

## Sangfielle 50: Dead in the Dust Pt. 3

Transcribed by: Iris (@sacredwhim)

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

[RECAP BEGINS]

AUSTIN: The sand and dust kind of sweeps up into your vision and around you, and for a second you feel as if you're being pushed back, and you actually see the sand take a sort of humanoid form, but with like, long, lanky arms, and like, reverse-jointed legs; a sort of monstrous, almost alien form, as it shoves you back and steps closer.

[MUSIC INTRO BEGINS - ["Sangfielle" by Jack de Quidt](#)]

[STITCH]

AUSTIN: When the storm catches something between destinations, it drafts whoever that is, or whatever that is, into performance at the next destination and then they're free to go. When a town doesn't let the show go on, and let it complete its night at the town, it will begin to swallow the whole town to make them permanent additions.

[STITCH]

AUSTIN: Here, at the big top tent, at the Carnival of Moted Light, there are eight acts after Chantilly Scathe gives the big introduction.

[STITCH]

AUSTIN: Chine, it sounds like you're trying to fuck this up somehow.

DRE: Mhm.

[STITCH]

JACK: Pickman coming, storming over.

JACK (as PICKMAN): [STERNLY] What are you doing?

DRE (as CHINE): Uh, putting dust into the clown bags?

JACK (as PICKMAN): Why?

DRE (as CHINE): 'Cause that's what the Course would like?

[STITCH]

AUSTIN: Alright, what is your 'stop the clowns' behavior?

JANINE: I kind of want to just take their bags? Like, how aggressive are they gonna be about it? They're clowns.

AUSTIN: They're a little—they're a little—they're a little—

JACK: Oh, Janine. Gotta be careful.

AUSTIN: Yeah. How aggressive are the clowns gonna be? God damn. They're clowns. They're dust-clowns.

[STITCH]

AUSTIN: It's dark. It's spooky. It's a converted haunted house that's been turned into a Tunnel of Love. And that's where you find Chine, Lyke and Duvall.

ART (as DUVALL): Alright, I sort of thought that this would be more revelatory for you...

DRE (as CHINE): I don't know—I mean, you've asked me if I remember things, and then you've basically said 'but do you really, though?'

ART (as DUVALL): Yeah. But do you really, though?

DRE (as CHINE): Yeah.

ART (as DUVALL): Okay. No, it's... that's great. You have to stop doing this. Look around. Do you want to be in this every day for the rest of your life? Follow-up question: do you think most people would want to be in this every day for the rest of their life?

DRE (as CHINE): I don't know. That's a good question.

ART (as DUVALL): No, I think it's almost rhetorical.

KEITH (as LYKE): Yeah, I mean, you're about to blow up the town because you don't care enough about it.

ART (as DUVALL): I'm not blowing anything up. I don't even know that this is gonna keep being a circus.

ART (as DUVALL): Well that's—you can't be doing this because you think it's not gonna be a circus anymore.

DRE (as CHINE): I don't know.

ART (as DUVALL): Yeah, but it's a bonkers assumption.

KEITH: Okay. Duvall, did you—I feel like Chine is a villain now.

[RECAP ENDS]

[MUSIC INTRO ENDS]

KEITH: I don't think that there's any—I mean, like, 'oh, it's very funny that you'd accuse Chine of being a villain a day after drinking a glass of orange juice.' Is that funny? I don't think that's funny.

AUSTIN: Well, if you drank a glass of orange juice that created an evil god, I would think—

DRE: And that people told you not to drink a bunch of times. [LAUGHS]

AUSTIN: Yes. What I'm saying—the comedy in it for me is about knowing there would be consequences that other people might be affected by in doing the thing anyway. That is the comedy in terms of who gets to point the fingers.

KEITH: No, I think—I think that we have a guy that was trying to do the right thing, and the world turned it into a bad thing, because the world is a bad place, and then on the other hand we have, like, you know. A—the part in a comic book villain's storyline where the sad thing that happened to them stopped making sense when they started, like, making dust bombs to turn everyone into sand-carnies.

[AUSTIN CHUCKLES]

KEITH: The only thing I ever did with Aterika'Kaal is try to help a thing that was, you know, kept in a box by Dayward YVE.

AUSTIN: That's not true.

