

## Eyes of A Killer 01

Transcriber: robotchangeling

<b>Opening Narration</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Game Rules [0:05:34]</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Prelude — Genre [0:17:57]</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Worldbuilding [0:39:57]</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Worldbuilding Cont. [1:02:38]</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Creating The Knife [1:26:46]</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Knife Cont. [1:49:20]</b>	<b>1</b>

## **Opening Narration**

[“[Eyes of a Killer](#)” by Jack de Quidt begins playing]

Sylvia (as **Narrator**): All right, all right, all of you quiet down. You've got this whole thing wrong. I see that once again it falls upon Gabrielle to set the record straight. You! Yes, you. Come here. Refill my drink for me while I enlighten my friends here. All right, where should I start?

I know that a lot of you were fond of that Caldera boy despite his...station around here. Heaven knows I enjoyed his silly little anecdotes about rocks or sand or...whatever. But we have to accept the truth of what happened: instead of simply dealing with the fact that his family is and always will be dormant, he let dreams of grandeur go to his head and did something unspeakable! No matter how sparkly those eyes were, they were the eyes of a killer!

Hmm? No, [laughs quietly] we were not involved like that. Have you ever seen me with anything secondhand? I swear, nobody has manners these days. Now, where did the help go with my drink?

[song ends]

## Introduction

**Sylvia:** Welcome to Friends at the Table, an actual play podcast focused on critical worldbuilding, smart characterization, and fun interaction between good friends. I am your host today, Sylvia Bullet, and with me is Keith J. Carberry.

**Keith:** Hi, my name is Keith Carberry. You can find me on [Twitter](#) at @KeithJCarberry and [Cohost](#). You can find the let's plays that I do at [youtube.com/runbutton](https://youtube.com/runbutton).

**Sylvia:** Art Martinez-Tebbel.

**Art:** Hey, I'm Art Martinez-Tebbel. I think if you're on a Patreon episode, you probably know where to find me on the internet and have made that choice by now, but I encourage you to check out things like [friendsatthetable.shop](https://friendsatthetable.shop), where you can find our new merchandise, and this is evergreen no matter when you hear this.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Art:** Newest merchandise is going to be there, maybe. Unless this is, like, really far in the future.

**Keith:** Can I say—

**Art:** Our merchandise is only available at the Universal Studios Hollywood gift shop.  
[Sylvia and Keith laugh quietly]

**Dre:** Man. If that's true, we've made it. Or... [Art and Sylvia laughs] Universal Studios fucked up.

**Keith:** If you made the choice “no” for me, reconsider.

**Sylvia:** Reconsider.

**Art:** I trust you.

**Keith:** It's been so long.

**Art:** I trust you people.

**Dre:** Read some literature on the subject.

**Sylvia:** Also with us, that last voice you heard is Andrew Lee Swan.

**Dre:** Hey. I was trying to think of a fun bit to do here, and I don't...I don't have one.

**Sylvia:** It's okay.

**Dre:** Uh, hey. You should review the podcast on iTunes, both Friends at the Table and Media Club Plus.

**Keith:** Yeah, hey. The Friends at the Table one's almost at 2000, and I think it's been hovering there for a while, so I would love to see that hit 2000.

**Dre:** Let's go.

**Keith:** And the Media Club Plus one, the monsoon of early reviews has slowed to a light rain, and so I [**Dre:** Mm.] would love to see that pick up again, so if you're thinking, "Oh, every time they say this, the exact same amount of people go and rate and review..."

**Dre:** They don't?

**Keith:** They don't. It goes down.

**Dre:** Douse me with reviews.

**Sylvia:** Whoa. Yeah. Please destroy us with reviews.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** You're already on Patreon if you're hearing this, at least originally. This might end up on the main feed someday, so if it does, go to [friendsatthetable.cash](https://friendsatthetable.cash) to support us. You can also download— buy. Not just download, buy any of the music that you

heard at the beginning of this. I don't know what it is yet, but I'm sure it's good. You can buy it at [notquitereal.bandcamp.com](https://notquitereal.bandcamp.com).

**Keith:** It's pay what you want. It's all pay what you want.

**Sylvia:** It's all pay what you want, but do it on Bandcamp Friday, if that's still happening.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Because Jack deserves it.

**Keith:** It's true. This is—

**Art:** Unless you're in some far-flung hellscape where Bandcamp Friday has gone away.

**Keith:** Yeah. We're... [laughs] I can see the hellscape on the horizon, which maybe means, for the first time ever: don't wait for Bandcamp Friday, because...

**Sylvia:** Yeah, that's a good plan, I guess.

**Keith:** It might go away. It seems like they need money over there.

**Art:** If you're in the future and Bandcamp Friday doesn't exist, uh...

**Sylvia:** I'm sorry.

**Art:** Yeah, I'm sorry. Go and, I guess, like, knife the person in the hell-car next to you in the Mad Max future you're living in, and... [Sylvia laughs]

**Keith:** Mm-hmm. And hope—

**Art:** Trade their blood for some of Jack's music.

**Keith:** And hope that the person that you just knifed was either the original guy whose name I forget that sold Bandcamp to Epic or an Epic executive that sold Bandcamp to Songtradr.

**Sylvia:** To Songtradr? Yeah. That would be ideal.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Not that— but, uh, parody, parody, also. I don't know— don't— you know.

**Art:** Yeah, this is a parody of...

**Sylvia:** This is a— we're not saying actually do that; satire, et cetera. You can find me on the internet everywhere at [@SYLVIBULLET](#). There's the TikTok, [@friends\\_table](#), and we do some streaming, [twitch.tv/friendsatthetable](#), and it's on the YouTube as well, [friendsatthetable](#). I'm just gonna get all the plugs out of the way. And hey, I'm hosting it this time. You're probably listening to this being like, "What the heck?" Yeah. So, we're—I've been banging the drum to play a specific game with us for a while, and that might involve actually the stabbing of corrupt executives, depending on how we play it.

**Keith:** Yeah.

## **Game Rules [0:05:34]**

**Sylvia:** We are going to be playing *The Slow Knife*, which is sort of a collaborative storytelling game where we all play real pieces of shit who will get what's coming to them.

**Keith:** Not me.

**Sylvia:** No?

**Keith:** I won't. [Art laughs]

**Sylvia:** [sarcastic] Yeah, definitely not.

**Dre:** No, you're gonna win. Yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** I'm built different. In our Discord, I linked the rules booklet, because that's not on the Miro board, and we do also need to read through that before we get started. But

yeah, it's— I'm gonna read just the first page of the rules, because I think it gives a better pitch of what this game is than I could off the top of my head. *The Slow Knife* is a game of avaricious villains and patient revenge for two to four players. Oh, also, it is designed by Jack Harrison with illustrations—beautiful illustrations—by Rafael Nobre. And yeah, just check it out, even if you can't afford a game right now. I mean, there's community copies on Itch, but. Check out the art. It's very pretty, very well put together game. Over the course of an evening or two—or a podcast recording or four, for Friends at the Table—we'll tell the decades-long tale of a young soul's revenge against those who betrayed them. We'll tell the story from the perspective of the villains. That's us. Do you guys have the rulebooks open? Do we want to just start going through this?

**Keith:** I do, yeah.

**Sylvia:** Cool.

**Keith:** Uh, I can go.

**Sylvia:** You can go? Cool.

**Keith:** Unless you have an idea. Okay.

**Sylvia:** No.

**Keith:** We'll answer prompts about our villains, the Conspirators, as we had characters and connections to a board of sin and scandal. We'll also tell the story of the Knife, the victim of our long-ago crime and their grueling and determined return to society.

**Art:** I'll pick it up. The loose threads of our story will knit together into a complex revenge plot as we play. By the end of the game, we'll have constructed a conspiracy that destroys our wretched Conspirators, as they find themselves broken, alone, and utterly ruined.

**Sylvia:** Except for Keith.

**Art:** Except for Keith.

**Keith:** Right, except for me.

**Art:** It's weird that it says that.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** [laughs] It's weird that it said in the book.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Dre, page six?

**Dre:** The characters we play in this game are fairly nasty and menacing people. However, there are many ways to be evil, and our goal is not to be as vile as possible. As a baseline, we should aim for the kind of dramatic inflated villains we might see in a family adventure film.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. So, you know, let's get campy. Now let's talk about the content we would like to make off-limits for our story. This could include specific topics, phobias, or difficult feelings. Make a list of anything discussed and add to the list as needed during play. I'm gonna jump out of the presentation on our Miro board and make a card for this.

**Dre:** [quietly] Oh, presentation ended.

**Sylvia:** Does anybody have anything? Huh?

**Dre:** Nothing.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, the presentation ended. I had to do this just to, you know.

**Dre:** Mm, mm, mm.

**Sylvia:** Does anybody have anything we really want to avoid?

**Dre:** Uh, sexual assault.

**Sylvia:** Okay, yeah, that's a...you know. That's a pretty...

**Art:** Uh, I say this often. Graphic medical stuff.

**Sylvia:** Okay.

**Art:** Non-graphic medical stuff, fine. But like, I don't really want to live in it.

**Sylvia:** We—

**Keith:** Sure.

**Sylvia:** In general, we don't like, I think, putting, like, excessive blood and guts, I think, also might be worth— I know it's weird to hear me say that, but I do in fact think that keeping this in the sort of, like, um...

**Keith:** It did say family adventure.

**Sylvia:** Family adventure, Disney villain sort of realm works. So, okay. I'm just gonna call these X cards. So, we've got medical...medical trauma decent description for that?

**Art:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Slash excessive...

**Art:** Like, I was watching an episode of the *Quantum Leap* reboot last night, which for the first four episodes I thought was terrible, and now I love it. [Sylvia laughs] But someone broke an ankle last night, and for some reason, they just wanted me to keep looking at this ankle, like...

**Dre:** Ugh!

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Art:** Yeah, just stop it! It's like they paid the whole budget on the ankle, 'cause the whole episode's [Keith laughs] just, like, in the woods, which was, like, definitely Griffith Park, you know?

**Keith:** We gotta really make up for the park with the ankle thing.



**Art:** Yeah. They also had a needle drop. I guess that was a lot of the money too.

**Keith:** Yeah. Use it or lose it.

**Sylvia:** I mean, yeah. Do we have anything else we want to add to X cards in terms of, like, subject matter? And also are there any genres we're not interested in playing with at all, if anybody has just, like, an immediate knee-jerk "I don't want to do this right now," because we've, like, done it too much or done it recently, and it's fine if the answer to that's no.

**Keith:** Uh, I don't think so. I do have— I do have, like, you know, you gave us a list of settings, and I did—

**Sylvia:** Yeah, there's some— go on.

**Keith:** I did have, like, a preferred order of, like, this is the one I would probably least want to do, but not enough to put it on a card, I don't think.

**Sylvia:** Okay, yeah. So, worth mentioning that *Slow Knife* comes with three premade settings, but we thought it would be fun to go through the prelude, which we'll be doing after we do the rules stuff, to build our own setting, and we'll see where that takes us. You know, we've got plenty of worlds, but we could also just make a new one.

**Keith:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** I'm very curious about the order that you were interested in them in, but we could—

**Keith:** Oh, sure. Yeah. And I'll remember that order as soon as I see that list of three things again.

**Sylvia:** No worries. Okay. [Keith laughs] Do you think we are good for things that are off limits then, though? Like...

**Keith:** Uh...yeah, I think I'm okay. I think I'm covered.

**Sylvia:** Art? Dre?

**Dre:** All right. Um, if something makes us feel— did you just read page eight?

**Sylvia:** I just read page seven. [cross] I think in the order, it's Keith next.

**Keith:** [cross] Oh, that's me. That's me, sorry. Yeah.

**Sylvia:** I was saying—

**Keith:** I'm on page eight.

**Sylvia:** I was checking with you guys to see if you had anything to add.

**Dre:** Oh, sorry.

**Sylvia:** It's fine if not.

**Dre:** Um...

**Art:** No, I think I'm good.

**Sylvia:** Cool.

**Art:** Yeah, this time I don't, but hey, you know, as we read page eight, we'll, you know...

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Art:** There'll be space to add more stuff later.

**Sylvia:** Absolutely, and there's always time to add things.

**Keith:** If something makes us feel uncomfortable during play such as a prompt, answer, or something off limits, we can ask the group to hang on. We can either say the words aloud or hold up our hands as a stop sign. Then we can take one or more of the following actions.

**Art:** It's worth nothing that in this particular instance, holding up a hand as a stop sign is

not going to be terrible effective.

**Keith:** No.

**Sylvia:** It's not gonna work.

**Keith:** We could put stop with a marker on the...on the Miro board.

**Sylvia:** You could draw a hand. It's not exactly time, like, sensitive. It's not really a great use of time if it's an urgent thing you need to pause, but I'd appreciate the effort at least.

**Art:** If we're in presentation, I think one of the things is a hand.

**Sylvia:** That is true. We're not gonna be in presentation super long. It's just while we do the setup.

**Art:** All right. Well, we can take some time away from the story to discuss the issue, rewind and remove something that was added, change the direction the story goes from this point, continue with a more informed understanding of a sensitive topic, make space for a player to leave the game, or take a break. When we're all satisfied, we can resume play.

**Dre:** To set up the play area, we'll need the box of cards and some materials to build our board: a corkboard or wall table/whiteboard/floor; index card or printer paper cut into eight pieces; sticky notes or printer paper cut into 16 pieces; string and pins or washi tape or colored pens. Alternatively, you can use a digital board like Miro.

**Sylvia:** That's what we're doing.

**Keith:** That's what we're doing.

**Art:** I have to assume it's product placement, because I'd never heard of this service before. [Keith laughs quietly]

**Sylvia:** We've used— it's, like, kind of known in indie tabletop games as being useful for this sort of thing. I do wish we got the full exp—

**Keith:** Yeah, we used it for *Orbital* and it worked really well.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. I wish we got the full experience of *Slow Knife* of using the red strings wrapped around pushpins, [**Dre:** Mm.] but we can just use our imagination. Is this back to me?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Yep.

**Sylvia:** Yes, it is. First, we're gonna set up the cards. I already did this in a Roll20 board. One of us should start shuffling and placing the decks as we talk through them. First, separate and shuffle each act deck. Keep the opening cards separate, and set them on top of each deck after shuffling. I'm just gonna put those on our board when we get to each act.

**Keith:** There's an image of the Conspirator card. It's a black card with a few different colors of text. It says, "The Knife is coming for you!" In Act Four, when your part in the revenge is complete, flip this card. We should each take a Conspirator card. We should read through both sides and place it in front of us with the black side, as above, showing.

**Sylvia:** These are one the bottom of the Miro board if you scroll down. I can't have a flippable card in Miro, so I just put two—

**Dre:** Mm.

**Sylvia:** There's two sets. There's two images in four sets of the front and back of the Conspirator card.

**Art:** Page 13 has a picture of some people.

**Sylvia:** Yep.

**Keith:** [sarcastic] Probably good guys.

**Art:** On a red card.

**Sylvia:** Yep.

**Art:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** [sarcastic] Definitely good guys.

**Art:** Especially this one on the right.

**Keith:** [laughs] Yeah. He looks like he's just told a very funny joke and is expecting everyone to laugh. [Sylvia laughs]

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Art:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** He's on our Miro board too.

**Art:** Or depending on how the rest of that picture goes, you know, maybe he's from, like, a late '30s German newspaper.

**Sylvia:** Oof. Yeah. [Art chuckles]

**Dre:** Mm.

**Art:** These portrait cards can be used to represent characters on the board as we introduce our story, if we wish.

**Sylvia:** These are also on our Miro board. They're to the right of the Conspirator— uh, the Conspirator cards, yeah. I thought they'd be fun to have.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Art:** Oh, they went a different direction with this one from the rest of the...

**Sylvia:** Probably shouldn't have obscured him in that way, you know?

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Art:** Yeah.

**Dre:** He looks like Red Skull.

**Art:** Little bit. Too much nose.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Art:** Which is where I was reacting to. [Sylvia laughs]

**Dre:** That's fair. Uh, page 14?

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Dre:** Alongside the cards, we'll be building a conspiracy board as we tell our story. The board area should be empty and at least two foot by three foot. On it, we'll be placing characters, threads, and notes. And they have an image here of classic conspiracy corkboard with notes and photos [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] with red strings pinned between them.

