

Sangfielle 40: Just Returns Pt. 4

Transcriber: robotchangeling

Jack (as Pickman): As it stands, I think we have a great benefit in the Margrave's presence with us. They don't know that he's with us. And you have the torch of the *Zephyr*, Duvall.

Art (as Duvall): Yes. But if the trains haven't been coming, maybe there's a problem.

Jack: Uh, like, Pickman glances at Bucho.

Austin (as Bucho): [deep breath] Ooh. If they have a priest who can do the lightning, maybe they enchanted it so that the trains would stay away. Or maybe the trains are afraid, hmm?

Ali (as Marn): What do we want to do if we go down there?

Jack (as Pickman): Can we kill them? I don't know that we can kill them.

Janine (as Es): I was going to say that it feels like whatever you want to do in town is gatekept a little bit by the sniper who shot people simply for looking.

Jack (as Pickman): Mm-hmm.

Janine (as Es): We may still need to kill them.

Ali (as Marn): I mean, we're in this mess because we killed one of them.

Jack (as Pickman): And it was a fucking trial.

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

Austin (as Teresa): Meyer. [uncertain sound] You all look like you're getting ready for a hunt. But my understanding was you were the ones being hunted.

Art (as Duvall): Well, that's how you...that's how you defend against that. The hunter becomes the hunted, it's...it's a common saying.

Austin (as Teresa): Meyer, you can't go get yourself killed.

Art (as Duvall): No.

Austin (as Teresa): Your parents sent me here to bring you home, and now what you're doing is sharpening a knife. [nervous quiet laugh] And you can understand where I'm a little bit worried.

Austin: Give me your three omens.

Janine: Es sees these. I don't think anyone else sees them.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Janine: But it's okay, 'cause she announces them.

Austin: [amused] Okay.

Janine (as Es): A gold tooth. A calf crying. A violet cord, its ends reddened and wet.

Ali (as Marn): Uh, thanks, Es. [Janine and Ali laugh]

Art: Yeah, utterly no-selling it.

Jack: Yeah.

Art: I think is...

Jack: You know, big nod.

Jack (as Pickman): Thank you.

Austin: Alekest and Bucho make eyes at each other in the sort of like, "Oh boy, here we go." [Janine laughs] This is all dang— this is all very dangerous stuff that we're fucking with, but okay.

Austin: So, you turned into a big eyeball, floated up there.

Janine: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Do you have a signal to like show them that you're good? Or do you imagine they just kind of saw, saw all that happen?

Janine: Um...you know, I think if you're looking for an eyeball monster to be doing stuff, you probably see that. I don't know.

Austin: Yeah, probably. Yeah.

Janine: If you were looking at the sniper thing.

Austin: But nobody else saw it somehow, so yeah.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: But from the Weather Room, all that just happened.

Janine: No one else was looking for an eyeball.

Austin: Uh, I think we get...so, Bucho has seen you do this before, right? Back at Yellowfield, has seen you in eyeball mode, presumably.

Janine: Oh, he must— yes, yeah, must have.

Austin: Alekest has not, and Alekest, uh... [Jack chuckles] I think, Pickman, Alekest comes over to you and is like:

Austin (as Alekest): Oh. Uh, heritrix, right?

Jack (as Pickman): Uh huh.

Austin (as Alekest): [deep breath] Mean business, mean business.

Jack (as Pickman): Mean business?

Austin (as Alekest): That's it. Just, I wouldn't want to fight one. I have, but I would like to not again.

Jack (as Pickman): Do you have a problem with Es?

Austin (as Alekest): No. [Janine laughs] You need to calm down.

[song ends]

Jack (as Pickman): What?

Austin (as Alekest): You're all nerved up. If you go down there and you're paranoid about us, something's gonna...something's gonna sneak up on you.

Jack: Big sigh, turns around to the window where Marn is and just sort of like—

Austin: Uh huh.

Jack: —points at Es, who's presumably like crouched on the roof of the trade hall?

Austin: I guess so.

Janine: Yes, she is crouched there, checking out this gun.

Austin: Uh huh.

Jack: Well.

Austin: And yeah, I think it's worth saying just briefly that Ennib the sniper, at this point, has fallen unconscious at your feet, basically, but not dead, from the— because you used Exsanguinate.

Janine: Mm-hmm.

Jack (as Pickman): How did she do that?

Jack: Pickman says to Marn.

Austin: [laughs softly] This is the first time Pickman's seen this? [Ali laughs]

Jack: No, but it's like...

Jack (as Pickman): It took us 45 minutes to kill Ezek.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah, uh huh.

Ali (as Marn): Oh, you know Es. She can move around. She hopped up there and, you know, did the damn thing.

Jack (as Pickman): Yeah, great. Fantastic.

Jack: Okay, well, who's up next? Um...

Austin: Uh huh. Good question.

Janine: I was gonna ask real quick if I could take her knife and maybe like tie her up or something.

Austin: Yeah, totally. That works. [Jack laughs softly]

Janine: Okay.

Austin: Her knife is super basic. Her knife is just like a D6 Kill knife.

Janine: Yeah, I just don't want her to have it. That's the thing. [laughs softly]

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah. But you should take it, 'cause it is a thing you could like sell. So, D6 Kill knife. Or knife, D6 Kill.

Austin (as Bucho): Well, we shouldn't leave her down there alone.

Austin: Says Bucho.

Ali (as Marn): No.

Art (as Duvall): Yeah, I guess we should just head out, right?

Austin (as Bucho): Without their sniper, should be easy enough to approach. The question is where we— where we strike, hmm?

Art (as Duvall): Mm-hmm.

Ali: The train would not give us... [laughs] It would be— you know, it's great to have it in action, right? It feels like a...but I don't know how we— I don't know— like, if we got the train, I don't know what step two is. But we have...

Art (as Duvall): Well, we could...we could signal the *Red Zephyr*.

Ali (as Marn): Right. And then what?

Art (as Duvall): Then we have a...a train.

Jack: I mean...

Art (as Duvall): Our train. Train friend. [Jack laughs softly]

Austin: Bucho and Alekest are both looking at you now [Ali laughs] with wider and wider eyes.

Ali: This is out of character.

Austin: Ok— is it? [Ali laughs]

Art: No.

Ali: I'm—

Austin: None of that felt that way. [Ali laughs]

Art (as Duvall): The attendant is a friend from school.

Austin (as Alekest): The train attendant.

Art (as Duvall): Yes.

Austin (as Alekest): Hrm.

Jack (as Pickman): It's fine. It's fine. Trust us. It's fine.

Art (as Duvall): Yeah, if...look who's saying that.

Austin (as Alekest): Yeah, well, my understanding is that you are traveling with a very unorthodox Shape Knight, in Pickman.

Art (as Duvall): I...I think Pickman's stance on trains is very orthodox!

Jack: Hmm.

Ali (as Marn): I don't know about that.

Austin (as Alekest): [grumbles]

Art (as Duvall): Against!

Ali (as Marn): [muttering] Duvall, I don't know about that. [Austin and Ali laugh]

Art (as Duvall): I'm not sure how you think you're helping rhetorically right now. [Ali and Austin laugh]

Jack: I mean, so, out of character, having the *Zephyr* attack the train station would be a great distraction.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Um, and I truly think that the...I think that three Magistrates might be able to do real damage to a train, but they'd all have to work together.

Austin: Right.

Jack: The only other problem is that when the *Zephyr* is in action, it sort of...it crashes and bashes tremendously.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Yeah, you have like an emergency flare to call the *Red Zephyr* in, but that's not like...the *Red Zephyr* is not your Pokemon.

Ali: No, no, no, no, no.

Austin: You're not getting to pick Tackle, you know?

Ali: No, no, no.

Jack: I want to be clear that like, yeah, it's unlikely that we can summon it and be like, "*Red Zephyr*, target the abbey!"

Austin: Yeah, uh huh.

Jack: And it's more like the *Zephyr* shows up and eats the lower half of Blackwick.

Austin: Well, who could say?

Jack: Yeah, who could say?

Austin: There would be rolls involved, Compel rolls, like we've seen you do with regard to that train. You know?

Jack: Um, okay. So. [pause] Yeah, let's get down and in. Let's get off the boat.

Austin: Yep. Y'all head down the— can head down at your will at this point. I'm not gonna make you roll to approach at this point, because they're— they are counting on the best sniper they have [Ali laughs softly] to be their eyes and ears about approaching threats, right?

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: So.

Jack: Uh, take a position inside the Open Hand Trade Hall.

Austin: There are other— there are other people in the trade hall, so I would— I would...

Jack: Oh, yeah. [laughs softly]

Austin: What I would say is like—

Jack: So we're still hiding in bushes.

Austin: Let's— yeah. Let's think about hiding in bushes, hiding, you know, in shadows. I'm not gonna make you roll to do that, but let's...when we talk about framing where those scenes are, we should be thinking still in the sense of like, you are wanted people. And while Es may have, you know, by herself been able to move through the town pretty, you know, easily...you're not them, right? You're not one person.

Jack: No.

Austin: You are...you are two train knights plus three members of the Blackwick Group, that together is a little harder to ignore, you know?

Jack: Uh, where is Polyte's house?

Austin: I want to say it's down near the Boundless Conclave somewhere, right? Like, if— for people who aren't—

Jack: Oh shit, all the way down there?

Austin: Yeah, yeah. I mean, that's where all the— that's where the town residents are, right?

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: Are all the way through this part. For people who are listening, there's kind of, uh...this map, I would say, kind of three main zones. The north is a big empty plane, plus the mountains on the left and the train line on the east. Then there's the kind of middle of the map, which is this kind of raised area that has the ruined abbey and the Open Hand Trade Hall and the mine entrance and the mining camp. And then there's lower kind of old, old Blackwick—you know, old Eastern Folly—which is the big residential area, the big, you know, kind of boulevards. Boulevards is probably too strong, but like the big open dirt roads, really wide, that have houses and little shops and stuff along them, plus some farming, especially further to the south. The Triadic Pyre church, the Boundless Conclave, the Blackwick Group HQ, the train station, the town council, the automat. And of course, the kind of eastern half of this entire map is dominated by the lake, which has the coastline right here. So that's the summary there. And so, yeah, I think he's down south near the Boundless Conclave and also probably near where Kerr is, Kerr Kern, the Telluricist.