KEITH: That is true.

AUSTIN: We know that that's not true.

DRE: Didn't it—didn't Aterika'Kaal start killing random people?

AUSTIN: And also, Dayward YVE didn't even fuckin' know about Aterika'Kaal.

KEITH: Okay, well, Dayward YVE's, like, great-great-great grandparents.

AUSTIN: Yeah. And didn't keep it in a box so much as sign a two-way blood treaty with it that it was very happy to sign. This was the whole thing.

KEITH: But he knew about the contract.

AUSTIN: He knew that there was a contract, he wasn't exactly sure what it meant or that Aterika'Kaal was upstairs. Otherwise he would have been like, 'can you get rid of this thing that's upstairs?' Anyway, that's beyond the point. My point is really just—Chine's worldview is such that the conse—Chine's worldview is such that the Course, which is an ever-changing, constantly, you know, mind-bending thing that blends and remixes all of reality constantly, is fundamentally good, and that this is a way of letting the Course do the thing it does.

KEITH: [OVERLAPPING] Sure. But as a person whose job is to violently attack people who seem to be a major threat to general stability—

AUSTIN: Mm.

KEITH: Chine is a villain.

AUSTIN: That is not Chine's—

JANINE: [LAUGHING] Oh my god.

AUSTIN: Chine's—what are the key things—

KEITH: [OVERLAPPING] No, no, no, it's not about Chine's perspective. This is about Lyke's perspective.

AUSTIN: Oh, you said—okay, I see.

KEITH: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: That's Lyke's—well, I mean, you got fired, that's not your job anymore.

[KEITH STAMMERS]

AUSTIN: I think you're doing this from a place of good and wanting to protect people—

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: Not 'cause it's your job, right?

KEITH: No, I said it *has* been my job. It has been my job—

AUSTIN: Oh, sure. Sure. Yes.

KEITH: There's a difference between what Chine is doing and what Lyke had been doing up until this point. So... that's all I'm saying.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

KEITH: That's the—that's what I mean by...

AUSTIN: I mean, at this point the question is really 'is someone just going to stop him from continuing to do this?'

KEITH: Right, that's what I'm—that's what I'm trying to initiate.

AUSTIN: [OVERLAPPING] Or are they going to just keep going?

KEITH: I'm like, there's no more conversation to have. Chine has decided to become the kind of person that we kill as a group. Are we still a group enough to kill Chine?

ART: Well, there's only two of us here, and I don't particularly like our odds.

AUSTIN: Let's go to Bucho and Marn, and let this tension hang for a moment. I think you find Bucho kind of limping back up the main road north, away from the terrible sandstorm that's eaten the Blackwick group's headquarters.

AUSTIN (as BUCHO): [WEARY SIGH] Well, I'm glad you're safe. I heard gunshots, and then there was a bunch of people looking at the sky at a big bright trapeze artist, and then... now this.

AUSTIN: Gestures at the sand.

ALI (as MARN): Yes, somehow it's still a really long day.

AUSTIN (as BUCHO): I would like one night of sleep. One. All the way through.

ALI (as MARN): Yeah. Yeah.

AUSTIN (as BUCHO): I have not taken my armor off.

ALI: Yeah, I—I like—I guess the thing that I wanted onscreen that I wasn't sure like, when or how, was like... [LAUGHS] I think the show is missing some of the crushing defeat beat of being like, 'well, the next thing we're gonna do is take down that bad guy!' And then, like, went into a room and nothing—[LAUGHS] like, that opportunity was cut off completely. And like, the last conversation Marn and Bucho had were like, 'we're gonna get 'em!' [LAUGHING] So.

AUSTIN: Yeah. And—yeah. And Bucho, I think, maybe adds that to the pile, then. Right? And is like:

AUSTIN (as BUCHO): [ANGRILY] And on top of all that, the person who tortured us is empowered and gone.

ALI (as MARN): Yeah.

AUSTIN (as BUCHO): I'm sick of this town.

DRE: See, Bucho gets it.

[ALI AND AUSTIN LAUGH]

ALI (as MARN): Tough break.