**Keith:** And is there anything better than a conspiracy board? It's just one of the best all-time things.

**Dre:** It's so good.

**Sylvia:** It's honestly untouchable.

**Art:** Yeah. I hope one of the playsets included in this—and I didn't check a single one of them—is the *It's Always Sunny in Philadelphia* episode with the [Keith laughs] famous Pepe Silvia board.

**Sylvia:** Pepe Silvia, yeah. Which, you know, I've been thinking about a lot leading up to this. There isn't, unfortunately, but hey, you know what? We're doing the prelude today. Who's to say we couldn't...?

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Art:** I hear you.

**Sylvia:** Characters are the cast of our story, including our Conspirators and Knife. We should add a character to the board if we think they might come up again. This might be true even if they're dead, like a murder victim, or inanimate, like a ship. We can use an index card to represent a character or choose a portrait card.

**Keith:** Threads mark connections between characters. Use string or tape to represent threads. We should add notes frequently to capture details about characters and threads. Each note should be a short sentence at most, such as a name, description, or relationship. Use small sticky notes or cut index cards for these.

**Art:** With our play area set up, we're ready to start telling our story. We'll first create our setting and characters and establish the facts of the incident that befell the Knife. We can do this using either a playset or the prelude.

**Dre:** Playsets give us everything we need to play the game in a predefined setting. They are available as printed books or at...a URL that I'm not gonna read. [Sylvia laughs] Playsets are the—

**Art:** A URL that I'm gonna say doesn't work.

**Dre:** Oh. Okay. Playsets are the best way to get started, especially if it's our first game.

**Art:** Oh, shit.

**Dre:** If, instead, we'd like to create a custom setting from scratch, we use the prelude booklet.

**Sylvia:** And lastly— or not lastly, actually. We had setup checklist, which we've gone through. Have we discussed [Dre: Mm-hmm.] content and safety tools together? We have. Unfortunately, raising hands not gonna work. The act cards I need to shuffle, actually. I'm glad there's a checklist. [Dre chuckles] We have got the materials together for our board, yes. Okay, the rest of this stuff is stuff that will come through the prelude, so I think maybe time to get to that.

**Keith:** Okay.

## **Prelude — Genre [0:17:57]**

**Sylvia:** [sighs] This is the prelude! Read the rules booklet first. Oh, I like this. I like the cheering. This is helping me with the anxiety. Read the rules booklet fir— oh, no, wait. We did read the rules booklet. The prelude is written— stop sending angry faces, Dre. [Dre laughs] It is written to be read aloud, passing as you go. This booklet will guide us through the creation of an original setting and characters for our story, and I'm gonna skip the italicized text about playsets, because we're not doing that. Oh my— okay. Does anybody want to read this one?

**Dre:** Sure.

**Sylvia:** Also, is it— okay, cool.

**Dre:** We'll start by establishing some essential truths.

**Sylvia:** Oh, I didn't mean to hit stop. [Art laughs]

**Dre:** In this game, we each play a self-serving scoundrel, a villain. Sylvi, they don't know. They don't know!

**Sylvia:** I know. I shouldn't have said anything.

**Dre:** They don't know.

**Art:** Oh, now we're back here.

**Dre:** Yeah, we are back here.

**Sylvia:** I'm sorry.

**Dre:** No, it's fine.

**Sylvia:** There we go.



**Dre:** Ugh.

**Sylvia:** I was trying to get out of fullscreen so I could take notes.

**Dre:** Sylvi, I wish you knew how much of when I read *Lancer* was me being like, “Wait, why the fuck isn't this working? Why isn't this working?”

**Sylvia:** [laughs] I mean, to be—

**Dre:** “Why isn't this working?”

**Sylvia:** Like, we've all heard Austin struggling with Roll20.

**Dre:** Oh, yeah.

**Sylvia:** This is just what facilitating is.

**Dre:** Uh huh.

**Sylvia:** It is fighting against virtual tabletop boards, so.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** For real.

**Art:** Yeah, but don't worry, by this point, everyone's heard your sick, like, poetry intro to this episode, and so they think that you're really, like, on top of it. [Sylvia and Keith laugh]

**Dre:** Uh huh. Yeah. Okay, we're gonna establish essential truths. In this game, we each play a self-serving scoundrel, a villain. We are powerful members of elite society or soon will be. Together, we will conspire to ruin the life of a gifted young soul for our own gain. This is the story of our rise and inevitable fall.

**Keith:** Mostly inevitable.

**Sylvia:** Mostly inevitable. [laughs] To sum up, put it very plainly, there's gonna be five characters that are integral to the plot. Each of us will have our own character, and then there'll be the Knife who is a shared sort of, like, background protagonist to this revenge plot. All right, next one.

**Keith:** Uh...

**Sylvia:** Keith, your name's on this one, [**Keith:** Oh, Sylvi.] so you read it.

**Keith:** My name is on this one. While we have the Conspirators— while we the Conspirators connive and carouse, the young victim of our conspiracy plots their patient revenge. They are the Knife. When they return, cloaked in the finery of our peers, they will bend our sins against us to destroy us completely. It did say “except Keith,” which is true, and then someone crossed it out and said, “especially Keith,” which is a lie.

**Sylvia:** Some ne'er-do-well.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Dre:** A villain.

**Keith:** We know that the Conspirators are villains, so any one of us could have done it.

**Sylvia:** This is so true.

**Keith:** Except me. I have no motive. [Sylvia laughs]

**Art:** With this basic outline in place, we'll start by establishing some details about our setting. This is the backdrop to our revenge story. It could be a city, a ship, a tower, or something stranger. Like a ship that is a tower.

**Sylvia:** Oh.

**Art:** We'll build this place by answering prompts together as a group.

**Keith:** I love the tower ship.

**Dre:** I think that's back to you, Sylvi.

**Sylvia:** Oh, it is back to me. It can be daunting to create something from scratch, even with a guided process. We should make notes on the board, reference media touchstones, give things placeholder names, and ask clarifying questions. We can also go back and change our answers if a better idea emerges. Yeah, I'm gonna be stopping and starting this presentation a lot is what I'm feeling.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Sylvia:** Okay.

**Dre:** You can just stop it, and we can scroll.

**Sylvia:** I think—

**Keith:** It also—

**Sylvia:** I trust you guys to just follow along.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** We're on...we're on the first set of prompts.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** So.

**Dre:** Across all of history, imagined or otherwise, there are people seeking vengeance. What genre is our story in? I figure we want to answer these questions before we read the next one.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Oh, sure.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, we do. Very important.

**Keith:** Uh, so, here. Here's the three that we had before, and I can tell you that on the bottom is science fiction.

**Sylvia:** Okay.

**Keith:** And then the next is fantasy, and then at the top, for me, is historical drama.

**Sylvia:** Those are based on the playsets, which are...

**Keith:** Right, yes.

**Sylvia:** One is a sort of, like, post-revolutionary France.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Sylvia:** The historical drama one. One is sort of fae court elves, and the other takes place on a sort of, like, luxury spaceship.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** They're all very cool. They all have their own art. I would recommend just, again, check out this game. It's very aesthetically pleasing.

**Keith:** Yeah. I just— my immediate gut reaction when we were first presented with these was that we're already doing a sci-fi season, [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] and so to not double up, but I'm not, like, fully opposed. If everyone else was excited to do a spaceship, I love spaceships, so.

**Sylvia:** This is— yeah, I'm also sort of in the mood for a sci-fi break, or at least a little breather from it.

**Dre:** Sure, yeah.

**Sylvia:** Just because, like, we are all, what, how many months into PALISADE? Eight months in?

**Dre:** Oh, we've been sci-in' and fi-in' for a long time.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, we're, like, [**Art:** Yeah.] deep in it, and I feel like— you know. It's nice to sometimes go into things without all the beeps and the boops and the robots, et cetera. Sorry, Thisbe. I do still roll with you.

**Keith:** [laughs quietly] Roll what? What do you roll?

**Sylvia:** Fucking weed cigarettes. [laughs] Okay.

**Art:** Oh my god, we're 35 episodes of PALISADE, and the Road must have been...

**Sylvia:** The Road was really long too, yeah.

**Keith:** [cross] The Road was 24, 26, something.

**Dre:** [cross] It was really long.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. Road is its own season.

**Keith:** Yeah, we've barely done more than the Road.

**Art:** That means we're, what, like, a year of PALISADE.

**Keith:** Yeah, basically, yeah.

**Art:** We should start wrapping that up. [Sylvia laughs]

**Keith:** Road to PALISADE's sick. Honestly, I'm like...

**Sylvia:** Hey, we almost wrapped it up.

**Keith:** We did almost wrap it up. [laughs quietly]

**Dre:** It's true.

**Keith:** We could have wrapped it up 10 episodes ago.

**Dre:** All right, so no sci-fi is what I'm hearing.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. That is also what I'm hearing. Does historical drama interest anyone?

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Like, the book has that in that sort of Victorian period, but we could do all sorts of stuff. We could do, like...we could do, like, a mob story. We could do, um...

**Art:** Love a mob story. What I learned from the trailers to the movie *Napoleon* is that I don't know as much as I think I do about French history.

**Sylvia:** Here's the thing. When I played this game, we did the French history, like, playset, but then also there was, like, magic and shit. Like, you know. We don't have to actually do history. We can just be like, "Oh, also, now there's magitech in this setting."  
[laughs quietly]

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Art:** I feel like my school history classes went from, like, the French Revolution, Robespierre, now it's World War I.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Art:** And, apparently, there was a lot of stuff in there.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** It turns out.

**Keith:** I had a really long French Revolution to Napoleon section in my class, but then, yes, then we did basically skip to World War I.

**Art:** Yeah, historical drama sounds fun.

**Sylvia:** Okay, cool.

**Art:** The fantasy setting you described sounds fun. Yeah, it's all...everything that doesn't beep or boop is great with me.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Who— [laughs quietly] who feels like they have the strongest position on which one of these two to do?

**Dre:** Important question.

**Art:** Well, you have a ranking, so, so far it's you.

**Keith:** I did have a ranking, yeah.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** You had a question, Dre?

**Dre:** Yeah. At one point, we were talking about whether or not we wanted this to, like, tie into Bluff City or any other established Friends at the Table stuff?

**Sylvia:** Yeah. That is also something worth talking out. We could do this. If we want to do a, like, period piece thing, we could do, like— we've done Bluff City in, like, the '70s and stuff before, and I'm sure that there's some room in different time periods for us to do stuff there too. We could also, if we want to keep the sort of, like, noble court intrigue stuff going, we could do, uh...we could set something, like, pre-the-season Sangfielle, in, like, Conventus or something. That was another idea I had. But also, just doing something set in, like...like, listen, we've established that New Jersey is a place in the Friends at the Table canon. Earth New Jersey is a place, so that means [**Dre:** Mm-hmm.] the rest of the Earth is too, so we can— [laughs quietly] we can—

**Art:** I'm not sure that's true.

**Sylvia:** Shh. [Art laughs]

**Keith:** Somewhere out there, there's the lone state of New Jersey, floating in space.

**Sylvia:** Okay. Well, that's fair. Okay. Austin's allowed to overwrite anything I say about that.

**Dre:** Sure.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, that is also a concern too, right? is us accidentally— but it's our show too. I've— hey. [laughs quietly]

**Keith:** Yeah, I think that anything that you say Austin then has to deal with.

**Sylvia:** That's an interesting way to put it, and a good way to make me feel emboldened.

**Keith:** One way to deal with it is just to say, well, it's not— this is non-canon, because it's—

**Sylvia:** Shh.

**Keith:** [laughs] Another way is to be like, how do I gotta make this work?

**Art:** The other way is to make this *really* canon.

**Sylvia:** Now there's just—

**Keith:** Yeah, this is the most canon episode that we've done.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. [Keith laughs]

**Art:** What if the Knife was Maelgwyn? [Keith laughs quietly]

**Sylvia:** Oh my god.

**Art:** No, we're not doing it. We're not doing it.

**Sylvia:** We're not doing that?

**Art:** It's really one of the things I think we could do that would make Austin mad. [laughs quietly]



**Sylvia:** Yeah. Uh...

**Art:** We just did— we just recorded eight more hours of Marielda. Deal with it. [Sylvia and Keith laugh]

**Sylvia:** Oh my god.

**Keith:** The episode is titled “Canon Marielda Pt. 1”. [Sylvia and Dre laugh]

**Art:** “Marielda: What *Really* Happened.”

**Sylvia:** It’s just—

**Keith:** The untold story.

**Sylvia:** It’s just Maelgwyn has a gun in this one, and not like a [**Keith:** Gungwyn.] Marielda-appropriate gun, like a 9mm pistol. [Sylvia and Keith laugh quietly]

**Art:** Like a 1920s tommy gun.

**Sylvia:** [laughs] Yeah.

**Art:** An Al Capone gun.

**Keith:** Oh, you don’t think that, uh...that someone down there could make a 9mm pistol? I think they could handle it.

**Sylvia:** I mean, yeah, that’s...

**Art:** Hey, youse, Maelgwyn. We’s gonna rub you out.

**Dre:** Oh?

**Sylvia:** Aubrey’s in the lab making the gat.

**Dre:** He’s gonna rub me out?

**Sylvia:** Archive of Our Own probably has that. So, let’s— I’m gonna write down

historical drama for our genre, if that's cool with everybody.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** That seems like the direction we were heading. Does anybody else feel stronger about leaning towards fantasy, or do we want to leave the, like, door open for this setting to have fantasy elements?

**Art:** Nah, I think—

**Keith:** I love an open door.

**Sylvia:** Okay.

**Art:** Yeah, I think we should leave ourselves open to anything that could come through, but.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Keith:** Yeah. Including the pullout, the final reveal, that actually, this was all taking place on a big space station.

**Sylvia:** On a tall ship.

**Keith:** Mm-hmm, yeah.

**Sylvia:** A ship that's a tower.

**Keith:** A ship that's a tower in a sea on a space station. In France.

**Art:** In a dream of a child holding a snowglobe.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm. [Keith laughs] Which is also inside of a globe that an alien dog is wearing as a necklace.

**Art:** This is *St. Elsewhere* inside of *Men in Black*.

**Sylvia:** Are there any elements of this genre that we're keen to include or avoid? I have

a suggestion, which is historical accuracy.

**Dre:** Oh, yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah. Yeah, for sure. [Sylvia laughs]

**Art:** Oh, yeah, I have no interest in historical accuracy.

**Sylvia:** Cool.

**Art:** I'm not even gonna touch Wikipedia.

**Keith:** Not only do I have no interest in it, I have no capacity for it.

**Sylvia:** Same.

**Dre:** Uh, I'll touch Wikipedia if it's cool.

**Sylvia:** That's a good point.

**Keith:** Oh, yeah, for sure, yeah.

**Dre:** Like if we've gotta look up types of, like, blimps and zeppelins, I'll go to Wikipedia for that.

**Sylvia:** Fair enough. Top of the list coolest form: Led. Anyway. That's a terrible joke. I need to— do we have anything else we want to avoid, other than what I just said?

**Keith:** Uh, no. Just that.

**Dre:** Yeah, just that.

**Sylvia:** Just the— okay. Uh, let's move onto the next page.

**Keith:** All right. Oh, are we writing down our stuff somewhere?

**Sylvia:** I have started a—

**Dre:** Sylvi's got it.

**Keith:** Cool.

**Sylvia:** I got a note just for the genre. I'm trying to find my non-touchscreen mouse so I can drag things easier.

**Keith:** Touchscreen mouse?

**Sylvia:** Not touchscreen, like, touchpad? You know, the laptop type.

**Keith:** Oh, sure.

**Sylvia:** Thank you for adding non-accurate to that, Dre.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** Do we, like...okay. Historical drama is very broad. Are we doing sort of, like, French aristocracy, like...?

