

[Sangfielle 36: Marrow in the Bone](#)

Transcriber: vesta

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

AUSTIN (as Reuben): Welcome to Marrowcreek, by the way!

ANDREW (as Chine): Thank you.

AUSTIN (as Reuben): We don't get too many visitors, all the way out here.

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

ANDREW (as Chine): It smells great out here.

AUSTIN (as Reuben): You don't happen—

AUSTIN: And looks close at you, Chine.

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

AUSTIN (as Zofina): You're not from here, are you? I can hear it.

KEITH (as Lyke): No, not at all.

AUSTIN (as Zofina): Do you come for the doctor? he might even be able to help with your sickness, I think.

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

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

SYLVIA (as Hazard): I'm fine. I'm apparently the only person here who has—

AUSTIN (as Delian): Shhh.

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

ANDREW (as Chine): Hey! Hey! Do you have a— do you have an extra fruit?

AUSTIN (as Delian): Yeah, of course.

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

SYLVIA (as Hazard): Chine!

AUSTIN: The banjo clatters, and one of the strings breaks, and the person who handed it to you puts their hand on your back, like “well done.”

SYLVIA (as Hazard): Hey, hey, hey. Hey. You. You know something. What have you seen? You've seen the— hey, tell me. Tell me, and I will throw as many fruit as you want at this guy.

AUSTIN (as Delian): Quiet. Come with— come— you stay here. We need— we can't talk right here.

ANDREW (as Chine): [hushed] I'll- I'll cover for you.

ANDREW: Chine hurls another fruit. [laughs softly]

AUSTIN (as Delian): Anyway, I think I've seen the fellow you're looking for up in the slaughterhouse. Day worker like me. I can introduce you.

AUSTIN: You catch movement in the trees. It's a big figure out east.

ANDREW (as Chine): Oh, you got- you got critters out here?

AUSTIN: The thing that moves is bigger than a critter, is what I would say, Chine. Muscles changed into bulbous, tumorous growths. You're only catching glimpses of it in the shadow of the trees here, but you're having a hard time understanding where flesh ends and metal begins. And it strikes you in this moment that the person who said that they saw something that looked like you was talking about the thing in the woods.

[Music ends]

AUSTIN: Keith. Lyke, what are you up to?

KEITH: Um, well. I guess I'm gonna go check out the doctor.

AUSTIN: Sure! It's an easy walk.

KEITH: Yeah?

AUSTIN: You were like here somewhere, right? You were down on this kind of south-western road?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And you know, it's the direction that Zofina gave you. You go east, you go south. The houses becoming increasingly, and the buildings in general become increasingly slim as you head towards this lake. The lake shimmers from the sunlight. And there is a fairly large clinic built of wood and local stone, that is built alongside this little- it's probably more of a pond than a lake.

Maybe it's, you know, I don't know where that line gets drawn, you know? I guess it's a lake, if I'm looking at the river size, and I look at the lake size, I think that's probably a lake given its width. Couple miles across, you know? And you absolutely recognise the architecture's being something someone from the Unschola Republica would have designed in terms of the moulding and you know, maybe there's like a cool gargoyle on it, even though it's kind of a low building. And there is a, you know, a heavy door.

But you pass someone walking away, it's a parent and a child. And the child is like skipping a little bit and is sucking on a candy. Probably one of those marrow candies. And yeah, you're able to go right in. It's the middle of the day, so it's wide open, you know? There's something like a waiting room with a few other people there sitting down, and I think it's a pretty, it's a pretty modern for the day setup, compared to the various sawbones and back, you know, backyard clinics you've been up till now? And there is a mural behind the kind of reception desk of a group of people walking. It's a very weird, there is like a, it's a wide shot of people walking in the dark, led by someone with a torch, and it's like Hieronymus Bosch? Is that right? Bosch?

KEITH: Yeah, Bosch, yeah.

AUSTIN: A painting in terms of the use of light, the dark- the use of light and darkness? It's not as busy as a Bosch painting, there's not so many little vignettes happening on the thing. It's just this one image? But the way that this kind of like, orange torch light cuts through the dark here is very similar and the way some of the figures are kind of twisted and tilted and looking up in various directions. And it's just not in line with the warmth of this room, you know? This seems like just a totally functioning waiting room for a doctor's office, you know? And, again there are a couple other people here sitting and waiting, and there is a receptionist, he kind of looks up at you and says,

AUSTIN (as Receptionist): I'm sorry, are you new here? I know everybody in town, are you a visitor?

KEITH (as Lyke): Uh yeah, just visiting! I was sent over this way.

AUSTIN (as Receptionist): By who?

KEITH (as Lyke): Ohh! I forgot her name, but she runs a little, you know, trinkets and magic-

AUSTIN (as Receptionist): Zo- Zofina.

KEITH (as Lyke): Zofina.

AUSTIN (as Receptionist): Zofina, Zofina, yeah of course. Take a seat. If Zofina sent you over, it must be- just take a seat.

KEITH (as Lyke): Must be what?

AUSTIN (as Receptionist): Zofina tends to um, if I'm being honest, try to take as much of our business for herself as she can. And so if she sent you, then that means it was something that she thought better if we treated.

KEITH (as Lyke): Hm.

AUSTIN (as Receptionist): It must be serious.

AUSTIN: He says with a little smile and,

KEITH (as Lyke): I'm fine!

AUSTIN (as Receptionist): Of course.

AUSTIN: The other two people here look at y- give you a look when you say "I'm fine", which is like, "yeah buddy, okay". There's a beat and another beat, and a woman comes out in a white coat and dark pants. And a sort of light, a light- actually I wanna say she's probably wearing something like a, maybe she hangs up something like an apron here before she comes out, and underneath she has on kind of dress clothes? Again, pants and a shirt. And before she can call the name of the next person, the receptionist calls her over and is like, [whispering sounds], points at you. And looks over to you and says,

AUSTIN (as Yersa): Ah!

AUSTIN: Like, as if to like, reach for a name and can't find it.

AUSTIN (as Yersa): I'll be seeing you now. Mr. Lyke? Lychen? Is that right?

KEITH (as Lyke): Mhm.

AUSTIN (as Yersa): Come with me.

AUSTIN: Leads you into a little doctor's office, a little examination room. A couple things catch your eye as soon as you step in the examination room. The first is a- I mean I guess you tell me which is first. One is a big jar of blood, that's just resting on a table near a windowsill.

KEITH: It's gonna be that. I'm shocked- I'd be shocked if it wasn't that.

AUSTIN: Okay. There is also a butterfly collection, you know like a glass-framed butterfly collection?

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: But all of the butterfly wings are still moving.

KEITH [overlapping]: Yup blood first, then butterflies.

AUSTIN: They all seem to be alive, okay. Then the third thing are probably the straps on the table which are like harsh leather straps, as if to strap someone in. And in proximity to the big jar of blood that has a sort of transfusion set-up with it? Like an IV, in and out situation. You're not sure which is in and which is out. But she doesn't direct you there, she directs you to a stool.

This woman, who again, her name, which I've said before so I don't mind repeating here, is Yersa Mallow. Upon seeing her,

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She is like someone you can't quite place her age. She might be 38, she might be 68?

KEITH: She might be 608!

AUSTIN: Sure. Stark white hair, a real spring in her step. Like does not seem like- you've known doctors. Most doctors know the weight of compromise, of like a life of you know, you can't save 'em all, and you can do your best, but there are limits to what you can do. She does not seem to have that? She is a little bit more vibrant?

KEITH: Well I heard that she has saved everybody.

AUSTIN: Uh yeah, sure. That might maybe change your outlook, right? And she asks you to take a seat, and says,

AUSTIN (as Yersa): Now, what is the problem as you see it?

KEITH (as Lyke): I- you've put it in a very interesting way, because I do not see a problem.

AUSTIN (as Yersa): Do you feel it? Or smell it?

KEITH (as Lyke): I was sent here by- wow!

AUSTIN (as Yersa): Zofina.

KEITH (as Lyke): Zofina.

AUSTIN (as Yersa): Yes.

KEITH (as Lyke): Um, and sort of came on a whim. I wasn't really looking for doctoring.

AUSTIN (as Yersa): I see, I see. I will not force you to do anything of course.

KEITH (as Lyke): That's good.

AUSTIN (as Yersa): But an examination could be useful.

KEITH (as Lyke): Okay. I'm curious, I mean they named the whole town after you, so.

AUSTIN (as Yersa): Oh, that is a myth.

KEITH (as Lyke): Is it the fruit, then?

AUSTIN (as Yersa): I'm not sure, I don't have much interest in names. I'm, I find names subjective. They're not things you can count on, you know. Open wide, hm?

KEITH (as Lyke): Aeeghh.

AUSTIN (as Yersa): Mm. Hm, I see.

AUSTIN: Takes a stethoscope and begins to listen to you, your chest and your back and various parts, and,

AUSTIN (as Yersa): Let me see your wrist.

KEITH: I hold up my arm.

AUSTIN: Mm, grabs them. Touches like, basically touches them, takes your pulse by hand, by finger.

AUSTIN (as Yersa): No, you're sick. It is not a bad sick. I can see why others might think you need my specialty. But it is, it is your sick. And maybe that is okay, hm?

KEITH (as Lyke): But I don't understand.

AUSTIN (as Yersa): Oh. We all carry little things in us, and some of them are good things, and some of them are bad things. And I deal with the bad things, the cancers and the parasites. And I can see why someone would see you, smell you, and think, here is one with a parasite. Here is one with a cancer. But you don't have that, you have a guard dog, don't you?

KEITH (as Lyke): Oh! Yeah, I do.

AUSTIN (as Yersa): Ah. I could excise it, if you wanted.

KEITH (as Lyke): Sure. Yeah. It's-

AUSTIN (as Yersa): Are you sure?

KEITH (as Lyke): Should I not be so sure?

AUSTIN (as Yersa): How often are you sure?

KEITH (as Lyke): I'm not sure.

AUSTIN (as Yersa): It seems like a big decision. Do you have things you like to protect, Mr. Lychen?

KEITH (as Lyke): Yeah! Yeah.

AUSTIN (as Yersa): Well then a guard dog could be useful, couldn't it?

KEITH (as Lyke): This is not a good dog.

AUSTIN (as Yersa): Oh, well. Have you taught it? Trained?

KEITH (as Lyke): I've mostly avoided it.

AUSTIN (as Yersa): I see. What sort of things do you prefer to spend your time with? Are you a cat person, Mr. Lychen?

KEITH (as Lyke): Mm... I like animals fine.

AUSTIN (as Yersa): And not this one.

KEITH (as Lyke): No.

AUSTIN (as Yersa): Hm.

KEITH (as Lyke): This one's angry, and it's got big teeth.

AUSTIN (as Yersa): Yes? And?

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

AUSTIN (as Yersa): Is that a reason not to like a thing? Big teeth.

KEITH (as Lyke): [chuckling] I guess I've helped more dangerous things than the dog.

AUSTIN (as Yersa): Huh. I- you take a seat, and I will remove it for you, but, it is your choice. Yes?