ALI: Yeah, I think Marn is like—the thought of like, walking through the Boundless Conclave and like, being in that place that they were locked in again, and like, dealing with stressed people, and seeing the same faces of being like 'well, just follow us and we'll make sure you're okay!' And like, not seeing everybody again, has her in near tears, but is like, 'well, just come on! Just keep going,' and, you know. 'Just right up the hill.'

AUSTIN (as BUCHO): Hmm. Where is everyone else? We should be doing something to stop this.

ALI (as MARN): Oh.

[ALI CHUCKLES]

AUSTIN: Said as if, like, that's just like the thing you're supposed to do, not with any belief that that's a thing that he could do or be part of.

ALI (as MARN): I think we're doing the best that we can, doing this. I don't like admitting it, and I feel like somewhere along the line I've lied to you, but... [SIGHS]

[10:00]

AUSTIN (as BUCHO): About what?

ALI (as MARN): About all this, about—about... what we were capable of.

AUSTIN (as BUCHO): You think that you sold me a bill of goods that you were... heroes beyond comprehension. Legends. The sort they write about.

ALI (as MARN): No, I just thought it would be chill. [LAUGHING SOFTLY] I thought we would just—it would be fine.

AUSTIN (as BUCHO): Marn, you found me as a sort of living scarecrow. I never thought it would be chill.

ALI (as MARN): Yeah, well. It could have been better than that, at least.

AUSTIN (as BUCHO): And it has been. But I would like to leave. Sooner than later. So let's help these people, and then go somewhere else.

ALI (as MARN): Yeah, okay.

AUSTIN (as BUCHO): Alright.

AUSTIN: And then like, a little sigh, and there's some sort of clink as he readjusts his armor so it's like, on the right way and not like, a slouchy way. You know? It's like tightening your belt back up. And y'all head to the Boundless Conclave. Presumably—we don't need to go beat by beat here—presumably you bring people up to speed and begin to navigate people down into the basement, the second basement, through the broken wall, up the mountain, the interior, uh... tunnel—and I mean, here's the thing: all that lava that was there is just gone now.

Inside the sort of where there had been the river of lava, there is the collection of half-broken, half-formed things that were in there before the Heart of the Mother-beast, or the—whatever the—yeah, the Heart of the Mother-beast, was stolen away. So you're just looking at a pile of like, broken radios and strange half-formed dinner tables and—just every possible thing you could imagine just piled in this kind of riverbed. It's great.

Alright. I'm guessing that the Es and Pickman and presumably Alekest group have dealt with the clowns now and made their way back out into the town. You can see some people heading down towards Boundless Conclave. What are y'all doing at this point?

JACK: Good grief. Um...

AUSTIN: Mhm. It's a shame we don't live in a world where you could like get texted by Duvall and Lyke, but you don't live in that world.

KEITH: Oh, I thought Pickman was with us.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Uh-huh. I—

JACK: No, no, no, I was helping with the clowns. I'm too angry to talk to Chine.

AUSTIN: Yeah, that's fair.

JACK: Um... hmm.

AUSTIN: Oh, you know what? Sorry. I'm wrong. I apologize for this swerve. We should go to Hazard tracking down their head.

SYLVI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: You go into the town council, the town council is filled with these deputies and Maleister, and Maleister is like, ordering them to keep calm, and to start, you know, rounding people up and getting them into the big buildings, because that's what worked against the dust storm to begin with, and you could give me a Sneak roll here to try to sneak into Maleister's office.

SYLVI: Yeah, sure.

AUSTIN: And retrieve your head.

SYLVI: It's still Haven Domain?

AUSTIN: This is Haven, yeah.

SYLVI: And Standard or Risky, or...?

AUSTIN: This is Risky. Apologies, but.

SYLVI: Why do I ask? Why do I ever ask? I could just roll Standard.

AUSTIN: I mean, Maleister is trouble. Just—yeah, I know, I know.

SYLVI: I should just do it. [CHUCKLES]

AUSTIN: You're giving yourself homework.

SYLVI: Yeah, I know. Okay. 7. So that's a partial, right?

AUSTIN: Success at a cost, yeah. That's success. Success is success. Take 6 Fortune Stress.

SYLVI: [SARCASTIC] Sick.

AUSTIN: S.

SYLVI: Shut up.

AUSTIN: Heh heh heh. I'm great.

SYLVI: Oh, I'm about to get a Fallout.