[0:10:07]

Jack: Okay. I'm gonna just say this outright, and I'm curious if it is anything. What if we intimidate the Telluricist into going back to the Magistratum and being like, "they all fell down a big hole," or something. Like, on the journey, there was a...there was a...you know, have them deliver the lie that like a *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are Dead* type situation, where it's like—

Austin: Ah.

Jack: "Oh, pirates took them out on the way," or something. You know, completely unrelated to Blackwick. And I mention that, 'cause that might guide us in terms of like, can we capture the Telluricist and make them deliver this message?

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Mm, mm-hmm.

Ali: [deep breath] Um, I mean, I really like maybe 75% of that plan. [laughs] I feel like that is the...

Jack: Okay.

Ali: I bet she has a humanity to appeal to, especially given the, like, amount of bodies that have been here, and probably our best bet. But I don't know if we should say that like we're dead or if it should be like, "I have a lead on Polyte! We can leave Blackwick." [laughs] You know? Or, but I don't know. Both are just as easy to not believe.

Jack: Yeah. I mean, and that would get us into the realm of down into that area as well. So that might be a direction to head.

Ali: Mm-hmm.

[brief pause]

Austin: Don't look at me.

Ali: Yeah, there's— yeah. I mean, I just don't feel like they're...

Art: I like it.

Ali: Like, it's not like we can get in touch with somebody else who's in the community, right? And even if we did...

Austin: I mean, why not? Or, what are you looking for?

Ali: Well, like, it's just, if we do that, what's step two of that?

Austin: That's my— yeah, right. Totally.

Ali: We can't like lead another revolt, because that didn't go well, and we wouldn't want to do that to these people. Like... [laughs] It's really between us and the Magistrates.

Jack: Yup. [laughs softly]

Austin (as Bucho): Well, we outnumber them now.

Austin: Says Bucho.

Austin (as Bucho): I guess we technically did before, also.

Art (as Duvall): Yeah. But I mean, that felt like a lot.

Austin (as Bucho): But we really outnumber them now.

Art (as Duvall): Yeah!

Austin (as Bucho): Six to five, eh. Six to four?

Art (as Duvall): Yeah.

Jack (as Pickman): What, so we do — target them one by one? Go Magistrate by Magistrate until there are no more Magistrates?

Ali (as Marn): Well—

Art (as Duvall): That's not a terrible idea.

Ali (as Marn): Now we get back into the they'll just send ten afterwards.

Jack (as Pickman): Yes. Yes.

Ali (as Marn): Could we—

Jack (as Pickman): Should we send your—

Art (as Duvall): Then it'll be six to ten, and then it's...

Ali (as Marn): Could we use the person we tied up as like leverage?

Jack (as Pickman): I don't think...I think that they would burn her.

Ali (as Marn): [sighs] Must be tough being a Magistrate.

Jack (as Pickman): Mm-hmm. [Ali laughs]

Janine: I'm not there, so this is out of character, but that's still a kind of leverage if she knows they're just gonna burn her if she's...that's leverage on her.

Ali: Oh, sure.

Austin: Counterargument that I think Alekest would raise in character would be like:

Austin (as Alekest): I don't know that they'd burn her. They came all this way to get revenge for the one's brother. They're tight knit like that. That's something you can take advantage of.

Jack: [laughs softly] Oh shit. Let's do a— let's do a trade at the train station, and then have the *Zephyr* kill them all. [laughs]

Ali: We got it. Let's go. [laughs] Who's making the first roll? [Art laughs]

Austin: That's facetious? That wasn't— you're not committing to that one? No?

Ali: I'm putting my vote in. That sounds great. [laughs]

Austin: Oh, okay. Okay.

Art: Mm.

Ali: I'm willing to hear edits to the plan, but that's the best plan I've heard so far.

Jack: Okay. All right.

Austin: None of my characters are givin' plans. My characters are here to...

Jack: Yeah.

Ali: Oh, no, no, no.

Austin: ...you know, help.

Ali: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: Okay.

Jack: Okay. I'm gonna...let's figure out why the trains aren't getting close, in case that might be a problem. So I proposed going down to the train station, potentially with another character, to try and see what that's about, while somebody else figures out this whole "we have a hostage" situation. [Austin laughs] Austin, I can't tell if you're laughing like this is a good idea or... [Jack and Ali laugh softly]

Austin: I don't know. Yeah, who could say? It's an idea. I'm happy to just execute on ideas. Let's do it. Who's going where?

Ali: Okay, is this a three prong thing where— sorry. [laughs] Where Pickman goes to look into the train.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Ali: Es and Duvall go talk to the hostage. And then I go find the Telluricist to be like, "Hey, can you—"

Austin: Mm.

Ali: "—set up a meeting between us and the Magistrates?"

Austin: That seems right to me.

Jack: [laughs] Shit, okay.

Art: Mm. [Ali laughs]

Jack: [laughs] Okay.

Ali: I mean.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Ali: It's not a great plan, but it's the plan we got.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Jack: You know, we're going by the planning by attrition school of plans. [Ali laughs] [laughs softly] Which is...

Austin: Yeah. Yeah. All right. Who's— where are we going first, here?

Jack: I'd like to take another Shape Knight or...yeah.

Austin: Yeah, Alekest'll go with you. To the train station?

Jack: Yep.

Austin: All right.

Jack: I would ideally like Es to cover me if possible, because I am in a bad way.

Austin: You are in a bad way, yeah. And I think this is gonna need a Sneak roll for two big train knights to walk down...down through this town and get there.

Jack: [laughs quietly] One in colorful porcelain armor.

Austin: Uh huh. Uh huh. Which, do you—

Ali: Wear one of our coats. Cloaks, cloaks.

Jack: Oh, I've got a cloak.

Ali: Oh. [laughs]

Jack: But yeah, Alekest might have a...

Austin: Yeah, yeah. Alekest probably has like a big brown cloak to put on over this armor too. So yeah, it's not— it's not Risky or anything, but it is...but it is, uh...unless, wait, does your thing make it Risky?

Jack: Yes, it does. But...

Austin: Ah, I see. Yeah.

Jack: I was hoping Es might be able to help with this.

Austin: Es can definitely cover you, yeah.

Jack: No, I mean, it's Risky, it's Risky.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Jack: Um...

Austin: Yeah, it is. It is. But it's still— but you can get the Mastery from Es, for sure. Or not the Mastery, the help, the helping dice, rather. Mm, you could make an argument for Delve for like getting across it quickly or something, but I don't know that you can make an argument for...uh, I guess you could make an— you could make a Delve roll to climb down this cliff face of the plateau, where there aren't people looking. That could be a Delve instead of a Sneak. Do you know what I mean? Like, a Sneak would have you go like boop, boop.

Jack: Yes.

Austin: Uh, I can't do this rapidly enough, but like, down through the town.

Jack: Yes.

Austin: And if, instead, you were trying to like throw some rope off the side of this higher up plateau—

Jack: And just drop.

Austin: —from behind the trade hall and just drop, that's Delve. I could give you that.

Jack: Yeah. No, absolutely. I bet—

Austin: It's Risky still.

Jack: I bet—

Austin: Or, it's not— it's...you know, it might still be Risky, because you're trying to do this inside of Shape Knight armor. Which, we talked about this in literally the first Delve, it's hard to climb in Shape Knight armor like this, and it's really hard to go down a rope in that way without risking falling.

Jack: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Especially two of you like this.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: That's...that's Risky.

Jack: Yeah. Okay. So let's do Delve—

Austin: But you have the— but you do have the thing at least, you know?

Jack: Yeah. Delve, Haven, it's Risky, and I have plus one from Es.

Austin: Mm-hmm. Yeah, Es is still looking out for you, and I still think it's like worth giving you that plus one to like be able to signal you if someone's walking by that way or gonna see the ropes or whatever, right?

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: Can throw a stone to distract people, you know, and give you the opening to...goes like "Ooh, what's that sound?" and then you got to [Jack laughs] put the rope down and go down, you know? All right. This is a tough one. Let's see how it goes.

Jack: That's a critical success.

Austin: Look at this.

Art: Ha! [laughs loudly]

Austin: That's a Risky—you rolled three, nine, ten, ten. Two tens. So you get down there like nobody's business. This is...this is the first time you've worked with Alekest one-on-one, and I think that there is a smoothness of operation here that is hard not to be impressed by. That is just like, all of the jovialness is like gone, and you are in business mode now, right? I think, in my mind...in my mind, there is like a lot of...on his helmet, he has like interesting engravings on the actual like faceplate of the mask. This is truly an Austin Walker, like...of course this is where my mind went, but I sort of imagine some of the sort of shapes of tusks and stuff that is on Lando Calrissian's skiff guard disguise.

Jack: [laughs] Lando Cal...

Austin: But imagine that just like it's on a piece of armor, instead of it being...it's not open-faced like that, right? But it's that sort of like curving tusk and tooth designs on the front of this, this...

Jack: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: This close-faced ceramic, you know, helmet, basically. And he lowers it and hides his face as he begins going down this thing. And the two of you just get there extremely cleanly. You get all the way, with that ten, all the way to the train station. You slip past a couple of the kind of deputized locals and get into the train station proper, and there is...I mean, you see the first of these omens very clearly. At the...there's a sort of an area where you would line up to get on board the train, and two little, you know, standing, you know, poles have been set up. And between them is, of course, the rope, the...Janine, what was it? It was a violet rope with reddened ends, right? Violet cord, its ends reddened and wet.

[0:20:22]

Janine: Yes.

Austin: And so it's almost like you come to a velvet rope. And the the ends of it are like lingering down on the— like, kind of, they're hanging loose, like there's too much of this rope than just that stands between these two poles blocking the way, and their kind of ends are hanging loose down to the ground. And they've been dipped in what looks like red ink or blood or something, but it's still wet. And as they kind of draw on the ground, they're drawing just a very, like, as the wind moves them.

Jack: Oh, wow.