KEITH (as Lyke): I'm not su-

AUSTIN (as Yersa): You fear the dog? Oh- ...a single- a single small transfusion.

KEITH (as Lyke): Oh you want the blood.

AUSTIN (as Yersa): Just a little.

AUSTIN: She like gestures at the big jar of blood.

KEITH (as Lyke): It seems gross.

AUSTIN (as Yersa): Mmm... why is this?

KEITH (as Lyke): I don't know, just a lot of different bloods, sloshing around.

AUSTIN (as Yersa): How many bloods do you have?

KEITH (as Lyke): One.

AUSTIN (as Yersa): Are you sure?

KEITH (as Lyke): Yeah.

[Dre laughs]

AUSTIN (as Yersa): How are you so sure you have one blood?

KEITH (as Lyke): [slightly lost for words] Cause I've never put in any other bloods in there!

AUSTIN (as Yersa): How do you think bloods are made? You think you make one blood?

KEITH (as Lyke): Yeah, you just make one.

AUSTIN (as Yersa): For your whole life?

KEITH (as Lyke): Whole- yeah, just one!

AUSTIN (as Yersa): Well, I see. Mm, mhm. Take a seat, please,

AUSTIN: And directs you to the longer- slides the straps away, as if to indicate that you will not be needed to strapped down, probably. But says, you know,

AUSTIN (as Yersa): You can lie down now, and we can begin the procedure.

KEITH: Is this uh, is this gonna be a damage roll?

AUSTIN: It will be one damage to Blood.

KEITH: One stress to Blood.

AUSTIN: One stress, yeah yeah yeah, one stress.

KEITH: And then a Fallout roll.

AUSTIN: And then a Fallout roll, mhm! [Keith laughs] You know! It's like that.

KEITH: Let's see.

AUSTIN: And, I mean I think that she-

KEITH (as Lyke): You know?

AUSTIN (as Yersa): Mhm?

KEITH (as Lyke): I- I think I can- I think I can take care of the dog on my own.

AUSTIN (as Yersa): Oh, you do?

KEITH (as Lyke): I've got a place. I have a-

AUSTIN (as Yersa): Oh, a place? What sort of place?

KEITH (as Lyke): Um. I keep a- I keep my plant there. And I think I can get the- I think I can get rid of the- I just haven't had the time, it's the least of my concerns, usually.

AUSTIN (as Yersa): The dog inside of your blood is the least of your concerns.

KEITH (as Lyke): Yeah. Oh it's in my blood- is that the second blood, is the dog blood?

AUSTIN (as Yersa): No. Well, hm. Many bloods. Can I see the place you speak of?

KEITH (as Lyke): Mmm... yeah! Oh yeah, I'll show- I haven't shown off in a little bit.

AUSTIN: She smiles and moves to lock the door.

AUSTIN (as Yersa): It seems like something we would not want someone to come in and be surprised by.

KEITH (as Lyke) [overlapping]: Actually it's been a long time- well I mean I guess there are my friends that I show usually but, yeah, okay

AUSTIN (as Yersa): Ah, I see.

KEITH: I'll roll Sanctum of the Stone Chorus.

AUSTIN: What is the- what is that roll?

KEITH: That is-

AUSTIN: It's Discern Religion, right?

KEITH: Discern Religion, yeah.

AUSTIN: It is Risky here.

KEITH: It *is* Risky here, huh.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

KEITH: It's Risky- I'll just tell her-

KEITH (as Lyke): It's risky here. I forgot, it's risky here!

AUSTIN: You can use the- you can use that Occult cigarette if you want to get that protection.

KEITH: Oh yeah! I'll smoke the cigarette. [Austin chuckles] I'll get 4 protection, 4 protection-

AUSTIN: Uh huh. Uh huh.

KEITH: Or I have to roll the 4-

AUSTIN: Or is it you get it, you roll the 4- yeah, you roll the 4. [rolling sound] Of course it's a 1. Of course, this is the luck that we're having tonight.

ANDREW: Yeah.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Take one-

KEITH: No it's fine,

AUSTIN: Take one-

KEITH: Cause my experience is that rolling- consuming anything guarantees that I won't actually need that protection.

AUSTIN: Yeah, of course. Ahh, well there's a failure!

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: There's a hard, absolute failure.

ANDREW: Yeah.

AUSTIN: It's Risky, Risky is rough- hey! Only take the one, and hey, it cancels out! You don't get a Fallout from it. But you did fail the roll, and we'll talk about that in a sec- I guess I'll prime it now. You open the door-

KEITH [overlapping]: Well hold on, I don't get a Fallout from it, you don't think?

AUSTIN: Yeah? You don't have to- you didn't take any stress, right?

KEITH: Why wouldn't I take stress?

AUSTIN: Because I only rolled 1 stress, and you have 1 Mind protection- or one protection from consuming the cigarette.

KEITH: Ohhh!

AUSTIN: It worked exactly right.

KEITH: Ohhh!

AUSTIN: It finally worked, Keith.

KEITH: It finally worked! See, I had already forgotten that I had one protection.

AUSTIN: Yes, uh huh.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: However you did fail. Which means it doesn't work exactly- or I guess actually what it- we know what it means now, don't we? To some degree. I guess I'll- I'll-

KEITH: Well it's embarrassing is what it is, it doesn't work right.

AUSTIN [overlapping]: Let me just double check. Well no no no! It's gonna work the way- it's going to *work*, there's just going to be consequences, that's how we- you know Friends at the Table, right? Sometimes you prefer that it didn't actually succeed.

KEITH: [chuckles] Sure.

AUSTIN: The, the plants begin to open up the portal, right? There's that kind of great moment of this archway of plant life growing as you- what do you do again? How do you do this? What's the thing we see Lyke do?

KEITH: I think it's fast. I do it so much, that I think it's like getting faster.

AUSTIN: Mm. Mhm.

KEITH: And, I think, let's say that maybe it's, it's so fast- like I think I used to have to draw a thing,

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ANDREW: Yeah.

KEITH: And maybe I start doing it with my foot, and it just works. I don't think I've ever failed this roll. Maybe one other time.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: But- so let's, let's say that I have done it too quickly without taking into account-

AUSTIN: The difficulty of this place.

KEITH: Well there is now a god that lives there. It's not-

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AUSTIN: Ahhh. Yes.

KEITH: It's not just a portal to a temple. This is now,

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah. This is Aterika'Kaal's domain.

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: So. As you open it up, there are a few things that I think set you off a little bit. The first is, that normally the door closes behind you. And it does not do that now. The door remains open. You normally have to re-open the door and leave, but right now you can see right back into the doctor's office.

The second thing is, that you see a pair of bodies on the ground. Bloody and beaten. Dead. Strangers, a carpana and a, and a devil. You don't know who they are.

KEITH: Just real quick, just for Hazard, two horns?

AUSTIN: Two horns on the devil.

KEITH: Thought so.

SYLVIA: [chuckles] Thank you.

AUSTIN: You don't know how they died. I think you, the doctor immediately steps backwards upon seeing dead bodies in this place you've brought her to?

KEITH (as Lyke): Relax, you got a blood jar.

AUSTIN (as Yersa): Are- are these?

AUSTIN: She begins to reach for like something inside of a pocket, you know, some sort of knife, or something to protect herself with.

KEITH (as Lyke): Uh, that's new. That's not usually like that.

AUSTIN: And you start to see the tendrils of Aterika'Kaal begin to move inwards at you and the doctor.

Let's cut back up before we wrap up tonight. Let's cut back up to Hazard. Hazard, you've made it into the abattoir.

SYLVIA: Yeah, I'm sure it's super regular here, and everything else in this town seems normal.

AUSTIN: Oh, it's a fucking- I mean it's a slaughterhouse,

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And slaughterhouses are already fucked up, right?

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: In so many ways. And here is one where, [chuckles] it's mostly a bone slaughterhouse, so that's even worse. You are lead into- no one stops you as you get led into like the locker room where this person like has a little locker, that you open up the locker and like put their stuff, their wallet and stuff in and lock it up. And you can hear the sound of a shower running, kind of nearby. There's a shower in this locker room obviously for people who finish up their shifts. And Delian is like,

AUSTIN (as Delian): Anyway, he's around here, probably somewhere, I don't know. I gotta get to my shift but, if you ask around, I bet you can find who you're looking for.

SYLVIA (as Hazard): Wait, you're seriously-?

AUSTIN (as Delian): Well, I told you I'd bring you to where he was. This is- he works here sometimes, like I said.

SYLVIA (as Hazard): [exhales] Yeah, I get- yeah, you know, okay. Have a great shift, Delian.

AUSTIN (as Delian): I do my best. I'm in the stick pit today, so.

SYLVIA (as Hazard): I don't even wanna know what that is.

AUSTIN: And just leaves you here in the locker room, alone.

SYLVIA: Okay! Well, I guess I'm gonna go looking to- for someone either to talk to and ask, like, this about, or just if I see someone like out on the like, floor.

AUSTIN: Give me a Discern roll.

SYLVIA: I don't have Discern, so it's just gonna be a Haven.

AUSTIN: Ooh. It's just gonna be a Haven, huh. You could give me a Sneak!

SYLVIA: Okay.

AUSTIN: Could be sneaky about it. Or are you being talky about it? If you're being talky about it,

SYLVIA: I think I'm trying to blend in, so I think Sneak would work here.

AUSTIN: Let's see you do Sneak. Sneak Haven. Uh huh.

SYLVIA [overlapping]: As much as I can blend in with the whole,

AUSTIN: Yeah. Mhm.

SYLVIA: Always wearing a fucking face-covered mask.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah.

SYLVIA: I got a success at a cost!

AUSTIN [overlapping]: Hey, that's a success at a cost! We know how this goes. Roll D6. Hey! There you go! That's only a 1! That's only a 1, take 1 to Fortune.

SYLVIA: Okay.

KEITH: There's always a cost.

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

KEITH: Here at Friends at the Table we love a cost.

SYLVIA: Okay.

AUSTIN: No Fallout- hey! You got a 10, look at that!

SYLVIA [overlapping]: I really almost missed the zero on that ten and was like, did I, wow?

AUSTIN: Did you for real get-? Yeah yeah yeah. So you do a little lap of this whole place. You, it's gross. We don't need to get into detail about what a slaughterhouse is.

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: You do not see the person *fucking* anywhere. You don't seem them in this place or in that place, this is me naming places it's a slaughterhouse, it's places A, B, and C. [Sylvi chuckles] You know, you listen in and try to eavesdrop about people talking about other people, no one here who you hear described matches what you thought you heard, or what this person looks like. There's nothing.

And you find your way back to the locker room. And emerging from the shower, towel around his waist, chest out proud. You know, wide-shoulders, slim waist, real inverted-triangle situation happening on this motherfucker.

SYLVIA: Oh my god.

AUSTIN: Hair slicked back, is a one-horned devil.

AUSTIN (as One-Horned Devil): Well, well, well. Didn't expect to see you here.

SYLVIA: I think I gotta pull my pistol out now.

AUSTIN (as One-Horned Devil): Woah now buddy! Hey! Why you so riled up?

SYLVIA: It's- Austin, it's them, right? Like, I recognise it as-?