AUSTIN: Oh, what are you at?

SYLVI: I'm at 10.

AUSTIN: Yeah, Minor. Okay. Minor Fallout. That's not too bad though. Minor Fallout's not too bad. Yeah, 10 is not great.

SYLVI: That clears my Fortune Stress, right?

AUSTIN: That clears your Fortune Stress. Um... let's see. "Foreboding." You're gonna get "Foreboding". I think that makes perfect sense here, given everything. Foreboding says "Something bad is about to happen. GM, hint at an ominous future event: smoke in the distance, the tremors before a pulse, the frantic music of the carnival."

JACK: Oh! Hang on a second.

AUSTIN: [LAUGHING] "This Fallout can be updated to Crisis." There is a wild-ass carnival in this game that is different, it's a virus. It's like a disease you can get that makes you become part of the carnival by like, being—like a bacteria.

JACK: Oh wow.

AUSTIN: So, yeah, I don't—eugh, no thanks. I'll add foreboding to your sheet. You sneak upstairs, you find the office—I bet—we're just gonna do it. You hear the frantic music of the carnival echoing through. And actually the thing is—that's foreboding for you, is it's hiding the footsteps of Maleister Price coming up the stairs, trying to figure out, you know—just going up to—maybe just going up to his office. You know? But you do get inside. You succeeded here. You find—here's what you find. You find a bag, a canvas bag, and a bunch of—and that's like on top of a desk—next to a bunch of paperwork. And that paperwork has the symbol of the Wrights of the Seventh Sun on it.

SYLVI: Can I take this paperwork?

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally.

SYLVI: Cool.

AUSTIN: And you have this canvas bag.



SYLVI: Yeah, I sure do. That's exciting.

AUSTIN: It's exciting.

SYLVI: I'm gonna leave before I look in it.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

SYLVI: I don't really want to dig through my stuff—

AUSTIN: Does it feel familiar when you pick it up? What's lifting a bag of your own head feel like?

SYLVI: Yeah, there is—there's like an electricity in the air from it. It's weird. It's like, not—not like an emotional resonance thing. It's like there's some other, like, beyond this physical plane resonance going on between the body and the head.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Give me a Sneak again to get away.

SYLVI: Okay. Same as last time?

AUSTIN: This is—oh, yeah. Because he is coming this way. You're going to have to truly walk in the [APPREHENSIVE] shadows...

SYLVI: I rolled a 3.

AUSTIN: You rolled a 3. And I think you just—

AUSTIN (as MALEISTER PRICE): Ahem. Now wait just a minute there. You're one of them Blackwick Group, right?

SYLVI (as HAZARD): No, not affiliated, just familiar with them.

AUSTIN (as MALEISTER PRICE): Well, what were you doing in my office, and what is that bag you're carrying?

SYLVI (as HAZARD): Uh, this is mine.

AUSTIN (as MALEISTER PRICE): Mm. It was in my office. Which means it's mine.

SYLVI (as HAZARD): Are you sure about that?

AUSTIN (as MALEISTER PRICE): Everything in my office is mine.

SYLVI (as HAZARD): Why do you have a severed head in your office?

AUSTIN (as MALEISTER PRICE): The reason I have things is the reason I have things. Now drop it, along with those papers you snatched, and maybe I'll let you leave.

SYLVI (as HAZARD): I don't think I can do that.

AUSTIN: Give me an Endure - Occult roll.

SYLVI: [MUTTERING] I don't have...

AUSTIN: His eyes narrow in a way that is oddly—it's oddly compelling to you.

SYLVI: Is this Standard?

AUSTIN: Straight roll, Standard. Yep. Not Risky at all.

SYLVI: It's a 7, so that's a partial success.

AUSTIN: Success. Let me roll this. Take Echo, as you can feel—you've succeeded, so this doesn't work, especially with no Fallout, but for a moment you remem—you're like 'oh yeah, Maleister Price, I remember when Maleister Price first moved to Blackwick, made a bunch of good friends, everybody liked him,' but then you're like 'wait, I'm not from Blackwick. How would I have that memory? That doesn't make any fucking sense.'

SYLVI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: You'll remember earlier today, Keith rolled to see if Lyke knew Maleister, and I said no on a success. That's because Maleister's not from Blackwick.

