is? [Pause] Alright!

Ali: Do we wanna talk broadly about characters, or do you wanna set up like—

Austin: Um, yeah, you know what, let’s do that first. Let’s go over characters and your like—what your skills are and stuff like that and then we’ll get into it. Caitlin! Why don’t you start.

Ali: Sure. Yeah, uh—

Austin (overlapping): Caitlin Key, right?

Ali: So uh—yeah, I’m playing um...Caitlin Key a...angry gangster in Blough City [laugh]. My identity is “Crackerjack.” (Reading from playbook) “You are great at the things you do and enjoy proving it. Gain Moxie when you succeed at something difficult without any complications.” My virtue is “dignity.” (Reading) “You take pride in your reputation and never sully it.” My vice is “vengeful.” (Reading) “You constantly have a score to settle.” And then my skills are: Sense, Sleight of Hand, Acrobatics, and Stealth...

Austin: Right.

Ali: ...and then...my...Powers [laugh]. My major power is the Dimension Step, which is currently rank one of two. Um...(quietly) what is this...

Austin: Which lets you...teleport, basically? Or like to create portals?

Ali (overlapping): Basically. It lets me create a portal from one place to another place that I can see, and then I can like...punch someone through that portal, take people through it, put something in someone’s wallet...

Austin: Mhm.

Ali: ...or I think that's actually one of my minor powers, but this is portals for right now [laugh].

Austin: Mhm.

Ali: And then yeah, so my minor power is Dimensional Pocket, which is a very tiny portal that I can pull objects out of, that are like predetermined. But yeah, the Boost that I have on that is...I have an "Alley" Boost, which means [laugh] sure. (Laughing) An "Ali" Boost...

[**Art** laughing loudly in the background]

Austin: What? You have what?

Ali: (Laughing) I keep saying "Ali" instead of "Ally."

Austin: Ok [Laugh].

[**Janine** chuckles]

Ali: (Laughing) I do it *every*—

Austin: It's ok. You look at it and you go "That's me. I'm an ally. I'm Ali."

[**Ali** laughs]

Ali: What it does is let me put things in other people's hands—

Austin: Uh-huh.

Ali: —so if my cool portal has a knife in it, [**Austin** lets out a surprised laugh] one of your characters could...I can also put things from my portal in people's pockets...

Austin: Love it.

Ali: ...and then also I have more items in my—I have more space in my—I've upgraded my portal...pocket. Um...(laughing) and then my second minor power is Force Field, which is a—

Austin: I think that can only be rank one. You have rank two of two here [**Ali** gasps], and I think total, you can have one major power and then with the level up you got two minor powers at level one, or one minor power at level two.

Ali: I...

Austin: I think.

Ali: ...took away one of my—because it was either you could take another skill or have a minor power Boost, and I ranked up one of my minor powers to get...

Austin (overlapping): Right, but you only...I *think*—whew.

Ali: I'm gonna look at the thing you just told us last time. [Laugh]

Austin: Uh-huh. I got—

Art: (Reading from playbook) “When you get a level, you get two advancement points [**Austin** laughs] and you spend one advancement point to gain or advance a minor power.”

Austin: Uh-huh.

Ali: Right. So I used—

Art (overlapping): Or get a skill.

Ali: —Right. So we get two of those, so I...

Austin: Right, but you only start with a major power at rank one, a minor power at rank two, OR two minor powers at rank one, so...

Ali: I might've...

Austin: So you started—okay, we can just work it out. You start with Dimension Step, major power, rank one—

Ali: Mhm.

Austin: —right? That's you're starting—

Ali (overlapping): Right.

Austin: —that's IT to start. Then you get two AP as a [sigh].

Ali: (Understanding) Oh, it's—it's a major power OR two minor powers.

Austin: Or two minor powers, not a—

Ali: Ok.

Austin: —major power AND two minor powers. That would be a lot. Uh, and be very—

Art (overlapping): Yeah, each advancement point does ONE unit of minor (laughing) power adjustment, or TWO advancement points does the same thing for a major power.

[**Austin** laughing in the background]

Janine: This is the only way this could have started.

Austin: Uh-huh. [**Ali** laughs] (Sarcastically) No, it's perfect. It's so good. Um...

Art: It took SO long to find that paragraph in the rules last night, [**Janine** chuckles softly, **Austin** sighs] I thought I was *losing* my *mind*.

[**Ali** laughs]

Austin: Uh-huh. Mhm.

Art: Like, where would you put this information—and I still don't know where they tell you how many Boosts you get. I never found it, I just believe Austin [**Austin** laughs] when he tells me.

Janine: (Laughing) Yeah.

Austin (overlapping): (Laughing) You get three unless it says otherwise, and then you get one every time you rank it up, unless it says otherwise.

Ali (overlapping): Ok.

Janine: Also you can only use—you can only use a Boost once per turn, but you can use up to three Boosts per turn. [Laugh]

Austin: (Laughing) But only three Boosts—three Boosts across all powers. [Laugh]

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: (Laughing) Not three Boosts per Power.

Janine: And also there's something that applying a Boost from one power to a different one, which at one point I got the impression you could do—

Austin (overlapping): (Sarcastically) There's no way.

Janine: —and at another point I got the impression you couldn't.

Austin: Can you do that?

Janine: So...

Austin: That seems like a different special Power to me [laugh].

Janine: Some of them said you can—look. I don't—

Austin (overlapping): Ok. You know what? That's all you. Yeah. Uh-huh.

Janine (overlapping): —Look, it said, at one point I was like “Yeah!” and at one point I was like “I guess not?” [Laugh]

[**Ali** laughing in the background]

Austin: Yup.

Art: If you're listening to this, you're gonna be *amazed* at how straightforwardly I (laughing) use my powers in this game. [**Ali** and **Janine** chuckling in the background] [**Ali** sighs] Just literally exactly what they say in the book.

Janine (overlapping): It'll be a lot of punching.

Austin: (Exasperated) *God*. [Pause] So you might have to—

Ali: Well...

Austin: What's your next Power? [Laugh]

Ali: If that's—yeah [Laugh, **Janine** exhales a laugh] Let's re-do it! My second Power is Force Field, which I have rank one of two, and that is a shimmering wall of force that protects me.

Austin: Love it!

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Sadly it's not a bubble of force.

Ali: I sure don't have the Size Boost now—

Austin: No...

Ali: —but that's fine.

Austin: ...I'm sorry—well you *could* instead take Size Boost instead of taking the other three, but...

Ali: Right...

Austin: But that's up to you. You can—I would happily let you change which Boosts you've taken here, but—

Ali: [Gasp] No n-n-no.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: Yeah, that's ok.

Austin: Ok.

Ali: That was gonna be the—the upgrade that I chose, but—

Austin: Gotcha. Uhm...alright! Uh...that's Caitlin Key. Caitlin Key does not have a...nickname? Does not have a—like a superhero name? You're just Caitlin Key?

Ali: Oh...

Austin: I know we—

Ali (overlapping): Yeah, I guess not.

Austin (overlapping): —didn't talk about this before.

Ali: No, we sure didn't. [Laugh]

Austin: That's fine. You just—you're just a gangster with some power.

Ali: Yeah...you know, it—you know, there's no—I don't think there's any sort of celebrity to...

Austin: No. It was like the opposite, right?

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Ali (overlapping): ...superheroes in this...this thing, yeah.

Austin (overlapping): Well, I guess that's the thing. Is it like a supervillain thing—has the—the press hasn't written about you yet, right? Maybe you'll get a name if you get arrested and [laugh] they're like—

Ali (overlapping): Sure.

Austin: —“Portal Gal!” or whatever, you know? In the headlines.

Ali (overlapping): Right right right. Yeah.

Janine: Or maybe they just punch it up for the papers, like “Cait Key” or something.

Austin: Right, right, right.

Ali (overlapping): Right. Well I feel like it would be the opposite thing cause it would be like “*This* person, who has *this* power, who you should be afraid of—”

Austin: Right, but they—

Ali: Like they would publish her government name instead of being like “Oh—

Austin (overlapping): Yeah...no...newspapers are all about like serial killer nicknames and shit, though.

Ali: Sure.

Austin: Right?

Ali: Yeah, that's true.

Austin: That's the...that's the fucking gross thing about this era of—**[Ali laughs softly]** I mean not this era. Serial killers weren't so much the vibe...but like...but also this era is weird. We're very timey-wimey on this episode—

Ali: Mhm.

Austin: —which we'll get into in a moment.

Janine: I mean also—**[Austin exhales a laugh]** but this wasn't—this wasn't like serial killer era big-time, but this was like ransomings—

Austin (overlapping): Right. Right. Sure.

Janine: —this was poisonings, this was bank robberies...

Austin: Right. Yeah! Gangsters had nicknames, right?

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: This is—this is how you get—

Ali (overlapping): Right, yeah. Fair.

Austin: —you know, whoever. Dick Tracy villains. Uhm...let's move on.

Art (overlapping): [All the Dick Tracy villains](#) is actually exactly right. Like cause it's all from Scar—calling Capone “Scarface.”

Austin: Right. Exactly.

Ali: Mhm.

Austin: Chanti Park!

Janine: Uhm...so I'm playing Chanti Park...whose identity is—has been established before as The Grouse...

Austin: Mhm.

Janine: ...or Grouse. **[Austin exhales a laugh]** (Laughing) That's probably a little less rude. Her identity is...“The Stickler,” which I had, and then I scrolled around and lost...the description of it.

Austin (overlapping): I'm going to copy these in. I need all of you to be on...your own—to be your own referees when it comes to...the...your identity things. Because you get Moxie for it, and Moxie is good. And so I need you to like note if you've lived up to your...to your identity,

virtue and vices. You gain moxie from—if your character is consistent with your identity, if you stay true to your virtue when it would be easier to ignore it, and if you give into—are hindered by, rather—[catches breath] ‘scuse me—hindered by your vice. So, go ahead with (laughing) your identity being a stickler.

Janine: So, yeah. My identity is “The Stickler.” (Reading) “You try to be perfect in everything you do. Gain Moxie when you make your way through a significant encounter and you do everything right.” Uhm...[clicks tongue] my virtue is...“reliable,” which is (reading) “You’re always there when the chips are down.” And my vice is “arrogant.” (Reading) “You simply do not back down when you think you’re right.”

Austin: Love it. Uh...

Janine: Um...skills...

Austin (overlapping): You can go ahead and continue, yeah.

Janine: Yeah. Uh...my skills are Diplomacy, Humanities, Insight, Sciences, and Stealth.

Austin: Mhm.

Janine: Uhm...Powers are Telepathy—I have in brackets “bird plus question mark.”

Austin: Yeah, good.

Janine: Because technically—

Austin: It’s only birds.

Janine: Technically Grouse’s powers aren’t in this book...and we’ve established that they’re only birds...but also we’ve had like—she’s a little bit older now, so like—

Austin: Yeah...

Janine: —I don’t necessarily want to rule out other things, especially cause it feels kinda shitty to be like—it feels weird to...stick to the enhancement rules of a game, but then also artificially limit a power—

Austin (overlapping): Mhm, mhm.

Janine: —you know what I mean? Like it feels like I’m cheating myself somehow.

Austin: Mhm.

Janine: Anyway. So bird telepathy, rank one. With Emergency Boost, Group Boost, and Range Boost.

[Pause]

Austin: Right.

Janine: [Sigh] This is a system. Um, and...

Austin: (Amused) Mhm.

Janine: ...Puppeteer, “bird plus question mark” again, rank *three*. Damage Boost, Range Boost, Steel Boost, Twin Boost, and Weight Boost. I ended up like...weighing this more heavily in favor of “Bird Puppeteer” because—sorry “Puppeteer” [Laugh, **Austin** laughs] whatever. (Laughing) Bird Puppeteer, fine. Because...I kinda thought I’d do it the other way around, but then when I actually look at how those powers are applied, Telepathy felt like “bird conversation” and Puppeteer felt like “bird action,” and—

Austin: That’s correct.

Janine: -Grouse is a little more “bird action” oriented.

Austin (overlapping): She’s a little “bird action,” yeah.

Janine: Yeah...

Austin: Yeah. Definitely. [Laugh]

Janine: [Clicks tongue] So...yeah. And Weight Boost in case there are any ostriches around.

Austin: Mhm.

Janine: You know.

Austin: Uhm...ok! Whew. Uh...Elana Flores?

Art: Yes, hi. I would like to start...with a brief story—

Austin: Oh, ok.

Art: —about bird telepathy.

Austin: Ok. [Laugh]

Janine: (Confused) What? [Laugh]

Austin: [Laugh] Yes.

Art: Ok. So. You might be aware of DC comics superhero Aquaman.

Austin: Yeah, familiar.

Art: Um...he doesn't have *bird* telepathy.

Austin: No.

Janine: Not even seagulls? Cormorants?

Art: No. Flying fish...

Janine (overlapping): Pelican?

Austin: Not a bird.

Janine: Hmm.

Art: Yeah. Fish. He does fish.

Austin: Uh...wait wait wait. Not just fish. He also does...like whales, right?

Art: Yeah, uh-huh. But there's a...there's a problem with fish telepathy, which is that it's...largely mocked in the world.

Austin: Yeah, people think it's corny.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: 'Cause of it being about talking to fish.

Art (overlapping): So, in the...in the nineties, when Grant Morrison took over Justice League—

Austin: Yeah.

Art: —maybe this is the early 2000s. Who knows? No one could know. Um...(laughing) lost to us. [**Austin** laughs] In the first arc, he was like, "I can also control the part of your brain that came from your...aquatic ancestors." And he used that to like give someone a seizure.

Austin: WHAT?

Art: And from what I can tell—

Janine: (Incredulous) What?

Art: —that never happened again.

[Pause]

Austin: *WHAT?*

Art: Uh-huh.

[Ali laughs]

Janine: Someone read that "[Aquatic Ape](#)" book and had a moment. That's what that was.

Art: Or just like, "Well, we need Aquaman to take someone out right now." [Laugh]

[Ali clicks her tongue]

Austin: Wrote themselves into a corner.

Art: (Laughing) And we've done a lot of punching in the last twenty pages.

Janine: Mmm. That was like a popular theory in like the nineties—was the idea that like humans...started in the water and that's why our hair patterns are the way they are—something.

Art: I mean if you go far enough isn't everything in the water?

Janine: No, but they meant like—like actual like sea monkeys—like not [overlapping laughter]—

Art: (Laughing) It all comes back to sea monkeys...

[Austin laughs]

Janine: [Laugh] Actual monkeys in the sea.

Art: Mmm.

Janine: Apes in the—you know?

Art: Yeah.

Janine: Anyway.

Art: Sea apes.

Austin: He did this to [Steel](#) too?

Art: I don't know. I remember him doing it to a Martian, which makes less sense cause they're from—who *knows* how you would evolve on Mars...

Austin: Yeah wait—[laugh] time the FUCK out! [**Art** laughs] WHAT?

Janine: Hmm.

Art: Well if you're presupposing there is life on Mars, you have to suppose that there is...

Austin: Ah, there is...uh...water...

Janine (overlapping): There's ice on Mars.

Austin: ...fish, yeah...

Art: Yeah...

Janine: You know?

Austin: Uh-huh.

Janine: It doesn't mean stuff evolved from the water, cause then...

Austin: Who...who was Steel 2? Was Steel 2...John's niece?

Art (overlapping): Steel 2 was John Henry Irons, I think—

Austin: Wait—

Art: I think there's a Steel that predates John Henry Irons.