AUSTIN: Give me a- you know. Give me a Discern.

SYLVIA: Okay.

AUSTIN: You don't have Discern, right? Is that- we already went over this?

SYLVIA: I don't have Discern, but I'll roll it, fuck it.

AUSTIN: I mean this is- this is, yeah, give me the roll. Give me the roll. Unless you're just gonna shoot. If you're just gonna shoot, you can also just choose to shoot.

SYLVIA: No, I'm not gonna shoot.

AUSTIN: Okay.

SYLVIA: I- I kind of jumped to an assumption that Hazard recognized them immediately, so.

AUSTIN: Well, I mean, how well do you remember them?

SYLVIA: This is the thing-

AUSTIN: Do you remember them enough to say it's a person with a- it's a devil with one horn, right?

KEITH: Well hold on-

SYLVIA: Yeah.

KEITH: What did they say? They said "look who it is!"

AUSTIN: Uh huh, yeah!

KEITH: So.

SYLVIA: Yeah, this is fair.

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

SYLVIA: I'm gonna roll this Discern roll, I think.

AUSTIN: Okay.

SYLVIA: I- I, you know-

AUSTIN: You have Haven, you just don't have Discern.

SYLVIA: Yeah, and I got an 8.

AUSTIN: Hey, that's a full success!

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: This is- this is them, but you realize something strange happens, that I would've just narrated as a thing that was true that you would have just not noticed, which is there is a moment where they walk past, or he walks past a, like a column in this locker room?

And when he comes like, pass the other side, he is wearing a brown suit, with like a light you know, pink shirt, dress shirt underneath, and a vest, and a gold watch, you know, chain. He has a carnation, and his hair is now not just slicked back from the water but is gelled back in a way that is like, this is not only him, it is him the last you saw him exactly.

You can make out- there is a moment when you focus in on the broken horn, he only has one horn, the other one is broken, and you're like, you remember staring at the horn exactly like this. So this is him, you're certain it's him, but you're also certain it's- there is something- there *is* something off about this moment, and about what's being done here, and like why the fuck is he in a slaughter- why is he working in a slaughterhouse?

SYLVIA (as Hazard): Why are you working in a slaughterhouse?

SYLVIA: I think I'm going to say it!

AUSTIN: I think he says,

AUSTIN (as One-Horned Devil): I would like to know just like you! I'm not from this little town. Why'd you- did you do this? Was this some sort of spell, or ritual?

SYLVIA (as Hazard): Wh- ...no! I just saw you here.

AUSTIN (as One-Horned Devil): You want another game. Is this what this is about?

SYLVIA (as Hazard): I want what you took from me.

AUSTIN (as One-Horned Devil): Oh well that's, I can't do that. I mean we could work our way back there. We played many games that night- you don't remember, do you?

SYLVIA (as Hazard): You know I don't.

AUSTIN (as One-Horned Devil): Take a seat. [slight stuttering] Put the gun away.

SYLVIA: I think it's like, you know the thing like people can do with a revolver is one they can like put the hammer back.

AUSTIN: Yeah yeah yeah.

SYLVIA: Where instead of- but like I think, it's like. Does that, but keeps it unholstered and within like, right next to them?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

SYLVIA (as Hazard): What are we playing?

AUSTIN (as One-Horned Devil): False War.

SYLVIA (as Hazard): Yeah, probably should've known.

AUSTIN (as One-Horned Devil): What did I take from you? Do you remember that much?

SYLVIA (as Hazard): You took everything. You took *me*.

AUSTIN (as One-Horned Devil): Okay well then, what we playing for in this first game? Because I can't give you everything back at once.

SYLVIA: I'm trying to figure out like what would be the most interesting thing to say here. Um,

SYLVIA (as Hazard): Let's start with some memories, how about that?

AUSTIN (as One-Horned Devil): Memories. I'm good with that. Let's see here.

AUSTIN: Produces a pack of cards fresh, still in the wrapper, from inside his inside coat jacket. And just on like a little you know, a bench in a locker room, deals out deck- deals out hands for both of you.

AUSTIN (as One-Horned Devil): Talking about memories is fun, because I don't remember how I wound up here. You swear you didn't do anything to- you don't have anything to do with that, right?

SYLVIA (as Hazard): I'm not exactly in the game of trying to give you a menial labour job? I feel like our history goes a bit beyond that.

AUSTIN (as One-Horned Devil): You know it's funny I wound up here, first thing I remember,

AUSTIN: Begins to play cards.

AUSTIN (as One-Horned Devil): First thing I remember is holding this.

AUSTIN: And produces a knife from inside the coat jacket. It's a stick knife, it's a knife they don't make anymore because that's not how they kill cattle anymore.

[00:30:00]

But it used to be a sort of, there's no guard on the handle, and it's sharp on both ends, and it's mostly a puncturing knife. It's meant to quickly kill an animal.

And he puts it down on the left hand side of the cards, almost as if he's placing like his side of the bet, you know? It's almost like that's what he's put in the pool against your memories as the thing you want? It's not necessarily clear what he'll do with that knife. And, uh huh?

SYLVIA: No, I was gonna like, I think, I was gonna say like I think Hazard just, like, eyes the knife? And asks like,

SYLVIA (as Hazard): Is that the same one?

AUSTIN (as One-Horned Devil): The very same, it's a good knife. It's not normally my tender, but um, can't say no to a good tool.

SYLVIA (as Hazard): Yeah I guess I learned that the hard way, huh?

AUSTIN (as One-Horned Devil): Uh huh. Play your hand, hm?

AUSTIN: How've we been doing False War?

SYLVIA: I genuinely think it was just through some dice rolls?

KEITH [overlapping]: Yeah we've done one roll-

SYLVIA [overlapping]: But I don't know the exact system-

AUSTIN: It was- it was, it depends on, it was Haven was the thing, and it was based on how you played, right?

KEITH: Yes.

AUSTIN: It was Compel to like bluff and stuff, it was Discern to catch bluffing and just kind of play straight. And it was Sneak to cheat, but I don't think anyone cheated. And I wanted to say there was another roll but I don't remember what that was. I don't remember what- there was a third one I know at some point, but I don't remember what it was. Or fourth one, I guess, I don't know.

Discern, Compel, or Sneak, what do are you rolling?

SYLVIA: I think if this was someone else, I'd be rolling Compel?

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

SYLVIA: But I'm rolling Sneak.

AUSTIN: Alright, give me Sneak Haven. This is Risky.

SYLVIA: That's success at a cost- oh, it's-

AUSTIN: You missed me saying Risky.

SYLVIA: Oh! Well, yeah, I did, so it's a failure-

AUSTIN: I'm gonna let- do you want me- do you want to, because you rolled it before I said this, do you wanna re-roll it and-? I mean you don't have anything you can spend on this, right?

SYLVIA: I don't, I don't. I mean like I think like,

AUSTIN: You're gonna do it. You're gonna do it no matter what? Alright.

SYLVIA: I'm gonna do it because I failed it.

AUSTIN: Then let's- well let's- right, uh huh. Yeah, you did, you failed here, huh. Go ahead and give me a- yeah.

SYLVIA: I failed the-

AUSTIN: Okay then I feel good about this, you failed twice in a row. Alright.

AUSTIN (as One-Horned Devil): [chuckles] Memories. Give me your hand.

SYLVIA: Yeah, I'll reach out.

AUSTIN: What's this do? This does D6 Kill Piercing Good. Take 5 Blood.

SYLVIA: Okay. Piercing means that it ignores my protection?

AUSTIN: It ignores your protection, I don't think- do you have Blood protection?

SYLVIA: I have 1 Blood protection from the retribution.

AUSTIN: Well it ignores your Blood protection, yeah, right. Yeah, uh huh. So take 5 Blood. And you do get a memory back. Hey, take Minor Fallout, that's fun. And it's Minor Blood Fallout, right?

SYLVIA: Yep.

KEITH: Almost worth it- how much stress do you have right now, Hazard?

SYLVIA: Well because- you know what? I've been getting Fallout pretty regularly,

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

SYLVIA: So I actually only have one now. Because of the Blood stress just cleared. But, like I had like six Mind and then I got a Fallout on that so, it went back down to zero.

KEITH: Oh, okay.

SYLVIA: And the exact same thing-

KEITH: Cause I was just about to say maybe it would've been better to get a Major Fallout, clear all your stress, but you have no stress because of all the Fallout.

AUSTIN: Cause of all the Fallout.

SYLVIA: Yeah, it's you know.

AUSTIN: You're going to take Disarmed. You drop and lose whatever you're holding, leaving you defenceless; you inflict D4 stress in combat until you source a weapon- this is like, it's not like you're sourcing a weapon, it's that you can't hold a weapon right now.

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So take Disarmed, and I guess rewrite it to be like, until you heal, you can't hold a weapon. That's probably too strong. You know what, that's too strong. You know what, here's what you should actually take, is Furious. You're hurt, short-tempered and perceive sleights everywhere. You cannot help another character by adding a dice to their roll.

That, I think actually fits much more closely, the thing that is happening here is you get stabbed in the hand. And as it happens, you do get a memory back. Which is this exact thing happening. The cards played were the same. And suddenly you realize that there are like, there are elements of the words that are being said, that are like, did I hear him say many of these words once before already? Like, is there a sort of cut-up thing happening with the words that are being said? Or is this really the person in front of me, you're not sure.

But there is the second memory. The second part of this memory is why he stabbed you in your hand. And remember, you lost this hand, so you should not have gotten any memories back, let alone this one. But he stabbed you because you, he didn't believe you would let him take the thing that you bet for. It flashes back to you very quickly at this point. You had- I mean maybe, the memories don't flashback, who you were does not come back.

SYLVIA: Mhm.

AUSTIN: You don't remember- you remember losing who you were. And you get the final memory from the final hand back. And you were betting it all, to get yourself back. You put a single coin down, the last coin to your name. But it wasn't any coin. You'd been holding it in your mouth the whole time. The silver coin.

And you bet it. And you- he was right. You would've reached for it, and would've run, because you know, even with all your memories gone, this is something so important, that to lose it in a card game is the greatest sin you could do. But he stabbed you, and he took it from you like he took everything else. And now he just looks over to you again and he says,

AUSTIN (as One-Horned Devil): I just don't think you're very good at cards, Hazard.

KEITH: [laughs] Brutal!

SYLVIA: I'm about to shoot this motherfucker. [laughs]

AUSTIN: Oh well don't worry, because in this moment, let's get a little bit more here and then we'll wrap up. Chine.

ANDREW: Mhm?

AUSTIN: What did you do after you asked- after you put this other person in the shed?

ANDREW: Um, I think I just turn to the trees where I saw whatever it is, and just, whistle.

AUSTIN: Uh huh. It- at your whistle- alright everybody, this is. We're in "it's about to get real" time. [Dre chuckles]

KEITH: It's about to get real in three different spots.

AUSTIN [overlapping]: I have to re-read how this works. Everybody in every- all three of you in this moment, give me an Endure Cursed check.

SYLVIA: I don't have either of those.

AUSTIN: Ah.

SYLVIA: So this is gonna go great.

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

KEITH: Yup, me neither.