JACK: Hm.

SYLVI: Okay. Does—

AUSTIN: Maleister certainly has convinced a lot of people that he has been here and been part of their lives forever, and that he's trustworthy and that you should make him sheriff, and et cetera.

KEITH: I do not know how he convinced people he's trustworthy, he gives off extremely untrustworthy vibes.

AUSTIN: The magic eyes he just used and almost worked on Hazard, who is a player character.

KEITH: [OVERLAPPING] Yeah, fair.

AUSTIN: Also, when you're, like—the people who followed him wanted power.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Do you know what I mean? They're not good people, they just rallied around him specifically because of this power. But they were happy to sign up to be deputies themselves. You know? So, yeah. What do you do?

SYLVI: I think there's a second of just like, shaking—'shaking my head' is a hard thing to say here.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

SYLVI: I don't mean the bag. Though maybe the bag moves when Hazard does that, as well.

AUSTIN: [OVERLAPPING] But maybe the bag. Yeah. Oh, that's so funny. Yeah.

SYLVI: And I think it's like—

SYLVI (as HAZARD): Listen, we're getting off on the wrong foot here. I don't really have any business here in Blackwick aside from what's in this bag. So if you just let me go, there's not gonna be any trouble, we're just gonna be able to, you know, go our separate ways and keep doing our own thing. But I'd really like to avoid this getting any uglier.

AUSTIN (as MALEISTER PRICE): Drop the papers, I'll let you leave with the bag.

SYLVI: Okay, I'm gonna shoot him.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

SYLVI: And I get 'Brutal' on this because he is trying to take something that is mine.

AUSTIN: Oh, absolutely.

KEITH: What is the—what are the papers, by the way?

AUSTIN: Wrights of the Seventh Sun documents.

KEITH: Ah, gotcha.

SYLVI: Wrights stuff, yeah. I figured I'd give them to Marn at some point.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

SYLVI: Seems to know more about this stuff than I do. Kill - Haven?

AUSTIN: This is still Risky, but you do get Brutal. Kill - Haven. 'Kill Haven.'

[PAUSE]

SYLVI: Fuck. I got a 6.

AUSTIN: Success at a cost.

SYLVI: Oh, 6 is a success at a cost? Okay.

AUSTIN: A 6 is a success at a cost, yeah, yeah, yeah.

KEITH: I still—we've been playing this game forever and I still see 6 as a failure.

[20:01]

AUSTIN: Take 2 Blood.

SYLVI: It's because of all the Powered by the Apocalypse games. Right?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: It is.

SYLVI: 6 is the—

AUSTIN: 6 is the—yeah, the threshold. 7-9 is success.

SYLVI: 2 what?

AUSTIN: 2 Blood, Blood.

SYLVI: Okay, so I take 1 Blood, because I have 1 Protection.

AUSTIN: Awesome. And then give me that—

SYLVI: And this is Brutal, so I'm 2d8, right?

AUSTIN: So you give me your 2d8, yeah. You don't get the bonus up to a 10, for some reason.

SYLVI: No, it's only one time per session.

AUSTIN: Or you do—oh, it's per session.

SYLVI: It's once per session, yeah.

AUSTIN: And it lasts for that scene, not forever, presumably.

SYLVI: I think it's literally just for that when you hit once. 'Cause it's—

AUSTIN: I think it's more than that. I—

SYLVI: "Once per session after you successfully hit, but before you roll damage, increase your damage dice one step." I'm not gonna say no if you think it counts, but I rolled a 5.

AUSTIN: [OVERLAPPING] Gotcha. Yes, yes, yes. Right, right, right. I was thinking of Bloodbound, which is the one that lasts for a situation. Alright, 5. You give me your Fallout roll.

SYLVI: Oh, yes. That's a 4, take Minor Fallout?

AUSTIN: Take Minor Fallout. This is just a classic—you've both shot each other at the same time, you know? This is a quick-draw shootout in the upstairs hallway, which maybe is not as exciting as you might think. But you get caught here. You are... ah. You take—sorry, I was thinking about being very rude, but I think I might just do Ringing Head again, because it's funny that your head is the thing ringing.

SYLVI: Oh, that's really—yeah, because I fired the gun right next to it.