Austin: (Understanding) OH ok. Ok, I was thinking it was John Henry Irons.

Janine: I'm sorry, is John Henry Irons the character or the artist?

Austin: The character—

Art: Character.

Austin: Doctor John Henry Irons. He became—

Janine: Dr. Irons is Steel 2?

Austin: Uh-hu—Steel. But yes. The second steel. Yeah.

Janine (overlapping): Steel. Ok.

Art (overlapping): The second Steel.

JA(: Right, I forgot we were talking about comics for a second, so yeah—

Austin: Yes. Yes [Laugh] we sure are. Uhm, alright. Uh...did you talk about your powers yet? Have you—no, you didn't talk about ANYTHING yet, Art! You haven't talked about your identity—

Art: What! I'm talking about Aquaman this WHOLE—

[**Austin** and **Janine** laugh]

Art: [Laugh] Talking about nothing...

Austin (overlapping): Tell me about The Champ.

Art: How dare you. [Laugh] Elana Flores, or The Champ, returning from Masks. [Pause] The powers I took were Super Strength. I took Damage Boost, Penetration Boost, and Push Boost.

Austin: Sure.

Art: Those all do *basically* exactly what you'd think they do.

Janine: Are you gonna punch through a guy?

Art: No, you punch through stuff.

Austin: Like steel.

Janine (overlapping): Oh, ok.

Art: Yeah, like steel.

Janine: Ok.

Austin: Like Steel does.

Janine: So, also you could do it to a person, though.

Austin: Well, is a person—let me check the Boost. (Reading) “You can punch or throw things through up to eight inches of concrete or a thin steel plate to hit something...”

Janine (overlapping): That's a person.

Austin: “...on the other side.”

Ali (overlapping): That's guts...guts is...

Austin: But you have to (laughing) choose to use the Boost. It doesn't always do it.

Ali: Oh, it's not, like, a Superman...yeah.

Art (overlapping): Is a person 8 inches thick?

Austin (overlapping): What do you mean it's not like—Superman also (laughing) ok, wait. Time out!

Janine (overlapping): A person is much more yielding than...concrete.

Austin: (Laughing) Superman is also not punching people to death [everyone laughs] constantly in the comics.

Ali: (Laughing) I was thinking of the—the—the thing of like “Oh, I can't control my...” Elana's good enough at that...

Austin: Yes.

Ali: ...at this point.

Art: Right.

Austin: Superman is also good enough at it!

[Ali laughs]

Austin: TO BE CLEAR.

Janine: Isn't that how he killed Lois Lane that one time? Or something?

Austin: I for—Art?

Ali (overlapping): (Quietly) He killed her?

Art: Um, I don't know—I don't know what you're talking about, but maybe—

Janine: Or am I thinking of Spider-Man?

Ali: You're thinking—

Austin (overlapping): You're thinking of Spider-Man.

Ali (overlapping): I think you're thinking of—you're thinking of Spider-Man.

Janine: I thought there was one where like the super hero and the love interest slept together, and it killed her because...

Austin: No, that was a—well...I'm sure—

Ali (overlapping): Oh...

Janine: something was too...forceful [laugh].

Austin: There are—at *this* point, there absolutely have been those comics. It might've happened in [The Boys](#). That feels like a Garth Ennis thing to do.

Art: Yeah, but it did not happen in Super or Spider-Man.

Austin: Right. It happened by like—

Janine: (Laughing) Ok...

Austin: —edgelord writers who were like—

Janine: Oh...

Austin: “—why didn’t Superman just (laughing) *kill* Lois Lane when they fucked? That’s a good story. [Typing sounds] *Type type type.*”

Janine: Ugh...

Art: Yeah, that’s a—I think it’s a joke from [Mallrats](#).

Austin: (Laughing) Yeah, that is what it actually is.

[**Janine** and **Art** chuckle]

Art: Um...

Austin: But no, Spider-Man did kill his first girlfriend by mistake, so. But also she was probably gonna die anyways—

Art (overlapping): Well it depends—

Austin: —it’s—it’s complicated.

Art: —They retconned that back and forth so many times.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: At one point, he had—she had—he had pre-snapped her neck and *then* thrown her off the bridge.

Janine: Oh my god.

Austin: Not Spider-Man. [Laugh]

Janine: Oh [laugh].

Austin: Spider-Man did not [**Art** laughs] (laughing) pre-snap Gwen Stacy’s neck.

Art: But you’re right, that is what it sounded like.

Austin: (Laughing) That is EXACTLY what it sounded like. WHEW. It was the Green Goblin, please.

Janine: Oh.

Austin: Comics! Comics be doing bad shit. Anyway. What are you—what is your Identity, Virtue, and Vice?

Art: Oh my—hold on. My second power—

Austin: Oh. Right.

Art: Kinetic Absorption.

Austin: Sure.

Art: [Clicks tongue] Uh...I took Flex Boost, Speed Burst Boost and Fall Boost. And I'll tell you, I don't remember what Flex Boost does. I'll have to look that back up.

Austin: Makes you flexible, right? Be like "Wooo!—"

Art: Mmm.

Austin: "—Look at—doing all the yoga poses."

Art: Uh-huh.

Austin: "I can do 'em."

Art: And then I—my other uh, my other—I took an extra skill as my other advancement. I have Athletics, Fisticuffs, Insight, Willpower, and Diplomacy.

Austin: Great.

Art: My Identity is "Ruffian." (Reading) "You prefer solving problems through physical violence and intimidation. Gain Moxie when you deal with a situation through violence." My Virtue is "Loyal." (Reading) "Once you've given your word, you never break it." And my Vice is "Reckless." (Reading) "Take huge risks without thinking."

Austin: Great. Uh, for the record, Flex Boost says, "For every round you spend not acting, other than moving, you gain plus one bonus to damage dealt with your next Fisticuffs or Melee Weapon attack to a maximum of plus three. You only deal this damage if you hit. If you miss, the extra damage potential is lost." So you're like charging up...a punch. You know? Uhm...are we good for me to set things up?

Ali: Yes.

Austin: Okay. So...Champ and Grouse, one week ago, you and your crew were investigating a major burglary of Ferro Fluid, which is kind of a special magnetic fluid that has some scientific uses. You tracked this big stolen shipment to a hidden industrial dock just west of Bluff City, and what you found was a kind of massive and surprisingly well hidden professional import-export operation that was running in the middle of the night. Tanks of this fluid were being shipped away, and in crate after crate, liquor bottles were arriving—so it's not just that they were shipping this stuff out, it's also that they were bringing in liquor bottles.

You swung into action. You know how to be superheroes. But things went bad. Someone knocked out the lights—this was the middle of the night, again—and in the dark, you two were separated from Mr. Good and Paternoster and things got weird. Almost dream-like as things are wont to do in Bluff City sometimes. There was kind of this heavy electronic reverberation sound.

There was a brief glimpse of an endless tunnel with light kind of pulsing down it. Shadows danced and strange music played. There was the sound of neighing in the distance. And then there was a hard knock, and then a splash. And then the two of you woke up on a strange beach in what felt like a strange time. Uhm...Caitlin Key, you met these two when an associate of yours—a bootlegger named [Mr. Lee L. Bee](#), brought them to you for help. He told you that they were like you—which is to say that they had powers like you—and that he knew their work from another place and another time. And that the three of you might be able to help each other.

The thing is, Key—and the reason why you might need [chuckle] a little help—is that sometime last year, a little bit after this big holiday parade that got a little out of hand, things started getting a little tougher around Blough City, your home. Sometimes that meant tougher in the sort of ways that are easy to understand. The city put a new Prohibition Act into place. There was a new nightly curfew that was patrolled—and in fact more cops were on the street in general looking for heads to bash. Especially the sorts of heads that can do special things the way yours can. Deviancy of any kind, and especially of the kind that you're familiar with, is somehow even more illegal than ever. Individuality is policed even more than ever in Blough City. So, you know it's gotten like regular "tougher." But it's also gotten *weird* "tougher." Like the streets got more narrow. Like...like the songs are missing a beat you used to remember fondly? Like...like your memory is a little hazy—what exactly *did* happen last holiday season? No one really can quite...bring the details together. Or at least no one you've spoken to. In fact, did it even happen, or was it just a radio play? Or a dream? Or...the details don't add up. Regardless, you're the sort of person who gets going when it gets tougher, and what you got going doing is helping people under the table—you know, doing your own bootlegging, moving people around, being a bit of a fixer.

[TIMESTAMP 00:30:03]

Austin (continued): Especially for the sorts of people who are being persecuted by the police and the corrupt mayoral administration. Uhm...part of the way that you did that is [soft laugh] that you started running a speakeasy down in the basement of a hotel. That's the only detail I have—if you wanna tell me what that speakeasy is like, it's up to you. [Chuckle] Do you have details on that speakeasy? Is it just a cool speakeasy?

Ali: I think it's just a cool speakeasy. I was like trying to think of like what's the best...what are the like cool ways that you can have to gain access (laughing) into a speakeasy?

Austin: Mmm...mhm.

Ali: And um...I think that because it's in the basement of a hotel, it's probably a situation where like...you need to go in and tell the elevator operator or whatever like your room number, and it's a specific room number...

Austin: Right.

Ali: ...and then he takes you up to like where the floor is, and then you walk from the like person elevator to the service elevator on the floor—

Austin (overlapping): Right...

Ali : —and like get taken to the...the basement.

Austin (overlapping): The secret basement, yeah. Uh, speakeasy. Awesome. Good! Uhm...well, until recently—until this week—your speakeasy has been under the protection of the very wealthy and very influential Whitaker family. The reason it is no longer under their protection—or they're kind of holding that protection over your head—is something that happened that you read about in the papers last week. They have a kid—you know, twenty-something, pretty boy—named Hollis Jewels Whitaker, who has a rude mouth and a penchant for very loud parties. And he was caught in the middle of some sort of roadside encounter with the police and some mobsters, and the thing that happened is three cops wound up dead. The Whitakers are extremely influential, and to that end Hollis has not been arrested, but he is under house arrest—he has been told not to leave...not to go anywhere, not to disappear. And is basically the most likely...big name person who they can pin those dead cops on. Uh, and until his name is cleared, the cops are going to start sniffing around in general more and more, and that means that the Whitaker's aren't going to protect you and your speakeasy from those cops anymore.

They have given you a lead and basically expect you to try to find someone who is really responsible for whatever happened at that roadside incident. On that night—on the night of the shootout—Hollis Jewels Whitaker was apparently seen in an argument with someone during a party at Gale Green's massive cliffside estate. And for both the Champ and for Grouse, that is a name you recognize. Gale Green is the name of the little girl you saw in a painting that you recovered from that auction last year. Here, of course, she is not a little girl. That painting was (laughing) much much earlier in her life. And I'd say Grouse, maybe at this point you know that Gale Green is the real name of the superhero Goldfinch, who was your mentor Waxwing's erstwhile girlfriend, who left and came back to Blough City. For listeners, this is also the Gale Green who was a...a filmmaker in the game...*Lacuna*, in the—why am I blanking on that last arc that rules—Messy Business?—that we played. And Gale Green is apparently now a...holding parties as kind of a rich socialite in town. And you can't help but wonder, the two of you, if maybe she could help you figure out a way home, or maybe even just give you more ideas about what the hell happened to you that brought you here.

And I'll just note again, for Champ and for Grouse, this city feels like it's in the 1920s to you. The last time we saw it, it was very much 1950s—like post-war Americana. We are now 1920s post-war Americana. It still feels locked in time—and it still feels locked in time in a way that has that same certain familiar pre-post-modern [laugh]—the era of modernity has set in. We are still like pre, you know, digital devices and consumer electronics and stuff like that, but we are also post, you know, the...late nineteenth century or anything like that. But for you two, you would see this and be like "This is the 1920s." For the people living here, you don't even talk about years. Why would you talk about what year it is? It's the year it is. You know? But things—

Art: It's like, what's on the front of a newspaper?

Austin: Yeah? [Pause] "Today," you know? The date is there.

Art: [Laugh] Ok.

Austin: You know?

Art: Not a year.

Austin: You—it's one of those. It's a dream-like weird space that is increasingly unmoored in a way that Blough specifically has always felt a little more stable [laugh]. Things are happening. This is—this should—it *feels* disorienting to be here. In a different way. And also, I'll note, this is just like meta-context that these characters in play wouldn't necessarily notice this, but like everyone can talk to each other fine...there has been—there's no weirdness when you (laughing) look at each other. There's no—like the names are all making sense to you. That part of the weirdness is—has been replaced with this sort of, like, out-of-time-ness. And maybe that reflects some shit that's going on. Who could say? In any case, that is kind of the base set up. I've kind of hand-waved the idea that like Mr. Bee just kind of (laughing) dropped these two kids in your lap, Key. [**Ali** laughs softly] But I suspect you've dealt with this sort of situation before—runaways, and people hiding from the cops, and people who just like need a place to duck for a little bit, you know?

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Austin: In any case, that's the basic set-up. And I don't know like if one of the Whitakers—I think the Whitakers probably just sent you a message that conveyed what I just told you, but I don't know that you actually...[clicks tongue] that you actually had like a direct contact with someone from there who you could've like asked questions about? But if you want to, like, try to call somebody up, you can do that—it's kind of up to you. In some ways this is another film noir investigation-type vibe? So yeah, the big case—the big question is like "What the fuck happened at the roadside in between the—or that roadside after Hollis—Hollis Whitaker is this rich boy—left that party? And how did those cops end up dead? And who all is caught up in it? And also why the *fuck* are these (laughing) kids here.

Ali: Right. Um...I [laugh] I have a suggestion on a superhero name—

Austin: Mmm.

Ali: —but it's also the name of a website, so [laugh] I was gonna go with—

Austin: (Jokingly) Ebay.

Ali: —Verge.

Austin: Verge. Verge is good.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Here's the thing about superhero names, is like they're all already used—

Ali: Right, right.

Austin: —so you can use whatever the fuck you want.

Ali: Yeah yeah yeah.

Austin: Um [Laugh] I'm going to also relink to you this old document that I guess—Art, you were not in this game at all, but here's the old Blough City dossier from our...*Lacuna* game, that includes some people, some of whom they are not in the same situation anymore. And then also includes locations, which is kind of the big thing. The kind of core locations of the city are still similar. There is still the Boardwalk, which has like amusement piers and stuff. There is still the Taff district, which is the industrial district that is named such because of a large scale candy factory. There is still Countinghouse, which is the financial district that's deep in the heart. There's still Standard Town, which is probably where the hotel that you're running is. Standard Town is kind of what was the nightlife district, and now—I mean there's still—there are still music venues, there are still hotels, there are probably still sex workers here, there are probably still...like this is still where you can go to a good speakeasy. But also it's even more policed than it was then, and you have to be a little more careful about stuff. The one—one of the big differences is the Thicket, as listed here is a suburban sprawl—there is no suburban sprawl in Blough City at this point. There is only—there is kind of wetlands and swamps and so like that is one of the most clear and distinct differences about this place from when the camera was last here before, you know. We are pre-war LA in terms of touchstone. Um, but—

Janine: I was about to say, wouldn't it suck to live in a society where one day everyone's like “Yeah, the 50's and 60's are really cool.” The next day, everyone's like “Yeah, the 20's are really cool.” Then I realized that's kind of—

Austin: That's—

Janine: —we do...

Austin: —we do that.

Janine: ...that happens.