SYLVIA: Holy shit!

AUSTIN: Holy shit.

KEITH: Wow.

ANDREW: Wow.

SYLVIA: [laughs]

AUSTIN: Wait. How is that possible? What did you-

SYLVIA: I don't know, I had nothing checked.

AUSTIN: You rolled- that means you would've rolled two 10s.

SYLVIA: [laughs and claps]

AUSTIN: That's *incredible*. Alright.

SYLVIA: Now I get where the good luck went during the card game.

AUSTIN [overlapping]: Chine gets success at a cost.

KEITH [overlapping]: This is Risky?

AUSTIN: This is- no no no. This is Standard. Yeah, this thing that you're responding to.

SYLVIA [overlapping]: If it was Risky I would have just automatically failed, right?

AUSTIN: I think that that's true, yeah.

KEITH: Endure.

AUSTIN: Uh huh. I guess you only- right, yeah, mhm. Yeah.

KEITH: Endure, Risky.

AUSTIN: Endure Risky. Endure- yeah, sorry, not Risky.

KEITH: Endure, Cursed.

AUSTIN: Cursed.

KEITH: How do I get myself something here? No, there's not, I have nothing. I don't have anything.

AUSTIN: I don't think you have anything, yeah. Mhm. Oh, and there's a failure, okay. So, you are- and we have what, we have one success at a cost, so Chine. You take 4 Mind, but your protection's gonna help you quite a bit there. And then Keith, Lyke, you take 3 stress to Mind.

As the sound of a cannon- it's, you know, it's the sight of a cannon, but it's the sound of a single, vast bell ringing. Just this deep, heavy bell that just echoes through the entire town and everything begins to shake at it. A cannonball tears into that shed you were standing next to, Chine. And then another one, and another- but only on that first ring of the bell do you have to resist this. As it feels like it's something cutting, the sound is cutting through reality itself. You should both take- give me a Fallout test.

KEITH: I failed it.

AUSTIN: Lyke you didn't get any, nice work. Hey-

KEITH: I did.

AUSTIN: What? You rolled a three-

KEITH: I had five-

AUSTIN: Oh, it didn't-

KEITH: Yes, I didn't click- I rolled three on five, not three on two.

AUSTIN: I see. Uh huh. Yeah yeah yeah.

SYLVIA: Aw.

AUSTIN: That's brutal. And so does Chine. Both of you.

ANDREW: Geez.

AUSTIN: Both of you. I mean I actually think this is actually very easy. Because it is yet again, it's the same thing that you had before.

KEITH: Shaken?

AUSTIN: It's Shaken. And your impulse is- your impulse is to flee, Lyke? Because you can't close the door. You can't close the door to Aterika'Kaal. And so it's like you're trapped in- you're not trapped in here, but like, this isn't a safe place. Because the door won't shut. And there are other bodies in here which means there must be other doors in. Where did these other bodies come from?

KEITH: No one should be able to get in here but me.

AUSTIN: That is what you believe. But why would that be true?

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: It hits you for the first time, why would that be true?

KEITH: Cause I can make a door anywhere I want. I mean, or anywhere, I can make a door anywhere-

AUSTIN: So why can't other people?

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: What makes this *your* Aterika'Kaal sanctum?

KEITH: That I built- I built it.

AUSTIN: But you go into other places other people build all the time, it hits you for the first time!

KEITH: Yeah Austin, I'm an idiot!

[00:40:00]

AUSTIN: [laughs] But this is the moment that it hits you, and so you flee. You run out the portal. The doctor is very confused, and I think like, stays, but is concerned, and is confused, you know. She failed this roll also, let's say.

KEITH: Yeah, she's run-

AUSTIN: Is frozen. But she is frozen, do not act, putting herself in danger. You flee, you flee out the clinic-

KEITH: I'm out of the situation.

AUSTIN: You are- no you are fleeing- the situation is now broader than this. The situation as you now see it coming through the clinic, are these cannonballs being fired from the eastern, from the eastern woods into the city. And as they hit, something very strange happens.

KEITH: I should say real quick, before we continue.

AUSTIN: Yes.

KEITH: I wanna be clear about what counts as a situation, because as far as Shaken says,

AUSTIN: Yes.

KEITH: All I can do the whole situation is flee.

AUSTIN: Yeah, well we're gonna- you're going to have the impulse to flee for the rest of this.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: I, you know. I think maybe the situation will change in a moment when you've really truly understood what's happening.

KEITH: Gotcha.

AUSTIN: But I suspect you will still want to flee.

KEITH: Kay.

AUSTIN: Chine.

ANDREW: Mhm.

AUSTIN: The thing in front of you, you know it in your heart instantly. Do you know what it is, Dre?

[Music begins: "Marrow in the Bone" by Jack de Quidt]

ANDREW: Hmm.

AUSTIN: Cleavers tell stories about what happens to Cleavers.

ANDREW: Ah, yeah. Uh huh.

AUSTIN: Cleavers can be very social, working with other Cleavers. Or they can be very asocial, working by themselves. Each of those things can be thought of as a way to protect themselves from the result of the other. But neither actually offers protection. In the end, groups of Cleavers find themselves similar, growing closer and closer until as if stitched together they are a single being. Solo Cleavers change until they are something different, something monstrous and angelic, and that is the thing you see in front of you. You can only describe it as beautiful as it moves in ways you wish you could.

Flinging itself in balletic sweeps through the air, aided by metal built into it, by bone protruding from it, moving like a hopping insect or a ballerina. It is beautiful. She is beautiful.

You recognize her, Lyke, as Katonya. The Cleaver you met back at Bell Metal Station.

KEITH: Aww.

AUSTIN: Now here in this place. And Hazard, the building you were in shakes and shudders as one of these cannonballs bursts through the ceiling into the room you're in. And when it hits the ground, it does not leave a hole. Because it is not a cannonball, it is a seed. And all at once, it sprouts.

A tree. A white trunk, almost like a tall birch trunk, begins to grow, separating you from your target. You are also scared, how could you not be in this moment?

[Music ends]

SYLVIA: I kinda like the idea of while this is happening, that Hazard is trying to scramble back to the Count.

AUSTIN: Yeah, okay.

SYLVIA: I don't think it's going to be succ- I don't know if narratively I like even want it to be successful that they get back to them?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

SYLVIA: But like, if we wanna do that, we can?

AUSTIN: What do you wanna- are you trying to hurt- are you trying to like counterhit? Are you trying to- what are you trying to do?

SYLVIA: Like, I think, yeah. I think like, when I said I wanted, was going to shoot them, I wasn't really joking. I think the cannonball- yeah.

AUSTIN [overlapping]: Yeah, okay, give me- I think you, give me the opportunity. You have the opportunity here.

SYLVIA: Okay, cool.

AUSTIN: We'll see how it goes, right? Give me a...

SYLVIA: I just want to make sure.

AUSTIN: This is Kill Haven.

SYLVIA: Does this count for my Red and Bloody Business ability if you're killing someone or something that's shed your blood before, your attack gains the Brutal tag.

AUSTIN: You just got- your blood was just shed.

SYLVIA: Oh right, yeah!

AUSTIN: A second ago, so yes.

SYLVIA: Okay, yeah.

AUSTIN: So even if we were talking about it in limited terms, yes, you know what I mean?

SYLVIA: Okay cool.

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

SYLVIA: It's a critical success.

AUSTIN: It's a critical success. Give me your damage, and it's Brutal? What's Brutal mean again? Do we, does anyone remember it off the top of their heads?

SYLVIA [overlapping]: I need to double check, because I don't have it written down.

AUSTIN: I think I have it. You focus on getting ready to roll dice, and I'll give you Brutal.

SYLVIA: And I'm using my revolver for this.

AUSTIN: I mean yeah, that makes sense. Brutal says, I got lots of things tagged Brutal here. Here we go. When you roll for stress against an adversary using this item, pick two dice and pick the highest.

SYLVIA: Okay.

AUSTIN: So give me two damage dice. So that's a two and a six, you do six. You shoot this person. You shoot him in the chest. Oh yes, is that where you're aiming, you're aiming for the chest?

SYLVIA: Yeah!

AUSTIN: You're aiming for center mass? Okay. And I think he says... I think he stumbles back at being shot, and says,

AUSTIN (as One-Horned Devil): Whoa..! Better shootist than card player, I guess.

SYLVIA (as Hazard): Shootist isn't a word, dipshit!

AUSTIN (as One-Horned Devil): Yes it is, look it up!

[Keith laughs, Sylvi chuckles]

AUSTIN: And then, and then,

SYLVIA: Fuck.

AUSTIN: Throws a bunch of cards at you, to try to like cover his escape. And begins to flee, as more cannonballs begin to come down. You've wounded him. This is not not-wounds. But these cannonballs are gonna continue to come down. Chine.

ANDREW: Mhm?

AUSTIN: I really gotta know what the- ah! I know what's happening. Here we go. You are- your action is to Kill. Your response is Kill, because this is who Chine is, we've seen this happen again and again. But the creature is pulling on your pants-leg. I think you have to make an attack roll. But I think the creature is going to try to pull you out of this. But I do think your instinct is Kill. Because that is- as a reminder you got the same Fallout that Lyke did, which is flee, fight, or stand in place. And I think your instinct is fight, so give me an attack roll- how do you attack Katonya, who is now a fallen Cleaver? Or a transcendent- ascendent Cleaver?

ANDREW: Yeah-

AUSTIN: I don't-

ANDREW: It's not fallen, it's ascendant.

AUSTIN: No, yeah.

KEITH: Is this sort of like that- the what is it? The Zenith move?

AUSTIN: It is very similar to that, yes. Yes yes yes, that is what has happened to Katonya. Cleavers in the book become angels, right? And this is what angels look like in Heart.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So. We're very close to that, so that is as discussed. What I think, the stuff that's not in Heart is the group versus solo thing, that comes out of some conversations Dre and I had, now months and months and months ago. You can go look into the Drawing Maps on creating Chine to hear more.

ANDREW: Mhm. I guess it's Kill and then...

AUSTIN: Cursed?

ANDREW: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Haven?

ANDREW: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Wild? They're in the woods.

ANDREW: Yeah, I've got Cursed or Wild, so.

AUSTIN: She's in the woods. Let's do Cursed.

ANDREW [overlapping]: Yeah, I think that fits.

AUSTIN: Cursed is right. This is- this is Dangerous. This is- you can't solo an angel.

ANDREW: Yeah yeah yeah. I am going to take Blood stress to activate my Bloodbound tag on my axe.

AUSTIN: Mmm. What's that look like?

ANDREW: Or my poleax. Um.

AUSTIN: Oh I guess it says what happens.

ANDREW: Yeah does it say?

AUSTIN: You feed it your blood, and it fights for you.

ANDREW: Yeah, mhm. Yeah.

AUSTIN: So, as the creature is pulling on your leg, your pants-leg, do you like, cut some, your hand for some blood to feed it?

ANDREW: Um, since it's pulling on my legs, I think I like- cause I kinda thudded the poleax to the ground?

AUSTIN: Oh yeah, sure. Yeah.