AUSTIN: Right next to it, yeah. A hundred percent. So you actually don't get hit, but between the two gunfire—two guns being shot, the sound—maybe you get Scraped. You know what I

mean? But yeah, you get Ringing Head, which again, is you have a Dangerous roll, then a Risky roll, then you're back to normal.

But this is not—I think it stuns him. You know what I mean? He like, 'ough!' And takes a step back. But it classically impacted into the sheriff badge he wears. Which still does damage to him, it pushes in, it does not perfectly armor him or anything. But he stumbles back and gives you a chance to run past him. But your head is ringing, you're scared—I mean, maybe you're not scared. But you're—you know.

SYLVI: At this point, I don't think I'm scared, I'm just kinda mad.

AUSTIN: Yeah. I mean, maybe you don't run past him. Maybe you just—you draw down again. I don't know.

SYLVI: No, I am. My head is ringing, Austin, and that means my next roll is Dangerous.

AUSTIN: [OVERLAPPING] This is true. Yeah. Uh-huh.

SYLVI: So I am going to try and leave.

AUSTIN: Okay.

KEITH: Yeah, you want some other roll for Dangerous, a future roll.

AUSTIN: [OVERLAPPING] You sprint past him—yeah. Uh-huh.

SYLVI: Listen, something that doesn't involve a gun being pointed at me.

KEITH: Yeah, fair.

DRE: Yeah, fair.

AUSTIN: The thing that happens is you step outside the town council hall back out into the open air, and deputies are whipping around to start looking in this direction, because they heard gunshots go off inside.

SYLVI: Yeah, that makes sense.

AUSTIN: He dispersed them, and they're a little far away now, but I need one more roll for you to escape the premises. And this is Dangerous.

SYLVI: I guess I'll do Sneak here.

AUSTIN: Alright.

SYLVI: Sneak - Haven.

AUSTIN: Do you have anything that gives you any bonuses here?

SYLVI: No. I just have both of these Domains and Skill. So it's like I'm rolling a zero, basically.

AUSTIN: Yeah. You're basically rolling a—yeah. Uh-huh. Alright.

[PAUSE]

SYLVI: Yeah. That's a 2.

AUSTIN: There's a 2. Uh-huh. They—

KEITH: Hey, at least you blew that Dangerous roll on a roll that would have failed no matter what.

SYLVI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. True, true. Take—

SYLVI: [EXHALING] Fuck.

AUSTIN: Take 5 more—this is Fortune, as they quickly realize it's you and begin to move in at you.

SYLVI: Okay, I'm gonna do my Fallout test again.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

[PAUSE]

SYLVI: Take Minor Fallout.

AUSTIN: Take Minor Fallout. I'm gonna combine it with—actually, no I'm not. I'm not gonna combine this with—this is in fact Disarmed, or whatever that one is called. Or is that a Blood one? I should—we can do that one. Let's see. Yeah, I'm gonna give you that instead. Which is: "Disarmed - You drop and lose whatever you're holding, leaving you defenseless. You inflict d4 Stress in combat until you source a weapon. If you're somewhere precarious, you might lose the item forever." I think they just start firing at you, and you drop your gun and cling tightly onto your head so that you don't lose that. You know?

SYLVI: Yeah, that's fine. I will, um...

AUSTIN: I think that makes more sense.

SYLVI: ...mark that the gun has been dropped.

AUSTIN: Sounds good. Actually, wait. Let me make sure that you get to—one second. Let's—

SYLVI: Because I'm assuming I can go back and get it at some point.

AUSTIN: Yeah. I think that makes sense. Yep.

SYLVI: But if I end up not being able to, I'll just...

AUSTIN: I mean, they'll probably just put it in a lockbox in their fake—they don't have an evidence room. They have a safe. You know?

SYLVI: Hey, check out this *Destiny* Exotic that we found.

AUSTIN: [LAUGHS] And they are gonna chase after you, and we are now gonna finally cut back to Es and Pickman. What are y'all doing? I guess, actually, you, at this point, would totally be able to see this all happening if you've left the big top and have moved into near the town council. Right? You see your friend being chased by deputies.

JACK: Oh, god.

AUSTIN: Your new-ish friend, but.