Austin: The wind seems to draw, like, small— it's not the Shape icon, it's this other, it's this other kind of...the Fulminan magic is a lot of drawing different types of lightning bolts. And the lightning bolts, depending on like where you branch them, it's like a different rune. It's a different runic, you know, symbol or something, right? And so...you don't know this magic necessarily, but maybe, you know, on a ten, I think Alekest is able to just give you like...he nods and says:

Austin (as Alekest): This is what I thought it was.

Austin: You know.

Austin (as Alekest): This is the runic magic of of the Magistrates. Fulmina's mark. This is a mark of safety.

Jack: Huh.

Austin: So, so yeah, that is preventing the arrival of any trains.

Jack: Wow. Did they—

Austin: And I think he adds like:

Austin (as Alekest): And we gotta be careful, because if we mess with it, there's a chance that it breaks bad on us.

Jack: Hmm. I wonder if Pickman has encountered this before, up in the Magistratum.

Austin: Maybe. Yeah, yeah. This is like extremely powerful stuff, if this has been able to st—

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: Or it's been reapplied very regularly, right?

Jack: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: Which maybe gives you a little bit of information, that like, this priest who's overseeing the big lightning bolt has to come here regularly to re-up on this, at least maybe once a day, maybe twice a day.

Jack: Yes.

Austin: It is fresh, you know? And as a note, you get Mastery on your next...your next roll from having seen this omen. What do you do?

Jack: Um...I think that there's like this— [laughs] as soon as we get into the room, there's this glance that, you know, of like soldiers having the...like, one soldier noticing something else and pointing it really quietly.

Austin: Uh huh. Yes.

Jack: There's this like shared moment between us, except it's that's one of the omens that the heritrix mentioned. [laughs softly]

Austin: Yeah. Yeah.

Jack: Hmm.

Austin (as Alekest): Mean business.

Austin: He says again.

Jack (as Pickman): Mean business. Your fancy armor. It would cause you a problem as well?

Austin (as Alekest): Hm. Probably less of one.

Jack (as Pickman): Huh. [Jack laughs softly]

Austin (as Alekest): If we do it right, there won't be a problem at all.

Jack (as Pickman): Well. I suppose you better take the lead then.

Austin (as Alekest): The way you— mm, this is proprietary knowledge, the sort of thing you learn after a lifetime of doing this. The way you counter a spell like this, a rune like this, is you have to...

Austin: And he lowers a— or I think he produces like an extended rod, like a small, thin— almost like an antenna from a car. In fact, let's just say it is.

Jack: Yes.

Austin: It's like a car antenna.

Jack: A radio.

Austin: You know what I mean?

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: A radio antenna from a car from, you know, 120 years in the future. and lowers it to the...one of the smaller branches of the lightning bolt, and says...and begins to like go over. He doesn't touch it yet, but he's like going between the various like, the lowest of the branches, as if to try to choose one. And he says:

Austin (as Alekest): You have to trace You have to trace it back from the most recent to the oldest of the branches drawn. [deep breath] Which takes some study and some...and some guesswork. I wish I knew this priest, because then I could get inside of his head a little bit, figure out what's, how he ticks.

Jack (as Pickman): We wait long enough, the priest'll show up to paint the symbols again.

Austin (as Alekest): And then we simply undo what was done.

Austin: Closes the antenna. [laughs]

Jack: Pickman puts her back to a wall and like slides down the wall slowly to like sit and wait.

Austin: Uh huh. Yeah. Uh huh.

Jack: This feels a bit like—

Austin: All right. I think that's a good—

Jack: Oh, it—

Austin: Go ahead.

Jack: I was just gonna say it feels a bit like watching...it's like, this is like watching a Shape Knight from a parallel universe.

Austin: Uh huh. Yeah, weird.

Jack: Where it's like, Pickman's like, "Oh, huh. Yeah. I...you can do that, huh?"

Austin: [laughs] Um, Marn. You and Bucho, presumably, are heading down to find Kerr?

Ali: Sure, yeah, would love the backup.

Austin: Yeah. Again, I will need a roll as you get through this more residential part of the district, especially because we got both Rebek Semm and big, big ax fella who you— whose name you don't know yet, but does have a name. I don't think I said— maybe I said ax guy's name. Did I? Uh...let me see here. What's the ax person's name? Ah, yeah. His name is Gren, Gren Voznik. The Silent Hatchet.

Jack: Gren? [laughs softly]

Austin: Yeah, mm-hmm. And yeah, so I think you're definitely gonna need some sort of Sneak roll here, Marn, to get across this area.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: I don't know what you got.

Ali: I have Evade, but Evade feels like...

Austin: Yeah, Evade's more like [imitates fast motion]

Ali: [laughs softly] Right.

Austin: Right?

Ali: It is having the target's attention on you and then evading that.

Austin: Exactly, yeah.

Ali: And that is not what I want.

Austin: You could...you could Compel someone to give you, like, you know, a rando from town who likes you, to help sneak you past through houses and stuff, maybe? That could be fun.

Ali: Yeah, that seems to make sense, 'cause it feels like we would have a pretty good line to the automat.

Austin: Mm-hmm. Yes.

Ali: And I think that I live in that basement? Or does Duvall live there? I thought that I...

Austin: Of the automat? [Ali laughs] I don't remember that. But sure.

Ali: I feel like Duvall might have, but then I was in the restaurant. I've had this headcanon, maybe never said it out loud. Anyway. I think Marn knows somebody who lives in Blackwick, maybe multiple somebodies, probably.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Almost certainly, right?

Ali: So yeah, let me do that. This is gonna be...

Austin: Let's do Compel Haven. Um...yeah, let's do that here. This makes sense.

Ali: [laughs] Okay.

Austin: Yeah. Sorry, I was thinking about something else.

Ali: No, no, no. It's fine. Um...

Austin: Um...however, really quick, you should— did you already do Homecoming?

Ali: Oh, I did that when I went to Roseroot Hall.

Austin: You did it last time.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Okay, then— okay, then yes. Yes, yes, yes. Okay. We're good, then.

Ali: And I think that was my Haven domain...

Austin: That makes sense.

Ali: It's all the same Haven domain, yeah.

Austin: Yes. Yeah, this is all now the same.

Ali: Okay.

Austin: Yeah, totally. Okay.

Ali: Thank you, though.

Austin: Yeah, I was just double checking.

Ali: And yeah, I don't have any. I have the one that's like when you go to a place you can learn of a...somebody will reach out to you, and...

Austin: And you'll learn about some situations. Which like, you've kind of...

Ali: Which I feel like is what happened when that person was like, "Get away from me, 'cause I think that you're gonna kill me." [laughs]

Austin: Yeah, uh huh.

Ali: And then the "you can always find someone who will give you a place to stay" is sort of what I'm...

Austin: That's kind of what you're doing now. Right?

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah. So yeah, I think maybe, yeah, someone is— they're willing to invite you into their home, at the very least. Whether or not they guide you through the rest of town is up to this roll.

Ali: Sure. Risky, Standard?

Austin: Standard.

Ali: Cool. Cool, cool, cool.

Austin: Standard.

Ali: No plus ones, nothing else I can do? Okay.

Austin: All right.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: That's success at a cost, so we get our first little bit here. Go ahead and take three Fortune Stress.

Ali: Sure.

Austin: As you push your— push your luck and begin to try to sneak through this place. Give me your Fallout test before we continue.

Ali: True.

Austin: Uh huh. Ah, Minor Fallout.

Ali: Here we are.

Austin: Here we are again, huh? [Ali laughs] So, go ahead and clear that Fortune Stress, I guess.

Ali: Oh, yay.

Austin: 'Cause that's gonna be Fortune Fallout. You know what this is? I know what this is. [slyly] I know, I know what this is. [Ali snorts] Do you know what this is?

Ali: I don't think that I know what this is, but...

Austin: Okay. [Ali laughs] I'm gonna...I'm gonna kind of slow roll this reveal, maybe. In fact, here's what I'm gonna do. You're going through these houses. There's a kind of a network of people who are loyal to the town and who want these people gone and who know you and like you because you are Marn Ancura and you've helped a lot of fucking people here. And they begin to like, you know, bounce you from backyard to backyard. You're slipping into these different houses. You're being given signals, you and Bucho, to like, when to cross the street, all that stuff. You know, you get a good look at this point, by the way, of Rebek, who is a Caprak much like Ezek, except a little bit bigger, a little bit broader shouldered than the one that you fought on the bridge all that time ago.

Ali: Mm.

Austin: And, and you can hear her giving orders to people in the town council and kind of shouting orders here and there. You get a look at Gren who is...who is a...just a big motherfucker, just a big motherfucker.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: And we get to...as you begin to get down further south past them, towards this kind of quadrant here where there's these two big farm fields, right? One of these is a pasture, and it, you know, it cuts through the air the way it would, and you hear the sound of a calf crying, and it is a cow calf being...it's leashed, and it's being kind of walked around as if...it's being taken somewhere, but you can't quite figure out where it would be being taken. And in fact, it seems a

little bit like...I mean, what do you do? Let's start with that. Let's start with: this calf cries out, you know that's one of the omens. What do you do?

[0:30:33]

Ali: Mm-hmm. Yeah, I feel like Marn might like stop to like really absorb what else is happening around them, to be like...

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Ali: What is it about this right now that would trigger this, right?

Austin: Yeah. So what do you— do you just stare at it for a second and watch?

Ali: I think so, yeah. It's somebody who's like...

Austin: [sighs] It's like a— I'd say it's probably someone in their 30s, maybe. They looked dressed in, you know, just an average townsperson's, you know, outfit. Suspenders, kind of a dirty shirt. Dirty from use, not dirty from like rece— not recently dirty, just like old, kind of tattered. You know, buttoned shirt, slacks. And they have this kind of rope leash, you know, tied to a collar. And the thing you realize is like, they're walking this calf back and forth, but not...they're not like bringing it to a place to eat or drink. They're just kind of like on autopilot, walking around.

Ali: Mm. How does the person seem? Do they seem like...

Austin: That seems like a thing you'd have to roll for.

Ali: Yeah. I'm willing to Discern that.

Austin: And you could have Mastery on that, because of it— because of this thing.