ANDREW: So I think I like, hit like, kick it up with my foot, and cut my leg on the way up.

AUSTIN: Ooh. Wow. And it begins to lap at the blood. And inherits some of your anger I guess, and some- not anger, this isn't angry. You're not angry, right? You're committed.

ANDREW: Yeah.

AUSTIN: To doing the thing Cleavers do.

ANDREW: Mhm.

AUSTIN: It's really fun, because you don't know Katonya. You don't recognize who this is, but Lyke, from you know, a mile away, more than a mile away actually, does immediately, you know? You recognize the cannon, which is now like connected to her as like a scorpion tail?

[00:50:00]

You recognize the way she moves, even though she's moving much- in a much more dramatic fashion than what you first saw her as? You recognize that the scythe that she used to use as a melee weapon is now just like, you can't see the separation from her body and the weapon. The limb becomes the weapon at a certain point.

Give me a- give me this roll.

ANDREW: First, do you want me to roll the stress that I take to Blood?

AUSTIN: Oh, yes I guess so, huh. [Andrew chuckles] Jesus christ. Hey!

ANDREW: So, zero.

AUSTIN: Nothing. You rolled a one. So zero, yeah. It doesn't say like, it ignores armour or anything, right?

ANDREW: No.

AUSTIN: Yeah okay then you're fine.

ANDREW: Okay.

AUSTIN: You heal up as soon as you begin this cut, right?

ANDREW: Yeah. So Kill Cursed with Mastery, and you said it's Dangerous?

AUSTIN: Uh huh. Oh it's Dangerous.

ANDREW: What could go wrong?

AUSTIN: Wait what's the Mastery from? Oh boy.

ANDREW: [chuckles] The Mastery is from the Bloodbound. That's what the tag is.

AUSTIN: Oh that's what Bloodbound does, gotcha.

ANDREW: Yeah.

KEITH: Is it just four, is that what it was?

AUSTIN: Yeah, you rolled a six, four, one, ten, but Dangerous takes your two highest.

ANDREW: Uh huh.

AUSTIN: So that six and that ten are gone.

ANDREW: Yup.

AUSTIN: Oh buh- woof. Looking here at what Katonya does, I see.

KEITH: Please, better than fight [chuckles].

AUSTIN: Take eleven.

ANDREW: Uh huh. To?

AUSTIN: Take eleven Blood.

KEITH: [pained] Ohhh! Buddy!

ANDREW: Oh, and I guess I should have cleared Mind earlier, right? Cause that's what-

AUSTIN: You should have cleared Mind earlier, yes. Clear Mind for sure. Also you need to clear Mind right now.

ANDREW: Yeah. Hey.

AUSTIN: Hey!

ANDREW: Only Minor.

AUSTIN: Only Minor Fallout, somehow.

ANDREW: And I clear all that Blood stress.

AUSTIN: Jesus.

ANDREW: Look at that!

AUSTIN: And you clear all that Blood stress! It's all gone, just like that!

ANDREW: What was the name of the Minor Mind Fallout? I forgot to mark it earlier.

AUSTIN: Oh it's gone now, it's happening, right? So you don't need to write that down.

ANDREW: Gotcha.

AUSTIN: That's fine. You're going to now take the Minor Blood Fallout, [exhales], I think. So, I think that, Dre?

ANDREW: Mhm?

AUSTIN: It's only Minor, you know what. It's only Minor. I'm not gonna- wait what do you have now?

ANDREW: I don't have anything.

AUSTIN: You have nothing now. You're good, you're clear, okay, so this is the first one. Okay. I'm going- you know. She- there is something that happens here that is remarkable, to the degree that I think Chine has to respect it.

She recognizes in this- she charges at you, and lands- and you know, she is big. Like a Bloodborne boss, do you know what I mean? [Dre chuckles] She is much bigger than you? And with a twirl of one of her many weaponed limbs, catches you in the back of the legs, and- not too much higher from where you cut yourself to feed your creature. Your godling. And you realize, she is wounding you so you can't get away easily.

Take Limping. You're slowed, if someone or something attacks your party, they'll attack you first. If there are any questions over who arrives last, it's you. All checks involving rapid or stealthy movement become Risky. So, the sort of like- the part that's impressive to you, is that a Cleaver so big and so powerful, could still deploy their strength so precisely. You know?

And maybe there's a flurry of you know attacks here between the two of you. The polearm blocks the scythe, the kind of scythe limbs a couple of times. But eventually, one of these kind of

like sharpened bone out- you know, what's the word I'm looking for? Not outcrops, but like outgrowths, does catch you. And cuts you there.

Hazard, are you giving chase? Are you giving up? Are you getting out?

SYLVIA: I-

AUSTIN: I guess I should-

SYLVIA [overlapping]: I think-

AUSTIN: Go ahead. You go ahead.

SYLVIA: Go ahe- I was gonna say I think I need to get out of-

AUSTIN: Yes.

SYLVIA: -the abattoir more than anything, just because like, I don't wanna get crushed by one of these giant seeds, or swallowed up by the vegetation that's growing from them.

AUSTIN: Uh huh. Lyke and Chine.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: In this- Lyke, are you fleeing the town?

KEITH: No.

AUSTIN: You're not gonna flee the town, okay. Where are you going?

KEITH: Oooh. Okay. So. [short pause] Here is what I have in my head.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: [slowly, thoughtfully] I feel compelled, personally, both to immediately try and help with the uh, with the fight? But also.

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

KEITH: To go help the doctor. Who I was- I have-

AUSTIN: Sure. So you turn back around to go help?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Bring her out?

KEITH: Yep.

AUSTIN: You kinda get your wits about you, and turn- I think that that is a fair thing to go do, I think we can just narrate that you do this, right?

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: You head back in, everyone's fleeing the clinic at this point but they don't know where to go. Some of them just start heading- I mean, let's come back to them in a second. You run past everyone who's running out, you know what, everyone else is leaving, you're running in.

KEITH: Yup.

AUSTIN: And you find her there, and Aterika'Kaal has wrapped up her legs in tendrils. And is going to kill her.

KEITH: Yeah. Mhm.

AUSTIN: Just like it killed the other two beings in here. Two other two people that were there. You grab her and pull her away, and get out. But the door remains open.

KEITH: Okay, I can do this- I can fix that.

AUSTIN: Okay, what do you do?

KEITH: I use my "fix anything in an instant" roll.

AUSTIN: Yup! Uh huh, yeah, give me that roll.

KEITH: Alright. I lost Roll20, okay here we go. And-

AUSTIN: It's a Mend- it's Mend, right?

KEITH: It's Mend.

AUSTIN: Mend Occult?

KEITH: Mend Occult.

AUSTIN: Yep, go for it. Not- this is Standard, this isn't- I mean risky, but it's not literally, you know.

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: Risky in the mechanical sense.

KEITH: Mend, Occult. 10.

AUSTIN: Look at that critical success!

KEITH: Yeah, love to see it.

AUSTIN: Okay! You close it up, and here is what I'm gonna give you on that crit? There is a- you get the sense, and you managed to kind of excise this. Among the various like vines that make up the doorway into this place, one of them is not a vine, but a branch. It is like, the white birch trees that we're seeing grow wherever these cannonballs land? And you manage to snap that off before it can permanently make its way in there.

To be clear, that is not tied to what Aterika'Kaal is doing. That is not tied to the fact that other people found their way into Aterika'Kaal's shrine.

KEITH: And died.

AUSTIN: Or temple. Right, and died. This is a new thing. This was this place trying to find its way in. That was going to try to permanently make a connection between where you are now, and where- and Aterika'Kaal's temple, basically. So you've stopped that from happening. Everything else is still an open question.

You drag the doctor out and into- back into the world writ large outside. And now you have a much better view of what's happening here. The cannonballs are as they land again, sprouting these trees, and the trees go up, and up, and you realize they remind you of the vision you saw via the radio. The smoke radio?

And you track them up higher and higher until you see above you, the moon. It's as if they're holding the moon up above you.

KEITH: The flowers.

AUSTIN: Right- yes, remember- yes. Yes. Hazard.

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: You have an Echo Fallout, and it says "don't worry about it, it's fine?"

SYLVIA: [chuckles] Yeah.

AUSTIN: That is Mirage. The next landmark you reach is a facsimile made by the Heart arranged to give you what you want. It seems real, [Sylvi laughs and claps] but the more you explore, the more obvious it is that everything: the streets, the books, the people, is fake.

[Keith groans] It's an artful copy made of meat, bone, and blood. From the looks of things, it existed for hundreds of years. Once you realize the landmark is fake, remove this Fallout.

SYLVIA: That rules.

AUSTIN: You are somewhere- but here's the thing. The place you are, *is* real. And you can't shake the fact that it seems as if the Heartland, the truth of the Heartland, a phrase I use a lot, gave you your target. Really, truly put it in front- put him in front of you. Somehow.

You remember his name. It comes to you. His name is Uno. [Sylvi wheezes] First name is Uno. Uno Riscano.

KEITH: Do you know what's so funny about doing actual play and tabletop stuff? Is,

AUSTIN: What's that?

KEITH: Literally the last time we played, I remembered that Fallout, or whenever that Fallout came.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: And we- when this town showed up, I was like,

AUSTIN: Yeah!

KEITH: Oh, that's Sylvi's Fallout, is this fake-

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

KEITH: Is this place that's fake. And then between when we played and now,

AUSTIN: Yeah? [starts chuckling]

KEITH: I had totally forgotten-

[01:00:00]

AUSTIN: Uh huh!

KEITH: We step off the boat, and you're like, this is basically a dream but you can't prove it, and I still didn't remember-!

[Friends burst out laughing]

SYLVIA: At least you put it together at some point! Cause I never did.

AUSTIN: Chine. You know where you are.

ANDREW: Mhm.

AUSTIN: I mean, maybe you don't know specifically where you are, but something clicks for you, and that click is, you should take four protection for everything. You're in a-

KEITH: Is this why Chine loves it here?

[Dre chuckles]

AUSTIN: You're in the Course. You're in a place that is close to the Course can be. The Course is somewhere around you, or above you, or in you in this moment. You are, I mean, a couple of sessions ago we played- you did a ritual and you saw a thing, do you remember what you saw?

ANDREW: Oh!

AUSTIN: There was a story about you-

ANDREW: Uh huh.

AUSTIN: You didn't see it, you wrote a second story. You wrote a story about a person who realized they were going to hurt people around them and so left and went to the woods.

ANDREW: Mhm.

AUSTIN: This is Katonya. Katonya is here. Katonya realized what was happening, and took herself here to the moon-touched words. They are called such because the woods reach the moon here. They really truly do.

You suddenly get the impression, this is the place you're not allowed to go outside to be in, in the- from the boat? Remember the boat was like, don't go outside on these days, because you pass through here. And all three of you immediately feel it begin to rework who you are.

Like, now that the fantasy has failed, and we can talk about this long-term between sessions. But, being in this place reworks who you are in ways you both want and don't want. This is- the raw Course flows through you and reshapes you. I mean the note that I have is, I'll just say it.

The trees seem to reach the moon, seem to be made of it. The Course is wild and loud here, and it calls to you. Step into it and change forever. Change anything you want about your sheet, I'll then do the same.