Austin: (Laughing) Yeah, it does.

Janine: That did happen.

Austin: That did happen. Uh-huh. [Pause] Also, I don't know that anyone who's living in this place is like “This is cool now!” [Laugh]

Janine: Yeah, yeah.

Austin: Or not no one, but you know. You know what I'm saying. Anyway.

Janine: Mhm.

Austin: Um...so yeah. Let me know if you need any other stuff explained, or whatever. I'm curious what you do. Kind of on y'all at this point to kick things off.

Janine: This is like a world question, but—

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: Is the—is the movie business still as like—

Austin: You know—

Janine: —big a deal, or is it still—

Austin (overlapping): No...it's—it's—yes.

Janine: Cause like the 20's was still...big east coast for movies, right? Like the...whatever the fuck Edison's compan or whatever was.

Austin: Mhm. I think that what you—what you see a lot here is the recording industry is very music-based. There's a reason why I mentioned at the top that, like, maybe you heard a story on the radio—and not that the radio business was, like, small—was only west coast in the 1920's by any means. But what you see—what you—any sort of that like what we talked about as more organic organization and like organic culture stuff is happening on radio waves out here. You think about the people in the 1910's, 20's, and 30's who were able to, like, get on the radio to spread political messages. That's more the vibe here now than movies. And in fact, again, like...I will just say out right like Gale Green is not in the movie business right now. [Chuckle] No one out here really is. Or if they are, movies are a pastime, not an emerging art form, do you know what I mean? They are the films of the 20's, and they are not tied to the Hollywood machine in the same way—or to the kind of city machine in the same way.

Janine: Right. Also still like—

Austin (overlapping): Nor—

Janine: —the time when one person could conceivably make dozens of movies a year—

Austin: Yes.

Janine: —because they're all like a half hour.

Austin: Yes. (Laughing) exactly. So yeah, that's a big difference for sure. Uhm...any other—any other questions about the world or anything like that?

Ali: So the—the thing that we need to find out is who...

Austin: Who killed those cops, or [pause] “Hey, get our son out of trouble” is really the thing.

Ali: Right.

Austin: Right?

Ali: Ok.

Austin: He's currently just at his mansion...which is, you know, kind of—I'm kind of imagining it as you know, less populated—and Art, as the Angelino on this call, you can correct me here—but a kind of less dense, various different “Hill” communities in LA. The Beverly Hills and the—there's other “Hills” right? There's other...people living up in the Hills with mansions and shit.

Art: Yeah I mean it's the *same* hills, but they—

Austin: They have different names.

Art: —they start calling them different stuff, yeah.

Austin: Right. It's that, but it's—again it's less densely...cause now those houses are like right up against each other, right? And I'm imagining much more of a time of like them being spread out a little bit, kind of still having estates in a way that is a little less prevalent. And then also some stuff probably that's like out of town—that's like out towards the...like west of the city center towards the water? And north up toward where like the roads and early highways would run nearer to cliff sides that kind of overlook things. Like, Gale Green's mansion, specifically, is on a cliff face overlooking the sea. Y'all also washed up on the sea—or from the sea onto the shore. So you've already seen some of that shit. Uhm...so yeah. I think that's the basics of like “Here is what is at—here is what is going on.” I will say that like I definitely have a thing that's like “will...”—there is a ticking clock in terms of other things moving around that I'm not gonna represent as an actual clock, but know that other people are also investigating this stuff, and also trying to find out, just generally, looking for people with superpowers and looking and looking for speakeasies and looking for ways to shut 'all down. So things can start moving without y'all, but I'd rather give you the first option, the first [soft laugh] *play*, so to speak, than to start with some cops knocking at your door.

[Pause]

Ali: Sure. Um, yeah...

Art: Yeah, we should go knock on a door.

[Austin laughs]

Ali: Yeah, the first thing I was thinking was like, “Has anyone talked to this kid yet?” Like we didn’t have direct interaction...

Austin: No, if you wanted to, though. That’s a good way to start.

Ali: Yeah...

Austin: Um...what is the...what is the—do you have a car?

Ali: I have a bicycle.

Austin: (On an exhale) Ok.

[Ali laughs]

Art: I think we all have motorcycles.

Austin: This is why the shopper is important.

Art: Oh I didn’t by the motorcycle—

Janine (overlapping): *Right!*

[Ali continues laughing in the background]

Art: —cause I didn’t—I didn’t know we had enough...

Ali (overlapping): Cause it’s so expensive.

Austin: It was very expensive. I’m gonna say that for this, Mr. Lee L. Bee has given you access to his car. [Ali chuckles] (Typing) Cars of the 1920’s....here we go. Aw, these are fucking good. These are good. [Art laughs] Y’all gotta get one of these fucking old cars. Love it! You know, it’s one of those—just do a search for “the cars of the 1920’s.” It’s one of these dope like Rolls Royce’s or something, you know? It’s like a low...it’s like a low—*damn* these are good. It’s good (laughing) is what it is. It is a—I’m gonna say it’s this—yeah, three people can fit in this. Four people can fit in this. A [1926 Packard Twin Six Roadster](#). [Pause] This is what Mr. Bee drives around in, and it’s—it’s red, and has big lights on the front [laugh], and this thing is so dangerous to drive in, but you should drive it.

[TIMESTAMP 00:45:01]

Janine: I love the era of cars where they couldn’t quite—they still were not quite divorced from the idea of being a horse carriage.

Austin: (Laughing) Uh-huh. Yup.

Art: Mhm.

Ali: Right...

Austin: It's like a—

Janine: Like when you get those cars that have like an enclosed back compartment but an open front, or just like—

Austin: Yup!

Janine: —the opposite of just like—you know, this is where your driver goes, which you have because who else is gonna wanna touch a horse...

Austin: Right.

Janine: ...and then everyone else sits in the back, and [laughs].

Austin: Mhm. Love it.

Janine: I love—this one has the pop-up back seat, though. That's very cute.

Austin: Yes. There's a whole page of these. These are great. Uhm...so yeah. You could drive that out to the...it wouldn't be like the Whitaker estate, because the Whitakers probably live in an even fancier full estate compound thing. But their son has his own, you know, mansion probably not so far away. I think you drive out there, it's a nice day. How have y'all been getting along? I guess to Grouse and Champ, how has it been being away from home for so long? It's been a week, you know. How are you feeling about your environment and what all is happening?

[Pause]

Art: I mean I imagine a week in a place where it feels like time doesn't—isn't real. Feels like a long time, right?

Austin: Yeah...

Art: I mean—

Janine: Yeah, it's...[sigh] you know, it's a place where time isn't real, but also like—Blough is a [laugh]—it's—mmm. I'm having a hard time expressing my idea, but like my impression of Blough has always been—especially from *Lacuna*, that, like, it's a place where time is sort of weird, but not in an open way.

Austin: Yeah, totally.

Janine: Like I imagine being there instead of feeling like you are just in a series of moments that are—that like don't go anywhere, it's just like being in one moment again and again.

Austin: Yeah, yeah. That's totally right. Yeah, it's—it's like waking up every day and feeling like it's the same day it was yesterday...with the exception of these like little—little escapes that are really held close to the people who live here, who value them a lot, but are not things that you can—you can't just be like "Oh yeah, I'm into...yoga!" Like that's just not the life it is [laugh], you know. Every—every escape is framed as an excess, so. So yeah. Um...you drive out there. The drive is nice. The three of you are—you know, drive through the gates—the big golden gates of this mansion, which is kind of—I think it's lower—I'm not picturing like a big three story tall mansion, or four—you know, it's kind of like a two story mansion in the way that any of us would be happy to live in a big two story mansion. It has like a big roundabout driveway type-vibe, and there are—there's probably another car parked in a garage that you can see off to the side, and as you're pulling up, a butler is coming out of the front door and closing the door behind him, and is...waiting to see what the deal is with y'all. Um...[soft laugh] as you pull up and park the car. What do you do?

Ali: Uh...gotta approach the door, right?

Austin: You gotta. You gotta approach the door.

Ali: You get into places by acting like you belong there...

Austin: That's true.

Ali: ...and [laugh] yeah.

Austin: Are you known enough that this butler would know you?

Ali: Um...I mean do I...do I work for the Whitaker's enough in this way that...

Austin: [Sigh] I don't think so. I think it's more that they...I think it's more that they get a cut of your money from the speakeasy...

Ali: [Laugh] Sure. Yeah.

Austin: ...and don't wanna actually—they have known to keep...you have to keep a finger in every pie, because you never know—

Ali (overlapping): Right...

Austin: —when someone's gonna take your other fucking pie.

Ali: No no no—but like [**Austin** chuckles] if they were like [**Art** laughs sharply] we wanna— have a society party, because...

Austin (overlapping): (Laughing) That's the saying. Right. No because the society party—

Ali (overlapping): ...my cousin's in town...and we wanna invite a bunch of people.

Austin (overlapping): The society party—they get to just have the open, cause they're influential and powerful, and they just call it—

Ali: Right.

Austin: —like a “Wine Culture Event” and suddenly Prohibition doesn't fucking apply to them because they're rich.

Ali: Right...

Austin: Whereas—

Ali: I'm saying would I get an invite because I'm that much into the—

Austin (overlapping): I see.

Ali: —like that's how the butler would know me.

Austin: Draw me a card. Let's say. Let's see. **[Ali laughs]** Let's see the—I wanna—this is a fun low thing.

Ali: Ok. Drawing a card.

Austin: Also, I did not set the difficulty. I have to—wait, do I set the difficulty in my own head? I set the difficulty in my own head. Um...and this is gonna be like no bad consequences to this—eh, I mean the bad consequence is they won't know who you are. This is gonna be a Charisma trait check. So. **[Clears throat]** (Reading) “The way this game works is that when you want your character to do something,” in this case be recognizable, “announce your intentions to everyone. Think of what the task is in terms of what your character might do in a movie.” It's this case it's not—you've not even met this person yet. I'm not saying you're not gonna also get to talk to them and like try to find a way into the house, but I'm just like laying the groundwork. This is a fun first trait check.

Ali: (Quietly) Mhm.

Austin: (Continues reading) “Narrate the attempt. Once you've described what your character's intention is, in narrative terms, you'll determine what you need to do with the rules. If the task is fairly simple or has no real consequence for failure, the GM will tell you what happens when your character completes the task. There's no reason to slow down the game,” blah blah blah. “When you make trait checks, you look at your traits and select the one based on—that is the most applicable to the task your character wants to accomplish.” In this case, let's say that's Charisma. (Continues reading) “Make note of the trait's score. If you have a skill that pertains to the task you're performing, add one to that trait's score. The resulting number is the card count for that trait check. This is the maximum number of cards you can flip while making the trait check. This count can be increased a number of other ways.” So, let's say Charisma and

then—what are your skills? Do you have any skill that you think would be like “This is my—like I’m known around town” type shit.

Ali: (Quietly) Um, yeah. Let me open up my thingie again...(Regular volume) No...

Austin: And your Charisma is two? Right?

Ali: And my Charisma is two, yes.

Austin: Ok. So.

Ali: My Defense is nine.

Austin: Yeah, in this case this isn’t a Defense thing, this is a score thing, which means you’re gonna get to...

Ali: Mhm.

Austin: (Reading) If you don’t have any skills that will help you in this, that means you get to flip over two different cards. You shouldn’t draw a second card yet. The GM determines a target score for your check and (conspiratorially) keeps this information secret. As the game progresses, you might pin down the target score for certain tasks after attempting them multiple times. Flip one card.” So in this case, you go ahead and just draw it out into the play field here. So you’ve drawn the ten of hearts, right?

Ali: Mhm.

Austin: Buh-buh-buh...I closed the thing I was on...trait checks. Here we go. Um...

Art: This is going great so far.

Austin: It’s fantastic.

Ali (overlapping): Mhm. Mhm! [Laugh]

Austin: (Reading) “Flip one card. The [pip value](#) of the card indicates success or value. The suit indicates the degree of success or failure. If the pip value of the card you flipped exceeds the target score, you succeeded at the task. Otherwise you fail. If the card count for this check is one, you announce the result and the GM tells you whether you succeed or fail. If your card count is higher than one, you have a decision to make. You can—” so in this case it is. You have two cards you could flip. (Continues reading) “You can stick with the initial card flip or you can flip additional cards to try to attain success or greater success. You can flip additional cards as long as the total number of cards flipped does not exceed the card count. You can stop and accept the current card flip at any time. If you get to the last card you’re allowed to flip, you are stuck with that result. If the card count is zero, you can’t attempt that check—” that doesn’t work. And then I describe the result of your trait check with any additional necessary information.

Alternatively, I may just narrate—they might have—I might have YOU narrate the [laugh] results of the check. So it's sort of like Blackjack, is the basic gist of it, right?

Ali: Right, right, right yeah-yeah-yeah.

Austin (overlapping): It's like you wanna try to get to a success...that is good for you—and there's another half thing that you need to remember here, which is...that certain—that there is a degree of not just the numbers mattering—cause a ten is a solid number—but also the suits mattering. The way that it works is that the red cards are just like you succeed or fail, but then the black cards—clubs mean it's a failure—it's a fail, but—or sorry, it's a success or failure, with a complication. Things get worse. So, if you succeed and it's a club, then it's "Yes, but," and if it's a [laugh] failure and a club, it's like a botch. It's like "This goes really bad and also it goes worse." [Laugh] And if you get a *spade* and succeed, it's a success with advantage. And if you fail with a spade, it's a failure with a kind of bright lining—with a—something helpful happening. So—

Ali: Mhm.

Austin: —keep all that in mind. You got a ten of hearts. Would you like to draw another card? [Pause] Or do you wanna stick with your ten of hearts?

Ali: Um...so I've succeeded here, but if I draw another card—

Austin: I have not said you succeeded here.

Ali: Oh. Ok.

Austin: I tell you—this is why it's blackjack—

Ali: (Understanding) Oh...

Austin: It's because I have the target score in my head...

Ali: Ok.

Austin: ...and will tell you—if you say you're good—if you're like "Stay," I will tell you whether you succeeded or failed.

[Pause]

Ali: Sure...

Art (overlapping): Ali, ten is a really high number.

Ali: A ten *is* a really high number.

Janine: I want you to know that when you said that ten is a solid number, I thought you meant that was a thing in the game [**Ali** and **Austin** laugh], that there were solid numbers...and (laughing) non-solid numbers in some way—

Austin (overlapping): Yeah, that's fantastic. I love it.

Janine (overlapping): —it's the tone that's been established here, and I had a moment of like "Oh, fuck, what's a solid number?"

[**Austin** laughs]

Ali: Ok, I'm gonna-I'm gonna speak metaphysically about these (laughing) game rules for a second—

Austin: Yes.

Ali: —just so I can talk about the decision that I'm making. When you're playing jackblack, and you're calling or not calling—

Austin: Wait!

Art: Mmm.

[**Austin** and **Janine** laugh]

Ali: What?

Austin: Say that sentence again, it's fine.

[**Janine** continues laughing in the background.]

Ali: (Laughing) When you're—when you're playing blackjack—

Austin: Yeah...

Ali: —that's what it's called, right?

Austin: You said Jack Black. [**Ali** bursts out laughing] The actor.

[Everyone laughs]

Ali: As I often do.

Austin: Yeah, (laughing) when you're playing *Jack Black* as a character...[continued loud laughter in the background] in your hit show *Friends at the Table*...

Ali: [Deep inhale] When you're playing that—

Austin: Yes.