Ali: [laughs softly] Sure.

Austin: Uh huh.

Ali: Yeah, I think Marn is both observing this person and being like, what's going on with this calf? And also the medical side—

Austin: Uh huh.

Ali: —of being like, do they seem delusional? You know, how are they walking?

Austin: Sure. Is it—

Ali: You know.

Austin: Yeah, exactly. Yep.

Ali: Uh, Mastery.

Austin: So yeah, that's Discern and Haven plus Mastery. And that is success at a cost. Uh, hey, there's something wrong with them. [Ali laughs] All right, take four to...take four to Mind.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: And I'm gonna tell you what that other Minor—

Ali: Oh, I have one Mind Protection, so that's three.

Austin: There you go. That's only three. You can clear that Debilitated from before, because that's not a real thing, and at this point, she's dealt with, right?

Ali: Oh, right, she's knocked out, yeah.

Austin: But...but what you need to upgrade is Forboding.

Ali: [quietly] Oh, that's too bad.

Austin: Because the second Minor is going to upgrade to Crisis: "As Forboding above, but now the danger actually occurs." [sighs] It is...it is about, I would say, you watch them do this path three or four times. And at first, you're like, why are they frowning? And you realize they aren't frowning. It's that their smile is melting into a frown, because their face is made of wax.

Ali: Ooh. [Jack sighs in dismay]

Austin: Scattered throughout Blackwick are members of Alaway's legion of waxen followers. [Ali laughs softly] How long they've been here, I don't know.

Ali: Whoops.

Austin: Or you don't know. I know how long they've been here.

Ali: Whoops! [Jack laughs] Oh, let me look up the...

Austin: Uh, yeah, it is just as simple as: "As Foreboding above, but now the danger actually occurs." [Ali laughs] That is how Crisis is written. Uh huh. So you put it together. And in fact, you know, in your mind, we get the like, people you've walked past who seem a little sluggish

throughout the streets. As people have left Blackwick, fleeing, some of them came back. Some of them maybe seemed— it seemed as if they didn't leave at all. And that's because they were being quietly replaced with...you don't know what Alaway's deal is currently. It has been a while since you last saw Alaway.

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Alaway has had time to make plans. You don't know if Alaway, you know, herself is back onto feet or if this is— or what, because last time you saw her she was being melted into a big wax pit.

Ali: Uh huh.

Austin: But hey, you've had that In Trouble [Ali laughs] tag now for quite some time, "You upset an important figure in this or a nearby Haven," and you've had Forboding on and off now for a few times, so.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: There it is. There it is.

Ali: They are still upset, it turns out.

Austin: It turns out. [Jack laughs] It turns out.

Ali: Somehow I got blamed for putting them in a big vat, but that's neither here nor —

Austin: Well, it's the group of you.

Ali: Yeah, no, no, no.

Austin: You know?

Ali: Yeah, yeah, yeah. [laughs]

Austin: It really is. But you're able to get to— you're able to, at this point, get down to Kerr without upsetting this person. You got successes on these rolls. I'm not putting you into— I mean, the crisis is that this has happened. And like, again, you walk past more people, and you recognize that like, oh my god, this person who is like sitting, just sitting and staring out the window looking at nothing, is a wax figure.

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Austin: They're all human. In, you know, in the past, we know that also Alaway has made those, the Caprak ones, but these ones seem to be mostly human. But they also don't seem like as lifelike as the people in...you know.

Ali: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: As a reminder, when you were in Yellowfield, and for people who haven't listened to that side of the game or whatever. Alaway is a vampire, is like a candle wax vampire person who made like duplicate bodies—or not duplicate, but variations on bodies—and they could move their consciousness into those bodies when their current body died. And also had these kind of like chimeric wax soldiers who worked for them. And these seem like a new invention is what I would say. They don't have that same, you know, lifelike verisimilitude that the members of the community had. So. But, uh oh, is what I would— uh oh. [Jack laughs softly] That's it.

Ali: Mm-hmm. Yeah, this is super bad.

Austin: Uh huh.

Ali: And I don't know that this conversation needs to be like zoomed in on right now, but if like Marn is talking to non-wax people who she knows in the town...

Austin: Uh huh.

Ali: I feel like she would be like, “Hey, so what's going on with the wax things?”

Austin: Hey, be careful.

Ali: You know?

Austin: I don't think they've noticed. They've noticed that there are weird— that people are weird and scared, right?

Ali: Sure.

Austin: But you know what these people look like. Everybody else is like, “Oh no, is everyone sick? Why does everyone looks so pallid?”

Ali: Right, right, right.

Austin: You know what I mean? Or like, so waxy. But there's a difference between that and I know this is from the wax vampire down south—

Ali: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Okay, yeah.

Austin: —who tried to do this to Bucho, you know? And Bucho is with you and is like, um...I think Bucho like reflexively rests a hand on your shoulder to kind of stable himself upon seeing this.

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Austin: To stabilize himself, because like, it was bad for Bucho. You know, we zoomed in kind of tight on that, and so you can remember.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Like, it was not a good way. Bucho was not in a good way when he dealt with this stuff, so.

Ali: No. Yeah, I'm gonna have to have a pull aside with Bucho later. [laughs]

Austin: Okay.

Ali: But yeah, I guess I find this person.

Austin: Yeah. Kerr is currently...has a little desk set up in the front lobby of the Boundless Conclave, has like a little...and is like handing out, you know, sandwiches, let's say at this moment, that were brought down from the automat. Because people do not— are not crossing town, going up all the way up there to get stuff.

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Austin: And there's plenty of, you know, a lot of people don't need to do that 'cause they have their own food at home, right? But there are people here who like go up and work in the mine everyday and grab a sandwich at the automat and don't have stuff, and it's been a siege on this town now for quite some time, and maybe they've run out of stuff. So Kerr is handing out stuff and is, uh...hoping that no one shows up to make this day weird.

Ali: I have...

Art: Ha!

Austin: Weirder than it already is, I guess.

Ali: I have extremely bad news for you, Kerr. [laughs]

Austin: You just walk in the front door?

Ali: I think so.

Austin: Okay.

Ali: Maybe I'm like around the corner, I'm like:

Ali (as Marn): [hushed] Psst!

Austin (as Kerr): [quiet groan] [Ali laughs] You gotta be kidding me.

Ali (as Marn): [hushed] Hey!

Austin (as Kerr): [weary] Hey. One—

Ali (as Marn): Five minutes.

Austin: Puts up a sign that's like, yeah, "be back in five minutes" sign, [Ali laughs softly] and then comes over to you.

Austin (as Kerr): [hushed throughout conversation] Marn, what are you doing?

Ali (as Marn): I need to talk to you.

Austin (as Kerr): Well, talk to me, then! [Ali laughs softly]

Ali (as Marn): Okay, hi.

Austin (as Kerr): I told you this is a bad place to be for you right now!

Ali (as Marn): I know. And that's what I'm here for. You're still...okay. I understand that the Magistrates are looking for me and the whole group that I'm a part of.

Austin (as Kerr): Yes.

Ali (as Marn): And you should tell them to meet us at the train station tonight.

Austin (as Kerr): [confused] Are you turning yourselves in?

Ali (as Marn): Yeee— sort of. [quickly] Yes. Yeah! Yes.

Austin: Give me a Compel Haven. [Ali laughs]

Jack: You're really, uh...

Austin: Mostly—

Jack: The “sort of” was the... [Ali continues laughing]

Ali: Sure. Sure.

Austin: Uh huh.

Ali: Again, there's—

Austin: I don't think you have Mastery on—

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Or wait, did you get that Mastery before? Where'd you get that? Yes. You already spent that Mastery, right? On the Discern.

Ali: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm, mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Austin: So you gotta clear that and then...and then give me this roll. Standard.

Ali: [sighs] Yeah, there's no— there's no secret talk to people in my...? [laughs]

Austin: Uh, yeah. I mean.

Ali: They're not. There's not.

Austin: You know.

Ali: I'm just gonna roll this and then...

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: That's a failure. [laughs]

Austin: That's a failure. That's a failure. Take Stress.

Jack: [laughs] “Are you turning yourselves in?” “No. Wait. Yes.”

[0:40:00]

Austin: Hey, only take one. Only take one. Uh, and I think it's Mind. You're trying to lie, trying to get one over on someone.

Ali: Oh, so that's...yeah, Mind Protection.

Austin: So none.

Ali: Yeah, okay.

Austin: So you're good, 'cause you got that one Protection, right? Yeah. Okay. But, but it still doesn't work. I think immediately Kerr is like:

Austin (as Kerr): I wasn't born yesterday, Marn. What's the play? What are you doing? Is this a trap for them, an ambush?

Ali (as Marn): [sighs]

Austin (as Kerr): Uh...I don't like how things are going here, but, you know, [sighs] I'm kind of caught in the middle?

Ali (as Marn): You were caught in the middle of them killing all of those people?

Austin (as Kerr): I mean, most of those people attacked them when they came in and said they were looking for you, and...some people—

Ali (as Marn): And they deserved to die for that?

Austin (as Kerr): I didn't pull any triggers! [Ali laughs]

Ali (as Marn): [dismissive] Yeah, okay.

Austin (as Kerr): Oh, well, [frustrated noise] like you don't hang— I know the type of people *you* hang around! You think everybody your people have killed have been...you know, proper villains? [Ali laughs softly] We all end up in the world, Marn.

Ali (as Marn): I'm just saying, they weren't— they weren't—

Austin (as Kerr): We're all doing our best.

Ali (as Marn): This town can't continue being like this.

Austin (as Kerr): I agree with you, which is why we need to find this Polyte guy and then get out of everybody's hair.

Ali (as Marn): Well. [Ali laughs] We don't know where Polyte is, but we don't want them to keep doing this. So if they meet us at the train station, whatever happens happens.

Austin (as Kerr): And you want me to help you with this. You want me to go tell them that and just hope it goes out your way and not...and not that I've led them into a trap and then *I'm* dead, then it's *my* head under the hatchet.

Ali (as Marn): Well, you haven't had any problem being in between this in the first place. And tell them you don't trust me. That's fine. But just say that I came here and I threatened you and that's where we're gonna be tonight.