ANDREW: Ooh!

KEITH: One and one? Or as many and as many?

AUSTIN: One and one, one and one- well! I mean, or! I mean here's the second thing, and this is Chine, we have to have a talk.

ANDREW: Mhm.

AUSTIN: You're here. I don't know. This isn't how Zenith moves work, but we've been down this road with Virtue before already. [Sylvi laughs] But you're in the Course. Now, you're also in the Course being attacked a Cleaver who has become a living weapon. But like, you're in it, and you have this being with you, and I don't- does Chine leave?

ANDREW: I think it depends on what the beast wants to do. Like, cause it initially wanted to leave, and I think if it-

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ANDREW: If it still wants to leave, then Chine will leave.

AUSTIN: Right. There is a lot happening in this moment. I don't know what the beast wants. I think the beat its- you get some distance, maybe, right? And find some shelter as Katonya continues to tear through this facsimile of a town, revealing what's true behind it. Which again, is just this vast, you know.

KEITH: Are-

AUSTIN: Set of trees reaching to the moon itself.

KEITH: Are some of these people real? Are all of these people real?

AUSTIN: Not clear, Lyke! Not clear. What is a real person? Welcome to Friends at the Table.

KEITH: Well, if a- you know, an angel monster tears through reality,

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

KEITH: And the thing that looks like a shop is actually a rock, and the person that was in charge of the shop is a rock,

AUSTIN: But were they not a person a moment ago?

KEITH: They sure seemed like it, but it also-

AUSTIN [overlapping]: When Reuben was going to go fish this morning, and had that joy and that spring in his step as he was going to go fishing, you think that wasn't real?

KEITH: When I have a dream-

AUSTIN: I don't know!

KEITH: People in my dream were not real.

AUSTIN: I'm not sure that's true. We don't know enough about how brains and selves work. We're playing a game in which there are other people in this setting who have multiple people inside of them. Because that is how Heretrixes work. So especially in this world, I don't know that you can say what a person is or is not. And I think Lyke is probably knowledgeable enough to know that the line between these things is not so simple.

KEITH: What I'm asking is,

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: When the angel tears through,

AUSTIN: Are they killed?

KEITH: Are they there, still? And like, "woah, what happened to my shop!" Or are they gone?

AUSTIN: Yeah, until they are destroyed, they are there.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: And then they're destroyed, because no one is going to stand against this angel. And succeed, seemingly, you know?

KEITH: Does that include the three of us?

AUSTIN: I don't know! It would be a really rough fight. Like, just like.

KEITH: I've read this book-

AUSTIN: In terms of looking at the stat-

KEITH: I know what the angel has. [Dre chuckles]

AUSTIN: I will tell you, I have pulled this angel from a different book, from an expansion from the- I believe, let me double check it. Yes, this is not this angel. I'm gonna look at numbers really quick and tell you, this angel's stronger.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: Uh! It's weaker in some ways. It's similar.

KEITH: Cause that Cursed, that's out of this book, the Cursed roll.

AUSTIN: Well, the other one has a very similar one, I believe, let me double check it. Let me look at the names. Yeah the names are different one these. Yes, it's a very similar one. The one that I'm adapting had Endure + Cursed to mark Blood, and I made it Mind. Now I'm looking, and yes, the angel in the main book has Mind instead of having Blood, that's very funny.

The one that I'm adapting is, I don't know the name of it off the top of my head. But it's from the Haven- it's from the Haven expansion of the game.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Which has like four different angels in it basically. Wrenching- descriptors, wrenching a pillar out of the ground and hurling it into a group of defenders, clambering atop a bell-tower and howling a song of endings. Moving with an inhuman grace and tied to a distant drum-beat. Motivation, to utterly smash apart defenses, reduce the works of mortals to ruin, show dominance and destroy everything in its path.

I started there, and I said, Katonya doesn't wanna be that around people. And so, left, and went to the moon-touched woods. Went to this place where she could touch the Course, and be part of something, that wildness was part of what the truth is, you know? Without it being somewhere where she would hurt people.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: The numbers are bad for you. I think seven of you could win this fight.

KEITH: Mhm.

ANDREW: Woof.

AUSTIN: But looking at resistance and protection, the numbers are not good. But, it might not to be a fight, do you know what I mean? What she is doing is smashing apart defenses, reducing the works of mortals to ruin, showing dominance and destroying everything in its path. She is returning this place to truth.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: When you made eyes at her, and caught her- caught sight of her, Chine? She realized that this place was fake. And was staining this part of the woods. Now like, is it staining the woods? I would say probably not, right, this was the attempt of the Heartland to give you- this was the Course trying to give the people who walked into it what they wanted, right?

KEITH: Mhm.

AUSTIN: You know. If you had managed to go through with the operation, I would have never given you The Ravening Call ever again, Lyke. That would've been true. So again, talking about like are they really people type of stuff? That would've been true. It seems, Hazard, as if that was truly your target. That truly was the person you wanted revenge on, truly the Count of Cards.

SYLVIA: Damn!

AUSTIN: Uh huh. Now running through the woods.

KEITH: Some of the writing in this book is good. I like Heart.

AUSTIN: I, the- Heart is great. Heart won a bunch of Ennies recently.

KEITH: Oh really?

AUSTIN: Which is super well-deserved, yeah yeah yeah.

KEITH: This regular angel is like wild.

AUSTIN: Yes. You wanna- what is the bit that's hitting you?

KEITH: I really like, I like the first and third paragraph here.

"They are red and terrible and mighty. They bring with them waking dreams of chaos and unmaking, a screeching, scraping song of rust and ashes. The angels of the Heart, as they are known by the inhabitants of the place, are thankfully rare.

As they enter an area, it shifts into an unreal landscape. Walls pulse and seep interstitial fluid, the sound of grinding teeth drowns out all rational thought, and eyes blossom on every available surface.”

And this very beginning-

AUSTIN: Love it. Love it.

KEITH: -descriptors, is names. “Crimsonian. Vulperine. Theolosian. Anyone who witnesses an angel knows its name instinctively; indeed, they are unable to forget it.”

AUSTIN: So yeah, that’s Katonya. Everyone recognizes Katonya instantly, right? God. Alright. We have to- so. So, Dre. Chine. You find a moment- you find yourself in the- being pulled away. Not just- not by the beast, actually. Sorry, not by the creature, not by your little godling. But by the other you.

Begins to pull you into one of the fields. Where he finds peace among the marrow fruit. And lays down in the dirt, the sour dirt, and hides. And like, pushes you down and holds the creature down, and you can see the creature’s face now. The creature again being your pet, the thing that hatched from the egg, and it is so unsure.

[01:10:00]

And it’s looking to you for guidance in this moment, because. Do you have moves for communicating with this thing?

ANDREW: Um.

AUSTIN: I don’t remember.

ANDREW: No. Like they don’t really exist either.

AUSTIN: Wait what do you mean- oh, the moves don’t exist.

ANDREW: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I thought you meant the creature,

ANDREW: No, no, the creature exists, but there’s not like a specific move that’s like “and now, you can talk to it with your mind instead of your voice” or something like that.

AUSTIN: And the write-up doesn’t say like, you automatically- no.

ANDREW [overlapping]: It says it follows your commands, but.

AUSTIN: But that's not the same as like, let's see. Mark stress, once per situation, faithful till the- you don't have Faithful Till the End, but that's okay, that's fine, it's not gonna be a thing anyway.

ANDREW: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I think. Give me a Compel or a Discern, and Cursed?

ANDREW: Um.

AUSTIN: You don't have those.

ANDREW: No I don't. I did have a-

AUSTIN: What's Hunt say? Hm.

ANDREW: I had an alternate thing that I was gonna do.

AUSTIN: Oh sure, what were you?

ANDREW: Is the plough still in the field?

AUSTIN: Yeah. Sure.

ANDREW: Kay. I wanna destroy it.

AUSTIN: You wanna eat it? Or you wanted to destroy it.

ANDREW: I wanna destroy it.

AUSTIN: The plough.

ANDREW: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay. To what end?

ANDREW: Because the plough takes things away from nature.

AUSTIN: Mm. I see. Okay. I mean yeah, so you snap it over your- mm! Does it take things away from nature?

ANDREW: I don't know! I'm just breaking everything because that's what it seems like the other- that's what the angel's doing.

AUSTIN: That Katonya is doing, yeah. I mean you snap it in half, and it falls to the ground, and when it hits the ground it's soil. Like as it hits the ground, you know?

ANDREW: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I think other Chine is like,

AUSTIN (as farmer Chine): What are you- get down! It's not safe out there!

AUSTIN: And the creature is looking between the two of you and is not sure at this point, like what it's seeing? It senses a familiarity between the two of you also.

ANDREW: Mhm.

AUSTIN: But is not able to discern- there is a sadness in the creature in this moment. This is the moment the camera most firmly shows that it is missing its parents. It's missing a caregiver. It's missing someone to teach it things. It is missing- but it doesn't, it can't vocalize that.

ANDREW: Yeah.

AUSTIN: But also, part of the ambivalence is, it does feel, and we didn't do a good job of painting this necessarily- I mean we didn't because it was a mirage town, I couldn't be like, and your creature realizes where it is- and the creature didn't realize where it is, right, it's a baby. It's a couple of weeks old, you know? There is something about the way it- maybe the way it moves around, maybe the way it stares upward at the moon, like the moon is its parent, do you know what I mean?

ANDREW: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Like oh, there's mom. The moon! Or the trees, or whatever it- this forest does not feel alien to it. It does feel at home here. But also, it is scared of the violence that's happening around it, and it is looking for gui- it is looking- it will be at home where someone who takes care of it says "I will be your home". And I think if you are not doing it, other Chine instinctively will.

ANDREW: Mmm.

AUSTIN: Like as you go to break something, other Chine reaches an arm out to like, pet the creature. And like,

AUSTIN (as farmer Chine): Ooh it's okay, it's okay.

KEITH: Poor creature.

ANDREW: No, I don't like-

AUSTIN (as farmer Chine): Hey you-

ANDREW: I kick him off of the creature.

AUSTIN (as farmer Chine): Ow! What the hell! I was just trying to make sure it was okay.

ANDREW: Austin, is your offer for a one to one change still on?

AUSTIN: Yeah. That's what being here is like.

ANDREW: Yeah. I would like to add the Minor Cleaver ability, Vessel. Which is "You let the energies of the Course wash through you and fill you with glory, rather than struggling against them. Gain +2 Echo protection."

AUSTIN: Alright. I don't have these pre-written for what I'm doing to you. Or what I'm doing at you, you know? But I do know, let me think. Again, I think part of the thing that is going to happen here, part of the question is, are you- are you picking up the beast at this point?

ANDREW: Oh yeah! Absolutely.

AUSTIN: Are you picking up your-

ANDREW: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Alright. And then, are you leaving? Or are you staying, or are you-

ANDREW: No.

AUSTIN: Exploring?

ANDREW: No, we go break the shed.

AUSTIN: Okay! You begin to tear into this place. Now that you're guiding it, it is joyfully working with you on this. And other Chine stands up, is like,

AUSTIN (as farmer Chine): That's my shed! What are you doing!