**Keith:** I—

**Art:** Yeah, no accents, though.

**Sylvia:** No.

**Dre:** Aww.

**Sylvia:** But sort of, like, vague Victorian, post-Victorian aesthetics? Or do we want to do...

**Keith:** Well, I mean, I don't know what they call it in France, so sure.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, I don't either.

**Art:** [cross] Le Victorian.

**Dre:** [cross] Uh, they call it, like, [French accent] Le Victorian. Oh, god damnit, Art!  
[laughs quietly]

**Sylvia:** God. You guys both— you said no accents, and then two of you have done accents.

**Dre:** [accent] Hon hon hon!

**Sylvia:** Okay, no accents. [Art laughs]

**Art:** [accent] Zut alors! It is France!

**Sylvia:** Holy fuck.

**Art:** Janine doesn't listen to these, right? [Dre laughs]

**Sylvia:** [sarcastic] Oh, definitely not, no.

**Dre:** [accent] I love the things [unintelligible]! Hon hon!

**Art:** We're both just doing the Kenan bath character,<sup>1</sup> right?

**Dre:** Yes, we are. [laughs]

**Art:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Uh...oh, no. Okay.

**Sylvia:** I'm gonna move— I moved the notepad to the top of the playboard. Okay, hold on. So...I'm gonna shrink this down, so I can add more to this.

**Dre:** Okay, I know we said we don't care about historical accuracy, but...

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Dre:** What the fuck are we talking about when we say the Victorian era or post-Victorian era?

**Sylvia:** I don't— straight up, I picture, um...

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<sup>1</sup> Kenan Thompson's character Jean K. Jean on SNL.

**Dre:** Like, late 1800s, early 1900s?

**Sylvia:** Yeah. I think that, like...I mean, we need to be honest with ourselves. We're kind of playing in steampunk right now.

**Dre:** Uh, yeah. That's fine.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Dre:** We can't go there a lot, but...

**Keith:** Well, it would only be steampunk if you take that era and then put steampunk technology into it.

**Dre:** [sighs] Here's the thing, Keith.

**Sylvia:** That's true, which we don't have to do at all.

**Art:** Uh huh.

**Keith:** Right.

**Art:** Or...

**Dre:** But I really would like a zeppelin.

**Art:** Yeah, maybe we're not steampunk enough.

**Keith:** But that's real. I think zeppelins are real.

**Art:** Well.

**Dre:** Um, is the—

**Keith:** To be steampunk, it has to be fake.

**Sylvia:** That's fair.

**Dre:** Is the portrayal of Tesla technology within the movie *The Prestige* steampunk?

**Keith:** No.

**Art:** Arguably, yes.

**Keith:** Because it's not punk. It's just fantasy. It's like—

**Dre:** Because that's what I— that's the vibe I'm thinking of.

**Keith:** That's like historical sci-fi.

**Sylvia:** I am straight up writing down *The Prestige* under historical...

**Keith:** *The Prestige* is great.

**Sylvia:** As just a media touchstone, I think, is a good one.

**Keith:** It's a great non-repulsive version of steampunk.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. I— listen, we— we talked about Marielda earlier. We've kind of done steampunk already.

**Dre:** Yeah. Hey, we should reclaim steampunk.

**Sylvia:** I'm not gonna go that far.

**Dre:** Okay.

**Sylvia:** However, I do think that we can trade on that, like, time period of the vaguely sometime from the 1800s to the early 1900s, you know?

**Dre:** Sure.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** I think *The Prestige* is a really good visual touchstone, just for, like, what we're picturing. I also think, like...has anyone else here seen the, like, very sort of— at this point, it feels little known, prestige TV drama *The Knick* about, like, the Knickerbocker Hospital, in, like, the early 1900s?

**Keith:** No.

**Dre:** No.

**Art:** I saw a couple episodes and bounced off of it.

**Dre:** Is that, like, Knick like the New York Knicks? Is that how it's spelled?

**Sylvia:** It is spelled the same way, yeah.

**Art:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Okay.

**Sylvia:** That's, like, probably a little further along in, like, time periods, because they have—they are, like, in the process of, like, this hospital getting wired for electricity and stuff. And also, like, not—we're not doing any medical stuff. I just mostly mean, like, the fashion. I'll try and pull up...

**Keith:** Here's a twist, maybe.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, please. Twists are good.

**Keith:** So that we can avoid some of this.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** What if we are— what if instead of doing historical fiction opening the door to fantasy, we flip it.

**Sylvia:** To fantasy.

**Keith:** So that we don't have to be— we don't even have to pretend to be setting something on Earth. We can be in a fantasy setting that is technologically and socially very much like, you know...you know, Victorian England era.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. I'm writing "steampunk but not steampunk." But I know what you mean,



where it's like fantasy...

**Art:** Uh...oh, I thought you were drawing a frowny face to show that you wanted more steampunk.

**Sylvia:** No, I'm good. [Keith laughs] I did my steampunk time. I don't know if I've admitted this on the show, but I definitely had a brief period—

**Keith:** No, but we could tell.

**Dre:** Sure.

**Sylvia:** In high school, where I wore goggles to school, so yeah, people can tell.

**Dre:** Oh no!

**Keith:** Oh no.

**Dre:** Sylvi!

**Sylvia:** Yeah, so like, listen, I'm no fucking stranger. I can handle it. I just want to make sure you guys can. So, okay, fantasy that feels like early technol—

**Dre:** I'm sorry, was it Keith who was proposing this idea of it being fantasy? Are you basically proposing, like, what about *Shadowrun* but, like, Victorian era?

**Keith:** Um, yeah, in a way.

**Dre:** Okay.

**Keith:** Or it would—

**Art:** That's the—

**Keith:** I guess another thing— another way to look at it would be going back to, like, Sylvi's suggestion of, like, a Conventus thing.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. We got a, like...we could do that.

**Keith:** We don't have to do it there, but that's what I'm—

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** That is, like, the—

**Sylvia:** That's the—

**Keith:** That is, like, the vibe.

**Sylvia:** That is kind of the aesthetics that we're playing in, though, and I think is kind of a—

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** At least easy thing to compare to for listeners, right?

**Keith:** Yeah, and it just seems like fully, like, not being able to move around in, like, 1870s France or England [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] is going to be a stumbling block, at least, even just mentally.

**Sylvia:** That has kind of been— you've deduced the problem I've been having for the past 10 minutes.

**Keith:** Right, right.

**Sylvia:** Which is that this has been a huge stumbling block for me mentally.

**Keith:** Right, yeah. Because we can say as much as we want that we don't care about getting things right, but it's not gonna stop people being like, "Ugh, I don't want to say something stupid that's the opposite of what's real."

**Sylvia:** That's a good point.

**Art:** Yeah, so I think having— I think us just striking off and doing our own thing and

then sort of, like, backfitting it if it—

**Keith:** Totally.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Art:** If it rules, is the...

**Sylvia:** I like this. I like this idea.

**Art:** I mean, this is gonna rule. If you're listening to this, this is gonna rule.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Art:** But I want to give us space to, like, not feel like— there's a certain, like, tension in playing in something that everyone cares about.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. I think there's also, like, something to be said about this is the hardest part of this game is deciding the genre setup, so hopefully once we have that, things will start flowing a bit quicker.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, we could use this for future stuff. I mean, like, there's the setting that they came up with for *Shooting the Moon* that ended up being used for *Grandpa's Farm*, right? Nievelmarch? We can make a Nievelmarch. We can make a— add to the greater pantheon of worlds that we've got, or we can end up deciding that it's— I don't know.

**Keith:** Do we want to come up with a— do we want to come up with a name for a country or, like, a city-state or something?

**Sylvia:** Ooh. We don't need it right now, but we should start thinking of it.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Sylvia:** I think that's a good idea.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** Okay, so now that we're moving into, like, Victorian fantasy, I'm gonna use as just a more respectable term than the S word, [Dre laughs quietly] do we have any genre elements from that that we'd like to avoid? Having narrowed it down a bit. I feel like a thing that we're— we don't want to have— we're not gonna go full, like, waxed mustache with this. I mean, we could. That would be pretty despicable.

**Keith:** Yeah, give me a waxed mustache. Give me a...

**Sylvia:** A top hat with gears on it?

**Keith:** Give me some fencing swords, you know?

**Sylvia:** Okay, yeah.

**Keith:** Give me a—

**Sylvia:** Oh, I would—

**Keith:** Let me duel someone to the death.

**Sylvia:** If someone said fencing swords were not allowed, I would have to make a fuss, because come on.

**Dre:** Right, I'd quit.

**Keith:** The whole— quit whole Friends at the Table.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, no. It would just—

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** I'd blow the whole thing up. [Keith laughs] I think also that the next few pages will help us figure out, like, the vibe for the name of the world too, because they sort of define, uh...this just popped into my head. I'm all over the place, but they define the world a bit more when we start talking about the elites and stuff.

**Dre:** Sure.

**Keith:** Okay, cool.

**Sylvia:** Do we want to move onto the next set of questions? Does anybody have any other stuff to add or clarify?

**Keith:** No.

**Dre:** Let's go for it.

**Sylvia:** Also, let me know if you need me to slow down a bit.

**Keith:** What page are we on, and who's reading?

**Sylvia:** We're on page seven. I don't remember who's reading.

**Dre:** Uh, I read the last one, so whoever's after me.

## **Worldbuilding [0:39:57]**

**Keith:** Oh, so it's me. It's me. Uh, page seven. Now we can start creating our specific society. The society of ours is deeply stratified. How would elites describe their position? How do most normal people view the elites?

**Art:** Well, the elites are of course the steam kings, the, uh... [Sylvia laughs]

**Keith:** Sure. Yes.

**Sylvia:** Well, like, straight up. Hold on. Like, having people who— we could straight up have some sort of, like, oil baron situation here, right? Like...

**Art:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Sure.

**Art:** The steam monarchs. The...

**Keith:** This is like...this is like a, um...what's his fucking name from [cross] *Mad Max*?

**Sylvia:** [cross] Daniel Plainview? Oh, no.

**Keith:** Immortan Joe?

**Sylvia:** Yeah. [laughs]

**Art:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Just like, he keeps all of the hot steam away from everybody. Everybody's cold until they go to the steam king and get their hot steam. This is a stupid idea. I'm saying it because it's fun.

**Art:** I sort of like it—

**Sylvia:** I think we could—

**Art:** As long as we make sure it doesn't sound like we're doing scat porn.

**Sylvia:** [laughs quietly] Holy fuck.

**Dre:** Wow. That— okay. [Sylvia laughs]

**Keith:** [cross] No, all the disgusting peasants run to get their hot steamies.

**Dre:** [cross] I didn't think a show that had me and Sylvi would lead with Art saying the most horny thing, but...

**Sylvia:** No, hey, listen. I keep it pretty okay on the air. [mock offended] I don't know where this is coming from that I'm going willy-nilly all the time.

**Dre:** Yeah, I guess I'm crossing the streams of your Twitter persona.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, come on, now. Podcast Sylvi is a respectable member of society, she said, lying. Here's what— my suggestion to make Steam King sound a little less

scatological, is that—

**Keith:** Never in a million years would I have connected those.

**Sylvia:** I wouldn't either. [laughs]

**Dre:** Yeah, me neither.

**Sylvia:** Honestly, I... [laughs]

**Dre:** Shoutout to Cleveland.

**Art:** One of you said, like, “go for your hot steamy” or something.

**Keith:** Oh, the steam duke. That's how you do it. You just make him not a king. Make him a duke. Steam duke.

**Art:** Uh.

**Dre:** That makes it more scatological.

**Keith:** I don't see how.

**Sylvia:** I hate this. What if instead of just controlling steam, there's, like, a sort of, like, class of society that— it's not just steam that powers things, 'cause I think that, like, that would be a little...I don't know, a bit mund— like, easy for people to make their own. You'd be able to— I don't know. Maybe I'm wrong about that, but I think that people having power over energy sources in a world that is, like, starting to industrialize is kind of a good way to, like, classify elites? Does that interest you guys?

**Dre:** What if it's lava instead of steam?

**Sylvia:** What if it's lava instead of steam?

**Keith:** What if it's lava instead of steam?

**Art:** The volcano nobility, the...

**Keith:** Volcanobility.

**Sylvia:** Okay, wait.

**Art:** Volcanobility! Oh my god, that was beautiful! [Keith laughs quietly]

**Sylvia:** Hell yeah. I love it. Uh, volcanobility. Wait, okay.

**Art:** Sitting in their giant '80s cartoon palaces on top of volcanoes.

**Sylvia:** But no, straight up, we should have these people living in volcanoes.

**Dre:** Yeah, sure, of course.

**Art:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Okay, I'm gonna write—

**Art:** Just don't live down in the ash pits, the...ash swamps.

**Dre:** No, that's where the workers live.

**Sylvia:** No.

**Art:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Can someone write down that stuff about the ash pits? That's pretty good. I'm writing down what the volcanobility are, which is probably not what we're actually gonna call them, [cross] in fiction.

**Art:** [cross] Oh, it is.

**Keith:** It is. I think it is.

**Sylvia:** But out of character, I think it's fine.

**Art:** I think they definitely...

**Keith:** Hey, I think if we're building a world based on reality, it's a world full of people



who also know about puns.

**Sylvia:** Fair enough. You know what?

**Keith:** Portmanteaus.

**Sylvia:** Actually, I like as a thing that people call them, [laughs quietly] and I might make my character get really pissy whenever someone calls them a volcanoble.

**Dre:** Oh, there's gotta be another...there's gotta be another better volcano, like, term we can use as a...

**Keith:** Oh, by the way, if—

**Art:** Lavaristocracy?

**Sylvia:** Pretty good.

**Keith:** I like that. I really like that.

**Dre:** Hold on. I'm googling volcano terms.

**Art:** [laughs quietly] Just get a quick list of volcano things.

**Sylvia:** Magmagnanimous. I don't know. I don't know. I don't know. That's what they'd call themselves. Okay, control the flow of lava.

**Art:** Magman— oh, that's hard. That's...

**Sylvia:** Yeah, no, it's hard. I said it, and I was like, "Why did I say that?"

**Art:** Could be mag— mag—

**Sylvia:** I overestimated the number of repeating syllables.

**Art:** Magna— magnamanimous?

**Sylvia:** Magmana— [laughs]

**Art:** Mah mah mah mah mah.

**Keith:** Magmaffluent.

**Dre:** [laughs] What is happening?

**Art:** Magmaffluent!

**Sylvia:** We're having a stroke. [laughs]

**Art:** These are great! [Dre laughs]

**Keith:** The magmaffluent.

**Sylvia:** Okay. So, I've written down: volcanobility control [**Keith:** Okay.] the flow of lava—uh, maybe not flow; flow of lava makes it sound a little more literal than I meant here—that is being used as a power source for industrialization.

**Keith:** Uh huh.

**Sylvia:** Does that sound good to everybody else?

**Keith:** That sounds good. You should write down “magmaffluent” too.

**Art:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Um...okay, I'm gonna— hold on, I'm gonna write down “lavapunk” on our genre thing, and then I'm gonna write that.

**Dre:** Sure. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Art:** Does this exist already? Are we inventing something right now?

**Keith:** I think we're— yeah, [**Dre:** Mm-hmm.] I think we are inventing this.

**Sylvia:** If we're not, don't tell us.

**Art:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** I'm, like, so stoked about lava right now. This is a really cool idea. I like it a lot. Okay.

**Art:** Lavafloners. No.

**Sylvia:** Mm...

**Keith:** Born Warm!

**Art:** Born Warm!

**Sylvia:** That's a good one, actually!

**Sylvia:** I kind of fuck with that one!

**Art:** Oh!

**Dre:** Yeah. No, that's good.

**Sylvia:** Well, okay. That actually— do we want— we could probably— well, wait.

**Art:** Keith also just named the best gangster rap album in this universe. [Dre and Keith laugh]

**Sylvia:** We have written down what the elites are. The question is what do the— how would they describe their position?