Ali: And you're making your internal decision whether you should call or not, you have an *idea* of what—like the dealer will already have lile a ten, and then—

Austin: Right.

Ali: —you do the thing that you're gonna do, and *then* they reveal their cards.

Austin (overlapping): Yes.

Ali: But with this, I don't have any...

Austin: I can give you that. Here's what I can give you. This...**[Ali laughs]** what I can tell you is...according to what I'm looking at in the book, there is a target scores range as follows, starting at four with aces being high: four is a routine thing, six is a pretty easy thing—

Ali (overlapping): Mhm.

Austin: —eight is an average thing, ten is a challenging thing, queen is a hard thing, and aces are an incredible thing. So, you kind of judge, “Hey, is this a hard thing I'm doing? Is this an easy thing I'm doing...”

Ali (overlapping): Right. Yeah yeah yeah. Fair.

Austin: So that is the equivalent of reading the situation and trying to understand how difficult I might think it is.

Janine: It's like the Dragon Age tabletop game.

Austin: Uh-huh. **[Ali laughs]** This is how a lot of tabletop games are—

Janine: Yeah...

Austin: This system...

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: God.

Ali: Uh...I think I'm gonna go with it for now...

Austin (overlapping): What was the thing—go ahead. So you're gonna keep ten? You're gonna keep the ten of hearts?

Ali: [Pause] Ye—yes.

Austin: Sorry to Regis you on this.

Ali: (Laughing) No it's fine. Cause I was like maybe if—well, if I flip another one, it's not like “Oh, I fail now.” It's just a better success?

Austin: Well no, cause you could fail.

Ali: Oh, cause I *could* fail, cause I'm keeping it.

Austin (overlapping): You'd be keeping whatever that next card is, yeah.

Ali: Right. Right right right.

Austin (overlapping): Yes. Yes.

Ali: Ok, well then I'm just gonna...

Art (overlapping): It's sorta—it's less like blackjack, and *more* like classic game show “Joker's wild.”

Austin: Right. Correct. **[Ali sighs]** This is correct.

Ali: I—ok, um...I have a ten of hearts. Does this person know me or nah? **[Laugh]**

Austin: Yes. **[Ali laughs harder]** Yes they fucking do. And as you approach...I'll say this: yes they do, but that does not mean that they like you very much...

Ali: Sure.

Austin: ...because you did not get like a success *plus*—like a very good success, nor did you get a success with like a spade, which would've given you a big bonus thing. You know that this is Benedict Boatwright, who is the butler for young master Hollis Jewels Whitaker. And Benedict—who has like a very, you know, jowly white dude is his...you know, low—his high fifties, low sixties. Hair oiled back. He's like—

[as Benedict Boatwright]: Ah, Ms. Key...what—why do you grace us with your presence this fine afternoon?

Ali [as Caitlin Key]: **[Inhale]** Hi, hello, um...

Austin [as Benedict Boatwright] (overlapping): And who are your...friends?

Ali [as Caitlin Key]: They're...my...trainers.

Austin [as Benedict Boatwright]: (Disbelieving) Your train—(laugh)

Ali [as Caitlin Key]: Business is going great...

Austin [as Benedict Boatwright]: Your trainers?

[Art laughs]

Ali [as Caitlin Key]: I've hired some new employees [laugh] and they're...training with me today.

Austin [as Benedict Boatwright]: I see...

Art (overlapping): They would be *trainees*.

Ali [as Caitlin Key]: Sure—yes. [**Austin** laughs] That's what I meant. [Laugh]

Austin [as Benedict Boatwright]: Well...I don't understand why you would need to bring them here. Is there something we can help you with?

Ali [as Caitlin Key]: Well, this is a very serious situation with Mister...Whitaker. I was wondering if I could meet with him.

Austin [as Benedict Boatwright] (overlapping): I apologize. I have no idea what you mean. [**Ali** giggles] The young master is doing...fantastic, and...will not be seeing visitors.

[Pause]

Ali [as Caitlin Key]: Mmm...[clicks tongue] I was told to come here...and I think that he would be pretty upset if you were to go upstairs and ask him again if he was expecting me.

Austin [as Benedict Boatwright]: What makes—what makes you think the young master is upstairs? Everyone these days is so presumptuous. Who told you you could visit him?

Ali [as Caitlin Key]: He did.

Austin [as Benedict Boatwright]: He—[flabbergasted noises] *He* did?

Ali [as Caitlin Key]: I was sent a message to come and I've come.

Austin: Ok this is another trait check, for sure. [**Ali** bursts out laughing] This is again—this will definitely be a Charisma check again, I *think*?

Ali: Sure.

Austin: Do you have a skill that would help you lie to (laughing) this person? And also, is anyone helping? Because you can help in this game.

[Pause]

Art: What does that look like?

Austin: It *means* that [laugh]—mmm. (Emphatically) MMMmmm. Why'd you have to ask? [Austin laughs, then everyone else chuckles] It means—it's actually really simple. (Reading) "Other characters can help you with performing a task. How many characters can reasonably help you is up to the GM." I'd say both of you could help. (Continues reading) "The maximum is three [laugh] except for the GM, but it's no more than three. [Art laughs quietly in the background] Each character helping must have an appropriate skill for you to gain a bonus.

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For each character helping, you increase the pip value of the cards you flipped by one." So it's a one on the results, not the one in the number of cards. Does anyone have a thing—something that they could help with here? And if so, I'd love to hear what it sounds like.

Ali: I have an idea of a skill that could help me. Um...I have the Sense skill, which is: "involves sight, hearing, smell and so forth. Covering how your character perceives and reacts to everything around them." And, I don't know if it's too presumptuous to say, but like the situation of Caitlin being able to like hear music coming from upstairs, or like smell smoke or something and know like—

Austin: Yeah, and being able to—

Ali: —"Oh, he's up in the smoking room."

Austin: —yeah, totally. Yes. That would be—I'll roll with that. That—like that is totally where he probably is, and if you want to be like "He told me to meet him in the smoking room," that would totally be a thing that you could lean on as evidence. So yeah, take—that will give you an extra card.

Ali: Ok.

Austin: Chanti and Elana, are you helping at all?

Art: I can't see anything that would actually help...

Austin (overlapping): You both have a thing that would help! You both have a thing that would help. I'm shouting it.

[Ali snorts, Janine laughs]

Janine: We both—we both have Diplomacy and Insight, right?

Austin: You both have Diplomacy at least. And yes, you both also have Insight.

Art: But Diplomacy says it's about being honest.

Austin: Yeah, well, you figure out how to use it.

[Ali laughs]

Janine: Uh...actually I—yeah I could help with Diplomacy, I think.

Ali: You could speak eloquently and rally others, *and* convey thoughts clearly.

Austin: Mhm.

Art [as Elana Flores, aka “The Champ”]: We’re all going upstairs! [**Austin, Ali, and Janine** burst out laughing] To the smoking room!

Austin: Chanti?

Janine: Um...I think...I think Chanti approaches after sort of staying in the back a little bit. Also, to be clear, Chanti...you know, in Masks I described her as like very fashionable, very like trendy...

Austin: Yeah...

Janine: ...very like—I mentioned like chokers and velvet, you know, velvet clothing at the time. She, I think, has really leaned into this whole ‘20s thing—

Austin: Love it.

Janine: —especially cause the ‘20s was a big time for feathers.

Austin: Sure.

Janine: Big time for ostrich feathers—

Austin: Yeah, yeah. [Ali laughing in the background] Love it.

Janine: —big time for...like [marabou](#)...and all that shit. So I’m picturing her like always in some sort of marabou trimmed layer over top of like nice dresses and stuff. I think she’s like *very* put together. Walks up to this—to the butler...and like in sort of a...very sweet and confiding tone...is like:

[as Chanti Park, aka “Grouse”]: You know, we just want to...help him. We know that discretion is very important...

Austin: Mmm.

Janine [as Chanti Park]: I don’t think you’d find anyone more discrete in town...

Austin: That’s—that’s Diplomacy, right there. That’s Diplomacy. So yeah, you’ll take a plus one on all of your cards. [Pause] Elana, do you have a follow up? With Athletics, Fisticuffs, Insight, Willpower, or Diplomacy? [Pause] (With the same casual uptick) Please don’t say fisticuffs?

[**Janine** laughs]

Art: Um...rude.

Janine: [Laugh] “We’re very discrete—” *wham*.

[**Austin** laughs]

Austin: “You’ll find we’re very discrete.” [Punching sound]

Art: Yeah. [Laugh] The discrete-est. [**Austin** laughs and claps once] Yeah I think one—I think we’re good.

Austin: Ok.

Art: One—one pip. That’s a lot of pips.

Austin: We’ll see how it goes. Alright! Give me a—ok, so I’m gonna tell you how to do this. You’re gonna leave this ten out because it’s—we’re still in the same *scene*. At the end of a scene...I will recall your cards, or you can recall your cards...

Ali: Mhm.

Austin: ...and shuffle your deck. But when we’re still in the same scene—that means you don’t have this ten of hearts to rely on. That ten of hearts ain’t coming to help you this time.

Ali: Ok, yeah.

Austin: You still have...so you’ll—you have a card count of three, so you can draw three cards here. [Pause] That is the nine of spades.

Ali: And then, should I—I should just—pick the cards...

Austin (overlapping): Oh, and it goes up to ten. So it’s a ten of spades right now.

Ali: Ok.

Austin: Because—w-w-wait don’t draw any more. Go back. Wait.

Ali: Oh, ok. [Laugh]

Austin: Well, ok, well listen. You drew a fucking king of spades. What the fuck. You know what, you wanna keep—

Ali: Ok. fair enough.

Austin: You wanna keep—

Ali: You told me I had three (laughing) cards!

Austin: You do, but you have to—at the end—each time you draw, you have to say “Am I good with this result?”

Ali: Oh, oh-oh oh. Ok. Fair-fair-fair. Ok.

Austin: Right? In this case it worked out in your favor, cause you (laughing) went from...you went from the nine of spades—really the ten of spades because of (mispronouncing name) Chanti helping you—(pronouncing correctly) Chanti helping you—to the king of spades, which is now the ace of spades. The strongest card in the game. [Chuckle]

Ali: Oh.

Austin: Cause of that plus one. So in this case, let me tell you, you’re gonna succeed on that one. You should not draw it again [laugh].

Ali: Sure, yeah. I...yeah. Sure.

Austin: So what is the—what is the pitch you make? Give me the—give me the—what this pitch sounds like.

Ali: Um...[clears throat] Yeah, I think that...Caitlin kind of crosses her arms and says—

[as Caitlin Key]: You know, I was running late already, and I’m not gonna be late going up there because of you. I know that Mr. Whitaker is up in the smoking room. I was told to meet him there at 2 o’clock. It is approaching 2 o’clock.

Ali: And then I think she pulls out...(mumbling) did I...? (Normal voice) Oh, I was like looking at the things that I bought and I don’t—actually don’t care, but she pulls out [**Ali** and **Austin** laugh] um...like something he would need, right? Like some rolling paper. [Laugh]

Austin: Sure.

Ali: Something to be like “He asked me to bring these.”

Austin: [Laugh] “He asked me to bring these rolling papers.”

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Alright! Uh—

Ali: He’s running low.

Austin: So, [**Ali** chuckles] you not only succeed here, you succeeded with a Boon, because you got a spade. And that means that you can get the target to give you more information, get the target to tell you a secret—oh wait sorry, it’s a Boon—a Boon is something you buy with Moxie. I’m wrong. Sorry. You could also spend Moxie—that’s an important thing for y’all to

remember. Always, those rules are on page 28 and you should just like skim them really quick, because they're—you know I'm just gonna—I'm gonna quickly paste the image in the chat so that you can see what their uses are, because of how useful they are. But, with a...with a—and I guess it is actually a Boon. (Reading) "If you succeed on a trait check and get a spades for the suit, you receive an additional benefit called a Boon. A Boon makes things more difficult for the target of the trait check, or provides you with some sort of benefit. You and the GM work out what effect the Boon has. Some examples appear in the trait descriptions sections of the chapter, and easy stand-by is for the GM to grant you advantage. See the advantage and disadvantage [laugh] section in this chapter on the trait check, you make related—" that's not what's gonna happen. I'm gonna—he's gonna give you extra information here. He says, like:

[as Benedict Boatwright]: Oh Ms. Key. [Sigh] I—I've been so worried about him. [Sigh] I told him he should *never* hang around that [young Hughes lady](#). [Pause] She's certainly to blame.

Ali [as Caitlin Key] (overlapping): Has she—[clears throat] has she been here recently?

Austin [as Benedict Boatwright]: (Pointedly whispering) She was with him that night.

[Pause]

Ali [as Caitlin Key]: Oh.

[Pause]

Austin [as Benedict Boatwright]: Anyway, yes. I apologize. I've been so protective. You and yours go head up, and he of course will be waiting for you. I wish he would've told me though. I feel...a little sad. [**Ali** chuckles]

Ali: Did we get the butler's name?

Austin [as Benedict Boatwright]: Yes. My name was...Benedict...something. Wasn't it?

Ali [as Caitlin Key]: Right, yes.

Austin [as Benedict Boatwright]: I said it moments ago. It was a second B. [**Ali** laughs] You could call me Benny.

Ali [as Caitlin Key]: Right.

Janine: It was "Boat"-something?

Austin [as Benedict Boatwright]: Boatswain. (Pronouncing differently) Boats-wayne? Boats—boat—boat-something?

Ali (overlapping): Boatswain. Ok.

Austin [as Benedict Boatwright]: Benedict Boatshoes. [Laugh]

Ali [as Caitlin Key]: Um...

Austin [as Benedict Boatwright]: It was Benedict Boatshows but they changed my name when I [laugh] came to America.

Ali [as Caitlin Key]: Aw.

Austin [as Benedict Boatwright]: Yeah.

Ali: (Laughing) I think that...Caitlin um...puts her hand on the butler's shoulder...

Austin: Mhm.

Ali: And says—

Ali [as Caitlin Key]: Dear Benny. Like I said, I'm in a rush. But, when I'm done with him, I would love to speak to you. I think that you might be able to...help me assure this...does not bring any stress to Mr...

Austin [as Benedict Boatwright]: Oh your heart is so big.

Ali [as Caitlin Key]: ...Whitaker.

Austin [as Benedict Boatwright]: Your heart is so large. Just a massive, beautiful heart.
[Ali laughs quietly] It's not true what they say about people of low birth. It opens the door (laughing) for you.

Ali [as Caitlin Key] (overlapping): It isn't.

Austin: Um, and let's you in. It's—it's a marvelous mansion, in the sense that it's a very wealthy mansion. It's—this is—this is our Gatsby abode, right? This is our, like, "has money, doesn't know what class is" [laugh].

Ali: Mhm.

Austin: This is, you know, too much gold on things. This is books you've never read lining the shelves. This is like buying a bunch of different...imported—imported statues from various places around the world, and not really theming rooms so much as like "Here's all—that's my statue room. It's here I keep all my SHIT." You know? [Laugh] And it's all very fancy, but all very...you know, poorly put together. There's a, you know, rugs. Huge stairwell that leads up to the second floor where the smoking room in fact is. Where there is a record playing of someone singing some—singing along to some early jazz tune. And uh...and you make your way up there. You know, there are a couple other servants in the...in the house also, but it is—in fact, let's just go further and say there are a couple other servants and they're clearly cleaning up over whatever party he held last night. He's been holding parties at *home* since he's not allowed

out anymore. And when you find him, he is in his bathrobe in a...in his smoking room. Looks disheveled. He is a young white dude, mid twenties, with kind of hair that is—when the last time you saw him, was definitely oiled and gelled back, but now is kind of like grown out a little bit too much. He's like a dirty blonde, and he has like a little too much stubble on his face. In the movie version he's real hot in this scene, but in real life you'd be kind of grossed out by his whole deal. **[Austin laughs, Ali snorts]** And he looks up and he's like—

[as Hollis Whitaker]: Caitlin! Right?