Austin: Give me another Compel.

Ali: That's a better plan, huh? [laughs]

Austin: Eh. At least you're straight up, yeah. At least you have a distinct ask.

Ali: That's a nine.

Austin: Hey, there we go. There's the nine.

Ali: I think I accidentally rolled with Mastery last time, but it got me a two.

Austin: You did, and it didn't matter.

Ali: Yeah. [laughs]

Austin: It truly didn't. It got you a two, yeah. This nine, on the other hand. I think Kerr like sighs and says:

Austin (as Kerr): All right, I'll do it. [sighs] I want this over. I don't like this either. And I promise you I'm gonna get the stuff back to HQ once this is all done. All right? Now I gotta go back to getting people sandwiches and making sure that their coughs aren't anything serious and helping them with tummy aches, okay?

Ali: [deep breath] Um...what do I want to do here? I think I want to tell her to... [deep breath]

Ali (as Marn): Listen, if things get bad for you and you need a place that's safe without the Magistrates, there's a mansion like a two mile walk north. Tell them that you know me. Tell them that you know this guy named Duvall.

Austin (as Kerr): All right. Thanks.

Ali (as Marn): Okay. Have a good one.

Austin (as Kerr): [disbelieving] Good luck.

Ali (as Marn): [under breath] Yeah, same.

Ali: [laughs] I appreciate that, 'cause I fucking need it.

Austin: Uh huh. All right, the third thing here was, what, Duvall and...Duvall and Es interrogate a prisoner? Is that what I heard the third of the plan was? [Ali laughs]

Art: Yeah.

Austin: Was that right?

Art: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Es, how's it going up there, up on the top of the trade hall?

Janine: Um...well, I've gone through her pockets.

Austin: Uh huh.

Janine: Taking a good look at this gun. I'm not like a big gun person.

Austin: No.

Janine: But, you know.

Austin: But you got Kill, so.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: As a skill.

Janine: You know, I know the basics. I've been out in the world for question mark years.

Austin: Uh huh. At the very least, it had to—

Janine: I understand some things.

Austin: It's a good, um...it's a good, uh, what do you call it? Not a telescope, a...like, what's the— there's another word for like a one handed scope.

Janine: Spyglass?

Austin: Yeah, spyglass.

Janine: Mono— monoc— monocle?

Austin: Monocle is wrong, right?

Janine: Monocular? Monocular.

Austin: Monocular, yeah. Or like a spyglass, right? At the very least, you can see pretty far with it. And, you know.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: Look at people through it, so. So yeah, I guess Duvall shows up at some point.

Art: Mm-hmm.

Janine (as Es): What do you think?

Art (as Duvall): You did great work, I have to say.

Janine (as Es): [flattered] Thank you. I do like to hear that.

Austin: I'm guessing you're back to being non-eyeball form, Es?

Janine: Oh, yes. Yeah.

Austin: Okay. Okay.

Art: I mean, I had a conversation with a room of bugs a week ago. I really don't think I have any way to judge anyone's... [Austin and Janine laugh] In a room— with a room of bugs as part of the room of bugs.

Austin: Yes. [Austin and Janine laugh]

Art: I'm not...

Janine: I mostly need to have access to my own pockets, so.

Austin: Uh huh. Fair.

Art: Yeah, I'm just— I'm not here to judge, is what I'm saying. [Janine laughs softly] Fun fact: I don't have Compel, so, um...

Janine: I do.

Art: I don't know what we're gonna do. Do you...?

Janine: I've got Compel. Yeah.

Art: Great. All right.

Austin: So do you...you let her kind of come to?

Art: Yeah, let's get some information. Or, at the very least, some light threats.

Janine: I would like to also observe her as she's coming to and get a little bit of an aura read.

Art: Mm.

Ali: Ooh.

Janine: A little freebie.

Austin: Oh, sure.

Janine: Like, I mean...

Austin: I forgot about that. It's been a minute, right?

Janine: I'm sure it'll be like, of limited use, but still, it's a free thing I don't have to roll for. It's just a thing, so.

Austin: Yeah. What's— how does the aura work, again? What are we— how did we do this before? It's been so long since we've done one of these aura things.

Janine: Um, I think the way that we had framed it is that it was like a thing that like a heritrix can kind of do based on like when you're trying to find a host.

Austin: Right, right.

Janine: You sort of get used to reading people to try and find like someone who's gonna be compatible.

Austin: Right. And it's just...

Janine: And it's sort of based in that.

Austin: The big thing is that—

Janine: The vibe.

Austin: It's just like base emotional state, right? It's not like deep stuff?

Janine: Yeah, it's...it's...it literally says you can read their aura and dis— when you observe someone— so this is like from a thing that gave me the Discern skill.

Austin: Right, right, right.

Janine: It's not attached to Discern, but it gives me Discern.

Austin: Yeah, I gotcha. Yeah.

Janine: It says, “When you observe someone for a few seconds, you can read their aura and discern their surface level emotions, whether they're angry, happy, frustrated, and so on.” So it's just like a basic...thing.

Austin: Yeah. Frustrated is right, I think, as she comes to.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: Got outplayed multiple times in a row. Supposed to be the best in the biz, you know. Feels like she's disappointed her team.

Janine: [sympathetic] Mm.

Austin: Feels like a fuck up. None of this shows on her face. Complete poker face.

Janine: Mm-hmm. I think Es straight up says to Duvall that she's frustrated, that...

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: That, you know.

Art: Mm-hmm.

Janine: Just to make it clear. Or she's, you know, frustrated, disappointed.

Art (as Duvall): Yeah, I imagined.

Austin: Is she gagged? Is she able to talk? Is she able to...? I'm presuming you've tied her up so she can't like reach for another secret weapon. You've already— you've—

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: She just has no other secret weapons. You successfully got all her secret weapons. But, you know.

Janine: Um, I don't think she has— so— mm. I think maybe she has like a thing over her mouth, but it's not like in her mouth.

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: That feels very...

Austin: No.

Janine: That feels more intrusive than Es would do.

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: When she doesn't really know. It's just more of a thing of like, if you wake up and scream, I'd like it to at least be muffled while I react.

Austin: She doesn't scream right away, at the very least. I think a thing you note is that she's like looking at the suns to see what time it is. Which, you know, she's running all sorts of scenarios in her head in this moment, right? She's like, all right, where are people? I'll note, again, she's human, which is, she's the only...I guess, again, if you count the Telluricist as another, uh...why am I blanking on this? Ali— Carpana. Other than that, there's the human sniper, the Carpana Telluricist, but the rest of them are all Caprak, and it's pretty rare to find a human who is like, who is a Magistrate. That is not a common, you know, thing. So, something...there's a deep history here, you know, and a particular history.

Janine: Hmm.

Austin: Did not come up through the traditional structure of this group. And is very clearly like trying to figure out a way out of this and what the best, smartest play here is, but for now just kind of, you know, looks straight ahead and doesn't say anything, doesn't make any noise.

Janine: [sighs] Oh boy. Um...

Art: I don't like the like taken approach, you know?

Janine: I don't know. Duvall, do you have any like— what's— what do we— what would we like here?

Art: I mean, I think we should just start asking the questions we want to know and see what we...what we get, right?

[0:50:00]

Janine: Um...okay. Maybe— I'm trying to think of, like, what does a Compel roll look like here? And I'm wondering if it's Es sort of crouching beside her and saying something to the effect of like, uh, you know:

Janine (as Es): I had ample opportunity to kill you. I would strongly prefer not to. I don't particularly have qualms about doing it, I would just prefer not to. I would also prefer to have a straightforward conversation where, you know, cards on the table. How does that sound to you?

Austin (as Ennib): What do you want to know?

Janine: [brief pause] Duvall, what do we want to know? Is there like a specific— do we want, like— the thing I'm wondering is, like, do we want...what do we want that we don't already have? We know why they're here.

Art: Mm-hmm.

Janine: We kinda—

Art: We know how many of them there are.

Janine: Yeah. We—

Art: We know where they generally are.

Janine: Yeah.

Art: We could want to know what's up with the trains, but that's...

Janine: Well, I feel like we're not the people to necessarily be handling that anyways. [laughs softly] Um... [sighs] I wonder if maybe the question is, like, what does it take to get them to leave if we don't know where the person they want is?

Art: That's not bad. It at least gives us an objective.

Austin: I think she says straight up. There's not even a roll here, right? She says:

Austin (as Ennib): We're here for Polyte, and if we can't get Polyte, we'll take you. And beyond that, I don't know. You'd have to break spirits.

Art (as Duvall): You did a really bad job taking...taking us.

Austin (as Ennib): Ah. It's not over yet, is it?

Art (as Duvall): It might be for you.

Janine (as Es): Okay, well, we—

Austin: She looks you in the eyes and says—

Janine (as Es): We don't need to salt the wounds.

Austin: And she says:

Austin (as Ennib): I'm still breathing. You won't be.

Janine: Mm.

Art (as Duvall): [scoffs] Hilarious.

Austin (as Ennib): Untie me, and we'll see who's laughing.

Janine (as Es): Okay, well that's the opposite of the conversation I was expecting to have, actually. I was prefer— I was hoping there would maybe be some like good incentive to untie you and we could go our separate ways, but you've pretty much just thrown that out the window.

Art (as Duvall): It's also a ridiculous request. Undo the fact that I already lost, and then maybe I won't lose this time. You already— it's over. For you, this part is over.

Austin (as Ennib): You're digging yourself deeper.

Art (as Duvall): Hm.

Janine (as Es): Okay, well, um...they make you pay for these badges? Or do they just give them to you?

Austin (as Ennib): They're a sign of accomplishment. An investment.

Janine (as Es): That's not really an answer. Oh, an investment. So you do pay for them?

Austin (as Ennib): They pay for them. They're an investment in us.

Janine (as Es): Okay. Oh, that's fun. Like a merit badge.

Austin: She looks at the suns again.

Janine: [sighs] Okay.

Art: Okay, something's happen— something's coming.

Janine: Yeah.

Art: This is a time component here. Um...

Janine: I imagine there might be someone on patrol or someone who would be...