**Dre:** Uh, I like the idea of Born Warm and that's, like, you know, like...

**Art:** Yeah.

**Dre:** We were born better.

**Keith:** Right.

**Sylvia:** Okay, cool.

**Keith:** But also, it's also like, hey, don't blame me because I was Born Warm.

**Dre:** Yeah. It's not my fault.

**Keith:** It's not my fault.

**Art:** Well, like, they've had...

**Dre:** I didn't ask for this.

**Art:** They've had a lifelong connection to, like, the heat of the universe, the heat of the world.

**Dre:** Yeah. Do you know how hard— how much pressure there is on me, since I was Born Warm?

**Keith:** Yeah. It's a ton of pressure.

**Dre:** I have to do so much more with my life than a normal person.

**Keith:** The expectations are outrageous.

**Dre:** Yeah. I can't just, like, work a job everyday.

**Sylvia:** Oh my god. Okay, wait. I'm gonna make...

**Art:** Yeah, just 'cause you're cold destitute. [Keith and Sylvia laugh]

**Sylvia:** Okay, wait, so, who's playing the Heat Miser, and who's playing Jack Frost?

**Keith:** It's— we're— [Dre and Keith laugh] we're learning that this is a— the economy doesn't actually run on lava. It runs on portmanteaus and puns.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm. [Sylvia laughs]

**Art:** Yeah, the portmanteau designers are really living high on the hog.

**Keith:** Money baked ham.

**Art:** Money baked ham.

**Dre:** Guys, there's a lot of weird words that are involved when talking about volcanoes.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. I can't think of— I was gonna try and think of a pun to affirm that, but I'm writing, and it's hard to do that at the same time. I have written down for this one, and put it on orange, because I wanted to differentiate that it was, like, what the nobility think, and orange is a lava color to me. "Born Warm," in quotes. "Nobility see themselves as better than those born in the Ash Pits. You wouldn't under—" and then in quotes I've written, "You wouldn't understand the responsibility that comes with being Born Warm." We happy with that? Do we have anything else to add? I can get another notepad going. [laughs quietly] Dre, could you read the nobility thing that you wrote here?

**Dre:** Yeah, the nobility live high up on the volcanoes. Parentheses...these are suggestions.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Volcano towers?

**Art:** Uh huh.

**Dre:** They travel from tower to tower in zeppelins?

**Art:** I practically insist on it.

**Sylvia:** I love it.

**Art:** Obsidian zeppelins.

**Sylvia:** Fuck yes! Okay.

**Keith:** What kind of zeppelins, Art? What did you say?

**Sylvia:** Obsidian.

**Art:** Zeppelins made of obsidian.

**Keith:** Oh, sure.

**Art:** Which I think is a volcanic thing, but maybe it's not.

**Keith:** It is.

**Sylvia:** I believe so.

**Dre:** It is. It is, it is.

**Keith:** It is, yeah.

**Sylvia:** Here's the problem. We've gone from being worried about history to being worried about science. [laughs]

**Dre:** [cross] Well, they go hand in hand, and I say fuck to both of them.

**Keith:** [cross] Well, I'm fine with being wrong about science.

**Sylvia:** That's fair.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Art:** It's just, you know that you're rich if you have a zeppelin made of rock, because you really had to invest in the gasses to keep it afloat. [Art and Sylvia laugh]

**Dre:** Sure.

**Sylvia:** Oh my god!

**Keith:** We have the heaviest zeppelin. [Art laughs]

**Sylvia:** Oh my god. Fuck. Okay. Okay, good, you removed the question marks.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** I appreciate it. Okay, so, cool. Volcano towers, canon. And you read the last bit, right?

**Dre:** Oh, maybe I didn't. Hold on.

**Sylvia:** It's fine.

**Dre:** Oh, yeah, the working class live in the Ash Pits.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, which is...probably sucks. It sucks ash, you know?

**Art:** Hey! [Dre groans]

**Sylvia:** This started with volcanobility, and you cannot put that genie back in the bottle, so.

**Art:** I think we're just gonna do another hour of volcano puns and call it a night is the real problem here. [laughs]

**Sylvia:** Straight up? This might end up being what happens for this, uh...this prelude.

**Art:** [chuckles] *Slow Knife* episode 0.

**Dre:** Oh my god.

**Art:** 90 minutes of volcano puns.

**Dre:** Hey, if I said the word vog, what do you think that means?

**Keith:** Uh, I already know, and so I will keep to myself.

**Sylvia:** Volcanic fog.

**Dre:** Close. It's volcanic smog.

**Sylvia:** Fuck! God damnit!

**Dre:** But yeah.

**Sylvia:** Okay.

**Keith:** Did you also see— did you see laze?

**Dre:** Oh, I didn't see laze.

**Sylvia:** Like the chips?

**Keith:** This is great. This is a great word. Laze, L-A-Z-E. As the glowing stream of lava flows into the ocean, a new term began dominating headlines: laze. A combination between the terms lava and haze, laze is created when fiery lave meets cold seawater. When this happens, water boils away, and the resulting reaction produce a noxious plume of steam, hydrochloric acid, and shards of volcanic glass. Laze.

**Sylvia:** Laze. I like it.

**Dre:** You don't wanna eat 'em.

**Sylvia:** I mean, I don't think it would taste very good.

**Dre:** [laughs quietly] Uh, this is on the National Park Registry website. [Sylvia laughs] They also have a term called lavasicle, which is just a lava icicle. [laughs quietly]

**Sylvia:** Can you link this?

**Dre:** Yes, I will.

**Sylvia:** Fucking hell yeah.

**Keith:** Mine is from smithsonianmag.com.

**Sylvia:** We...oh, I love this. I'm so happy that we're doing volcanoes. We also need to answer: how do most normal people view the elites?

**Art:** Negatively.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** I wanna go deep negative.

**Dre:** Sure.



**Art:** Yeah. I mean, they must be doing horrible things, right? Like, pouring lava on people. Like, there's no way these people—

**Keith:** Exposing them to laze.

**Art:** Yeah. There's no way that these aren't the worst kinds of people.

**Dre:** I mean, yeah, this is very much, like, I'm thinking, like, coal mine town people.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. So, I'm writing they hate them. They think they're despots, maybe? Or, like...yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah, you know, despotic, yeah.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Art:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Most live in, like— do you think most of them live in, like, company towns or something?

**Dre:** Sure. Shacks.

**Sylvia:** Like, company-slash-mining towns.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Make bricks out of ash.

**Dre:** Ugh.

**Art:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Everything is sooty.

**Sylvia:** My first dog's name was Sooty.

**Art:** And they keep calling them Laze.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Art:** Oh, you're just one of the Laze.

**Keith:** Yeah, you're just the Laze.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Sylvia:** Oh! Okay, hell yeah. Laze by the born— we're doing some real— this could be a great young adult novel.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** The Laze, the Born Warm.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** Suzanne Collins, eat your heart out.

**Keith:** I'm proud of Born Warm.

**Art:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Born Warm's really sick.

**Dre:** Yeah, yeah.

**Sylvia:** Born Warm is not exclusively—

**Dre:** Hey, TM TM TM TM TM.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. [Keith laughs] Not to denigrate things by calling it young adult fiction. I just was like, man, we are setting a pace for good proper nouns here. Okay. I've written— and also, I'm using a sort of light blue for our common folk feelings.

**Keith:** I just realized I haven't been helping write things down at all.

**Sylvia:** That's okay.

**Keith:** I've just been looking at the page and thinking.

**Dre:** That's fine. Hey.

**Sylvia:** You're good.

**Dre:** You're vibing. You're throwing ideas out.

**Keith:** I'm bad at note taking, so.

**Sylvia:** I'm terrible at it, which is great for, uh, this.

**Dre:** For this. [laughs]

**Sylvia:** So, I've written: they hate the nobility, think of them as despotic. Which, like, they are. Most live in company/mining towns, homes made of ash bricks. Called the Laze—and did I spell that right?

**Dre:** Yes.

**Sylvia:** I'm assuming, because it's lava haze.

**Dre:** Yes.

**Art:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** By nobles.

**Art:** Well, I'm excited to move onto page eight and find that we know most of the examples: Power is concentrated in the ruling elite.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Art:** What is the most powerful force in our society? Access to lava!

**Keith:** Access to lava.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. Do we need to add an extra note for this, or...?

**Art:** No.

**Dre:** I mean, I think probably, like, mechanical stuff. Like, you know, they have [cross] air filters in their house.

**Keith:** [cross] Like, other resources.

**Sylvia:** You know what? Yeah, hold on.

**Dre:** Other people don't.

**Sylvia:** What level of technology? This is kind of a good time to ask this. Like, what is... [Dre sighs] Because we've talked about zeppelins. We've talked about stuff like—

**Art:** I think standard lavapunk.

**Keith:** Standard— yeah, this is standard lavapunk fare.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, okay. Of course— duh. Why am I— of course.

**Keith:** Okay. Are there—

**Dre:** I think that they probably have advanced machines relative to, like, quote, unquote, “real” time.

**Keith:** Right.

**Dre:** But said machines also have to be, like, huge and enormous and stupid.

**Sylvia:** Okay. Could you write that down about the tech, and I'm gonna write down them having—

**Dre:** Sure. Is there a specific color I should use for that?

**Sylvia:** Uh, this one is— so, the way I've got this lined up right now, just to not step on, like— I'm using just the Post-it note yellow as, like, these are just things that are true about the world.

**Dre:** Okay.

**Sylvia:** Because those are also, like, notes about characters for later, and then, yeah. Orange is specific to the nobles, and then the blue is specific to the people they're oppressing.

**Keith:** Massive mechanical, like, analog computers?

**Sylvia:** Ooh.

**Keith:** Like those Curta calculators but, uh, like, gigantic?

**Dre:** Hmm.

**Sylvia:** Could you get a picture of that and, like, link it in the chat?

**Keith:** Yeah, totally.

**Sylvia:** Because we can add images to this board too. You can literally just drag files from your computer in here, I believe.

**Dre:** What is the name of that, like, the huge fucking truck?

**Sylvia:** Uh, Grave Digger, right? [Keith and Sylvia laugh]

**Keith:** Uh, where should I add this picture?

**Sylvia:** If you want, you can just drag and drop it onto the board, like, pretty much anywhere, and we can move it around.

**Keith:** Okay, I'll put it right over here. Oh, it's the wrong format. Hold on. Let me fix it.

**Sylvia:** Oh, yeah, no worries. And if it doesn't work, you can just pop it in the Discord chat. As long as we [Keith: Bump.] can see what you mean. Ooh, hell yeah. Oh! Okay.

**Keith:** So, these things are, like, super, like, reliable calculators that can do a bunch of different kinds of calculations, like, not just like addition and subtraction and

multiplication and stuff, but it's a big series of gears that you wind, and it's able to do, like, you know, really complex stuff, and it's based off of older designs from the late 1800s—

**Dre:** Ooh, that's cool.

**Keith:** On, like, potentially building, like, you know, what could have become a computer had they, you know...I think the person who was inventing it died or—

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** And also was not popular as an inventor.

**Sylvia:** Damn.

**Keith:** Was not, like, a well-liked guy, [laughs quietly] so he just died, and no one ever built his machine. And I think—

**Sylvia:** This has a winch on it.

**Keith:** Yeah, yeah. So, that's how you— that is how you, like, enter the calculation. You set it up to what you want, and then you wind it, and it, like, flicks all of the gears that you've engaged with the sliders, and then it, like, gives you your readout. There's a lot of videos of these. This went viral, like, I don't know, a decade ago is when I first saw these, like, some video on YouTube showing how they worked, and they're very cool.

**Sylvia:** I fucking love it. I think it's a really good, like, image to have in mind when we think about, like, the technology in this setting. That, like, stuff is full of, like...you know what? We're getting into whirring gears and clicky stuff again—

**Dre:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Sylvia:** But when it's got lava that's, like, activating it, I think it's a little cooler.

**Art:** Yeah. I do love big old truck though.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** The big old truck, also great. I mean, listen. That can have those...

**Keith:** I like a big old truck.

**Sylvia:** Those clicky bits too.

**Keith:** The other thing is, like—

**Art:** Clicky truck.

**Keith:** Because, like, I'm thinking of— it's so difficult to work with lava. I mean, it's so dangerous, and like, you don't care about the people that do that job, [**Dre:** Mm-hmm.] but you also don't want them, like, burning to death constantly, and so I'm thinking of, like—

**Dre:** Yeah, just every once in a while.

**Keith:** Big factories that, like, are— constantly you've gotta divert lava flow. Does anyone remember the *Minecraft* logic gate?

**Sylvia:** Uh, I can't say I do. I was never—

**Dre:** [cross] Like a redstone gate kind of thing?

**Art:** [cross] No. Sounds great, though.

**Keith:** Uh, wait, Dre, what did you say?

**Dre:** Like the redstone kind of stuff?

**Keith:** Uh, I think so? So, there was this person who, like— yeah, it was, like, right in the first year or two of *Minecraft*, there was this person [**Dre:** Mm.] that built basically a physical virtual computer in *Minecraft*, where if you entered in— it's basically the same thing as the Curta, but it took up, like, a whole valley in *Minecraft* of, like, this thing where if you put in the numbers by interacting with, like, signs, and you told it, like, what number you want to multiply by what number, and then you, like, lit a torch, the torch would, like, set off a chain reaction that would basically do what the inside of this Curta

does to solve a math problem in the physical space of *Minecraft*.

**Sylvia:** That's cool as hell.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** It's one of the all-time best videos on the internet, and it's by far the best thing anyone's ever done in *Minecraft*.

**Art:** I don't think this is the first time someone— I don't—

**Dre:** Uh, I don't know. I've made some cool *Minecraft* stuff, Keith.

**Keith:** But, like, a computer in there?

**Dre:** Uh, no, but I made a house that looked really nice.

**Sylvia:** Oh. They've got you there.

**Keith:** Okay, that's probably number two. [Dre laughs] That's probably number two.

**Dre:** Okay, thank you.

**Keith:** But yeah, this thing is sick, and, like, you know, just, I'm thinking this is the sort of thing, like, the kind of technology you'd have to prioritize in order to make it so that, like, oh, we have something automatic. Like, you've gotta set it up in some weird way, but then you— once you let it go, it can change the gates in a precise time to divert lava to where you need it to go, so that no one has to— you have to do a bunch of dangerous work down in the lava mines, but at least you don't have to get so close to the lava that people are immolating anymore. That's my pitch for computers. That's why I'm—

**Sylvia:** I like it.

**Keith:** That's why I'm thinking of computers.

**Sylvia:** I like it a lot. I like lava computers.



**Art:** Yeah, I like it too. And I like that it's all slow, because it's like, you don't want the people to die, but you really don't care about how thoroughly unpleasant this would be.

**Keith:** Right, yeah. It does take— you know, it takes a few minutes to get your calculation done.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm. Uh, Keith, I linked a video in the Discord. Let me know if this— if it's the right one.

**Keith:** Um, so, this is a— ooh. I think this is a much more recent one, but it is this sort of thing.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Okay. Um...

**Keith:** Holy shit! This one's— this is massive.

**Dre:** Yeah. This is wild. Also, the music in it is hilarious.

**Keith:** [imitating music] Buh buh buh buh bum-bum-bum-bum-bum.

**Sylvia:** I'm adding slow analog— like, slow and analog technology to the note you put down, Dre, just because I feel like that's kind of the direction we've been going with...

**Dre:** Yeah, for sure.

**Sylvia:** With, like, the more— I guess I have it written down that massive mechanical analog computers is a sign of status, but...I like that their technology, the way it functions is similar to a lava flow, or at least, like, the mental image I have of lava flow. I'm sure someone's gonna be like, "Actually, lava's very fast," and to them I'd be like, "Yeah, sure, I don't know."

**Dre:** Well, our lava's slow.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Art:** Lava can be many speeds.

**Keith:** Yeah, true.

**Art:** And we're gonna use mostly slow lava. I'm not ruling out fast lava. There's that thing where it's like, the lava that if you can see it, you're already dead, because you absolutely can't outrun it, and I'm not ruling out that lava coming up.

**Dre:** Mm, sure.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** I have written down—

**Keith:** I can link the original 16-bit computer that someone made in *Minecraft*.

**Sylvia:** Oh, hell yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** I have slightly tweaked it, then. I have written, “the more complex, the slower it functions,” and then, “analog,” because I think that would also make it so, like, their cars aren't super slow [laughs quietly] quite as much, you know?