[Pause]

Ali [as Caitlin Key]: Yes, hello!

Austin [as Hollis Whitaker]: [Sigh] My parents send you?

Ali [as Caitlin Key]: Um...yeah they did...

Austin [as Hollis Whitaker] (overlapping): Who-wh-who are these people?

Ali [as Caitlin Key]: Um...These are my—

Austin [as Hollis Whitaker]: You can introduce yourselves.

[Ali laughs]

Austin: He. like, stands up. Like stretches a little bit and, like, straightens out his bathrobe. Sticks out his hand to shake you—your hands. Not to shake you. To shake your hands [laugh].

Ali: (Laughing) Ok.

Art: (Forcefully) UNH!

Austin: (Laughing) Yeah.

Ali: Mhm.

Art (overlapping): WHO ARE YOU?

[Austin laughs]

Janine [as Chanti Park]: Um...I'm Chanti Park.

Austin [as Hollis Whitaker]: Chanti Park. A pleasure.

Art [as Elana Flores]: You can call me Champ.

Austin [as Hollis Whitaker]: Right, but what is...your *name*?

[Pause]

Art [as Elana Flores]: Nah, it's fine.

Austin [as Hollis Whitaker]: ...Strange one. Well. Ms. Park, Ms. Key, Ms. Fine, welcome to my abode. If I can get you anything, the bar is downstairs, but I keep a little something in every room. **[Ali laughs softly]** No, not thirsty I guess? **[Janine laughs softly]**

Ali [as Caitlin Key]: Um...

Art [as Elana Flores]: It's just you're on the clock, you know?

[Ali laughs]

Austin [as Hollis Whitaker]: This is professional then?

Ali [as Caitlin Key] (overlapping): I would like—

Austin [as Hollis Whitaker]: This is business?

Ali [as Caitlin Key]: Yes. Yes, this is very serious business.

Austin [as Hollis Whitaker]: Mmm.

Ali [as Caitlin Key]: I—[sigh] I wanted to come here to see what information you could spare for me trying to help you out of this situation you've put yourself in.

Austin [as Hollis Whitaker]: Alright, *slow down*, Key. [Sigh] What information would—what information do you need? I was in the wrong place at the wrong time. Some...cops got...I don't know. I got out. It wasn't me. They're gonna find who it was. It's not a problem.

Ali [as Caitlin Key]: [Sigh] That's not what cops do. They'll stop searching once they think they have an answer.

Austin [as Hollis Whitaker]: Yeah?

Ali [as Caitlin Key]: And they think that answer is you.

Austin [as Hollis Whitaker]: [Sigh] They'll figure out that it may be someone else instead. That's how these things work out. I just...I just—

Janine [as Chanti Park]: You ever seen a headline before?

[Ali snorts]

Austin [as Hollis Whitaker]: I don't read much. No.

[Pause]

Austin: And he sits back down with a drink [laugh].

[Ali laughs]

Ali [as Caitlin Key]: [Deep inhale, followed by a sigh] Well let's start at the beginning. What were you even doing that night?

Austin [as Hollis Whitaker]: What was I do—uhm...I—it was a good time. You know. That Green broad. She was having one of her—you know...to do's and I went, and I had a good time. And then on the way home, there was a...car pulled over the side of the road. I must've pulled over to see if they needed to help, and then the police, and then...oh! Then I left. [Pause] From fear of my life.

Ali [as Caitlin Key]: You—you're skipping over (laughing) far too many details here.

Austin [as Hollis Whitaker]: [Sigh] Well many of those details were drinks, so...[sigh] you'll have to forgive me. [Pause] I'm not—you know, I'm not on the lam for any crime, I'm just...it's just gonna be a quiet couple of weeks. I *promise* my parents don't have anything to worry about if they sent you out here. In fact, they'll probably figure it out for me. That's how these things go.

Art [as Elana Flores]: This is that. You're in the middle of that now.

Ali [as Caitlin Key]: Yes.

Art [as Elana Flores]: This is your parents figuring it out. [Laugh] It's us.

Austin [as Hollis Whitaker]: (Skeptical) It's you.

Ali [as Caitlin Key]: And part of that process is you being honest with us.

Austin: This is gonna be. Another. (Laughing) Charisma trait check. [Ali laughs] God. You're talking to people.

Ali: Sure.

Austin: Who's taking the lead on this? I feel like—I feel like this could be anybody. I know we've put a lot on Caitlin so far. I kind of wanna give this to Elana who said "This is that—(laughing) this is us doing that." [Janine chuckles] Also 'cause I know Art's Charisma score is not great.

Art: [Clicks tongue] It's true.

Austin: But people can help! And you got that Moxie.

Art: I—this is Diplomacy?

Austin: I would say this is Diplomacy. That means your card score is two, which means you get to draw two cards. Who is helping and how are they helping?

Janine: Um...I'll help.

Austin: Mhm.

Janine: By...um...you know, this is an awkward situation. I think...

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I think the diplomatic choice would be to try and like—to recognize—actually maybe this is an Insight ch—I don't know. This is—this is a choice of like—this is a thing of like noticing that the mood in the room [**Austin** chuckles] is not really conducive to open conversation right now.

Austin: Uh-huh. Yeah.

Janine: So the thing that needs to happen is everyone needs to just relax a little bit and we can just talk like people and it'll be ok.

Austin: Ok. Yeah.

Janine: So I think to that end, it is...uh...[sigh] you know, I did already mention that Chanti's having a lot of fun with her clothing.

Austin: (Quietly) Uh-huh.

Janine: I think she's also just having a little bit of fun in general.

Austin: Uh-HUH. [Soft laugh]

Janine: Being away from the pressures of home in...in—there's like a—there's like a flavor of like...of like “I can be a jazz lady here—”

Austin (overlapping): (Laughing) Uh-huh.

Janine: (Laughing) I could—

Austin: Uh-huh. You're a fucking spring fling. You're out here making bad decisions. I get you.

Janine: Yeah, so—you know, she's wearing a lot of feathers, she's got—she's got very nice hair, she's got some cigarettes maybe. I think she, like, sits on the arm of his chair and lights a cigarette.

Austin: Great. Good. Uhm [laugh]...

Janine: In a holder. It has a cigarette—

Austin: Uh-huh.

Janine: —she has a cigarette holder.

Austin: Yeah I think—

Janine: Very important. [Laugh]

Austin: He holds a cigarette out for you to light for him, also. Uhm...Caitlin, are you helping?

Ali: [Inhale] Um yeah...I think that we...

Austin (overlapping): As you already kind of did. You followed up almost immediately, right?

Ali (overlapping): Right, yeah.

Austin: Uh, alright! So Elana, that means right now your card score is two, one from Charisma, one from Diplomacy. You're gonna get a plus two on each of the cards that you flip. That is the queen of spades, which goes up to ace of (laughing) *spades*. Would you like to flip another card? Or are you good with that?

Art: I think I'm good with the ace of spades.

Austin: With the highest card in the game. Yeah?

Art (overlapping): Yeah. Well I mean, if I drew the ace of—would I get like ace plus two?

Austin: No. You just get an ace.

Art: Oh.

Austin: That's the highest it gets. I'm sorry.

Art: If I can't get any higher, then I'm definitely gonna stop.

Austin: [Laugh] Yeah. Ok. Uh [sigh] he sighs and like—now with his lit cigarette and the woman sitting on his—the armrest of his chair—makes him feel important and hot. He like [sigh] [**Janine** chuckles, **Ali** snorts] slinks back down into his chair a little bit and, you know, waves his cigarette around and goes—

[as Hollis Whitaker]: [Sigh] It was a wild night. [Deep inhale] There really were a lot of drinks. [Sigh] Promise me you're all on the up-and-up? No wires?

Austin: Do wires exist yet? Probably not.

[as Hollis Whitaker]: None of you are—

Janine (overlapping): I don't think so.

Ali: No.

Austin [as Hollis Whitaker]: None of you are snitches, right? In fact—

Ali [as Caitlin Key]: Do not *offend* me. [**Austin** laughs]. I'm here to help you.

Austin: Wow actually—1906. Was the first wire—was the first remote...uh remote listening device, which is super interesting. Um...

Janine: But—ok, sorry—but define “remote” like—that doesn’t necessarily mean it fits on a person, right?

Austin: No, no, so it was not a *wire* in that way. No. In fact—yes.

Janine: I think you could probably bug, like, phones and stuff.

Austin: You could bug phones, you could have a microphone in one—

Janine (overlapping): Yeah.

Austin: —location or remote listening post.

Janine: It's like a fucking suitcase or something, I'm sure.

Austin (overlapping): Yes, exactly like that. Um...so! He...is like—

Austin [as Hollis Whitaker]: [Sigh] I was there, and...Horseface showed up and said that the pumps were broken. And that he needed help fixing the pumps. [Inhale] So we drove out to the thicket. I'm good with my hands. I'm *good* with my *hands*, and I knew how to fix these pumps. We got 'em fixed. And...on the way back I was in one car and uh...Horseface and his boys were in the other, in a truck [inhale] with the bottles [exhale]. And we ran into a cop who didn't know better. Pulled us over. Called for backup. And uh...you know...some other cops came. I—it gets hazy. Um...and after that...yeah. [Sigh] Everything—when I say it gets hazy here—I mean it got—like I—I can't tell you what happened. It got—[sigh] everything got a little dark. It was already dark. It was already nighttime. But I don't know if the car lights went out or what. And next thing I knew, I heard screaming, and I just—I hit the pedal. Um...so...as far as I know, Horseface and the boys are good. I told Horseface to go to ground. You know? So yeah. [Pause] I'm not saying it was Horseface, by the way. He's not the Whitaker—you know, I know he's one of the Nebraska boys. But Nebraska folks are alright.

Ali [as Caitlin Key]: [Inhale] When you say “got dark,” did you feel as though...you were under the influence of something? Or...

Austin [as Hollis Whitaker] (overlapping): [Laugh] I was under the influence of a lot, so...

Ali [as Caitlin Key]: I...

Austin [as Hollis Whitaker]: you know.

Ali [as Caitlin Key]: Yes...

Austin [as Hollis Whitaker]: Probably wouldn't hold up in court.

Ali [as Caitlin Key] (overlapping): Often. I understand. **[Austin laughs]** Right. [Deep breath]

Austin [as Hollis Whitaker]: Uh, you mean...you mean, was it a...a little something extra?

Ali [as Caitlin Key]: An altering.

Austin [as Hollis Whitaker]: An altering...*phew*. Geez. [Pause] You know...not like an altering I've ever been to, but uh...different strokes. [Pause] What I mean is it could—I guess it could've been. [Pause] I guess it could—yeah, it was prob—it was—I mean yeah. (Laughing) Probably. It was probably an altering.

Austin: Um, with the ace here, what I'm giving you is an advantage on your next thing, uh...there is still more to get here. This is—this is the sort of system where you can break up a conversation like this, and what's left is definitely something that will require a deeper dig, but I am gonna give you advantage on your next—on whoever—whoever does their next kind of poke at this. Uhm...(mumbling) also gonna look up how advantage works.

Janine: I'm sorry, did we know who Horseface is? [Laugh]

Austin: No.

Janine: Or is that new?

Austin: That is new.

Janine (overlapping): Ok.

Austin: No one's talked about Horseface before.

Janine (overlapping): Ok. (Laughing) I was wondering.

Austin: Uh-huh. All you know—

Ali: He just said it was a Nebraska...

Austin: Uh, yeah, a Nebraska boy. Nebraska is another family who you might remember as the family...that was involved in the first game this season. [Chuckle] Uh...whose family supposedly owned some sort of industry here, and some sort—there was some sort of big opportunity coming up. The name also came up as part of the tunnel project in the last—the last Bluff Arc. They were like on some paperwork. [Inhale] You don't know if Horseface is a Nebraska or is just like in the—the mob family of the Nebraska's, you know? Anyway, you have advantage on this

next roll. Uh...which is good *because* of how advantage works. [Clears throat] Which is, you get a—an additional card count for your next attempt here. So that's just like having a plus one in the—it's like having an extra skill, basically. Uhm, so yeah, at that point he kind of clams up a little bit. I think he says like—

[as Hollis Whitaker]: You know, [sigh] right now it's a...a real...a real heavy story to tell. But I'm sure in a month or two, or three or four, this'll just be another fun story to tell, you know? I was right in the middle of it all. The action. People love that.

Janine [as Chanti Park]: They don't love it as much when you can't remember it [soft laugh].

Austin [as Hollis Whitaker]: Oh, I'll remember all sorts of things by then. You know, details...

Janine [as Chanti Park] (overlapping): I bet you will.

Austin [as Hollis Whitaker]: ...punches [deep inhale] it'll be—it'll be dramatic. Like theater. Plus you're gonna help me remember. You're gonna find out what really happened, and...make sure uh, make sure people know the truth. Hm?

[Pause]

Ali [as Caitlin Key]: [Clicks tongue] Exactly. And when you figure out your version of the story, we'll all be very impressed.

Austin [as Hollis Whitaker]: Alright, well, if there's nothing else...

Janine [as Chanti Park]: Can we talk about Horseface a little?

Austin [as Hollis Whitaker]: Oh, you don't wanna know about *Horseface*. Old Horseface.

Janine [as Chanti Park]: Why don't I want (tripping over words) to-no-have—[laugh]. (Enunciating) Why don't I want to know about Horseface?

Austin [as Hollis Whitaker]: It's kinda in the name, isn't it?

Janine [as Chanti Park]: Eh, I like an interesting face.

Austin [as Hollis Whitaker]: His face is fine, it's just *euuh*... [Pause] He's—what do you need to know about Horseface? Horseface is a worker. Horseface gets things done. [Pause] You know? He uh...moves crates. You need to move crates...he moves...he moves coffins, you need to move coffins.

Art [as Elana Flores]: It's like a long face?

Austin [as Hollis Whitaker]: It gets to be a pretty long face.

Art [as Elana Flores]: It *gets* to be?

Austin [as Hollis Whitaker]: It gets—

Art [as Elana Flores]: How does it start?

Austin [as Hollis Whitaker]: It's kind of a small face.

Art [as Elana Flores]: His face gets longer.

Austin [as Hollis Whitaker]: His—[laugh]. Let me tell you about this guy. [Soft chuckle] His face gets longer. [Pause] Well, is it—

Janine [as Chanti Park]: So he's a worker, but he needs—he needs a fancy boy like you to help him with the pumps?

Austin [as Hollis Whitaker]: [Sigh] Different sorta worker. It's a new day, you know? Times—the times are changing. I got all this technology now. You know, in his day, what was a pump? A pump was a bucket you put in a well. These days a pump's got all these parts...you know.

Janine [as Chanti Park]: I'm pretty sure water pumps...

Austin [as Hollis Whitaker]: Not like these. You haven't seen ones like these. [**Janine** sighs softly] Let me tell you. These are—these are imported pumps.