Art: Like a check-in. Some kind of meeting, maybe? I don't know.

Janine: Or even a sign that's supposed to happen on a certain time schedule so that people know everything's going well.

Art: Yeah.

Janine: Okay. Well.

Janine (as Es): Listen.

Janine: Okay, maybe this is my Compel roll.

Janine (as Es): [sighs] It's very clear that you're waiting for something and that...something will happen that you think will throw this all in your favor. If something unexpected happens, I'm going to cut your throat. And what I would enjoy is if you prepared us with whatever knowledge we need to meet or avoid whatever it is you're waiting for. And then maybe you'll have a second chance at me in the future.

Austin: Give me a roll.

Janine (as Es): Or you will be dead on this roof.

Art (as Duvall): Honestly, cut your throat is the best option. All I have is gross bug things to do. [Austin and Janine laugh]

Austin: Give me a Compel Haven.

Janine: Am I— I'm out of Mastery on stuff, right?

Austin: You are out of Mastery on stuff, correct.

Janine: Okay. This is a classic one. Duvall, you want to help me at all?

Art: I don't have either of those.

Janine: [crosstalk] Do you have Haven or something? Okay.

Art: Nope.

Janine: Well. Um...all right.

Art: I'm really more of a...actually, you and I could probably have a good time on an adventure if we went to a place that was in our wheelhouse, you know?

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Janine: Yeah. That's true, we could. [laughs]

Art: It ain't here, but, you know.

Janine: Next season, maybe. Who knows?

Art: Yeah.

Janine: Uh...I'm just double checking stuff real quick. Okay. All right.

Austin: That is success at a cost.

Janine: [accepting sound]

Austin: Let's roll this Stress. Es, take three to Fortune, and likewise—

Janine: I will take two to Fortune.

Austin: There you go. And then, Duvall take four to Fortune..

Art: I did not help.

Austin: Oh, you did not help. You did not help.

Janine: Yeah.

Art: Yeah.

Austin: All right, so just Es, and then give me your Fallout test. [click] No Fallout. Ten. I think she says...

Austin (as Ennib): In six minutes, Lejune will be here, our priest, to check in on me before...before she goes down to the train station to do the afternoon ritual. [pause]

Janine (as Es): [sighs] Okay.

Austin (as Ennib): You would not like to face Lejune.

Art: Yeah, I think we could, uh...we could be out of here in six minutes. Um...how you want to do this?

Janine: [sighs] I mean, the thing I kind of want to do is like put her cough drops back in her pocket and like tell her to put in a good word for us and leave. But I don't know if that's...

Art: I think I've been kind of a dick for that. I...

Austin: Mm.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah, I think that door's closed, in a sense.

Janine: That's— okay.

Jack: Wait, don't we...correct me if this is wrong. Don't we want her as a hostage?

Janine: That's true, yeah.

Art: Carrying a person is so hard.

Janine: It is very hard.

Jack: No, but the plan that Marn is currently doing relies... [laughs softly]

Janine: Right, on having a hostage. Okay. Well...yeah, that's true.

Art: All right. I mean, it's gonna be hard to get away with a hostage in six minutes, but I mean, we could try.

Janine: Um...

Jack: I could try and take the priest hostage, but I'm working on the assumption that you're about to try and take her hostage.

Janine: Yeah. We could also like stash her somewhere. [Jack laughs softly]

Austin: Also, Alekest was not— did not know we were gonna take that priest hostage. I don't think that was...

Jack: No, I don't think Pickman thinks that we're gonna take the priest hostage or anything.

Austin: Okay, okay, okay, okay.

Jack: I'm just saying that, like, Pickman doesn't have the information that we do, which is that Duvall and Es—

Austin: Right.

Jack: —are debating whether to take this hostage.

Janine: Do we want to try and extract her back to the Weather Room or something?

Jack: Oh boy.

Ali: Probably be...

Art: That's not bad.

Janine: Or...

Ali: ...easier to just take her straight to the train station, right?

Janine: Okay. I didn't know what the timeline was like there. Like, how...I mean the priest—the— she said that whoever is gonna go to the train station afterwards, which...

Ali: Oh.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Janine: The timing is— the timing there is scary.

Art: But we have more people at the train station.

Janine: I guess that's true. It was just a thing of like, is everyone else gonna be there in like six hours? 'Cause then we're all dead on the floor.

Ali: Mm.

Janine: Right? Like. [laughs]

Art: We could just keep trying to get more hostages. [Ali snorts]

Jack: [laughing] Accumulate them in the train station.

Austin: Uh huh.

Art: 'Cause yeah, we got two against one here.

Austin: The— thinking cinematically here, the thing that, in my zoomed out perspective of what you've set up here, thinking about letting successes lie, right? and not trying to undo successes. You have gotten a hostage, and I think there's probably another roll in moving a hostage somewhere. You've set yourselves up to learn how to undo the train protection, right? Which, probably a Discern check or something, maybe. And you've gotten word sent, you're in the path of sending word that you want a late night meet in the train station. I don't want to undo the momentum we've got— we've started going down on that path.

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Outside of a failed roll. And I want to limit those rolls to things that make sense inside of this kind of like cinematic, you know, momentum that we've built. Which to me is like, all right, if you got her and you want to stash her somewhere, we can come up with a place to stash her and for you to lay low for ten minutes, right? What will— what will be clear is that she is missing, right? The priest—

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: The priest will know.

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: Lejune will know this, right? And then, and then, likewise...but does that mean the priest doesn't go and do the thing? Probably still has to go do the ritual, at which point Alekest and Pickman can still see what she does to, you know, what her— what that ritual looks like, so that they can try to undo it. So that's still on the table. Like, I think that that stuff is all still,

um...generally, I think we should just let that roll and not try to get too deep into hyper specifics of like where we put people. I think it's easy enough to be like, let's just go hide her somewhere.

[1:00:27]

Ali: Mm.

Austin: You know? You're close to the wilderness. The wilderness is vast and easy to hide in, you know?

Janine: Yeah. Yeah. I forgot about the ritual like needing to be seen.

Austin: Yes. Yes.

Janine: Which like... [sighs]

Art: And we can show we mean business by pushing her off the top of this tower.

Jack: I think it's a two story building.

Janine: What? [laughs]

Jack: It's like a...

Austin: Yeah.

Art: Yeah, that's not dead.

Austin: I mean, it might be. Remember how she got cut up real bad and consciousness pulled out of her?

Art: That's not—

Janine: Yeah, she's...

Art: That doesn't make you more prone to falling.

Austin: It might make you more prone to internal bleeding that will kill you.

Art: Mm...

Janine: Yeah.

Jack: We pushed the last Magistrate—

Art: Alright.

Jack: —off something to kill him, and he fell upwards into the sky and then was struck by lightning.

Austin: [laughs] That did happen, yeah.

Ali: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

Art: I bet that doesn't happen twice. You know what they say about lightning strikes. [Jack laughs]

Austin: [doubtful] Mm...

Janine: Can I fly her into one of these trees and kind of fasten her there?

Jack: Oh my god. [laughs softly]

Austin: That sounds like a roll. Yeah, that sounds like a roll to do a thing. That sounds like Delve. [laughs softly]

Janine: [laughs softly] Oh, well, hmm...

Austin: You have delve, right? Or do you not have Delve?

Janine: I don't.

Austin: No, you don't.

Janine: Nope.

Austin: I don't think it's Endure.

Art: I have—

Austin: I guess it's Sneak? You're sneaky flying? I, eeh.

Jack: Carrying a Magistrate.

Janine: Flying is a...

Ali: Is it not Endure in terms of like having to lift somebody?

Austin: I guess that could be Endure. Yeah.

Janine: That's true. There is an element of that.

Art: What's the hardest part [Ali laughs] of what is happening here?

Austin: That's a good way of framing it. That's a good question. I think it's—

Janine: Probably the carrying.

Austin: No, I think it's probably the not being seen as a big eye monster—

Janine: Or, no, the not being seen?

Austin: —during the daytime, flying with—

Janine: I'm norm— I'm the size of a person. I'm not that big.

Austin: If I saw— if—

Janine: I'm not like giant.

Art: That's huge for an eye monster. [Ali and Janine laugh]

Austin: That's huge.

Janine: Okay.

Austin: You're bigger than the biggest— I guess they see birds of prey out here pretty commonly.

Janine: Probably still just like five foot nine or whatever. [Austin laughs]

Art: But like, how—

Austin: But you're not—

Art: What's total eye mass, there? [Austin and Janine laugh]

Austin: Yes. And you're not like flapping your arms like a bird. You're carrying another human and...

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: And undulating through the sky.

Janine: Can I get some like bug help or something? Is that...

Ali: Ohh.

Austin: Like a bug, like a bug...

Art: No.

Austin: ...mist hiding you?

Janine: No.

Austin: No? Mm.

Janine: God, what good's being full of bugs if your bugs can't help me lift a lady?

Art: I mean, not since we decided that I can't...not since we decided that I can't do a Dracula-esque bug form.

Austin: [laughs] You can shoot bugs, but it doesn't seem like you can be bugs yet.

Art: Well, I mean, I think that hive— you are— mm, being bu— mm. It's really philosophical, isn't it? [Ali and Janine laugh]

Austin: Yeah. Yeah, uh huh. Well, it's just one of those things where it keeps saying your body is made of this waxen material and it gets eaten and remade, versus...

Janine: Right.

Austin: You know what I mean?

Ali: Can the bugs eat her up and...?

Art: Yeah. [Ali laughs]

Janine: So, you're not— you're not the queen bee. You're the hive. You're the...

Austin: Right. That's exactly it, yes.

Art: Right.

Janine: Yuck. Okay. Well, I'll just do it normal, then. [laughs softly]

Austin: I think Sneak or Endure both works, at this point.

Art: I guess, looking at the— looking at the character stuff, there sure are some Zenith abilities in this—

Austin: Yeah, uh huh.

Art: —direction, but uh, there's no coming back from that.