**Art:** But they're pretty slow.

**Sylvia:** They're slow, but they're not waiting for, like, seven hours for it to get down the driveway or whatever I, in my head, was picturing before I wrote that down. I'm very—I'm very stoked on this so far.

**Art:** Yeah, I'm having a great time.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Yeah, same.

## Worldbuilding Cont. [1:02:38]

**Sylvia:** So, what is the most powerful force in our society? We asked this, right?

**Keith:** Big truck. Yeah, big truck.

**Sylvia:** Big truck.

**Art:** Big truck.

**Sylvia:** Big truck, lava.

**Dre:** Sure.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Art:** Big truck, lava. Big truck full of lava. Now you're...I don't think you can make a truck— I mean, I guess you can in this world.

**Sylvia:** I mean, they better have.

**Art:** But it's tough to make a truck to transport lava.

**Keith:** You just make the bed out of obsidian.

**Art:** Maybe.

**Sylvia:** Oh. Right, okay, yeah. A thing I wrote down under signs of status that I didn't say out loud was that I think, like, obsidian palaces or, like, estates in the sides of the volcano [**Keith:** Yeah.] would be, like, probably where a lot of these people live. Which, you know, what could go wrong living on the side of a volcano?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Probably nothing.

**Art:** I can't think of anything.

**Sylvia:** Okay. What is the most powerful force in our society? We wrote down. It's big truck. I'm gonna write down most powerful force is MAGMA in all caps. And then the next question is how do they hold onto this power, I believe, right? Yeah, how do the elites keep this power for themselves?

**Art:** Weirdly, also magma.

**Keith:** [laughs] Right, it's sort of a natural defense.

**Sylvia:** Um...yeah. Magma militia.

**Keith:** I have a really fun—

**Art:** The magmlitia?

**Sylvia:** Yeah!

**Keith:** Magmalitia.

**Sylvia:** What's your, uh...

**Keith:** They're magmalicious.

**Sylvia:** What's your fun thing, Keith? You said you had something fun.

**Keith:** Uh, well, I was just thinking of— because you— you know, the obsidian palaces.

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** I was like, obsidian, that's great. It looks cool. It, uh...I'm saying we're declaring for fiction purposes that it doesn't melt from lava touching it.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** I don't know that that's true, but I think that this is just—

**Sylvia:** Eh.

**Keith:** We just gotta roll with it. But then I'm like, but I bet it would cook alive anyone that's in there.

**Art:** Sure does.

**Keith:** And so, I'm thinking, like, well, what is, like, a natural or like a low-tech insulation? And it's denim. [laughs quietly]

**Dre:** Ough!

**Keith:** These houses are full of denim!

**Sylvia:** Yeah, I love it. Denim insulation?

**Keith:** Denim. Or cotton.

**Dre:** Deninsulate— no.

**Art:** No.

**Dre:** [mock offended] Oh, okay. All right. Everybody else gets to have fun! [Art laughs]

**Keith:** Wait, what was the one— I thought it was no to cotton but yes to denim. What was your—?

**Dre:** Dinsulation. There we go.

**Keith:** Densulation? Uh...

**Sylvia:** It's, like, a prestige thing if you've got denim instead of cotton. It's like...

**Keith:** Another good one is sheep's wool, but...

**Sylvia:** I could just put, like, fabric insulation.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** But...

**Art:** I do like that we've sort of accidentally built a science fiction world.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** I mean, yeah, we have.

**Keith:** Yeah, we did.

**Sylvia:** But, like...

**Keith:** We did, yeah.

**Sylvia:** All science fiction is fantasy, and all fantasy is science fiction. That's...

**Keith:** Sure, yeah.

**Sylvia:** You know?

**Keith:** Yeah. Cork, another nice natural insulator.

**Sylvia:** So, we— is there, like—

**Art:** We're learning so much today.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** Is there a specific method that the elites use to keep things in power, or is it literally just they have the better technology, and that means they...?

**Art:** [cross] Yeah, they'll throw you in the lava.

**Keith:** [cross] I think it's capitalism, it sounds like. [Dre laughs]

**Sylvia:** Okay. Yeah.

**Keith:** It's capitalism, and if the, like, main money of the world was based around something that could kill you if you got too close to it, it's really hard to steal. You can't rob a magma bank.

**Dre:** Yeah, you can't steal lava.

**Sylvia:** Mm.

**Keith:** Or can you?

**Dre:** Ooh.

**Sylvia:** We'll find out.

**Keith:** I'm sure—

**Art:** You can't download a car.

**Keith:** [laughs] Can't download magma. Can't download lava. [Dre laughs] People trying to, like, crack the Earth in near, like, where tectonic plates meet to get lava up from down there. Be like, I'm gonna make my own lava palace [**Sylvia:** Oh.] by mining into the ground, digging.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. I'm just gonna write, "it's capitalism, baby."

**Keith:** It's capitalism.

**Sylvia:** On this thing. I wrote: "Born Warm control the flow of lava, literally ensuring their place in society. More lava affords them better protection. [**Keith:** Yeah.] It's capitalism, baby."

**Keith:** It's capitalism where the money is fire.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. Damn, this money fire. [Dre imitates air horn]

**Keith:** No, don't touch it. It's fire.

**Sylvia:** [laughs] No, literally. Okay, I think...feeling satisfied with the questions on page eight. I've kinda just started reading a bunch of these. Does someone else want to read these?

**Dre:** No, we've just started vibing our way through these.

**Sylvia:** Sorry. This is— the last time I played this game, it also just devolved into vibing for the setup, so.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Well, it's fine, because we're answering questions that we don't even know are going to be asked.

**Sylvia:** Exactly.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** It's centered around a single location. Where do most people live? How do the elites separate themselves? See, look at that? We answered that already.

**Dre:** Yeah, we already did it.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Art:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Moats of lava.

**Sylvia:** Oh. I'm gonna write this down for the common folk, actually, where it's like...

**Dre:** Wow.

**Sylvia:** Live in the Ash Pits, surrounded by moats of lava.

**Dre:** Sure.

**Sylvia:** Or cut off from...

**Keith:** Right, by moats of lava, yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.



**Keith:** I'm gonna say that, in addition to that, there is also, like, the area going up the volcano to go up to the tower where all the rich people live, there's probably, like, a lot of toxic gas and fumes and shit.

**Sylvia:** Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Art:** Yeah, the sulfur fields.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Art:** The sulfur ridge.

**Sylvia:** Ooh, I like the sulfur ridge.

**Keith:** That's the laze.

**Art:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** And that's why they call them that, because they're—

**Keith:** Yeah, there's the other— yeah, there's the, like, social meaning, and then the, like, scientific meaning.

**Sylvia:** Oh, they call them— the name “the Laze” for, like, common people started because that's what someone said they smell like down there. [Keith laughs] That seems like—

**Keith:** And 'cause they're lazy.

**Sylvia:** And they're lazy. Yeah, no, like, it's real...

**Dre:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Keith:** It works. It all works.

**Sylvia:** Exactly.

**Art:** And they're lazy!

**Keith:** And they're lazy.

**Art:** This is great! We fucking—

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Art:** We're killing this.

**Sylvia:** We're killing— it's capitalism, baby!

**Keith:** So, what's our single location?

**Sylvia:** So, I've been trying to think. We've talked about multiple volcanoes here, but do we want just the one that we're setting this around?

**Art:** Yeah, we're probably gonna have one central volcano. Perhaps, like, some important or governmental volcano.

**Dre:** Sure.

**Sylvia:** We could set it— like, I feel like we could have, like, one big one and then some offshoots that people work on as well.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Like, I've got this image of, like, a mountain range in mind where this sort of is set.

**Dre:** Sure.

**Keith:** Yeah. There's, um...

**Dre:** I mean, I'll say this. There is a lot of volcanoes in both the Global South and Africa, places where shitty rich people love to do terrible things to people.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** That's true. Well, I guess it's— I guess there's another question of, like, okay, it's

capitalism. We live in capitalism.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** We have malls, and we don't have big castles full of lava and, like, lava barons.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** We have things that are similar to that. Is, uh, the vibe, I think, has been that this is an early— this is, like, a cap— this is, like, a feudalism transitioning into, um...

**Dre:** Oh, god.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Into capitalism moment? This is, like, an early capitalism, is what it seems like?

**Sylvia:** Yeah, I feel like...

**Keith:** Which means that there's, like...

**Sylvia:** Industrial Revolution [**Keith:** Yeah.] is a touchstone, right?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Art:** Well, industrialism has happened. We sort of have this sort of weird lava industrialism.

**Keith:** Yeah, yeah, so we're, like...

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** We're, like, in...you know, it's sort of what we said originally, which is, like, late 1800s.

**Dre:** Hey.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Did you know that Antarctica has active volcanoes?

**Sylvia:** No.

**Keith:** No.

**Dre:** What if we're in Antarctica?

**Keith:** How tall are they?

**Dre:** Uh, the tallest active volcano in Antarctica is...4,000 meters, which is 12,500 feet.

**Keith:** That's tall. That's tall.

**Art:** I feel like we're getting away of— I like the, like, rocky ashy aesthetic too much to make it cold.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Sure, sure, sure, sure. Okay.

**Keith:** Greenland.

**Dre:** What if we're on an island somewhere, though?

**Art:** I love a volcanic island.

**Dre:** Okay. Hold on. Let me look. This map won't let me make it bigger so I can actually, like, read what's on it.

**Sylvia:** I'm just gonna write down— because we don't necessary need to come up with a name for it tonight, because I have a feeling, uh...I don't know how much— we might just get through character creation.

**Dre:** Sure.

**Sylvia:** Friends at the Table pacing.

**Art:** Well, we've created an entire genre here.

**Sylvia:** Exactly.

**Keith:** Yes. We're genre-building.

**Sylvia:** So, like, be thankful.

**Art:** Frankly, anyone at the end of this episode's that unhappy, they're the problem.

[Keith laughs]

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** I agree.

**Dre:** Oh, wow! There's a volcano called Stromboli in Italy.

**Sylvia:** Okay.

**Keith:** Wow.

**Dre:** Stromboli island.

**Art:** Does it have cheese and ham in it?

**Dre:** I hope so. [laughs, then sighs]

**Keith:** We also— we don't have to be on Earth. This is a...

**Sylvia:** No, we...I think we've established that we are in a fantasy world.

**Keith:** Right.

**Dre:** Yeah. I do like the idea of it being, like, an isolated, like, big island, but like...

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Which is probably also a part of how, you know, the aristocracy stay in charge, is that...

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Dre:** You know, there's— it's not easy for the outside world to get to this place.

**Keith:** It could be like an Iceland kind of place? That's rocky.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** I know it says Iceland, but it's rocky and green but also volcanoes.

**Sylvia:** I think that, like...I think that's a good— that is one of [**Art:** Mm-hmm.] a couple good touchstones we could use. I think, like, Iceland with a coat of soot on everything [**Dre:** Sure.] sounds like—

**Keith:** Iceland but shitty.

**Sylvia:** [laughs quietly] Yeah. Yeah.

**Keith:** Shitty Iceland.

**Sylvia:** Shiceland

**Art:** Shitty Iceland.

**Dre:** Scheissland.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. I wrote down on our, like, settings card—

**Art:** You know how I'm mad that we don't have a Hugo? This is what I'm sending the Hugo people this year.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** We invented lavapunk, and then they'll send back a list of lavapunk novels.

**Keith:** Did we ever send the Hugo people anything?

**Art:** No, they don't have any categories that we're eligible for.

**Keith:** Oh, so that's— this is a them problem.

**Sylvia:** They should make a category for us.

**Keith:** Yeah. Clearly, they should.

**Dre:** Hold on, I'm googling lavapunk really quick.

**Sylvia:** That definitely— it's gonna—

**Keith:** I'm sure someone— it's so easy to put the word “punk” after something.

**Dre:** No, I'm not seeing anything.

**Sylvia:** Really?

**Keith:** Wow.

**Sylvia:** Wait, hold on.

**Dre:** I'm seeing, like, a punk rock band that's called Lava?

**Sylvia:** Google magmapunk.

**Dre:** Oh, you're right.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Fuck.

**Sylvia:** Because it wouldn't just be lava. It would be magma.

**Dre:** Uh...

**Sylvia:** And there is a—

**Dre:** No, I'm not seeing anything there either.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. No official genre, but there is, like...

**Dre:** Oh, I am seeing a—

**Keith:** *Tales of Vulcania*, a comic—

**Dre:** A *Minecraft* modpack called Magmapunk, but...

**Sylvia:** There we go— and you know what? *Minecraft* came up, so...

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Great minds think alike. [laughs]

**Dre:** [cross] But this is not an established genre.

**Keith:** [cross] *Tales of Vulcania*—

**Dre:** Sorry, Keith.

**Keith:** It's okay. It's okay. *Tales of Vulcania*, a comic based on tabletop roleplaying game that I had not heard of. This is from comic-con.com. This is a relatively new, it seems like, thing. Vulcania. I don't— um, it does describe itself as magmapunk. But this looks different. This looks different than us.

**Sylvia:** It's different. It's different. Ours— I feel confident saying: ours is probably better. Sorry to them. [Keith laughs]

**Art:** Yeah, it's...

**Sylvia:** I just gotta— you know what? You gotta always believe you're making the best stuff you can.

**Keith:** That's true.

**Art:** Yeah, it's just different, comma, worse. [Sylvia laughs] I hope it's really good. I'm...



**Sylvia:** I...we don't know anything about them. This is a— we did a cursory google search.

**Keith:** I support everybody in the lavapunk genre.

**Sylvia:** [laughs quietly] The lavapunk community.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Okay. I feel like...I don't necessarily know how many more notes we need to take on some of these questions, but they are worth talking through, especially because we have some— we have a lot of these written down already.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** We have answered “Where do most people live?” I think, like—

**Keith:** Oh, and what smells do we note when we take a stroll.

**Sylvia:** Sulfur and ash.

**Keith:** Sulfur, hydrochloric acid.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Ash, burnt. Burnt everything.

**Art:** Burning rock.

**Dre:** Okay, what is—

**Sylvia:** You know what? This seems like there's probably lots of people trying to make some sort of, like, potpourris and stuff to just have around their homes.

**Dre:** I was gonna ask. There's probably— there's gotta be a weird thing that the nobility does to not have to smell the bad smells.

**Sylvia:** Oh! They— it's that— it's, like, an actual thing aristocracy used to do is they

had, like, a perfumed handkerchief.

**Keith:** Oh—

**Sylvia:** Isn't that, like, an actual thing?

**Dre:** Hmm.

**Keith:** You know, um...I think that was an actual thing.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** You know, anybody ever use those candles where it's actually, like, a tea candle, and like, above it is, like, a ceramic dish full of just wax, and the idea is that it melts the wax, but it doesn't use the wax as fuel.

**Sylvia:** Huh.

**Keith:** So that wax doesn't go away. It just melts and is perfumey.

**Dre:** Hmm.

**Keith:** And then you just replace the tea candle. Has anybody seen these?

**Sylvia:** I haven't.

**Art:** Yeah, I think I'm aware of this.

**Sylvia:** But...

**Keith:** So, it's that, but huge vats of them!

**Sylvia:** Oh.

**Keith:** Like, swimming pools of fragrant wax [**Dre:** Sure.] that are being kept melted and, you know, perfuming, you know, rich neighborhoods to make them smell nice.

**Art:** This is great.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, I'm gonna...I'm gonna write this down.

**Keith:** This is a good genre.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, we're, like...

**Art:** Giant candles is great. Giant scented candles. A sort of, uh, Yankee Candle hellscape. [Keith laughs quietly]

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Dre:** Oh, so Yankee Candle.

**Art:** [laughs quietly] I'm trying to be polite.

**Dre:** I mean, you gotta go to the mall to go to Yankee Candle, so.

**Sylvia:** I'm just writing down [Dre: Mm-hmm.] this perfumed wax thing. Okay. Okay.

**Dre:** Oh, I know we talked about, you know, like, waxed mustaches that evil people twirl.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Uh huh.