Ali [as Caitlin Key]: *Imported?*

Austin [as Hollis Whitaker]: Yeah, we brought 'em in from out of town. (Laughing) I'm kind of giving up the goose here, actually. I should probably—it's more my family's business [**Janine** laughs] than mine. [Sigh, clears throat]

Ali [as Caitlin Key]: Um...what—

Austin [as Hollis Whitaker]: Bathrobe makes me a little more casual than I like to be.

Ali: [Laugh] Does uh...would...would the words “out of time” make Caitlin sort of bristle [**Austin** sighs] the way that it would...you know what I mean?

Austin: Give me...a...[laugh]

Janine: Yeah, what does “out of town” mean in the context here?

Austin (overlapping): It's so weird, right? Like I don't—I think the...for the people who...I mean, for the people from Bluff City, you hear that configuration all the time, right? Because Bluff City has an “out of town”...you could go to Trenton. You can talk about out-of-town places.

Ali: Right...

Austin: Right?

Ali: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: But for *Blough* city? That doesn't really exist—or it does, but in a vague—in an much more vague way, right? In Blough City there is the city, there is—there is like the areas around the city like the city center, and there *is* out of town, but it never gets more specific than that. You never go like “I got these—I imported this suit from London,” right? You might say “overseas.” You might say...you know—you know, somewhere—you might say like “I—yeah, I got the best—I got the—I imported the best tomatoes in the country,” [chuckle] you know? Um, but—

Ali: Mmm.

Austin: —you wouldn't necessarily zoom in more than that. I think the specific thing that's ringing for you, Caitlin, is—theoretically you are someone who is kind of part of...the Omega Love weird revolution stuff happening on this side of things, right? During the—the Gale Green and—

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Austin: —like Hector Hu and Blossom Tape stuff. The Blake Blossom stuff. I think that there is like a degree to which if you were in that crew, the words “out of town” ring for you a certain way. I'm not gonna make you draw a card for this. That makes you like...“Wait a second. Yeah, I—I know—” ‘out of town’ is not an abstract thing. There are other physical places. And you can kind of—they kind of coalesce for a moment and then slip away, you know?

Ali: Uhm...yeah—

Austin: If you could talk to someone else who actually knew about this, that might help.

[Pause]

Ali: Um...yeah, I think in that case...(mumbling) where would she approach this from? Um...I think that she would maybe...in realizing that that's super weird and that he said it so casually—

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: —um, try to sort of...like do the thing that Chanti did of, like [**Austin** chuckles quietly] sitting down across from him—

Austin: Uh-huh.

Ali: —and crossing her legs, and being like—

[as Caitlin Key]: [Deep sigh] Well you've been very helpful, but I—[sigh] I'm wondering about the situation...what was wrong with the pumps that you needed to go out there to fix them?

Austin: Alright. Is anyone helping? Right now you have three cards because of the advantage you got from Art's last attempt.

Ali: (Quietly) Sure.

Austin: It is a lot of cards. Maybe you don't need help. I don't know.

Art: To help...with *insight*...

[Pauses]

Austin: Ok, how are you doing it?

Art: [Clicks tongue] Uhm...hmm...I probably shouldn't just be like "Yeah, cause you're looking real shifty."

[**Austin** and **Janine** laugh]

Austin: Is it just about having an extra awareness and being ready to jump on...something if it's—

Art: Yeah, I think that is it—

Austin: Ok.

Art: —like, you know—that's like a social experience we've all felt, right? Where like someone is just like waiting to—

Austin: Yeah.

Art: —pounce on us.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Love it.

Art: (Muffled) You know how the world is bad?

Austin: Uh, alright! So that means you have three cards. You get a plus one on each—on each—how many pips they are.

Ali: Ok.

Austin: So go ahead and draw your first card.

Ali (overlapping): So just pull this first one...

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: And we'll talk about where you go from there—there's a nine of clubs.

Ali: Ok.

Austin: Now clubs is bad. Clubs means even if it's a success—or it's a ten of clubs now, because you got the plus one from Elana helping—but it is a club, which means that you'll get a kind of a negative that comes along with the success—

Ali: Ok.

Austin: —if it is a success.

Ali: And then I could draw another card.

Austin: Or you could say, "I'm gonna draw another card. I'm not gonna take this. I'm gonna draw another card." But that is up to you. With the note that—

Ali (overlapping): Ok.

Austin: —whenever you stop, that is the card you get. You know what I mean?

Ali: Right-right-right it's not like...it doesn't build up on...

Austin: Right, exactly.

Ali (overlapping): Yeah. [Sigh] Ok. I'm gonna draw another card then.

Austin: And you did. That's a six of spades. Wait—

Ali: Oh, did I—wait—

Austin (overlapping): You drew two cards—

Ali (overlapping): No I didn't—

Austin: —yeah, it's off to the right.

Ali: Oh. Oh. Oh. Oh, cause my—

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Ali: —window is smaller.

Austin: Uh-huh. [**Ali** laughs] I need to move us—once we're done this sequence, I can move us on to a new table that's—

Ali: Ok.

Austin: —broader. Uh, apologies.

Ali: (Softly) Ok.

Austin: So six of spades, uh...seven of spades with the plus one, is better as being a spade, but worse in terms of that number.

Ali: Right. Uhm...

Austin: You got one more—well—

Ali (overlapping): I think I'm gonna—

Austin: You have one more draw but you've already drawn it. Do you wanna—do you want me to recall that so you can draw a new card?

Ali: Yeah, I would like to do that.

Austin (overlapping): Let me recall...how do I do this? Shit. Let's just draw another one and I'll just keep it to the side for now.

Ali: Ok.

Austin: Uh, if you wanna draw one more.

Ali: Um...[clicks tongue] a spade would just be normal—it doesn't have, like—

Austin (overlapping): Spade is good, but on—it's *good*. Spade is good, clubs are bad. That's what you need to know. Hearts and diamonds are whatever. So that means—

Ali: Ok.

Austin: —even if you fail, there'd be a—there would be a Boon—there'd be like a nice...

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...silver lining to the (laughing) failure. But it would not be a mixed success. It would be...it would be like a mixed failure, if that makes sense.

Ali: Ok.

Austin: If it would fail. I'm just gonna tell you straight up, seven—you're gonna need more than a fucking seven to—to crack this thing open a little bit more, for sure.

Ali: Right....ok, yeah. Cause then the eight is average, ok.

Austin: Yes.

Ali: Um, sure. Should have stuck with the—

Austin: Mm?

Ali: —failure ten maybe...

Austin: Oh! There's a—

Ali: Oh, there we go.

Austin: —there's an eleven. There's a jack.

Ali: Yay!

Austin: A ten plus one is a jack. A jack of diamonds, which does not confer any extra bonuses. But on your final card, that is a success! Um...(sigh) he says—so what was the exact question again? You asked what the situation with the pumps was? Or what was the—

Ali: Yeah.

Austin [as Hollis Whitaker]: [Sigh] You know, there uh...they're just pumping water, out in the Thicket...just pumping it up, and sending it out—out of town. [Pause] It's funny, right, because you think, with the Prohibition on, normally you're bottling plants—you uh, you see those liquor bottles, they're normally filled with liquor, but...I don't know. We got a client. I guess they want water? I don't know the specifics. But we're pumping it out of the wetlands. Easy money.

Austin: And I'll give you a little bit more. He says—

[as Hollis Whitaker]: Let me tell you, import-export. That's the business to be in. All my favorite things are imported. All my favorite people are imported. I just like—I like to know about the world, I guess. [Pause] Anyway, ladies [**Art** snorts] I have to look better than this [chuckle]. I should probably shower, and...clean myself up for the night's festivities.

Ali: Wait. He's been in a bathroom the whole time, but it wasn't a post-bath?

Austin: No.

Ali: Ok. Sure. Uh, let's—ok. [Laugh]

Austin: Absolutely was not.

Ali: (Laughing) I hate that.

Austin: Or—you don't know when the last time—maybe there—maybe it is post-bath. The bath was yesterday.

Ali: Sure. Ok. Yeah. Um...

[Pause]

Janine: Maybe he just woke up in the tub.

Austin: You know? What happens sometimes...

Ali: (Quietly) You know what happens...

Janine: Couldn't remember if you took a bath or not.

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: Why take chances?

Austin: Uh-huh. [Sigh]

Art: The bathroom doesn't care. [**Austin** and **Janine** laugh] The title of my memoir.

Austin: (Laughing) Yeah. Great book. I will—I'm just gonna say as the GM, like you—uh, y'all know there's probably still more here from him...but, those are different lines of inquiry, for sure.

Ali: Right. Before we leave, can I ask about the client?

Austin: Yeah. I'll roll that as part of this. He just says like—

[as Hollis Whitaker]: I don't—[sigh] it's something my folks and the Nebraskas and some other partners I guess have going. I...above my uh...not above my head—below my interest. Let's say it that way. I don't really care about...it's not the import-export *business* I like, so much as the import and export of...things, and people, and wealth, and....you know. The fun stuff.

Art [as Elana Flores]: Um, you ever uh—met someone with a horseshoe crab for a face?

[Pause]

Austin [as Hollis Whitaker]: Excuse me? I know a Horseface. I don't know a horseshoe crab face.

Art [as Elana Flores]: It's uh almost the same thing, if you think about it.

Austin (overlapping): Actually, would he know...hmm. Um...I'm gonna just draw—I'm gonna draw a card. What was thing—[laugh] what was the thing? I made you do a Charisma check? Right? [Pause] I'm gonna say out loud that this is a pretty high one. I'm gonna draw three cards from—up to three cards for my thing. Oh wait, no I'm not. What's he have in this? Hold up, I know what he has in this. Uh...ok. The...difficulty here is...jack. So first card...nope. It's a five of clubs. Second card—there it is. King of hearts. He goes—

[as Hollis Whitaker]: I mean, I don't know a guy with a horseshoe crab for a face, but I—it's funny you say that. Um...was a couple of uh...couple of months ago, I guess, maybe—[sigh] starts to get like a little woozy. Like a year ago? [Sigh] It was definitely after the holidays. [Sigh] The holidays were *weird*. Um...yeah, there was someone who was into—I guess into *masks*, and had like a...there's a horseshoe crab, right? The like big shell and long tail, right?

Art [as Elana Flores]: [Clicks tongue] Yeah. Just, you know—

Austin [as Benedict Boatwright] (overlapping): Yeah, and—yeah. I don't know—again, out-of-towners. They're—have the best stories. And I saw a guy like that—*nice* suit. And then, yeah, it was—uh, mask on. The *long tail*. I remember cause I was like “Ooh, that looks like it (laughing) might hurt somebody. You gotta be careful with that one, mister.” And...he was hanging out at my uh—my parents' place. I didn't want to get involved. I—they seemed busy. With business stuff and not with fun. But I haven't really—

Art [as Elana Flores]: Nah, that was—I was thinking, you know, who would need a lot of water? Maybe someone with a fish face.

Austin [as Hollis Whitaker]: Are crabs fish?

Art [as Elana Flores]: Aren't they?

Austin [as Hollis Whitaker]: I don't know. Not a biologist.

Art [as Elana Flores]: Oh. No, me neither.

Janine [as Chanti Park]: If you could talk to fish, do you think you'd be able to talk to a crab?

Austin [as Hollis Whitaker]: If I could talk to fish—what would I wanna do with that? What a bad power that would be.

Janine [as Chanti Park]: [Sigh]. (Defensive) Hey.

Art [as Elana Flores]: I don't know, maybe fish—

Ali [as Caitlin Key]: Well...

Art [as Elana Flores]: —maybe fish got interesting things to say.

Austin [as Hollis Whitaker]: No, I don't have nothing to say to animals. I think anyone who could talk to animals is probably wasting their fucking time.

[Pause]

Art [as Elana Flores]: Well, yeah, I mean—

Janine [as Chanti Park]: Ok.

Art [as Elana Flores]: Not everyone—no, you know, sometimes you can just do something.

Austin [as Hollis Whitaker]: What do you mean “something”—what

Art [as Elana Flores]: I mean like, if you—tomorrow, you could talk to animals, that's not wasting your time. You just started talking to animals.

Austin [as Hollis Whitaker]: Why would you waste your time talking to an animal? What's an animal know?

Art [as Elana Flores]: Ah, I mean sometimes just—you just—you know, let's just say you're like a doctor, and like—you're, oh like a funny—funny guy, and then like...

Austin [as Hollis Whitaker]: Like a comedian?

Art [as Elana Flores]: ...like your hamster starts talking to you.

Austin [as Hollis Whitaker]: Your *hamster* starts talking to you. Why would you have a hamster in the first place? What a boring animal.

[Pause]

Art [as Elana Flores]: Um, maybe your kid likes it. And like...

Austin [as Hollis Whitaker]: (Laughing) Ok, first of all...lady, no kids. [Pause] Anyway my point remains, uh...

Art [as Elana Flores]: But DOCTORS have kids.

Austin [as Hollis Whitaker]: Doctors have kids...huh. [Laugh]. Yeah. Doctors *do* have kids. Yeah. That's funny.

Janine [as Chanti Park]: (Exasperated) Do you know where we could find Horseface? I'm going to—we need to—we need to—you know. [**Austin** laughs] If he's your alibi, then...*then* we should probably follow up.

Austin [as Benedict Boatwright] (overlapping): My alibi? Whoa, wait a second. Let's stop using Latin. Alright? [**Ali** and **Janine** snort] Let's slow things down. Horseface—

Janine [as Chanti Park]: You sure you don't wanna talk to animals?

[**Austin** laughs]

Austin [as Hollis Whitaker]: Horseface—[laugh] Horseface is...where's Horseface at? Horseface is...he's safe. I don't know why you need to know more than that.

Ali [as Caitlin Key]: Because we're trying to make *you* safe.

Austin [as Hollis Whitaker]: Wh—(defeated) ugh.

Janine [as Chanti Park]: Just cause Horseface is safe doesn't mean he's useful to you. [Pause] We wanna make him useful.

Austin: Um...I think he gets, like, a little serious real quick. And he says—

[as Hollis Whitaker]: Oh, my—my parents wanna know where Horseface is. [Sigh]

Ali [as Caitlin Key]: Do you...do you want me to keep this from them?

Austin [as Hollis Whitaker]: [Sigh] They're gonna kill him. If I tell you where Horseface is, you're gonna tell them where Horseface is, and then what's gonna happen is...that headline you talked about? It's gonna say uh—what's it gonna say? It's gonna say—I'm not very clever. If anyone has a joke, like, headline, I'd appreciate it. "Horseface..."

Ali [as Caitlin Key]: Face down...

Austin [as Hollis Whitaker]: "Face down with Horseface. Horseface found face down after facedown with cop clowns." They wouldn't call the cop clowns, because they're dead cops, which—that seems disrespectful, all said. But that's what's gonna happen. I told Horseface to go to ground because...because I *knew* he would be the one who takes the fall for this. I don't think he has it in him, frankly. He's a worker but, kill three cops? Whew. [Pause] That's—that's hard work.

[Pause]

Ali: What's this dude's first name?

Austin: Hollis.

Ali: Hollis.

Austin: Hollis Jewels Whitaker. [Pause] I did not realize his initials were HJ, but they sure are.

[Ali and Janine laugh]

Ali [as Caitlin Key]: [Deep inhale] Hollis, we aren't friends, but I'm fond of you. And you know that I got here by being an incredible liar. If you don't want your parents to know where Horseface is, they won't. But we need to speak to him.