ANDREW: I don't think Chine says anything.

AUSTIN: You just continue- you just start tearing through this space.

ANDREW: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Just breaking it apart, tearing into the house. At this point Katonya is ignoring you, right?

ANDREW: Sure.

AUSTIN: Katonya absolutely sees you as kin in this. Hazard and Lyke?

KEITH: What can I see?

AUSTIN: Where are you? You see whatever you- what do you wanna see, Lyke? Do you wanna be back together with Hazard at this point? Do you wanna be running back, like- where do you wanna be in this, if I give you the camera, effectively.

KEITH: I sort of wanna be coming up on Chine.

AUSTIN: Sure! Then let's say that this is what happens, right? You manage to find- you manage to see that like, Katonya is still generally in that area, like firing these cannonballs off, and you recognize it's Katonya? And you see that she swipes down and hits someone, and when you go see who it is, it's Chine. I mean you're far off at this point.

And by the time you get there, Chine is back up on their feet, limping around destroying sheds and hoes and buildings. And other Chine, who is not Chine- Chine, was your name always just Chine? Or is Chine a kind of a new name.

ANDREW: Chine's a new name, yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay. Then this other person, whose name I don't-

KEITH: Harvey.

AUSTIN: [chuckles] I don't think it's Harvey. [Dre laughs, Keith chuckles] This other person, they are I think, scurrying away, realizing they just don't have- they like run past you, Lyke? And are like,

AUSTIN (as farmer Chine): I wouldn't go that way! There's someone there who's just causing a mess! Destroying everything!

KEITH (as Lyke): Yeah I know them.

AUSTIN (as farmer Chine): Well get- can you help get them under control?

KEITH (as Lyke): Wow- sure.

[Dre laughs]

KEITH (as Lyke): Yeah.

[Sylvia laughs]

KEITH (as Lyke): Yeah. Sure.

AUSTIN: I keep wanting to end, but we keep feeling like we're on the edge of being done, and it's been an hour, so, this is classic Friends at the Table shit right here.

KEITH: Yeah.

ANDREW: Yup.

KEITH: See it's funny because you saying "I keep trying to end", I'm sitting here like "wow, we keep on getting into shit!"

AUSTIN: I- yeah, uh huh.

KEITH: I think I'm gonna be- I think I'm gonna try to very you know, carefully go- get closer to Chine, and not to Katonya.

AUSTIN: Yeah okay, fine. Katonya at this point let's say have moved into the town proper, and is just swiping at buildings with various bone-scythes, and just tearing through the town. Which Hazard, you can see clearly from the top of this abattoir, looking down from the dunes.

SYLVIA: Yeah, I'm not gonna go that way.

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

SYLVIA: I'm gonna head towards, towards the big mean angel thing.

AUSTIN: Uh huh, yeah, fair. What do you-?

SYLVIA: I am going to try to find the other two.

AUSTIN: Okay.

SYLVIA: That should- is worth saying.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I got you.

KEITH (as Lyke): [whispering] What, is happening? Chine?

ANDREW: [stifles a chuckle] I think Chine just like, grunts back.

KEITH (as Lyke): [slightly louder whisper] What's happening?

ANDREW (as Chine): Everything that needs to.

[Dre laughs]

KEITH (as Lyke): Should I help?

KEITH: I kick a wheelbarrow.

ANDREW (as Chine): If that's the course you feel driven to take.

KEITH (as Lyke): I- it's not. I think we should get out of here.

ANDREW (as Chine): You're right, it's not-

KEITH (as Lyke): Katonya's gonna kill us!

ANDREW (as Chine): *Ehh*. I don't know. There's worse things.

KEITH (as Lyke): She used to be cool, there's not worse things!

AUSTIN: I know how I'm changing your sheet.

ANDREW: Mhm.

AUSTIN: I've added a Zenith beat.

ANDREW: Ooh!

AUSTIN: It is, "Become one with the Course, and bind you and your creature's essence to it."
You don't have to do beats.

ANDREW: Yeah.

AUSTIN: But you, you know. Just saying that in the middle of this conversation.

ANDREW: Mhm. What's left of the shed?

AUSTIN: Oh it's gone. You've destroyed it, at this point. You're tearing through the house at this point. Like, there's not- you're not making rolls because none of this is fighting back.

ANDREW: Yeah.

AUSTIN: You know? And because the mirage is naturally dying at the same time, you know?

ANDREW: Is there anyone else in this house?

AUSTIN: There were people who went screaming when you came in. You recognize the scream, you can't place it.

[01:20:00]

ANDREW: Yeah. Mhm. That fits.

AUSTIN: Someone from your old life, probably, you know?

ANDREW: I think as you know, Lyke is there talking, Chine like smashes into a dresser? And in the like splinters chunks of wood is a copy of his book of fairy tales.

AUSTIN: Oooh, yeah.

ANDREW: And I think that's what snaps them out of it.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ANDREW (as Chine): Yeah, no. We should- we should go. Go?

KEITH (as Lyke): Yeah.

KEITH: Any good stuff in this house by the way, I guess? [Dre laughs]

AUSTIN: His book of fairy tales.

KEITH: I'll take it.

SYLVIA: Something did just occur to me, would I have been able to grab that stick knife?

AUSTIN: Yeah! Totally, absolutely.

SYLVIA: Cool.

AUSTIN: I mean it was- you didn't have to grab it so much as it was already in your hand.

SYLVIA: I mean, yeah.

KEITH: I hope you grabbed it.

SYLVIA: I assumed that there was a motion when it came out of my hand at some point.

AUSTIN: Uh huh, yes. It is a-

KEITH: The knife goes into the hand, the cannon thing happens- or no, you shoot. Knife hand, you shoot-

AUSTIN: Knife hand, you shoot-

KEITH: Knife still in hand. Uno gets up.

SYLVIA: Just walking around.

AUSTIN: Uno gets up, runs away.

KEITH: And you're like: uh, knife! Sick knife!

AUSTIN: Good knife, sick knife. D6 Kill, Piercing.

KEITH: Good!

AUSTIN: Good. [laughs]

SYLVIA: Yeah!

AUSTIN: Yeah, so yeah you have that. You've wrapped your hand presumably in something.

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And yeah, you've made your way back to the center of town. I mean probably not- you probably walk the outskirts, right? And maybe that's the thing. You've walked the outskirts, and so you've made it to the farm and you see Chine and Lyke there.

SYLVIA (as Hazard): Hey, so this all went to shit pretty quick, huh?

KEITH (as Lyke): Oh it's so bad. [someone stifles laughter] Literally the third scariest thing we've ever seen is over there.

SYLVIA (as Hazard): What- you're gonna give me the top two later.

ANDREW (as Chine): I think it's like number two.

SYLVIA (as Hazard): Again, the fact that this is not top of the list for either of you, is fascinating to me.

ANDREW (as Chine): It's not orange.

KEITH (as Lyke): What's orange?

ANDREW (as Chine): Eugh.

AUSTIN: [laughs] Oh! Great.

SYLVIA (as Hazard): Do we wanna try and get out of here? I think the guy I was looking for is probably already- disappeared amongst all of this.

KEITH (as Lyke): Did you get him?

SYLVIA (as Hazard): I mean I *got* him, just not enough.

ANDREW (as Chine): Mm.

KEITH (as Lyke): [sighing] Uh, yeah. We should definitely go or we'll die.

SYLVIA (as Hazard): Yeah I'd like to avoid that. Which, which way are we headed? East?

KEITH (as Lyke): Boat.

SYLVIA (as Hazard): Boat-

KEITH (as Lyke): East.

SYLVIA (as Hazard): Isn't the boat gone?

KEITH (as Lyke): No, boat's there. Is the boat gone?

ANDREW (as Chine): Hm. That'd be bad.

SYLVIA (as Hazard): I assumed the boat kept going.

KEITH (as Lyke): No they're stop- they stopped! We stopped here.

SYLVIA (as Hazard): Oh, buddy. We can probably find a boat?

KEITH (as Lyke): I got off a docked boat.

[Dre laughs]

ANDREW (as Chine): Did we?

SYLVIA (as Hazard): They don't stay docked.

KEITH (as Lyke): Yeah, we got off a docked boat!

AUSTIN: It was docked, it was docked some amount of time ago.

KEITH [overlapping]: Yeah, I didn't- hey! I didn't fucking jump off a moving boat. I got off a docked boat, alright?

AUSTIN: Lyke, coming to the understanding that other people can come into the same shrines as he can, and also potentially, that docked boats will undock at some point.

KEITH: Docked boats- I counted an itinerary, it said, you know! Stay seven to nine,

AUSTIN: How many days-

KEITH: Don't get off the boat! That means-

AUSTIN: How many hours or days have you been in this town-

KEITH: Boats sit there- I've been here for twenty fucking minutes, I think.

[Sylvi and Dre burst out laughing, clapping]

AUSTIN: [laughs] Me, saying when the session's gonna end. "I think it's like twenty minutes left guys! I think we'll be done real quick!" Ohh...

You very cautiously make your way back, and there's something interesting here which is, which-

KEITH: Boat's still there. Interesting. Pretty fucking interesting.

AUSTIN: Mm, hm. Yeah. There are still buildings left. There are still some of these buildings- Katonya didn't get them all, right? On her pass through. And so it is like walking through an overgrown, ruins of a village in a way.

But another thing you do see, is that Katonya starts to destroy in the distance, you see trees falling? Because they're the wrong trees. It's these little pine- these pine trees all over the place.

These are not the big birches that hold up the moon. And so having realized this, Katonya has moved on to destroying those, and again, even though she was able to work it with you know, surgical detail on you to make you limp, Chine? In general, it is serving her best to do these big swipes with the scythes and these big cannon blasts. Which again, every blast just sounds like a heavy bell ringing. Like a deep ring, and it does not sound like a traditional cannonball.

And so yeah. You make your way through the ruins of this place, and there are still a couple of people around. Like, there are people here still, and they have not gone away. It's not the overwhelming amount that you saw before, at some point you pass the stage again, you know? And the twins on the stage go "ta-da!" as their act comes to a close, but there's no one left throwing stone fruit at them. They walk off the stage and give you a little nod, and you get to the dock, and there is Reuben with a fishing rod. And the boat is gone.

AUSTIN (as Reuben): Y'all three find what you were looking for? Yeah I tell you I didn't catch too much today.

SYLVIA (as Hazard): I mean I guess technically yes, but it really- it feels like a no.

KEITH (as Lyke): It feels like a big no.

AUSTIN (as Reuben): [grunts] I guess you're heading out, then.

KEITH (as Lyke): Mhm.

ANDREW (as Chine): It was an alright day.

AUSTIN (as Reuben): I mean you say that now, but I didn't catch any damn fish.

KEITH (as Lyke): Yeah and the monster is tearing everything apart!

AUSTIN (as Reuben): Hoh. Tell me about it.

SYLVIA (as Hazard): You seem very calm about all this, Reuben.

AUSTIN (as Reuben): I try to keep a straight head on my shoulders. Get done what I can get done and, you know. Let the damn Course worry about the rest.