**Dre:** But what if, you know, they wax them with, like, perfumes and stuff.

**Keith:** Love it.

**Sylvia:** Oh, yeah.

**Dre:** So they don't have to smell.

**Art:** Yeah, 'cause it keeps your— that's why you have a big mustache, [Dre: Right.] to hold your perfumed wax.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Art:** We specifically said that we didn't want to do waxed mustaches, and here we are.

**Sylvia:** Ah, you know—

**Dre:** Here we are.

**Sylvia:** I almost said I did, and then I walked it back, because I thought, you know...

**Keith:** Right, I argued for it.

**Sylvia:** Keith argued for it.

**Keith:** I was like, we got waxed mustaches and jewels and...

**Art:** Well, we've invented a new genre, and so [**Keith:** Yeah.] we're inventing new reasons.

**Sylvia:** Waxed goatees. It's a new facial hair. [laughs quietly]

**Dre:** Sure.

**Sylvia:** I'm joking. Don't do that. [laughs quietly]

**Dre:** No, too late.

**Sylvia:** Oh no. I'm gonna write that perfumes to cover the mountain's smell are a status symbol.

**Art:** Oh, a very skilled Discord scam bot just tried to message me.

**Sylvia:** Oh.

**Dre:** Oh.

**Art:** But it's— their name is Sylvia.

**Sylvia:** What the fuck?

**Art:** So I had, like, a... [laughs quietly]

**Sylvia:** That was— that's not me, Art! Don't trust her.

**Art:** I know. You're not Sylvia Jerome.

**Sylvia:** No. Damn. I can't believe another Sylvia would do this.

**Art:** Well, if it makes you feel any better, I doubt that that's their real name. [Dre laughs]

**Sylvia:** Damn.

**Dre:** Ah, Sylvi. I was reading what you were typing, and I thought you wrote "perfumes to cover the mountain's smell area." [Dre and Sylvia laugh]

**Sylvia:** Deodorizing the mountain is a status symbol. Oh boy, that is some facial hair. Thanks, Dre. This man ain't smelling nothin' at all!

**Dre:** Nothin' at all, baby!

**Art:** God. What muppet did this man... [Keith laughs]

**Dre:** Nah, that's just the guy from *Mythbusters*.

**Art:** Hannibal Lecter bite?

**Keith:** It's its own natural filter.

**Sylvia:** It does have the exact shape of my respirator, honestly, so. [Dre laughs] Like. I feel like "What do our hands feel as we run them along a wall?" has been answered both by houses of ash brick and obsidian estates. Right? Or do you guys have anything else you want to add there?

**Keith:** No.

**Dre:** Mm-mm.

**Keith:** I think that we got that.

**Sylvia:** Okay. Our society's— I'm just gonna read this one, unless— does somebody

else want to read this one, or should I just keep rolling?

**Dre:** Nah, keep rolling.

**Keith:** Keep rolling.

**Dre:** I don't even know where we are anymore.

**Sylvia:** We're on page 11.

**Dre:** Okay.

**Sylvia:** Our society is in turmoil, volatile and shifting. What is the source of this turmoil? One of the examples here is just workers' revolt.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** And I think that, like, workers starting to unionize and, like— or, like— basically the beginnings of some sort of, like, pushback from people in the Ash Pits makes the most sense, right?

**Art:** *Newsies* but lava.

**Sylvia:** I've never— I don't know what *Newsies* is about.

**Art:** It's about unionizing.

**Sylvia:** Oh, okay, cool.

**Keith:** The, um...another thing is we could bring in some of our, uh...it seems so long ago, but some of our French Revolution roots of, like, a...like, a revolution of the nobility who are, like, even us, the Born Warm, we're— we're the ones that are not happy with the Steam King.

**Sylvia:** Oh, so, like, there's like a lower class of the Born Warm kind of— there's a *petit bourgeoisie*, basically?

**Keith:** Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Sylvia:** Okay.

**Keith:** I'm not dedicated to this. I'm just putting it as an alternative.

**Sylvia:** Um, I think—

**Art:** Dismissively called Born Lukewarm. [Keith and Dre laugh] The tepid births over there.

**Sylvia:** Nobody is— *nobody* is named Luke in this setting. It's like a derogatory thing to call somebody.

**Dre:** Oh, god.

**Sylvia:** To, like, call a rich person. I think that...okay. I'm gonna put, like...I want to write, like, murmurs of a revolution have begun— uh, rumors of revolting against the Born Warm are starting to, like, [Keith: Okay.] bubble up in the Ash Pits?

**Dre:** Sure.

**Keith:** Mm.

**Sylvia:** Because we could get this actual revolt on screen at a certain point, is my thinking.

**Keith:** Yeah. Okay.

**Sylvia:** Because *The Slow Knife*, as a game—

**Keith:** Especially if they're saying it in there. It's one of the examples.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, and also, this is gonna take place over a span of years. Like, it is a slow revenge plot, so, like, having this progress in the background, I think, would be a fun, like, little thing, right?

**Keith:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** I almost wrote “ass pits.” I’m so sorry. I’m gonna write your thing about, like, there being some nobility that are also kind of unhappy, because, you know, again, getting into our sort of lava pyrotechnic puns, I could see them stoking the flames for their own gain, you know what I mean?

**Dre:** Sure. Yeah.

**Keith:** Mm-hmm. Sorry, we’re on 11?

**Sylvia:** Uh, we’re on page 11, yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Frame 13.

**Keith:** And so, we got— we were just talking about “What is a source of this turmoil?”

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Have we gotten to “What is the quickest way for an elite to lose their power”?

**Sylvia:** We have not. What is the quickest way for an elite to lose their power? Do you got anything for that, or...anybody got anything for that? I feel like...

**Keith:** Well, there is...there is something that is kind of interesting about this as a setting, which is like, a volcano can go inactive at any time and just turn into a mountain.

**Dre:** Oh! [laughs]

**Sylvia:** Oh, shit!

**Art:** Oh!

**Sylvia:** Yeah, yeah, yeah!

**Dre:** Yeah!



**Keith:** That's the quickest way.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, I love that.

**Art:** You can go dormant.

**Keith:** God, imagine going dormant. Oh my god. Imagine becoming— one day, you— one day, it's just cold in there, and you have—

**Art:** Well, you would want to, like, keep that from happening, right?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Art:** Like, you'd be worried about it. You'd just be like, "Just gotta pour some fresh lava and keep it warm in there."

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** [laughs quietly] Keep it warm.

**Dre:** Just throw a bunch of dynamite in there to make it erupt.

**Keith:** And then it's like, how long— how long can these resources last you, until you're in the mines?

**Sylvia:** I mean, especially because we've talked about how much fuel you need for this, like...like, the technology we've described here.

**Keith:** Yeah, yeah.

**Sylvia:** That like, that becomes an even bigger risk.

**Keith:** It's almost designed to punish people who have gone dormant.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Do they protect—

**Art:** Yeah, then you're just a rock...a rock prince. A rock, uh...idiot. [laughter]

**Dre:** Yeah. Fucking got 'em.

**Keith:** Fucking rock...

**Dre:** Rock idiot!

**Keith:** Yes.

**Art:** Got 'em! [laughter]

**Sylvia:** Okay. I think that that— I feel like we've answered those questions now.

**Keith:** Sediment.

**Sylvia:** Oh. Sure. Sure?

**Dre:** Mm.

**Sylvia:** To describe people who are— who've gone dormant? Whose lava's gone dormant?

**Keith:** Because they harden. They harden into— the lava hardens into sediment.

**Sylvia:** Damn. Fucking get 'em. Let's move on. Now we're gonna make a character.

**Dre:** Okay.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Sylvia:** If everyone's ready to. Do we have any other worldbuilding stuff? I should actually ask, before we move on. I don't need to...

**Art:** I think we've built a pretty good world here.

**Keith:** Yeah, this is 80% of a book.

**Dre:** Yeah, I feel good about this.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, we've got the— we've got lines to color in now.

**Art:** 80% of the book, except for the part with a plot.

**Keith:** 80% of the outline of a book.

**Sylvia:** [sarcastic] We just get AI to do that, Art. Come on. It's fine.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Art:** Hold on. I'm gonna fire up the, uh, Microsoft Edge AI for a second.

**Dre:** Yeah, please do. Bing me up.

**Art:** Bing me up a novel.

**Sylvia:** And type: invent lavapunk right now, AI. [Keith laughs] Okay. I'm gonna...I'm gonna read the— unless someone— does someone else want to read this, page 12?

**Keith:** Sure.

**Art:** Sure, yeah.

**Keith:** Okay, Art, you can go.

## **Creating The Knife [1:26:46]**

**Art:** Next, we'll establish the central character of our story: the Knife. This is the person whose life was ruined and will return to have their revenge. We should add them and any other important characters we introduce to our board and use notes to record details. I have a pitch for a Knife, but I don't want to, like, be too steamroll here.

**Sylvia:** I mean, listen. Pitch.

**Dre:** Hey. Pitch me up.

**Art:** Our Knife—and I'm sure there's a name for this—is like a geologist or like a spelunker who found a new volcano and was cheated out of it.

**Sylvia:** Ooh!

**Keith:** Ooh.

**Dre:** Ooh, I like that.

**Sylvia:** Ooh, okay, yeah. That's a really good— that's, like— that is a great setup.

**Art:** Spelunker is probably wrong. That's someone who goes into caves. Volcanoes are not caves.

**Sylvia:** Um, like, a surveyor?

**Art:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Art:** Yeah, or like, Indiana Jones, if they were a geologist.

**Keith:** Well, this is a world where a geologist would be, like, the main kind of Indiana Jones-style adventurer. Because who's not— if it could be your job to go and try and look for a new volcano for yourself, that is a treasure hunter.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** That's a good point.

**Art:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Do we want to wait before— or, like, do we want to pick out a face card down here for our Knife at all?

**Keith:** Oh, maybe I'll look at those face cards. Maybe something will—

**Dre:** Yeah, let's take a little peek.

**Keith:** Maybe they'll be inspiring.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. Also, these can end up being your Conspirator too, but I do find it's sometimes— I mean, the one other time I played this, it was kind of helpful jumping, like, when we were stuck for ideas— we will talk about their appearance in the next page or so.

**Keith:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** So, we don't necessarily need to decide straightaway.

**Art:** This one looks like a nerd, a.k.a., a scientist.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Yeah, I like this glasses guy.

**Sylvia:** I'm down.

**Art:** Any of the really defeated-looking people.

**Dre:** Sure. I kind of like this guy that has, like, the tattoo on the side of his head?

**Art:** Yeah. This sad motherfucker.

**Dre:** That is a sad motherfucker.

**Keith:** Oh, yeah. Fucking Lava Socrates over there. [Dre laughs]

**Art:** Granny No-Lava. [Keith laughs]

**Sylvia:** Damn.

**Dre:** Damn.

**Sylvia:** Granny No-Lava. I'm— also, is green good for our—? Is anybody on this call colorblind? I've realized I've started sorting things by color.

**Keith:** No.

**Dre:** No.

**Sylvia:** Okay.

**Art:** No.

**Sylvia:** Okay, cool.

**Art:** This one.

**Dre:** Thank you for asking.

**Art:** This David Bowie over here.

**Dre:** This MF over here.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. I'm gonna use green for the Knife, and I'm writing down "geologist/surveyor." And I think that, like, going off of the cheated out of a, like...

**Art:** Perhaps the volcano our story is even set on.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. I think that, like, that could be...that's what our Conspirators do, right?

**Art:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** The Conspiracy was cheating them out of this, right? So...

**Keith:** Were they...

**Art:** Cheated by someone like this guy. [Sylvia laughs]

**Keith:** Yeah, that's the guy. That guy cheats.

**Art:** And this guy. [laughs quietly]

**Dre:** Sure. If there's anybody who's cheating, it's that guy.

**Art:** Yeah. Lost all his skin in a lava accident.

**Sylvia:** Oh no.

**Keith:** Potential cheater, potential cheater.

**Art:** Uh huh. I mean, they're all potential cheaters.

**Dre:** That's my cheater.

**Keith:** Yeah, well, some of them don't look like— like, Granny No-Lava, this doesn't look like a crime for her, no offense.

**Art:** Sure. Well, what about this guy, whose band was struggling to take off before he stole this mountain? [Dre laughs]

**Keith:** What is the...what do we think the composition of the crime here is?

**Dre:** God. James Dolan, lava magnate, still makes people listen to his shitty fucking band.

**Sylvia:** God. [Keith chuckles]

**Art:** You mean the Sureshots?

**Dre:** [sighs] Sure.

**Sylvia:** Shots.

**Art:** And this—

**Keith:** Hold on.

**Art:** This one. This is just the worst person. This is a good old boy.

**Keith:** To me, this is this. This is this. This guy is my version of this.

**Art:** These are brothers.

**Keith:** These are brothers. Okay, let me think. I gotta think.

**Art:** This one is the businessy one.

**Sylvia:** [cross] The first time I played this game, I was the one Keith picked.

**Art:** [cross] This is the one who was on the crew team at Lava Cornell.

**Sylvia:** Wait, which one?

**Art:** This is the one on the crew team at Lava Cornell.

**Dre:** Oh, yeah.

**Keith:** 30 Hot Foot of Grunts.

**Sylvia:** What?

**Art:** What?

**Keith:** Sorry, it's the shitty band that the rich person still makes you listen to.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Art:** Mm.

**Keith:** And it's Russell Crowe's band, 30 Odd Foot of Grunts, but lavafied as 30 Hot Foot of Grunts.

**Sylvia:** So it's 30 Hot Foot of Grunts.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Dre:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Keith:** Thank you. I had to think about it, because I knew I could talk about 30 Odd Foot of Grunts somehow. [laughs quietly]

**Dre:** Sure.



**Keith:** And that's how. I knew that there was a way to put it in there.

**Art:** Hold on, I'm making a family tree here. It's these two and their kids, these two.

**Sylvia:** Oh, wow.

**Keith:** This is an age gap, to me.

**Dre:** Oh, you trying to get some discourse in?

**Art:** Well, you don't climb your way all the way up the volcano to...

**Keith:** Oh, yeah, sure, sure. I'm not saying don't. I'm just saying that this is what I'm—  
no, see, I'm feeling that this is an age gap relationship.

**Art:** Yeah, I mean, it could be this guy or...

**Keith:** Or all three of them.

**Sylvia:** Wow.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Progressive.

**Art:** Wow, the power throuple.

**Keith:** Yeah. [Sylvia laughs]

**Art:** And their weird butler. [quiet laughter]

**Sylvia:** I'm gonna ask—

**Keith:** Or the bad son. [Art and Keith laugh]

**Art:** Or it's real weird up here. [Keith and Sylvia laugh]

**Sylvia:** Okay. [laughs]

**Art:** This is terrible radio.

**Sylvia:** I love it. We're just playing— we're just playing with pictures.

**Keith:** Yeah, we're— yeah, we're playing *Guess Who*.

**Sylvia:** Sorry to everyone listening to this.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** With bad— with pictures of potential criminals.

**Art:** I'm sorry if the layout of these was important, because I wrecked it.

**Sylvia:** No, it wasn't.

**Keith:** [quietly] They go here and here...

**Sylvia:** I just wanted them to be in a place for y'all to grab and do exactly this with, so.  
[quiet laughter] Before the incident, the Knife was a good person. How were they viewed in the community?

**Art:** These two were flipped, Keith.

**Keith:** Oh, sorry.

**Art:** That's okay. It doesn't matter. Um...

**Dre:** Um...

**Art:** They were a good geologist, a fine rock...rocker. Rocker. They were a rocker.

**Sylvia:** So, they were good at their job, but like, how did other people in the Ash Pits, like, think of them? Like, that's more the point of this.

**Art:** Like a local boy who's gonna do good.

**Dre:** Wait, are you saying the Ash Pits, or are you saying the nobility?

**Sylvia:** Were they— where were they from? Actually, this is a good question. This is where we ask this, 'cause like...

**Keith:** Yeah, 'cause there's a few places. Is this a...is this someone who...is this, like, an emerging, you know, merchant class guy, someone who's, like, looking down on— I played *Pentiment*, I replayed *Pentiment* recently.