Austin: Give me...a...check.

Ali: [Chuckle] Sure.

Austin: Um, I'm gonna give you a point of Moxie for that line.

Ali: Sure.

Austin: It's a good line. [**Ali** laughs] Note that you can spend Moxie if you ever need to spend Moxie. So your Charisma again—

Ali: Sure.

Austin: —is two. That's Diplomacy. That raises to three. Um...if anyone wants to help—

Ali (overlapping): Ok, yeah.

Austin: —you can help now. But—but also, I'd be fine with letting it roll. Well, letting it draw. I don't know what the phrase would be there. Anyway.

Ali: I'm gonna...draw this card.

Austin: Alright, go for it.

Janine: How many cards are we at here? Sorry?

Austin: Three. Three right now.

Janine: Ok.

Austin: Mm-hmm. [Pause] That is the bad joker.

Ali (overlapping): That's a bad joker.

Janine: Eugh.

Austin: That's a *hideous* joker.

Janine (overlapping): Why is it all—

Ali: (Quietly) Bloody...

Austin: It's bloody.

Janine: It's all photoshopped bloody.

Austin: (Laughing) It is.

Art: (Disgusted) Oh!

Janine: With teeny little bullet holes in it. If you—

Art (overlapping): Honestly...

Janine: —consider it on a scale of a card.

Art: A really bad outfit.

Austin: Yeah, it's a hideous outfit.

Ali: Yeah, I don't like it.

Austin: Um...

Janine: I mean it's a joker, it's...

Austin: I'm looking up the bad joker. [Laugh]

Janine: I like that it says "bad joker" on it on a little—

Austin (overlapping): [Laugh] It's SO funny.

Janine: —on a little, like, scroll?

Ali (overlapping): Mmm.

Austin: Fuck. If you flip a bad joker, you immediately end your turn—

Ali: Aw.

Austin: —and can't draw another card, regardless of how many you have available. [**Ali** chuckles] You fail at any check you were attempting and suffer a botch. Your character cannot act again until your next turn. [**Ali** sighs] I'm seeing if you—I'm seeing if you can Moxie this, but I don't—I don't know. Let's see. [Pause] I think—I would let you spend [**Ali** snorts] a Moxie to restart this, but you'd have to spend that Moxie I just gave you.

Ali: Ok.

Austin: Or to...wait—(Reading) "Choose a card you flip for your current trait..." Yeah, no, I think that's what it would be here. Would be-cause otherwise—like, "take extra trait action" is what you would be doing, and that would like extend your turn here and let you start again. But I do

think he like clenches up when you say that, and he is like—I think he just says straight to your face, he says—

[as Hollis Whitaker]: I've seen them break good liars before. You don't get it. I'm their *son*. I'm their legacy. They're going to protect me no matter what. You lie to them, they'll put the gun in YOUR hands. You'll be the headline.

Ali: [Deep sigh] I can't use my cool [laugh] powers for this either. I can't just out like a fucking knife and be like (half-hearted) "Whoa."

Austin: Wait—[laugh]

Ali: Not that I wanna pull a knife on this—

Austin (overlapping): What? [Laugh]

Ali: I could do that. [**Art** laughs] I could do that. I'm not gonna do that [**Janine** laughs]. Um, I just—I—ok. So I'm gonna be honest with everybody. I've been thinking about this...portal that I have for a long time. I was thinking it was a mostly knife-based portal—

Austin: Mmm. Mm-hmm.

Ali: —cause I was giving myself the uh—

Janine (overlapping): WHAT?

Ali: —melee weapon thing. Yeah, I would keep knives in the portal, and then, like, throw them at people.

Janine (overlapping): A mostly knife-based portal?

Austin: Yeah, makes sense.

Ali (overlapping): Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes.

Janine: ...Ok.

Ali: Um, anyway, that was my other idea, but yeah, that's the—portal's trapped one.

Janine: So he just turns around and goes to the bathroom and there's a knife there? [Laugh, **Ali** and **Austin** join in]

Ali: Um...no. Um...

Austin: You can redo the thing you just did. Like I'm not saying you can't...do Charisma—

Ali: Oh, make the same appeal, you know?

Austin: Yeah, you totally can, it just—gonna cost you that Moxie point to do it.

Ali: Sure-sure-sure. Um, yeah. [Sigh] I think she says “yeah—” uh, b-b-b-buh—she says—

[as Caitlin Key]: [Sigh] You’re right. You are their legacy...which means that you’re gonna be in their position one day. I would rather have my alliances with you.

Austin: Nice. Give me another...[chuckle] another draw.

Ali: (Laughing) Sure. [Giggle]

Austin: Now that we know the bad joker is out. Card number one...[**Ali** makes a silly motorboat sound in anticipation] is the king of clubs. An interesting draw.

Ali (overlapping): Sure.

Austin: Almost certainly a success, but is a club, which means it’ll come with a negative.

Ali: Um...yeah, I should do that instead of pulling another card.

Austin: So you’re good? You’re gonna keep it?

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Ok.

Ali: Yeah yeah yeah. I’m good—

Austin: So if your character hits the target—

Ali (overlapping): I would like to succeed.

Austin: Yeah. The target—hits the—[**Ali** laughs] character hits the target score for the trait check, but gets a club for the card suit, they are successful but suffer a complication. A complication impedes the character in a minor way or brings about unexpected and unintended consequences. A complication never negates the success of the trait check, it just provides a minor downside the character has to deal with. A good default complication is disadvantage going forward, but that’s not what the—the complication here is. A...I think he—I’ll just give you the success first, which is, he goes like—

[as Hollis Whitaker]: [Sigh] Fine. [Pause] I got Horseface stashed in...a...[sigh] down at the docks...in a—he’s gonna—you’re gonna find a container. You know, one of those big ones, marked uh...with a picture of a—

Austin: —or like a—not a sketch, what do you call it—like an icon of a...what’s a good icon that would be funny?

Janine: Goblet? I don't know. [Laugh]

Austin: Yeah, goblet. It's got a—no, let's do something—my first thought was sun—I was like we've used the sun in too many games. We can't use a—we've also used the goblet in too many things. Uhm [laugh]...I think it's just like a...[clicks tongue] a trash can's too mean. Uh [laugh].

Janine: (Laughing) An owl smoking a cigarette.

Austin: (Laughing) There you go. Yeah. It's an—I like an owl.

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I like an owl. It's like a simple owl mark. Gives you the number of a container.

[as Hollis Whitaker]: He's set up in there. We bring him food every night. Don't worry, he's fine. But he's—you know, probably getting a little lonely, so if he's a little...if he's a little screwy, that's probably it. You know? Isolation. Ack, couldn't be me. I need constant socialization. I need to talk to people every day. Anyway, that's where he is.

Austin: Caitlin, I need you...to—there's a rule, there's a thing in this game called (unsure) Reaction...? Check? A react—a Reaction... (sing-song) do a reaction. Where is it? Let me see here—

Ali: Mhm.

Austin: (Reading) "Making reactions. When taking actions on your turn, your character is putting forth significant effort in the task. They are focused on putting a bit of time into the attempt. Sometimes, the GM will determine your character must simply react to something without any preparation. This is called a reaction check, and it's a free action. When you need to make a Reaction check, the GM will tell you which traits and skills apply. Flip one card and one card only. Add your score in the appropriate trait to the pip value of this flipped card." So in this case this is a Perception check. And your Sense skill is going to uhm...give you another plus one. So you're gonna flip a single card, and take your Perception score—which is three—you're gonna add you Perception score, and then another plus one for Sense. So four. You're gonna add...four to whatever card you flip.

[Pause]

Ali: So that's a seven. So that becomes an eleven.

Austin: That becomes an eleven, which is a...jack. And that is a success. While he says this, the sun shifts a little bit in the room, and...you notice that there is, coming from like, his side, like—you see his long shadow, you know, kind of reaching across the entirety of the smoking room, as the music plays, and off to the side of his left shoulder, or his right—let's say his right shoulder, there is like a little extra...*square* of shadow coming off of him. As if he has like, you

know, a cardboard box taped to his shoulder, or something, you know? But he doesn't. But there's like extra shadow there. And that—

Ali (overlapping): Mmm.

Austin: —is fucking weird. [Laugh]

Ali: Yeah. [Pause] Um, god.

Austin: You don't know what that's about.

Ali: I wish I could like...I can't use—[laugh] I can't do this, but I wanna be able to like use my like...object permanence powers to like *mind* pierce it, but (laughing) I don't know if I can do that!

[**Austin** laughs]

Austin: I don't know what that *means*.

Janine: (Laughing) That's just a bunch of words!

Austin: I mean, listen, to be fair—

Janine (overlapping): they're cool words, but...

Austin: —if I was like “Oh, a new *Capers* book came out. One of the new (laughing) powers is *object permanence*, and it has a *pierce object* Boost—” [**Ali** snorts] you'd be like “yeah, that—yeah. Uh-huh.”

Janine: Yeah...

Austin: “Yeah. Sure.”

Ali: (Laughing) Sure.

Austin: Mhm.

Art: I have object permanence power because I am THE WORLD'S SMARTEST BABY.

[**Austin** laughs, **Janine** and **Ali** join in]

Ali: I have a very—I have a very weird...portals slash...you know...

Austin: Yeah. You're—

Ali (overlapping): Like, I wanted to...

Janine: I mean if you think about it, a knife portal is basically a test of your—your object permanence in a—in a—

Austin: It's true.

Janine: —really exponential way.

Ali: I can pull things out of *other places*.

Austin: It's true!

Janine: Exactly.

Ali: And there's something here that's like clearly not there, and I should be able to be like, "Mmm, is that my thing? Is it a different version of the thing that I have?"

Austin (overlapping): I will just tell, it is a different version of the thing—

Ali: Ok.

Austin: It is—that is some—what did you call it before? An altering? You are looking at an altering. [Laugh]

Ali: (Laughing) Ok, sure. Um...

Austin: Uhm...alright! As—I think that's probably the end of that scene. Right? [Pause] You know where Horseface is now. Unless people wanna poke at something else.

[Pause]

Janine: Do— (cutting herself off) mmm.

Art: Never poke a sleeping horse...face.

Austin: ...face. [Laugh]

Janine: I was gonna say, does he—does he, like, leave us first, or wait for us to leave?

Austin: I think at this point he's—he's been like trying to leave for a minute. I think finally at that—that mixed success, I think he gets up and is like—

[as Hollis Whitaker]: Alright! I'm going now...[laugh] I would love to have the three of you come...visit for...another time. Under different circumstances, though. Ms. Key, it's always a pleasure. Miss...Park, and Miss Fine...you're fantastic women who clearly know how to get things done, and I appreciate that in this world.

[Pause]

Austin: [Clicks tongue] Then leaves. [Pause] Leaving you in the smoking room [chuckle].
[Pause] I'll note that—

Janine: I wanna lightly go through his stuff.

Austin: Yeah, I was gonna say—I'll note, the shadow—the shadow box left with him, but everything else is...is...just still here. You can look through everything if you want to.

Janine: Actually, correction: first thing I wanna do is put my cigarette out on his chair, [**Austin** exhales a laugh] because the thing he said about talking to animals was very rude.

Austin: [Laughs loudly] Get 'im. [**Janine** laughs] Um...

Janine: The second thing I wanna do is use my Stealth to lightly go through some stuff...

Austin: Go for it.

Janine: ...and see if there's any...

Austin: Yeah! Um...that's a good idea. Give me a check for that. Which exists...in...[**Janine** chuckles] the...book!

Janine: Mhm.

Austin: Chanti, what is your Perception?

[Pause]

Janine: Tw—two? Or nine.

Austin: Two. Your Defense—

Janine (overlapping): Two.

Austin: —is nine, which means if I was—

Janine (overlapping): Ok.

Austin: —gonna try to do something *against* you, I would have to get more than a nine—

Janine (overlapping): Ok.

Austin: —to do it. Uhm...

Janine: Sure.

Austin: So, yeah. Two. Uh...then you're using Stealth to do this kind of quietly and not get in trouble?

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: Alright! Sounds good. So that's three. Is anyone helping?

Ali: I can help.

Austin: Ok, how are you helping?

Ali: Um...I—let me look at my stuff, actually, because I also have a...

Janine: Do you have Perception or something? Sense?

Ali (overlapping): I have Sense...

Austin: Yeah, Sense works.

Ali: ...which...yeah. Um...so yeah, I'll definitely help with that. I can try to help you know where to look, and stuff like that.

Austin: Yeah, sounds good. So that means get a plus one to the cards you draw. Draw your first card Chanti.

Janine: Mm it's a four of diamonds, so we're gonna keep going. [soft laugh]

Austin (overlapping): You're gonna keep on going! [Laugh]

[Pause]

Janine: (Frustrated) Ugh...

Austin: It's an eight of clubs. That's your second of three cards. I'll note, again, you could always spend Moxie to get effect. You could also spend Moxie in the middle of a trade. You don't have to—or the che—check. You don't have to do it beforehand. It's not like a...you know—

Janine: Mhm.

Austin: —stress or something. Eight of clubs! Nine of clubs, really.

Janine: (Tentative) Mm...

Austin (overlapping): You have one more you can draw! It's up to you! I like this part of the system a whole bunch. This is fun. For me.

Janine: Yeah...I think I'm gonna try—ah, I'm gonna re—I know I'm gonna regret this, but I'm gonna draw another card.

Austin: Go for it. Oof!

Janine: That's a three of clubs.

Austin: You have—(sing-song) it's a three of clubs...

Ali: Ooooh-ho-ho-ho.

Janine: (Disappointed) Yeah.

Austin: That's really bad. Cause it's a clubs too.

Janine: Yeah. He just walks in again with a gun.

Austin: [Laugh] Yeah. Right. Like BOP!

Janine: "You're in my chair!"

Austin: (Laughing) "You're in my chair." Um...what uh...I'm—I'm giving you the option here. Do you wanna spend Moxie to draw another card? Oh wait, you can also spend Moxie—just to let *you* know—you could also spend Moxie to...one of these things is—uh, where is it? Uh...(Searching through book) buh-buh-buh-buh-buh..."Recall A Card" costs one Moxie, and that lets you...take a card—an earlier...(Reading) "Choose a card you flipped for your current Trade or Power Check, and use that card in lieu of the card currently in play. "So it's like if you played a good card before, and you still drew again, you can spend a Moxie to go back to that previous good card. Not that eight or nine is like a super good card? But that's on the table for you.

Janine: (Considering) Mmm...

Austin: Or you could spend a Moxie to increase card count and draw again. But right now you have the four of clubs.

Janine: (Unsure) Uh...[exhale] this is why I can't play Blackjack. I'm gonna spend a Moxie to draw again.

Austin: Hell yeah. Hit me. [Pause] Alright! That's an eight—that's a nine of diamonds.

Janine (overlapping): (Cheerfully) Ey! Ok!

Austin: That's—and—and that is a—

Janine: That's better than going back would have been.

Austin: That's—yes. Totally. Totally. That is success. What you find is a...key—you find a key...to a hotel room. You find this like in a...god—he's a fucking slob. It's just out on a table somewhere, right? [Chuckle] Like people are going through [**Janine** laughs] books and shit. But just like on...a table—like a side table next to one of the nice chairs in here is a...a letter, like a very short note letter, that says, like "Room 22...A. H." Then it says the name of the hotel. The

name of the hotel is, ironically, the hotel—what is the name of the hotel that your—your speakeasy is in?