KEITH (as Lyke): I recommend loosening that head, just a bit.

AUSTIN (as Reuben): Heheh. You know, fair enough. Sorry about your boat leaving. It seemed like maybe that was, going a bit faster than, hoofing it. Why don't y'all take one of these boats out here. I don't think- [chuckles] frankly, the people who plan on using them are gonna be around so much, so. They're small little things, but, they'll get you downriver.

SYLVIA (as Hazard): Oh! You mean that? That's very- thank you.

AUSTIN (as Reuben): I mean don't get me wrong, it ain't mine to give. But uh-

KEITH (as Lyke): Thank you for permission to steal these boats.

SYLVIA (as Hazard): Yeah, it's, you know what, it's- plausible deniability. We got permission from someone about it, it's enough for me.

AUSTIN (as Reuben): There you go.

KEITH (as Lyke): I have bad news. We're supposed to be like, four hundred miles downriver- upriver.

AUSTIN (as Reuben): Upriver.

KEITH (as Lyke): So I don't know that these boats are gonna help.

AUSTIN (as Reuben): Maybe they'll get you somewhere where you can take a different path. Train's not too far away, to my understanding.

KEITH (as Lyke): Oh, that.

SYLVIA (as Hazard): Oh I've never been on a train-

KEITH (as Lyke) [overlapping]: I've not had a lot of really good train experiences.

AUSTIN (as Reuben): You know Chine, was it? Chine?

ANDREW (as Chine): Hm?

AUSTIN (as Reuben): You sure you don't wanna come back with me, figure out the- a home for the little one? You going back out there?

ANDREW (as Chine): Yeah.

AUSTIN (as Reuben): Yeah. Okay, well. Y'all ever need anything, you know where I am.

SYLVIA (as Hazard): Yeah. You're just good with all-

SYLVIA: Hazard like points to [chuckles] Katonya in the background.

SYLVIA (as Hazard): You're good with that?

AUSTIN (as Reuben): Let's say I wasn't.

SYLVIA (as Hazard): I mean I just meant like, you don't wanna come on the boat with us, like to get somewhere safer, more, whatever?

AUSTIN (as Reuben): Where- where exactly is safer in this world?

SYLVIA (as Hazard): Well shit Reuben, you got me there.

AUSTIN (as Reuben): I think I'll take my chances in this place, I know it pretty well, you know. I'll do a little hunting, a little tracking. I bet there's plenty of marrow left at the- whatever's left of the abattoir. And, I don't know, maybe I'll wander into another town. They pop up around here every time someone new comes to town, so. Or comes through, I guess.

AUSTIN: Is what he says.

AUSTIN (as Reuben): This ain't my first. Would you believe it?

SYLVIA (as Hazard): Yeah at this point I would- I would believe that, because this has been an extremely weird day.

AUSTIN (as Reuben): Anyway let me help you get this boat in the water, and uh, hopefully you can get somewhere before the sunset. Ah! I wouldn't eat that candy, by the way.

SYLVIA (as Hazard): Oh! Yeah.

SYLVIA: And I think it's just like, the like, mouth opens, and then, they just like, move a little bit so the candy like flies out in the river.

AUSTIN: It like falls out? [chuckling] Yeah, uh huh!

[01:30:00]

It like sizzles when it hits the river.

ANDREW: Oh!

AUSTIN: Yeah, uh huh. I will say,

KEITH: I want it, I grab it. I take it. What is it?

AUSTIN: Oh my f- what?

ANDREW: Yeah, I-

KEITH: I grab it. I go grab it!

AUSTIN: From the river?

KEITH: From the sizzling river, yeah!

ANDREW (as Chine): Aww, I wanted it.

AUSTIN: It's- it's marrow candy.

KEITH: Yup.

ANDREW (as Chine): Hey can I have it?

KEITH: And how much-

AUSTIN: It's a D4.

KEITH: D4.

AUSTIN: Cursed candy.

ANDREW (as Chine): Hey, I'll trade you.

KEITH (as Lyke): What do you want?

ANDREW (as Chine): Oh no- I want the candy, I'll trade you.

KEITH (as Lyke): Yeah, what do you- sorry, what do you wanna trade?

ANDREW: I hold up my half-eaten stone fruit.

KEITH (as Lyke): Eugh. No!

ANDREW (as Chine): Please?

KEITH (as Lyke): [chuckles, wheezing] O... okay, okay, yeah. Fine.

SYLVIA: Just like looking between the two of these back and forth while this is going on.

KEITH (as Lyke): Do you have anything else in there?

ANDREW (as Chine): Not at all.

SYLVIA (as Hazard): Me?

ANDREW (as Chine): Oh.

SYLVIA (as Hazard): Oh.

KEITH (as Lyke): No, yes, sorry, no I'm- Hazard.

SYLVIA (as Hazard): No. No, that was it.

KEITH (as Lyke): Okay.

SYLVIA (as Hazard): Not a ton of space in here.

AUSTIN: And y'all get on the boat.

ANDREW: I'm- yeah as soon as I-

AUSTIN [overlapping]: Chine- go ahead.

ANDREW: Naw as we can on the boat I'm eating that candy.

AUSTIN: Okay. Take the Cursed domain.

[Sylvi laughs]

KEITH: How long do you get it for?

ANDREW: I already have the Cursed domain.

AUSTIN: [starts to speak, laughs]

ANDREW: It's fine.

KEITH: Oh you just wanted the candy.

ANDREW: Yeah! Look.

AUSTIN: Aw it's good.

ANDREW: It looked good!

AUSTIN: It's sweet. It's a sweet marrow.

ANDREW: Yeah! It's probably what I smelled earlier.

AUSTIN: You know they name the town after- [chuckles] after that.

SYLVIA: God damn it.

AUSTIN: And you get taken downri- or upriver, I guess. Downriver, I don't know. Whoo! Right. Because now you don't have a steam ship, so I guess you do start going back downriver, huh.

KEITH: Yeah.

SYLVIA: Don't got paddles?

AUSTIN: I mean y'all got paddles, but it's a big river. You all wanna paddle up the Mississippi, you can do that, but. Also now that you've done this, I can reveal this part of this map which is fun. Is uh, here are the moon-touched woods that you have been moving through.

KEITH: Oh so we weren't over here.

AUSTIN: Oh, you were not ever at- the actual Marrowcreek. Or does even Marrowcreek even really exist?

KEITH: No.

AUSTIN: I don't know!

KEITH: I don't know.

AUSTIN: Anyway you end up coming back down towards Cantbank presumably and, I don't know, we'll have to figure out how you get home from here. I *don't* know how. I don't know how long this party split is gonna be.

KEITH: So downriver is south.

AUSTIN: I- presumably, right? Yeah. Back towards-

KEITH: So the steam- steamboat,

AUSTIN: Was going up-

KEITH: Was going upriver.

AUSTIN: In my mind, that was always true, yes. So it had finished a downriver trip, down towards Sapodilla, where it loaded back up and went back up river. Cause the river empties out into the sea, you know? I mean it doesn't have to work that way in Sangfielle- in Sangfielle, this river could have current going in both directions.

KEITH: Yeah, totally, yeah.

AUSTIN: You know?

KEITH: Just going the- just going the, you know, the fast lane.

AUSTIN: Right, exact- [chuckles] exactly. Pooly you-ey, and get me in the other lane, exactly. Yeah, uh huh.

ANDREW: Go-pool lane, sorry.

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: I don't- so two things. One, we'll have to figure out how you get back with the other group. Or get back to Blackwick. I don't know what that looks like, we might end up being abstract in terms of what this trip back looks like.

KEITH: I'm-! I'll tell you now! There's no way I'm missing the True War finale.

AUSTIN: There is. [Sylvi laughs] You're not on the boat.

KEITH: This is- this is not part of it, for me.

AUSTIN: What do you mean?

SYLVIA: That's so funny!

AUSTIN: Everyone told you not to get off the boat.

KEITH: Yea, but they didn't say cause that we're leaving.

ANDREW: That's true. That is true.

AUSTIN: That's not how it works!

ANDREW: I mean I agree with you, but they didn't tell us that the boat was gonna leave.

AUSTIN: You didn't ask! You snuck off the boat!

KEITH: It said, hey, don't get off the boat, we're sitting here parked for two days waiting for-

AUSTIN: They did not say we're parked!

KEITH: It's heavily implied.

AUSTIN: No one was even awake. Y'all snuck out before they could even make a broad- they told the people who happened to be awake.

ANDREW: Yep.

KEITH: I'm not going down- I'm booking it upriver. Booking it.

AUSTIN: You're not gonna make it. You got off the boat!

ANDREW: It's gonna be an asterisk champion. It's not even a real True War champion.

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

KEITH: Hazard would've known- Hazard would've known!

AUSTIN: No! Hazard would not have known!

SYLVIA: I got be honest-

AUSTIN: Because Hazard didn't confer with the bug captain of the ship!

SYLVIA: I did assume that the boat will be leaving. I just figured we were all on the same page.

AUSTIN: Actions have consequences.

SYLVIA: Cause I also thought that we were like here, and would have to just cross the mountains to get to Blackwick.

AUSTIN: Right, right.

ANDREW: Eh, it'll be fun!

AUSTIN: You can hunt down whoever wins this and challenge this. If you wanna take a beat, that is, [someone chuckles] become the true True- [chuckles] or False War player- or champion-

KEITH: What's my resource on this fairy tale book?

AUSTIN: Uh, it is the same as the one Duval has, actually. It is a- where is it? Let's see here. Book of Fables.

KEITH: That better be a D10?

AUSTIN: It's not a D10.

KEITH: [whispering] Fuck!

AUSTIN: But it is a-

KEITH: I've had these- I've had these two minor beats for like, eight sessions.

AUSTIN: Oh, wait, right! You were looking specifically for a D10 resource, right?

KEITH: Yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: I'll give it to you. I think this session, you deserve to check that box.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: I think that that's fair. Chine, you can imagine how I could've imagined you were gonna go a strange surgical implant or Heartsblood transfusion here.

ANDREW: Mhm.

AUSTIN: I do think you've gained some information about why you've been chosen by the Course, which is it's about guard- it's about the creature.

ANDREW: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Right? This is your duty at this point. So I think you can take that. So yeah, go ahead and write Book of Fables- write, um, like Otherwordly Book of Fables? D10 resource. And that is Wild, Cursed, for you.

And then, do we have anything else? Oh! The second thing I was gonna say is, start thinking about what changes about your character sheet, for Hazard and for Lyke.

SYLVIA: Yeah. I'm not sure.

AUSTIN: So think about it, you don't have to answer tonight, that's what I'm saying. But something is changing- you can change anything you want, and I will also do the same.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: So.

SYLVIA: Okay.

AUSTIN: And I go second.

KEITH: You go second? We don't do- we can't do a 3, 2, 1, change?

AUSTIN: No. There is not a same time, no.

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

AUSTIN: The Heartland and pushes as you pull, you know, after you pull. Or you push and it pulls back, you know?

KEITH: What if I pull, does it push?

AUSTIN: It will push, yeah.

[Music ends]

[Episode ends]