**Sylvia:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Is this like the miller from *Pentiment* who's, like, not a noble but is just as rich or richer than a noble, and the thing that he hates most in the world is peasants? Oh, no, but he's a good guy, so he's not that. He's not the— but he could be like the baker who's, like, feeding you, you know, two meats and a cheese and a bread when you come for dinner, unlike the peasants who are struggling to give you meat and bread.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Or is it one of the peasants? Is this...is the Knife one of the Laze?

**Sylvia:** Um...I'm trying to, like...I'm trying to think of which is more interesting, I guess, because, like, just because they are...

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Just because they're well-liked doesn't necessarily mean they have to be from the Ash Pits themselves.

**Dre:** Sure.

**Sylvia:** They could be—

**Keith:** Right.

**Sylvia:** Like, the new money idea doesn't, like...

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Yeah. I mean, it could also be, like, you know, a trope in a lot of, like, 1900s, like, British period pieces is that, like, you know, the rich American comes over and, like, throws everything topsy-turvy, so it could be someone like that who is also, you know, a rich person but is from a different, like, culture than the lava barons are.

**Sylvia:** Yeah...

**Keith:** And to your point, Sylvi, like, you know, just because I feel like *Pentiment* is a really good thing to draw from for specifically this question—

**Sylvia:** Yeah, absolutely.

**Keith:** Where it's like, the baker and his family are, like, nice people who everybody likes but who are starting to suffer in the same ways as the peasants from, like, the increased taxes that they can't pay.

**Sylvia:** Okay.

**Keith:** And, like, the constriction on the peasants is starting to work its way up, and it forms a political alliance between these two classes that, like, ends up being part of the engine that drives the main plot of the game. And so there is movement, there is, like, a range of, like, a good person who's liked by your community but is in— could be— there's a big range that that could be.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. Like, in another, like, in a different time or, like, with the things slightly different, they would be seen as the person who is, like, the status class above everyone else. Yeah. Am I—?

**Keith:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. What if they were part of a family that went dormant, like, a couple generations ago?

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Oh, that's great.

**Sylvia:** And then the reason that they've studied, like, geology and stuff was trying to get their family back on top?

**Dre:** Sure.

**Sylvia:** Or, like, restore their family name?

**Dre:** And they were, like, about to succeed?

**Sylvia:** Yeah. Does that work for everybody?

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** I like it.

**Art:** Yeah.

**Keith:** I like bringing that concept back that we just had.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. So, I'm gonna put, like, well-liked by people in the Ash Pit, 'cause— I don't know. Do we— do you guys have any, like, personality vibes you want to include here? I'm gonna add another note for, like, how they actually are.

**Art:** I'm sort of seeing this as, like, a broken athlete, you know? Like, someone who was gonna, you know, go to college and play Division 1 ball, and then, like, had this big setback and is sort of, you know...

**Keith:** Yeah, like, broke his leg in the last game or something?

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Art:** Yeah. Bitter about it, living in that past, trying to, like— and, you know, our story, of course, is, like, getting past that to do revenge.

**Sylvia:** Sure. I'm down for that.

**Keith:** Where do we start? Do we start after the horrible thing has happened to the

Knife?

**Sylvia:** We are going to talk out what the horrible thing is, [**Keith:** Okay.] and then Act One starts right after that, yeah.

**Keith:** So, we should be thinking of a personality post-betrayal, not...

**Sylvia:** Pre-betrayal.

**Art:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Oh, pre.

**Sylvia:** What we're doing right now is defining the pre-betrayal personality.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Sylvia:** This question in specific is, like, before the incident, the Knife was a good person. How were they viewed in their community?

**Keith:** Oh, right, yeah. I should go back to looking at the page.

**Sylvia:** This is setting up the— yeah, this is setting up the background of, like, who they were within the community, what was important to them within the community, basically establishing what gets taken away from them by our cabal of Conspirators.

**Keith:** And is, uh...is the sort of broken athlete who doesn't make the...like, loses the scholarship or whatever. Is that also pre-betrayal?

**Art:** No, I think that's what the betrayal does.

**Keith:** Okay, okay, sure.

**Art:** The scholarship is the volcano.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** The scholarship is the volcano.

**Dre:** [chuckles] Of course, of course.

**Keith:** The lava's the money, of course.

**Dre:** Of course.

**Art:** And having it stolen from you is breaking your leg.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Dre:** I love— this is my favorite season of *Friday Night Lights*, yeah.

**Keith:** So, I think you've gotta go, like, okay, we're far enough removed from the dormancy that, like, I think that this person, like, is not connected culturally to the upper class, probably?

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** And so, I think that gives them a sort of leg up in the personality department. Oop, I'm moving things around, because I can't stop clicking on things.

**Sylvia:** Oh, no worries.

**Keith:** But there's also, like, the family story thing of, like, oh, we used to do this, we used to have this. I don't know if anybody's seen *Summer Wars*—

**Sylvia:** Oh, yeah.

**Keith:** The extremely good anime movie from the guy that did the *Digimon* movie, uh, with the...

**Sylvia:** Oh, I used to know this guy's name. Uh...

**Keith:** Uh, Hosoda?

**Sylvia:** Mamoru Hosoda.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, Hosoda.

**Keith:** Who recently did a movie about, like, basically, like, a VTuber.

**Dre:** Oh.

**Sylvia:** God, of course he did.

**Keith:** It's, like, a VR— it's like a VR popstar, basically. I think the movie was called *Belle*.

**Sylvia:** You are correct.

**Keith:** I haven't seen it, but it looks good. Anyway.

**Sylvia:** Okay.

**Keith:** So, one of the things that's great— so, the plot of this, of the movie, is like, this kid, he's like the nerd in school, and like, the popular girl shows up and is like, "I need you to pretend to be my boyfriend for a family reunion. I lied to them and said that I had a boyfriend who is in college, and you have to pretend to be that boyfriend." And also, while this happens, various things threaten the safety of the country? It's complicated, but one of the things [**Sylvia:** Mm.] that happens when they meet this family is, like, they can't stop, like, explaining how rich and famous they used to be. Like, they still have this beautiful property out in the countryside, but they basically have no money left, so they're basically, like, landed post-nobility. But this would be without the land but the same sort of vibe of, like, "Yeah, we used to have this and this and this and this," so you'd grow up with these stories and get kind of, like, kind of mythologize them in a way that would lead you to become, like, a weird treasure hunter.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.



**Keith:** That's what I'm thinking.

**Sylvia:** I'm absolutely writing this down. Family's— like, grew up with stories of his—

**Keith:** The magma and the who—

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** You know, the original founding of their first volcano and how, you know, we used to be the new rich people, and then, you know, the volcano dried up, and blah blah blah.

**Sylvia:** And mythologize them...I'm sure there's, like, probably some level of people who, like, pity them a bit because of this. Like, I feel like there's a level of sympathy that probably comes from people that [**Keith:** Yeah.] wouldn't come to other, like, Born Warms, because he— this guy— our Knife is so separated from it that they can sort of, like, move socially in...

**Keith:** Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah. And, you know, knows who to not bring it up near.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Like, everyone knows the person in town who's gonna be like, [mocking] "Oh, poor rich boy doesn't have his volcano anymore."

**Sylvia:** Yeah. I'm gonna— grew up with enough distance from family's prestige to be able to fit in comfortably with non— within multiple social circles, maybe is the way to put it?

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah, I think it works.

**Sylvia:** Because we do need them to be interacting with nobility as well.

**Dre:** Sure.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Okay. The next question: who did they treasure most, their closest companion?  
And also, did we—

**Keith:** That's a fun one.

**Sylvia:** Do we have any...I still like the glasses guy, honestly, for our Knife.

**Keith:** I like the glasses guy.

**Dre:** I like glasses guy as well.

**Art:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** It's, uh...to describe him, he's sort of a...how old would you say this guy is?  
Like, early 30s, late 20s, maybe? You know?

**Keith:** Um...

**Art:** Um...

**Sylvia:** Maybe younger?

**Art:** I think he's probably— with that hairline, it's probably 30s.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Yeah. Could just be a bad hairline.

**Art:** Or like, unfortunate 20s.

**Keith:** Just a stressful 20s.

**Art:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** I mean, listen. You live on a volcano. He's— yeah, sort of like early 30s.

**Keith:** People are stressed out.

**Sylvia:** [laughs quietly] Early 30s Black guy with, like, closely cropped hair and a little bit

of stubble, these very nice golden round glasses.

**Keith:** Love the glasses. Great look.

**Sylvia:** Friendly looking guy.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** I love the glasses. The glasses really stand out and, I think, also, glasses as both, like, a subtle indicator of, like, wealth in the past [**Keith:** Oh, sure.] works here as a thing to be like, [**Dre:** Sure.] this guy's family used to be rich, but he's separated from it now. Also, just for the listener, all these cards just use, like, three colors basically, of gold, red, and black, and they all look very— they're very striking, very good. Okay. Also, if anybody has name ideas, feel free to just, like, toss them out either in the Discord or write them down somewhere, and we can figure something out.

**Art:** Lavanthony.

**Keith:** Did you say Long Anthony? [Sylvia laughs quietly]

**Art:** Lavanthony.

**Dre:** Lavanthony.

**Keith:** [laughs] Oh, Lavanthony.

**Dre:** Lavanthony.

**Sylvia:** No.

**Dre:** Uh...

**Keith:** Magmanthony. [Keith and Sylvia laugh]

**Dre:** Lavarry.

**Sylvia:** Oh, we're—

**Dre:** Lava Larry.

**Sylvia:** I don't like this.

**Dre:** Lavalear.

**Art:** Rock. Like Rock Hudson. [Sylvia laughs]

**Sylvia:** Naming a guy just Rock is... [Dre laughs]

**Keith:** It's the most common name in the world in this world. It's like their John.

**Sylvia:** Oh, well, that's 'cause it's short for Rockathan.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Sure. Uh, hold on.

**Art:** Rockathan. Now we're onto something.

**Dre:** I'm going back to the volcano glossary.

**Sylvia:** [laughs] We don't need to—

**Art:** Yeah, we can't be naming him, like, Fissure. That's weird.

**Keith:** Yeah. That would be dumb.

**Dre:** Ooh, ooh, ooh! Caldera.

**Sylvia:** Caldera's good and also been in my mind recently, 'cause it's the name of a location in *Alan Wake 2*.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Sylvia:** I'm down with Caldera. That could also be a family name. But I'll add a little—does anybody object to that? Do you guys like that at all?

**Keith:** Is that a— is it a first name or a last name?

**Sylvia:** That's—

**Keith:** Or a mononym?

**Sylvia:** Ooh.

**Dre:** Ooh.

**Sylvia:** What's it— what's caldera mean again, Dre?

**Dre:** Uh, hold on. Let me go back. Uh...

**Sylvia:** Oh. Wait, I got it up. A large depression formed when a volcano erupts and collapses, which I think kind of fits for our family.

**Keith:** Wow!

**Dre:** Sure. Wow, I didn't even— okay.

**Keith:** Wooow.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. [mimicking] Wooow.

**Dre:** Wooow.

**Keith:** Wooow.

**Art:** Wooow.

**Sylvia:** Oh, the Wilson neurovirus has been activated. We've— [Dre chuckles] I'm fine with that being just his first name if we want that to be his first name.

**Keith:** What was it, again?

**Sylvia:** Caldera? C-A-L-D-E-R-A.

**Keith:** Okay. Do we want to pitch more rock/volcano last names?

**Sylvia:** We also do not need to make—

**Art:** Or just, like, a regular last name.

**Keith:** Basalt. Caldera Basalt.

**Sylvia:** We also need to be very careful that we do not become Flintstones with this, you know?

**Dre:** Why?

**Keith:** Or, we could lean really hard into Flintstones. [Sylvia laughs]

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Okay. So, my character's name is Barney Rubble. [Keith laughs]

**Dre:** [Flintstone voice] Barney!

**Keith:** Oh, that was not bad.

**Sylvia:** Oh, wow.

**Dre:** Thanks, thanks, thanks.

**Sylvia:** Fred Flintstone, not an impression you hear much compared to other of his—his other contemporaries, you know?

**Dre:** Hmm.

**Keith:** You hear Barneys a lot.

**Art:** [imitates character laugh] [Dre laughs]

**Keith:** Also not bad. Wow.

**Dre:** [voice] Bamm-Bamm!

**Art:** Well, it's just a whatshisname from, uh...it's just Norton.

**Keith:** Are they both Honeymooners?

**Art:** They're both— *The Flintstones* is *The Honeymooners*, very [Keith: Yeah.] beat-for-beat early on and never not that far, but like, the...

**Keith:** Right.

**Art:** The, like, [voice] "Hey, Fred," is, like, the same as, like, what's— I don't remember the name of the guy in *The Honeymooners*.

**Keith:** Yeah, I don't remember either. I've never really seen—

**Dre:** I've never seen it, yeah.

**Keith:** I've seen, like, clips of *The Honeymooners*. I saw, like, an episode of it for, like, a media class one time.

**Sylvia:** I've never watched a second of it.

**Art:** I've watched a lot of old TV, and so...

**Sylvia:** I...I mean, it just, like, wasn't...there were channels here that played old TV. We just never had the specific one cable channel that played old shit here.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Keith:** You didn't have TV Land?

**Dre:** Oh, wow.

**Sylvia:** No, it was called... [laughs quietly] Hold on.

**Art:** Oh, what Canadian horror is this gonna be?

**Sylvia:** I need to look up the exact name, 'cause it was...it was Zoomer TV, for boomers with zip.

**Dre:** [sighs] What?

**Sylvia:** Zoomer TV, for boomers with zip.

**Dre:** No. No.

**Sylvia:** It was their tagline.

**Dre:** No. That's illegal. You can't say that.

**Keith:** Zoomer TV, for boomers with zip.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Dre:** I hate that.

**Keith:** And how long ago were they saying that?

**Sylvia:** That was just their slogan for their channel.

**Keith:** Like, when?

**Sylvia:** Sorry, it was called theZoomer. This was, uh, at least seven years ago, because I remember seeing ads for it when I had just started dating my boyfriend.

**Keith:** Oh, they were early with zoomer, I think.

**Sylvia:** Oh, yeah, no. They were there before it became a term.

**Dre:** Hmm.

**Sylvia:** It was funny when it started becoming a thing.

**Dre:** "For boomers with zip" is a lot. [Keith laughs]

**Sylvia:** It's a lot.

**Keith:** It sounds like—

**Dre:** It's a challenging slogan.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.



**Keith:** It sounds like an erection pill.

**Sylvia:** [laughs] It does!

**Dre:** Oh. Yeah, it certainly does.

## **Knife Cont. [1:49:20]**

**Sylvia:** [laughs quietly] To get us back to the questions here...

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Yeah, get us out of here.

**Sylvia:** Who is important to Caldera? Which still could be a surname or a first name or a mononym.

**Keith:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** We can decide that later. I think just having a placeholder name of any kind is useful, though.

**Keith:** [sighs] Um...

**Sylvia:** This does not necessarily need to be a romantic connection either. It can be, but it can just be a bestie.

**Dre:** Bestie.

**Keith:** Um...okay. I'll— let's answer this, and then I have some name pitches after.

**Sylvia:** Cool. Bamm-Bamm.

**Keith:** Bamm-Bamm. [Dre laughs]

**Sylvia:** And Pebbles.

**Dre:** [voice] Bamm-Bamm.

**Keith:** Dino. [Sylvia and Dre laugh]

**Sylvia:** All right.

**Keith:** Okay—

**Sylvia:** Wait, I kind of want to hear your pitch. Wait.

**Keith:** Okay, okay. Okay.

**Sylvia:** If you have it, and we were on names, we could do it.

**Keith:** We were one names. Okay. So, I'm thinking it's sort of like— this could fork in a couple different directions, but I do think that, like, okay, mononym, like, that's so weird.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** And at first, I was like, what I've everybody— what if no one had a last name, and then, why would that be? Why would no one have a last name? And then I was thinking about, like, oh, what if people, like, their last name was given to them by, like, the major mountain that they were near, the major volcano that they were near.