Austin: That is why I'm being— that is why I'm being cagey about letting you have that, is because like, that is Zenith level shit, right? Or we come up with a major move of our own to address that, you know what I mean? Like, it has to be something special. You should get a move that does that. I don't think it's just kind of like the aggregate of a bunch of other smaller moves, you know? Anyway, this is an Endure or a Sneak. It's up to you how you want to frame it.

Janine: Yeah. Um...

Art: I can't help you with either. Unless this— unless it changes the domain, based on your whole deal.

Austin: No, not— you don't have any of the domains I can imagine this being, Duvall, unfortunately, which is—

Art: I think this is a pretty cursed action. [Austin laughs softly] I think, uh...

Janine: Uh, I'm just double checking something. Yeah, I think this is...yeah.

Austin: Okay.

Janine: This is Sneak, I think.

Austin: Yeah, sounds good. Let's do it.

Janine: [apprehensive] All right.

Austin: That's a success. Wow, four and an eight.

Janine: [relieved] Ahh.

Austin: So yeah, you lift her away, turning into an eye, and...and re-tie her up to a tree, to the tree kind of nearest the train station, I'm guessing? That was like kind of this one right here? Or is it—

Janine: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah, I think that makes sense, 'cause that's where you're gonna want to get her for later. All right.

Janine: And she's got the gag in now properly, 'cause...

Austin: Yeah, probably. Yeah, that makes sense.

Art: Duvall just walks out the front door and sort of tries not to be seen.

Austin: Uh huh. Disappearing back into the shadows, and...

Art: Yeah, with a six minute head start, you know.

Austin: Yeah.

Art: I guess it's probably more like four, three minutes. But still, I mean, you can't see that far ahead.

Austin: Yeah. Priest, you know, does come and check for her. Maybe from that tree, Es, you're able to see that she's a little...she's a little, uh, freaked out to not find Ennib here. And so, you know, Lejune I think begins to, you know, tell some deputies like, hey, we're missing— we're missing our sniper. Everyone be on high alert, et cetera. Then walks down the whole path of the road, probably checks in and reports this in to Rebek, the leader of this crew, and then continues to come up and goes into the train station, where...where Pickman and Alekest are. And then goes over to reapply the red ink of Fulmina. I should describe this woman, actually, this priestess or this priest. She is wearing— her name is Lejune Borr. She is a Caprak. I think she has kind of white, off-white horns that spiral. And is wearing these kind of like, this— I'm gonna send you a vestment. It's this kind of white, blue, and gold vestments. The ones I'm sending you I think are from the Orthodox Church.

Jack: Oh, wow.

Austin: And imagine this, but like, it's been in the dust for the last two weeks.

Art: Oh, these are great.

Austin: You know? She has not had the opportunity to properly wash them, and so they're starting to— they're starting to get a little worn down. And maybe she has a number of different vestments she can wear, but today it's these. And is alone in the train station. Maybe there's a deputy who accompanies her but stays on the outside door, you know? Walks through the

empty train station, goes to the little posts, and, you know, says a little incantation. Produces a prayer card from an inside sleeve pocket, which she slots on top of one of these kind of posts—

Jack: Huh.

Austin: —as if to like leave it up as reference almost, or maybe is just as like, as an actual component of what's happening. And produces a small bottle from the other pocket of water, which as she spills it on top of the ink, it kind of sparks with lightning and burns away the current marks. And then lifts the cord that was the, from the omen, up, you know, in her hands, letting it dangle, and begins to read from the prayer card. Or, I mean, she's reading the words on the prayer card, but she isn't— she's reciting the words on the prayer card, but her eyes are closed, are focused on doing the prayer and the ritual. And begins to let these...the edges of this rope kind of sweep like pendulum-like across the ground, etching in the shape of this lightning bolt that will be the kind of sigil that prevents the trains from approaching. What do you do?

Jack: [deep breath] Okay, so...we could try and, um...I use this word not in the sense of the move. We could try and discern what she's doing, and, and, and keep it in our minds such that when she leaves, we just do it.

Austin: Yeah. I do think that that's Discern.

Jack: Oh, yeah, no, I meant...

Austin: I do think that it's Discern the move, too, but...

Jack: Yeah, definitely. [sighs] I'm reluctant to try and like attack her. You know, I'm reluctant to be like, let's take another hostage.

Austin: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Jack: If only 'cause that just seems really overcomplicated. It would be great if we could have that prayer card. Um...

Austin: Mm.

Jack: But I don't know how to...we're both big people, Alakest and me.

Austin: Oh yeah. Yeah.

Jack: And I don't know how to do the sort of like Artful Dodger style, you know? [laughs softly]

Austin: Yeah, yeah.

Jack: Removal of the prayer card. Um, I still have my spyglass. Could I try and copy it?

Austin: The spell, or the prayer? Yeah. You could— I mean, just, this is a Discern roll, for sure. And I think that spyglass would definitely give you, um...

Jack: Oh, this is...this is a spyglass that we were just describing Pickman looking through earlier.

Austin: Ah, I see.

Jack: I don't—

Austin: I see. I see.

Jack: It's not an equipment spyglass.

Austin: Yes, yes. It's not an equipment. Then yeah, then eh, this is a straight Discern Haven.

Jack: [deep breath] Okay.

Austin: You will not— to be clear, you don't need the prayer card to dispel this. It's for— it's for doing the ritual to put it in place, right?

Jack: Yeah. I feel like this would be a—

Austin: But it's still a useful and interesting thing, for sure.

Jack: A great thing for Shape Knight to have would be—

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: —the ability to try or get some ghost of what they're able to do here.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

[1:10:00]

Jack: Um...is this Standard?

Austin: This is Standard.

Jack: Oh, and I'm rolling with Mastery, because of the omen.

Austin: Uh, you know what? Sorry, this is Risky, because...because...

Jack: Oh, because...

Austin: One, you're up against...it's a combo of things. I think a regular person who the sniper was missing, maybe doesn't go into Risky. Maybe if this was just a Magistrate that you were getting the drop on, maybe it wouldn't be Risky. But the combination of those two things, again, to treat this threat honestly, this is Risky.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: You know.

Jack: Mm-hmm.

Austin: I think that she is very aware that y'all are here or someone is here and is potentially targeting you, you know? Or targeting her. And so her awareness is like jacked up to eleven.

Jack: Yeah. Um...but I have Mastery because of the omen?

Austin: Because of the omen, yeah, correct.

Jack: Discern, Haven, Mastery?

Austin: You got it.

Jack: Risky.

Austin: Risky.

Jack: [brief pause] Nine! Success.

Austin: [relieved exhale] Nice.

Jack: Take no Stress.

Austin: Four, six, nine, nine. You lose one nine, but you keep the other one. Look at that.

Jack: Lovely.

Austin: Yeah, so from—

Art: If you're gonna roll like this, we should have just done a full frontal assault. [Austin laughs]

Ali: Mm.

Jack: Try to blow them up.

Austin: I'm guessing from some corner or a second floor or the loft or something, you're looking over, and yeah, you're able to— you're able to memorize the both the, um, the shape of the lightning bolt and what the order of the sketch is. And I think you're able to get some of the words down. I think maybe take like a D4 Occult—or D4 Religion, rather—you know, prayer of Fulminan, you know, prayer for safety to Fulmina or something like that. And I'll try to figure out what that is word for word at some point. But yeah, and is reciting this. Probably reciting it in Caprak, right? Or whatever, whatever dialect the church is in. And you can see that the...a thing that's interesting here is the actual ink, as it's going on, is almost dusty. It's not a wet ink. But when the final stroke of it hits, it turns into that wet, that wet red that was there before and that like, that suddenly even the ink on the edges of the ends of the rope turns wet at that point. But it's almost like a dry, almost chalky, red dust that has been applied to this, that sketches it out. And then once it's done, I think maybe with the final, you know, the final word at the end of the prayer, marks it. And there is a brief small flash of light, and suddenly it is liquid and wet. And then when she lets go and lets the ropes hang again, they begin to re-sketch over the thing, the way that they were going before, kind of hovering over it, you know, tracing the pattern like a pendulum.

Jack: Wow. That's great. And then, you know, all being well, I'm prepared to let her just leave.

Austin: Yeah. She does. And I think it's fair to say, at this point, y'all can be together again, back at the train station. You know, hiding safely with all your stuff. What is your setup? What are y'all— where— paint me a picture of you in this train station.

Ali: It's tense, probably. Is it like— it's like an indoor train station, right? There's like some benches and...

Austin: There's an indoor and an outdoor.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah, yeah. So yeah, I almost imagine— or, sorry, rather, not I almost imagine, but I'm trying to imagine. Are you out and like shoulder to shoulder? Are you hiding in pla— like, what's the...what's the camera see in terms of how you're waiting for these people to come for you?

Janine: I feel like most of us should be hiding in places that give us some kind of...

Austin: Mm, mm-hmm.

Janine: Like, this is easy for Es, who just got a fancy new sniper rifle— [Ali laughs]

Austin: Uh huh.

Janine: —and is weird and can fly and close distance really fast.

Austin: Yes.

Janine: Where like, it makes absolute sense if she's like, fucking, I don't know, in the rafters? Like, literally...

Austin: Yeah, yeah. [Janine chuckles] Mm-hmm.

Jack: Yeah, I think, you know, up in maybe like one of the attic rooms where I was watching the priestess work.

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: Mm-hmm.

Jack: With that rifle.

Austin: Mm.

Ali: Should we just like be on the platform?

Jack: Do we want to signal to the *Zephyr* early? I don't know how fast the trains come.

Austin (as Alekest): Are we really signaling to the train? That's a thing we're really doing. Not just a thing to keep in the back pocket, but something you're actively...okay. It's your town.

Jack: [chuckles] Um...yeah, I mean, I think, you know.

Ali: I mean, is it either you guys wait in the rafters and they come in and we try to kill them? Or is it like, we're there and being like, "Hey, we kidnapped one of your people. We want you to leave."

Art: Yeah, we could try to parlay.

Austin: Yeah.

Jack: Yeah, and that's better than, um...yeah, I think Pickman is more supportive of that, because there is less risk of the town getting destroyed by the train.

Ali: Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm. Mm-hmm! [laughs softly]

Austin: All right.