Ali: Oh. Um...

Austin: That's what—we didn't come up with this already. But, if we had, it's that.

Ali: [Laugh] The—the first thing I think—like the *Grenada*? What's a Grenada?

Austin: That is a...

Ali: (Quietly) It's a word.

Janine (overlapping): That's a place.

Austin: It IS a place.

Janine: Also, I think it means pomegranate or something? Right?

Austin (overlapping): Oh, that's nice. Yeah! It does mean pomegranate.

Janine: Isn't that what grenadine's from?

Austin: Is it? I didn't know that. That makes sense. Sure! I like—

Ali: It was either that or like "The Grand...something."

Austin: The Grand Pomegranate. Well "pomegranate" must already have "grand" in the name, right?

Janine: The Pome-grand-ate.

Austin: Uh.

Janine: No?

Austin: It comes from—[chuckle]

[**Art** laughs]

Art: I mean we should save that for some sort of pomegranate thief. It'd be the Pome-Bandit.

[**Austin** and **Janine** laugh in the background] Running to the trademark real quick.

Austin: Great. Good. [Pause] I'm here for the pomegranate!

Ali (overlapping): The Grand Canary.

Austin: The *Grand Canary* is also fantastic. I love it. Um...pomegranate just means "seeded apple" in Latin, so...good to know. Um...The Grand Canary—it says—yeah—

Art (overlapping): (Laughing) Why is that good to know?

Austin: You never—you never know. You never know when it's gonna come up, you know? (Laughing) You know? [**Art** laughs quietly in the background]. Um...buh-buh-buh-buh...I think—in fact, instead of just saying “A.H.” it actually says, you know, “Room 22, Alexandra.” [Pause] Which you know from Benny downstairs is the name of the woman—Alexandra Hughes is the name of the woman that he was with that night, said the butler. So that's the second lead. So you have that, and you have....Horseface down at the docks. [Pause] So I think...y'all leave. You know, your car is waiting for you, and you get back in the car. Where are you going? Are you going to check on Horseface at the docks? Are you going after Alexandra Hughes back at the Grand Canary? What is your—what is your—what are your next steps. Feel free to also just talk through a plan or talk to each other as characters. Also, I would love to get a fashion minute, cause we really—I really gotta be able to picture these characters.

Ali: Right. Sure.

Art (overlapping): Yeah, I've been working on this. [**Ali** laughs] Cause I did a bad job in episode 0, and if—if you listen to that and you're here now, I wanna say I know, and I'm gonna do better.

Austin: I—you know what, Art, I appreciate it.

Art: Yeah. I was just—I wasn't thinking clearly—I was trying to learn a lot of new information—

Austin: Yeah, no, no, no, I got ya...

Art: So there's this—there's this style of...of dress you see in the Baz Luhrmann Gatsby Movie.

Austin: Great. [**Ali** laughs softly in the background] I'm glad we're all pulling from the same playbook.

Art: I really struggled to like, find it. And like, what I really wanted and couldn't find is like some of the out—you know that scene where like...and maybe I'm making this up—has everyone seen this movie?

Austin: I've seen this movie.

Janine: I haven't.

Art (overlapping): Is there a scene where they're driving across the fridge and there's like another car that's playing like a Jay-Z song? Did that happen?

Austin: That happened—

Ali: I think so, yeah.

Austin: —at *least* in the trailer, if not in the movie.

Art: Yeah. I feel like there's a dress in that car that I want to pull from here, but it's not—I couldn't find it on the internet easily. This is one of those things where like, I'm gonna talk for twenty more seconds, and I'll just look and be like—I have the full scene on Youtube. [**Austin** and **Ali** chuckle] It doesn't even have a copyright strike.

Austin: Does anyone else wanna go while Art—[laughs] finds...

Ali: I would like to, yeah. Do you mind if I...

Art: No, I'm sorry that I—

Ali: No! [Laughs]

[**Austin** laughs]

Art: —I jumped and then I didn't...

[**Ali** laughs]

Ali: I just want you to have the space—

Art (overlapping): I've jumped out of a—an airplane and then realized I didn't even put on my backpack.

[**Austin** and **Ali** chuckle]

Ali: Sure, yeah, so I...when I was thinking about looks for Caitlin, it's tough because 1920s women's wear is, like so specific and so cool...

Austin: Mhm.

Ali: ...cause it's like really really low waists, but she doesn't wear women's clothes, so—[laughs]

Austin: Right.

Ali: The—the thing I instead wanted to do was a....a really old style savvy thing that I'm in love with, which is putting someone in a suit but each part of the suit has...a fabric of a different pattern?

Austin: Oh, interesting.

Ali: So she has like, you know, a button down shirt that has a, like a...like a gingham checkered patterned on it. And then she has like a (laughing) houndstooth vest—

Austin: Mmmmm...

Ali: —and then like a herringbone...coat and, like, tartan plaid pants.

Austin: Mhm.

Ali: But like, I think that the...I think it's such a specific like—I think it's supposed to...attract attention but also just like annoy people? In a sort of way? Because it's like—it's perfectly tailored, and then also—it like still goes together?

Austin: Mhm.

Ali: It's like one of those things where you look at it, and you're like "I know that's fucked up, but it's also visually appealing, and I am annoyed about it because I lived in this fuck up, like, city about [**Austin** laughs] not letting people do this.

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Austin: Mhm.

Ali: (Laughing) Um...so, yeah.

Austin: Ok!

Ali: [Clicks tongue] Yeah.

Austin: Uh...is...is Elana ready or should we go to Chanti?

Art: I mean I'm clicking on the two links you put in the chat—

Austin (overlapping): Let's go to Chanti.

Art: —and seeing if those are...

Austin: Uh huh. Sure does. What's Baz Luhrmann doing now?

Art: I don't know. Did you see the Wes Anderson trailer?

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Art: It's weird how he makes movies too. No one makes movies like Wes Anderson.

Austin: Oh wow, do you—Art you should know what Baz Luhrmann's doing next.

Art: Uh-oh.

Austin: It's—I don't know if it's an "uh-oh." I think it's a very You thing.

Art: Ok.

Austin: It's uh—it's uh—it's an Elvis Presley movie.

Art: Oh, that's a good idea for him.

Ali (overlapping): Hmm.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: Oh, and that's—that's the exact shot I was looking for, and I'm sure that this song just isn't in the movie, right? Mmm. But this golden black dress isn't actually what I thought it was gonna be in my mind.

Austin (overlapping): Oh my GOD [laughs].

Art: But I'm just gonna take it.

Janine: Yeah, this is just a bodycon dress. This isn't—mm.

Austin: What's that mean? What's a bodycon dress?

Ali: It's, like, body conscious...

Janine (overlapping): Bodycon is like a—it's just a—like a—yeah...

Austin: Oh...

Ali: It's like, it's very thin, and—well not thin, it's just form-fitting—

Janine (overlapping): It's—it's just like a tight dress, yeah...It's a Now thing.

Ali: Yeah, yeah.

Austin: So bodycon is not a convention that you go to, where they—

Ali: Sure isn't. Not one that I go to at least.

Janine: Oh, yeah, no [mumbling].

Austin: (Laughing) True. Good. Uhm...huh.

Art: Hold on. This is the...

Austin: (Exasperated) Oh my god...

Janine: What is—Art? [**Austin** laughs loudly] What is the thing you're looking for, cause maybe I can help. [Chuckle] Maybe people here can help.

Ali : Yeah.

Austin: (Laughing) I've done all I can do! I've provided the EXACT sequence.

Janine: Ok, yeah that's just—I don't know if there's a specific word for that, but it's—

Austin (overlapping): I mean it's a dress...

Janine: You want, like, the silhouette of the time, which is like very straight up and down, heavy—heavily de-emphasized breasts and waists.

Art: Mhm.

Austin: It's just like a tube.

Art: Yeah. Um, the dress should also play the song “Izzo,” by...

Austin: [Scoffs] Good. Sorry, yeah—”H to the” in parentheses.

Janine: Mmm.

Art: “H to the” in the par—in parentheses.

Austin: Right.

Art: And then like, an Avril Lavigne tie and a hat.

Austin (overlapping): That's the anthem. Get you damn hands up. Yeah. Uh-huh. [Laugh] Did you say an *Avril Lavinge tie and a hat??*

Art: Uh-huh, yeah. Mhm.

Austin: Ok.

Art: The sketch I provided is from the Prada 2011 collection.

Austin: There we go.

Art: So it's not period. It's also—the sketch is—this is all sequins. It's not all sequins.

Austin: If you do a search for “[Prada 2011 sketch blue](#)” you will find the—and this is also from the Great Gatsby sketch stuff. You will find the dress that Art is talking about, thank you.

Art: Yeah, that's true—this—I found it from a Vogue UK article.

Austin: Great.

Art: Which has a...just a—fashion sketches are weird and good. The *people* in these sketches look so...mad?

Austin: Yeah. [**Janine** chuckles softly] It's 'cause they're stuck inside of a sketch.

Art: Mmm.

Austin: Can't get out.

Art: I never thought of them as **Alive**.

Austin: Mmm. Now you'll never not think of them as **Alive**. Chanti? What are you wearing?

Janine: I don't have a lot of specifics, because I'm mostly...in my head drawing on a combination of outfits popularly worn by Josephine Baker and Anna May Wong?

Austin: Mmm.

Janine: Because, you know, they were extremely fashion forward, extremely, you know, famous and recognizable.

Austin: Mhm.

Janine: Also, lot of feathers, lot of like headpieces...I think because—Chanti's biracial, and I imagine her having more of a black hair texture—

Austin: Mhm.

Janine: So I think she probably has for her hair, much more of the like...[sigh] you know Josephine Baker had a really really really slicked down not quite [finger wave](#).

Austin: Mhm.

Janine: Like it was tighter than a finger wave, really. So it kind of, in profile, looked more like the sort of [Eton Crop](#), like really close to the head—

Austin: Yeah...

Janine: —kind of hair style? So I'm picturing her...I'm picturing her with that, but there is also like a school of 1920s hair that's, like, extremely teased and fluffy.

Austin: Mhm.

Janine: And I could see her—I could see Chanti with that just as much...

Austin: Hey, how does it feel to be in a place with like not-good hair product?

Janine: [Clicks tongue] I mean it depends. One of the first—isn't this around when—

Austin: Yeah...

Janine: —actually this might've been sooner. One of the first, like—one of the first direct sales companies, kind of, and one of the first like Black millionaires—

Austin: Mhm.

Janine: —was a woman who sold Black hair care products, and like—and things like that. So that does exist?

Austin: Yeah...

Janine: It's not as advanced as what Chanti would know, certainly.

Austin: [Chuckles] Yes.

Janine: But also I don't really imagine—I've never really imagined Chanti as being really into relaxing and things like that.

Austin: Sure, sure.

Janine: She'd probably be more of like a—like a silk press—

Austin: Mhm.

Janine: —kind of girl. Slightly more temporary solutions.

Austin: Would make sense.

Janine: And also braids. I've always described her as being more into braiding.

Austin: Right.

Janine: Also—I mean just because we have a couple characters who've referenced like, neck ties and stuff, it is worth mentioning that the 20s were—there's a lot of like, very...androgyny-friendly fashions for women. Like, there's a lot-a lot-a lot-a lot-and a lot of women who were wearing, you know, "Avril Lavigne" ties—skinny neck ties and things like that.

Austin (overlapping): That's what they called them back then, was Avril Lavigne ties.

Ali: (Softly) Mhm.

Austin: That's where she got her name.

Janine: Yeah. But also like very—

Art (overlapping): Yeah that's a stage name. For the tie.

Austin: Yeah. [Laughs]

Janine: —very like, boy school uniform-style sweaters and things like that too, so.

Austin (overlapping): Sure.

Ali (overlapping): Yeah, yeah, yeah. There's even—pulling a picture of [Mary from Downton Abbey](#) where she's wearing, like, a vest and a—

Janine: Yeah.

Ali: —collared shirt and a thing. Um...I think that's just who casts...Caitlin by the way.

Austin: Oh, good.

Ali: I keep thinking of her, so it's easy.

Austin: Yeah, that works. Sure

Ali: Yeah. [Soft chuckle] I think it's this specific haircut too, where it's like cut short to like where her jaw starts?

Austin: Mhm.

Ali: Like all the way—like the back, and then straight along her jawline.

Janine: So that's kind of the Eton crop I think, is my understanding—

Austin (overlapping): Gotcha.

Janine: —it's that very, like, severe...usually very dark...very rigid cut. Yeah.

Austin: It is—it is a fucking cool cut, so...

Ali: You can see the back of it, kind of poking out too, which is fun.

Austin (overlapping): Yeah. Ok...damn, that show really goes into the twenties, huh?

Ali: Mhm.

Austin: That's the thing it does. Alright! Uhm, so, y'all are outside, you're back in your car. Where are you headed? What are you talking about? What's the deal?

Ali: I guess if we're just hand waving the conversation with the butler, which would be like, "Oh yeah, she's this lady, she's at the hotel" or whatever—

Austin: Uh, do you tell him that? Or...cause he—he brought her up when you were going in, and said that he had—that the—that the young master had spent the—was spending time with her that night, and that she was there and that it's probably her fault.

Ali: Right.

Austin: And then you found the card with the key, but I didn't know—are you also gonna bring it up to the butler? Cause if you are, that's a different conversation.

Ali: Yeah, we can just move on if it feels like that, but I was gonna talk to him about her.

Austin: You can.

Ali [as Caitlin Key]: Benny, thank you for granting us access. He seems so...shaken.

Austin [as Benedict Boatwright]: Oh, I *know*. Hopefully he'll be—have his wits sooner than later.

Ali [as Caitlin Key]: [Sigh] Knowing him, I'm sure he will. But, this—this woman that you mentioned...

Austin [as Benedict Boatwright]: Ugh. (Disdainful) *Hughes*.

Ali [as Caitlin Key]: What do you know about her?

Austin [as Benedict Boatwright]: Not much. She's a writer, I think. From out of town. He's so fascinated by women of *letters*.

Ali [as Caitlin Key]: ...of letters? [Chuckle]

Austin [as Benedict Boatwright]: Woman of letters. People who write. Women who write.

Ali [as Caitlin Key]: Right. Right right right, of course. Well, who isn't?

Austin [as Benedict Boatwright]: I've never met her. Well, I've never spoken to her. I've met—I've seen the two together. Very strange eyes.

Ali [as Caitlin Key]: Do you know how long she's been in the city.

Austin [as Benedict Boatwright]: She's visited a number of times I believe. I don't pay attention to people who aren't worth it. [Laugh] She has no people, you know.

Ali [as Caitlin Key]: Friends, or...

Austin [as Benedict Boatwright]: Family. What really matters.

Ali [as Caitlin Key]: But of course.

Art [as Elana Flores]: (Quietly) We gotta get out of here. I'm gonna punch this guy.

[**Austin** laughs]

Ali [as Caitlin Key]: Well, thank you for your time. Until next time, Benny. It's been a pleasure.

Austin [as Benedict Boatwright]: An absolute delight.

[Pause]

Ali [as Caitlin Key]: [Groan] Those guys suck, huh? [Laugh]

[**Austin** laughs]

Art [as Elana Flores]: [Laugh] Yeah.

[**Janine** laughs]

[Music [*Extracurricular: Out of Time*](#) by Jack de Quidt starts playing]

[TIMESTAMP 02:11:54]