**Dre:** Ooh.

**Sylvia:** Oh.

**Keith:** So everyone, like, took the last name of, like, the, you know, lava king that they lived under, and then that would mean that this guy and his family would have, like, the only unique last name in the entire area, because they have their— they get to keep their last name, because they've been...

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** They've been, uh, they went dormant. So I was like, oh, the last name could be their mountain, but everyone else's last name would be, like, the next nearest mountain to them, because that mountain is dormant.

**Sylvia:** I'm writing this down, because I really like this idea.

**Dre:** Yeah, that's awesome.

**Sylvia:** Uh, people's last names are defined by the mountain they're born on. Does that sound right, or like...?

**Keith:** Yeah. Which means that they're, like, they're being, like, politically removed from identifying with their family.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, absolutely.

**Keith:** Which is crazy.

**Sylvia:** Honestly, it's a very, like, extreme and evil version of the, like, "we're all family here."

**Keith:** Yeah, it's evil. It's evil.

**Sylvia:** "Now get back to— now get back in the mines."

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** No, I—

**Keith:** Dad. Get back in the mines, dad!

**Sylvia:** [laughs] I like it. I like that idea a lot. I have added it under our— as one of our "this is just a fact" notes.

**Keith:** Cool.

**Sylvia:** Did you have, like, actual mountain names?

**Keith:** No, I want to know—

**Sylvia:** No, you just wanted that written down? Okay.

**Keith:** If people— yeah, I don't have— oh, the only name that I found that I liked was Basalt, which is a volcanic rock.

**Dre:** Also a great name.

**Keith:** That's the only name that I saw that I was like, "Oh, that seems like a good last name." Flows with Caldera, but I'm not tied to it. I just looked at a bunch of words, and that was the only good one.

**Sylvia:** We could— which would you prefer it as, a first name or a last name, if we used it? Because Basalt Caldera does sound nice to me.

**Keith:** Um...

**Sylvia:** Or did you like it the other way around?

**Keith:** I like it— honestly, I like it both ways.

**Sylvia:** Okay.

**Keith:** The only other name that I looked at, I had, like, a country generator, like a country name generator going, and I was just refreshing it over and over again, and one of the names that popped up was Mosie and I was like, "Oh, Mosie's a fun name," so that's the only other name that I saw and liked.

**Sylvia:** Do we want to name the person that is closest to Caldera, Mosie?

**Dre:** Uh, yes, I do.

**Keith:** I do.

**Dre:** I do.

**Keith:** Is this an old friend or a new friend, like a— and by that, I mean is this a rich friend or a poor friend?

**Sylvia:** Um...so, I have an idea— like, my— I think that it should be someone from the

Ash Pits, personally.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Sylvia:** Just to sort of, like...I don't know. It could be— I guess it could be, like— actually, I said that, and then I completely changed my mind to the opposite, where the idea of them having a friend who is, like, the youngest child of one of these noble families [**Keith:** Yeah.] and is, like...because of—

**Keith:** Maybe someone rich that's on their team?

**Sylvia:** Yeah, and doesn't really have, like, respons— like, isn't gonna inherit much other than, like, a house and [**Keith:** Right.] some lava money.

**Keith:** And a life without having to mine lava.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. Like, so, I think, like, it's just, like, yeah, I'm— honestly, could be someone who is like a benefactor to [**Keith:** Yeah.] his, like, studies and stuff.

**Keith:** I like that. I like benefactor is cool.

**Dre:** Mm.

**Keith:** Like, a...

**Sylvia:** Yeah, okay. Did we— wait, did we decide...who likes Basalt [pronounced: bay-salt]— Basalt [bass-alt]?

**Keith:** Uh, Basalt [ba-salt], yeah.

**Dre:** Basalt.

**Sylvia:** Basalt. First name good, or last name? We didn't...

**Art:** I...

**Keith:** Basalt Caldera. Caldera Basalt.

**Dre:** I like Basalt Caldera.

**Art:** I think it's better— oh, I like the other way, [**Dre:** Okay.] but it might be a little too *Star Wars*-y that way.

**Keith:** It's— Baldera Casalt?

**Dre:** Wait.

**Sylvia:** Bald Era Casalt is what I heard. [laughs]

**Keith:** I spoonerized it. [laughs]

**Art:** Caldera Basalt sounds a little *Star Wars*-y to me.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Art:** But might I'm just...maybe I'm wrong.

**Sylvia:** No, let's go with— I—

**Keith:** It's worth keeping in mind that we will make one of these names the family name of the mountain also.

**Sylvia:** Yes.

**Keith:** And so...and I guess I said that as if it was gonna help, but then... [Dre laughs]

**Sylvia:** No, but it does actually help, because I think I like Caldera as the family name, given the meaning that we [**Dre:** Yeah.] looked up for it, right?

**Keith:** Right, yeah, yeah. Is it the name— oh, no, okay. Sorry, I'm just doing different new lores on top of lores.

**Sylvia:** It's okay.

**Dre:** That's what we're doing.

**Sylvia:** We're gonna make a bunch of characters, [**Keith:** Okay.] so save it for later.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Sylvia:** Do we want to get—

**Keith:** It's relevant to the name, which is...

**Sylvia:** Oh.

**Keith:** It could be the name that they give to everyone who's gone dormant.

**Sylvia:** I liked your idea for it to be a unique signifier.

**Keith:** That you get to keep.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. I liked the idea that they— that he? Are we going he/him for Basalt? He/they? What are we—?

**Keith:** I just was, but I'm open to whatever.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** I'm fine with him being a dude. I'm fine with him not...

**Keith:** Sure.

**Dre:** Yeah, he can be a broski.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Okay, what's up, bruh? [laughs] So, I like the...I really like the idea of him having this, like, unique last name, because it also becomes this, like, thing that the other Born Warms can look down on him for, without it necessarily being, like, a scarlet letter surname.

**Dre:** Oh, yeah, sure.

**Keith:** Right, yeah.

**Sylvia:** It's like, oh yeah, you don't have anybody below you with your surname, so you're, like, nothing to me.

**Keith:** Right. Without it being, like, a mark of shame. Like, to him and to the family, it could be, like, the last bit of pride that they have.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. So, for the bestie we were talking about, benefactor.

**Keith:** Mosie.

**Sylvia:** Mosie. Does that vibe with everybody?

**Art:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Okay. Mosie. Oh, and now I've gotta draw a line between two things. That's always fun.

**Dre:** Mm. Godspeed.

**Sylvia:** Check this out. Whoa! Connection line.

**Keith:** Whoa!

**Sylvia:** There's a fucking little tool for it that has a little arrow and everything.

**Dre:** Oh, nice.

**Keith:** Mm-hmm.

**Sylvia:** Are they best friends? I wrote— I've been calling them best friends, but are they, like, old friends? Did they grow up together? Are they contemporaries?

**Keith:** I love grow up together.

**Dre:** Sure.



**Sylvia:** Okay.

**Keith:** That's great to me.

**Sylvia:** Do you guys want to look at the character cards again and pick one out? We don't have to for this character.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Sylvia:** But if you want to, we can. Also just in general, if anybody has, like, a vibe in mind for this character.

**Keith:** Um...

**Sylvia:** I kinda like the idea of Mosie, of them just being, like...they're, like, an—

**Dre:** Look at this hot motherfucker.

**Sylvia:** Ooh, hi. What if they're, like, an artist but not a very good artist?

**Keith:** An artist but not a very good artist.

**Sylvia:** They're like, they don't know what to do with their time, right?

**Keith:** Dre, you picked the Kurapika of the group.

**Sylvia:** You did.

**Dre:** Hey. Hey. You know? Hey.

**Keith:** Artist but not a very good artist is what you said?

**Sylvia:** I don't know. That's the—

**Keith:** This is, like, a...

**Sylvia:** It just popped in my mind as, like, what would a rich person with no—

**Keith:** Yeah, like a leisure— yeah, like a—

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Like a jobby. A leisure jobby.

**Art:** This is artist not a very good artist, IMO.

**Keith:** [laughs] I think it's a different kind of art and a different kind of not very good.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. [laughs]

**Sylvia:** But I just— I was thinking about, like, what type of shit do rich people do when they don't have, like, anything else going on, and...

**Keith:** Oil painting and sculpture.

**Sylvia:** Yeah, like, paint— like, they can't— 'cause they can't go off and ride horses. There's lava everywhere.

**Dre:** Yeah, somebody tried, and it didn't go well.

**Keith:** Well, they couldn't until they invented lava shoes for horses.

**Sylvia:** Oh, true. I mean, you know what? Easy as fuck to make horseshoes out here with all the...

**Dre:** Obsidian horseshoes!

**Sylvia:** Ooh.

**Art:** I don't think those will save you from lava.

**Dre:** I know, but...

**Art:** If anyone's listening to this and thinking about—

**Keith:** Well, pad them with denim, lots of denim.

**Dre:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. [laughs quietly]

**Keith:** Obsidian horseshoes with denim lifts.

**Dre:** Sure. Uh, horse...hmm. Jorses. Jorses.

**Sylvia:** Okay, well, now we've decided that Mosie is an equestrian, I suppose. [laughs]

**Keith:** I like— hey, I like artist.

**Sylvia:** I like artist too. I was just goofing.

**Keith:** I mean, I guess it could be both. It's sort of, like, uh, when you see art, and you're like, okay, it is...you know, it's refined; it's, like, technically proficient, and you're like, but it just, like, sucks. [laughs] Like, it's just like, uh...or maybe it's too harsh on Caldera's best friend, but.

**Sylvia:** Like, they can be a good person without being talented. Like, that is a...

**Dre:** [sighs] Man, thank god for that.

**Sylvia:** Oh, shush. [Dre laughs]

**Keith:** I don't know. I don't know, I've never seen it! [Sylvia laughs] I'm just saying, I've never seen it.

**Sylvia:** I think the reason why I reach for, like, not very talented, is a way to be like, well, shit, they don't really know— it's almost like a humanizing thing, where like, they don't really know what they're doing with their life, and so [Keith: Sure.] they're trying [Dre: Mm-hmm.] to, like, have a craft, but it's not really, like, going great, and the way that they sort of make up for feeling weird about their life of luxury is by helping their best friend hopefully do more than they're doing.

**Keith:** Yeah. And hey, maybe he gets Mosie into doing some art for the community.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. Oh my god. [laughs quietly]

**Dre:** Jesus.

**Sylvia:** Mosie doing really bad murals in ash town. [Keith laughs]

**Dre:** Oh, wow, is that an original Mosie? [Sylvia laughs]

**Keith:** No, it's just—

**Sylvia:** Just Banksy.

**Dre:** Mosie's Banksy. Yeah! [laughs]

**Sylvia:** Yeah. Oh my god.

**Dre:** Yeah, Mosie went into ash town and bought up, like, six people's houses and then turned it into a weird art installation.

**Keith:** And what happened to those six people?

**Dre:** Don't worry about it.

**Keith:** Oh no. I'm sure it's fine.

**Dre:** I'm sure it's fine. They still live there.

**Keith:** They got slightly better ash houses.

**Dre:** Yeah, they still live there. Now it's just people walk through their houses all day.

**Keith:** Yeah, I— anyway, I like everything that we've said so far for Mosie.

**Sylvia:** "Artist," comma—or, brackets—"not very talented," is what I'm writing here. Did— is there the extent that Mosie has for Basalt's research just funding it, or do they get involved surveying as well? Or is it, like I said, just a situation where, like, at the end of the day, Basalt is like, "Hey, check out this." Comes back covered in ash and being like, "Hey, look at the stuff I found in this tunnel! I think I'm onto something here. Look at these, like, all my notes, blah blah blah," while Mosie's like, "I painted a dog today."

**Dre:** God.

**Sylvia:** You know what I mean?

**Dre:** Yeah. Love it.

**Sylvia:** Okay.

**Keith:** You like the second one, Dre?

**Sylvia:** Do you like—

**Dre:** Mm-hmm. The second one, yeah.

**Sylvia:** Which do you prefer, Keith? And Art, do you have any feelings about it?

**Keith:** Um, I could go either way. I like the idea of the, like, amateur rich adventurer, but I also like the idea of the, like, “Okay, you go off and do your thing, and I’ll be here...I’ll be here. You go spelunking.”

**Sylvia:** Art, what do you think?

**Art:** I think I’m with Dre on this one, where I like the...

**Sylvia:** Yeah. If we want to have a little bit of a have our cake and eat it, we could say that Mosie did that, went on an expedition, one time, and it did not—

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** And did not enjoy ruining their shoes. [laughs]

**Dre:** Sure, yeah.

**Sylvia:** Like, they’re still a rich kid, right? Like, I don’t want to [Keith: Right.] lose sight of that. Okay. Are we satisfied for Mosie? We’ll come up with a name eventually.

**Keith:** I’m satisfied with— for— with Mosie.

**Dre:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Okay.

**Keith:** I'm satisfied for Mosie.

**Dre:** Somebody's gotta be.

**Sylvia:** Let's move onto— I mean, yeah, fucking hell, somebody does. Let's move onto the next page, which is: They were youthful, fair, and a little too proud. What feature marked them as conventionally beautiful? Examples are large lustrous hair and a honeyed singing voice, an auspicious birthmark.

**Keith:** Not quite large lustrous hair. [laughs]

**Sylvia:** No, we did pick a guy with pretty short hair.

**Keith:** [laughs quietly] No, it's his eyes.

**Sylvia:** I was gonna suggest that [**Dre:** Yeah.] for real, though.

**Art:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Big, big beautiful peepers?

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Mm-hmm.

**Art:** Piercing gaze.

**Dre:** And that's how they describe them, too.

**Sylvia:** I'm gonna write that down. I'm writing that down, word for word.

**Dre:** Do you remember Basalt Caldera and his big beautiful peepers? [Keith laughs]

**Sylvia:** Big beautiful peepers. They were always studying things.

**Dre:** God, he was— I'd let him peep all over me.

**Sylvia:** Whoa!

**Art:** Whoa.

**Keith:** Okay. Calm down, uh, steam king. [Dre and Sylvia laugh]

**Sylvia:** All right. I wrote down big beautiful peepers. I'm satisfied with that for what makes them conventionally beautiful.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** Which of their habits did the elders find most irritating? Examples are sardonic wit and ceaseless mocking, boisterous carousing and dancing, or relentless cheer and optimism. Anybody got anything off the dome that they think would piss off the volcanobility?

**Keith:** Is it a copout just to say the nature of this job that they're doing of trying to get a new mountain? Like...

**Sylvia:** I mean, I don't think that's...

**Dre:** No, I don't think it's a copout.

**Art:** It's, like, a really uppity pursuit.

**Keith:** It is, yeah.

**Sylvia:** I think ambition is totally a viable answer to this.

**Dre:** Yeah. I agree.

**Sylvia:** Yeah. [typing] Disliked by other Born Warm for his ambition. Boom. Easy. Easy. Asked and answered.

**Dre:** Crushed it.

**Sylvia:** Because yeah, we've painted a picture of this guy being an academic and adventurer and basically Indiana Jones, and, you know.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvia:** I feel like ambition comes hand in hand with that.

**Keith:** Yeah, sure. It feels like a sort of romantic ambition.

**Sylvia:** Yeah.

**Keith:** But it's still ambition.

**Sylvia:** I mean, hey, when you've got, like...when you're trying to keep the heel pressed down on the, [**Keith:** Right.] like, society of people suborn to you, I imagine that someone who's trying their best to pull themselves out of it, even if they came from it originally or came from your side of things originally, [**Dre:** Sure, yeah.] would probably get on your nerves, right?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Dre:** Well, yeah, he could start giving the Laze ideas.

**Sylvia:** Exactly. And hey, what's great is we've already answered the last two questions.

**Keith:** Sick.

**Sylvia:** Which is: but their work was honest and their dreams pure. What profession did they take great pride in? We've talked about this, that they are...

**Keith:** At length.

**Sylvia:** A geologist, surveyor, yeah. We've discussed this at length. They study the volcanoes themselves. And "What ambition, simple or daring, did they hold?" we've also discussed, which is they're trying to bring their family back to the status they once held.

[["Eyes of a Killer"](#) by Jack de Quidt plays]