Janine: That could always be the threat of, like... 'cause, you know, my thought is like, if you tell them to get the F out and take their person, why wouldn't they just come back? And I wonder if the train thing is like the "we'll burn this whole place down with you in it," kind of...

Austin: Uh huh.

Jack: Yeah.

Ali: Oh, sure, yeah.

Janine: Get the hell out and forget, you know, throw out your map, kind of... [Ali laughs]

Austin: Mm-hmm. Uh, before I forget, you are able to undo that spell, just because of...

Jack: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: I'll let that— I wanted to let that Discern roll. Like, you learned how to do it. It's...if you know what to do, it's not hard to undo it, you know? So yeah, I just wanted to say that outright. Is...is Ennib the sniper, your hostage, with you at this point? Or is she also— is she still hidden up in the tree tied up? Is this a "we have your sniper somewhere," or is this a "look at who we have"?

Janine: [thoughtfully] Mm...

Ali: Does it give— mm.

Art: Great question.

Ali: I feel like it gives us more leverage if we're like, "Look who we have," and then... "also, we have a sniper pointed at you currently, so don't attack us."

Austin: Mm.

Ali: [laughs] But open to other ideas. I think Art was about to say something.

Janine: I don't know if I trust them to like make that trade.

Ali: Yeah.

Janine: That could just be me though, and like, also...also, you know, that's me rationalizing, when it's like the roll will determine it either way, right?

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Janine: Like... [laughs softly] It's, you know, it's easy to get wrapped up in the aspect of, like, tactical whatever, but like that's not really how it works. So like, what's more interesting visually, right? What's cooler?

Art: It's cooler to be more upfront about it, right?

Janine: Sure.

Austin: Then yeah, then sure, she can be there, and then...and then, you know, we can just get to it, right? Who is not hiding? I guess is a question. Who is not hiding and ready to jump on people versus who is...who is, you know?

Art: Mm...is Duvall a good jump out person? [Jack laughs] Well, I did just get the Hunt skill. [Ali laughs]

Austin: That's true. You did.

Art: All right. I'm gonna try. I'm gonna try to be a jump out person.

Austin: Okay.

Art: I think it's important to try new things.

Austin: So, who is not hiding? Marn, it sounds like?

Ali: Yeah, I'm willing to be welcome committee.

Austin: All right. Bucho will stay with you. And...I think Alakest is more of a stand there with broad shoulders person than a jump out person. [Ali laughs]

Jack: It's also...it's good, because that'll be a wrinkle for them. They don't know who he is.

Austin: Yes. They don't know who Bucho is.

Jack: Yeah. Wait.

Austin: So it's like, it's Marn and two Shape Knights.

Jack: Yeah, great. [laughs]

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Right? What were you gonna say "wait," Jack?

Jack: No, no, no. No, I was— I was being like, “Wait, can we go over who is the welcoming committee?” but you just said it. It’s...

Austin: It’s those three, yeah.

Jack: Yeah.

Austin: Marn and the two Shape Knights. [laughs softly] Two big ones. All right. So, the appointed hour comes. The moon is high. The suns have set. The front door of the train station swings open, and in comes Rebek Semm, who has antlers that have— or not antlers, horns that have broken and grown back multiple times and in different directions each time, so they’re kind of like jagged and angular in a way that many antlers—I keep saying antlers—many horns are not, of the Caprak. And to her right is the priestess Lejune, and to her left is Gren, the big fuck off hatchet man in the armor. And behind them is the small Carpana, Dr. Kerr Kern. Not yet coming inside, waiting outside, or like, you know, lingering as the door begins to swing back and forth. And I think Rebek calls out from across the long hallway to you, Marn, and says:

[1:20:20]

Austin (as Rebek): [sighs] We got your invitation. Ennib, are you okay?

Austin: And Ennib just kind of nods and makes eye contact with the rest of her crew. Marn, what are you doing in this situation?

Ali: [deep breath] Yeah, I think Marn says, um...

Ali (as Marn): We want to put an end to this.

Austin (as Rebek): Well, rightly, we do too.

Austin: Says Rebek.

Austin (as Rebek): [slow and calm voice] Let me see if I have the understanding of the situation correct. A number of months ago, my kin came here in pursuit of a killer—not a regular kind; trained, professional, and political—who did us a mighty harm. The two of them had a bit of a melee and found their way into a poem or a hymn or a piece of religious verse, inside of which there was a second abbey to some ancient god. You—maybe not exactly you three, but some configuration thereof; I imagine the others are about—followed on the behest of those who run this town, to bring back one of their own.

Austin: Does a little like, you know, head tilt.

Austin (as Rebek): Fair enough. As I understand it, you retrieved both and began to bring them away. But in pursuit of justice, my brother Ezek fought to get free, at which point you did him disservice and took his life. You were warned that to do such would be to bring justice down on you, the light of Fulmina, the hammer of the Magistratum. Here we are. You have been absent, and in your absence there has been death. I have no quarrel with you, even as you took my brother's life. I have only the desire for justice, and the justice that is my priority is to seize one Janek Polyte, half of which I believe is a fake name. I will happily leave this town, if you give us our quarry.

Ali (as Marn): I can't do that. I don't...I don't know where that person is.

Austin (as Rebek): If you had put the effort into finding them that you did into harming my comrade, I suspect we would be on different terms, an easy trade. Instead, you've riled us all up.

Ali (as Marn): Well, this became a time sensitive issue when you started killing the members of this community.

Austin (as Rebek): [sighs] I killed people who got in the way of justice. This is the job that I have been given by god and country. It is a responsibility. I pray for everyone I kill, even the unjust.

Ali: Yeah, um...

Austin: You can see that there is...in this moment, I think, you know, I'm gonna say that Kerr has come in and is, you know, I don't want to say hiding behind the shirttails, but definitely in the rear of the pack. Lejune, you can see that she's fiddling with something inside of her sleeves. A little more anxious— I mean, much more anxious than Rebek, who seems to be just completely chill, despite kind of s— you know, I don't think...to give you that success from before, I definitely don't think that Kerr said, "You're walking into a trap." But Rebek is Rebek.

Ali: Oh, no, no, no. Yeah.

Austin: Rebek knows what the situation is, right? And then, and then, I think the thing that's maybe most surprising is that the hatchet, Gren, Gren Voznik, is just completely still, fully still. And there is a moment where I think you see the— I'll just say it outright. You see the third omen from inside of this platemail armor. There is the briefest moment of something glinting, and you imagine it is the gold tooth that Es saw. So something is afoot in this moment. And it's like the glint moves, even though Gren is completely still, which is strange. You know, the moon is not moving so quickly as to move the glint off of metal.

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Austin: You know?

Ali: Hmm.

Janine: Can I get a quick aura read on that boss?

Austin: Oh.

Ali: Smart.

Austin: You sure can. You want all of them?

Janine: Well, sure. Yes.

Austin: It's free, right?

Janine: I mean, if any of them are different than the ones that you've just said.

Austin: Oh, I see what you're saying. Yeah.

Janine: You said she sounded anxious, and... [Ali laughs]

Austin: The...so, Lejune the, yeah, the priest, is, she's absolutely— yeah, she's anxious in this way. But the anxiety that I think that she has is less...it's less, “oh no, someone might jump me,” and more, “okay, I'm about to ask...I'm about to ask my god for a big favor.” Like, I'm about to cash in some chips, so to speak, in a way that's like, maybe it's about like using a toolset that she does not often use, which I think you can...you've recognized similar auras in people who like are itching to pull a gun out from under a table, right? A bartender who sees that things are about to get bad in the bar and has to like rest their hand on the shotgun, you know? That's the aura. From Kerr, you get...you get the sense that, uh...this conflicted aura, this sort of like blending of desires, with the highest one being to get out of here safely. From Rebek, the leader, it is exactly what I said. It is just like stone cold, completely in control, deeply confident, and, and at ease in a way that like, even when she was talking about the death of her brother in those matter of fact terms, it was not about an absence of love for her brother necessarily, but it was this respected professionalism that comes from like, you know, our pursuits ran into each other in an awkward way, and my brother died doing what he was supposed to do. And whatever vengeance she wants for that is secondary to her desire for what she sees as justice for the death of a prominent religious figure up in the Second Canton.

And then from the...from Gren, from Gren Voznik, who's completely still, you sense nothing at all. There is no aura there. Something is wrong. Something is extremely wrong. You note, at this moment, the...that gold tooth that was glinting, it falls from his mouth as if it couldn't stay stuck in the wax, and it just goes like *tink, tink, tink* and falls out onto the floor in front of you. And he and his whole body begin to rumble and bubble and boil and pour out of the small holes in the plate armor. You faced down one of those like two person goat melded super wax

creatures before. In this moment, pouring into the train station, as if like it was as tightly packed as it could be. Like, you know, you hold in your breath when you put on pants that are a little too tight for you, and then has been holding it for god knows how long. God knows how long the real Gren Voznik was killed and replaced by this beast. Is a creature two to three times as big as the one you saw down in Yellowfield. The priest and the other Magistrate scream and like pull away. I think Ennib tries to stand up in front of you, Marn, and I think that the priest says, uh, you know.

Austin (as Lejune): What t—

Austin: Ah, she can't say devilry, 'cause devilry means something different in this world. [Ali laughs] Uh, I think what she says is like, uh...

Austin (as Lejune): You really are cursed. The things I heard about you. You really are cursed!

Austin: And this is the moment that the people in the town learn [Jack laughs] that half of them have been replaced with wax.

Ali: Oh, just the thing of like all of the bodies in the town sort of shaking weirdly—

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: —in response to this, yeah.

Austin: Yep, uh huh. Yeah, exactly.

Ali: Oof.

Austin: Yeah. Some of them, some of them, their eyes—

Janine: Are they all donating a glob?

Austin: I think most of them are staying as individual beings, but there's a moment here where we get a shot of the people walking down the street and then, you know, with their heads kind of covered by shadow. And then their faces light up from wicks that are in their eyes, where their eyes are light, as if someone has just like lit a match and set their eyes on fire. Because it's just, it's, there's like a hollow, you know, inset where a wax candle is.

Jack: Oh, god.

[Music plays: "**Sangfielle**"]