JANINE: Well, I'm still in a circus costume, but I'm very happy to intervene in that situation.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: That's got to be really deeply confusing for the deputies, who are just like, 'now a clown is attacking us.' Tightrope-walker.

JANINE: Mhm.

KEITH: Only in Blackwick.

JACK: Um... [EXHALES] ooh-wee. [CHUCKLING] Okay, yeah, sure, let's do it. One fucking thing after another. Yeah, I'm gonna—can I just engage one of the deputies? Like, take advant—take initiative?

AUSTIN: Yeah. Let's talk about it in broad, abstract—like, more abstract montage-y terms. You know? Broadly, what is the camera seeing in this sequence with you? Instead of thinking about it as like 'I'm gonna throw one punch.' You know what I mean? What is your strategy for helping your friend, Hazard, get to safety?

JACK: This is—I am going to draw the fire of—no. Before entering combat, I am going to enter a defensible position.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

JACK: [CHUCKLES] So this—you know. I'm gonna get myself into the best cover that I can find.

AUSTIN: You're gonna find—yeah. High cover. You're gonna find full cover.

JACK: Uh-huh. Yeah. With a full shield.

AUSTIN: Yep. Mhm.

JACK: And then I am gonna fire the hand-cannon at range at the deputy that is going to give Hazard the most lead that they can.

AUSTIN: Yep. Sounds good. That sounds like a Kill to me.

JACK: Oh yeah.

AUSTIN: The music, again, is just running louder and louder, the storm is also getting louder and louder.

JACK: Because we are in this Cursed place, is this Kill - Cursed? Or because I'm—

AUSTIN: Yep.

JACK: Okay, yeah. Because it's where you are.

AUSTIN: Kill - Cursed, Kill - Haven. Yep, it's where you are. Unless there's a special move that says otherwise, or there's some other circumstance.

JACK: Nope. I'm gonna roll...

AUSTIN: But Cursed works.

JACK: Kill - Cursed.

AUSTIN: This is Standard.

JACK: Oh, no. Fuck. The—it's a hand-cannon. It's not a revolver. It has 'Point-Blank, Reload, Expensive'.

AUSTIN: That's—'Point-Blank' means it's better at close-range.

JACK: Oh, but it's—I'm not gonna—

AUSTIN: I think it's not as good at super far range—

KEITH: Yeah, I think that it has long-ranged, but it does damage die up if you're Point-Blank.

JACK: [OVERLAPPING] I am firing just down the street.

AUSTIN: If you're—yeah. Uh-huh. And then it—the thing is, if you're close enough you do damage die down one. But again, I'm less concerned with damage die and more concerned with movement.

JACK: Yep. Cool. Kill - Cursed. This is—now, is this Standard? Because I am currently not in combat.

AUSTIN: Yeah. It's Standard.

JACK: Kill - Cursed, Standard?

AUSTIN: The thing that's risky is dealing with Maleister. These deputies are—especially, you kind of—you number the same as them as a group at this point.



JACK: Okay.

AUSTIN: Maybe three of them coming back, maybe four or five, but that's not such a big difference.

JACK: Do you want to help, Es?

JANINE: Um...

AUSTIN: Kind of roll it into one roll? I think that makes sense.

JANINE: Is this gonna take out all the deputies?

AUSTIN: This is going to give you space to get away with Hazard to a place where you're not being chased. You know?

JANINE: Okay, sure.

AUSTIN: All the deputies are spread through town, and word will travel, but this will give you what you need to leave the scene, you know?

JANINE: Right. Yes, I'll... [UNCERTAINLY] ah. I'm now in a position where the thing I want to do to help most of the time is a separate roll, and in this particular case, is a thing that there's a different thing I would rather do instead of that roll, um... but then again, maybe running out in a circus costume is sufficient distraction in many situations to let your friend get a couple hits in.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Fair. Fair.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I think that counts. Go for it. Take the extra die.

JACK: Okay. Kill - Cursed, one extra die. Standard...

[PAUSE]

JACK: Bang!

AUSTIN: 9! There you go. Firing shots off, Hazard, you see your friends posted up. Except, one of them's posted up, the other one is running around in a circus costume distracting.

JANINE: Backflips.

AUSTIN: Backflips. Backflips, front-flips.

JANINE: Doing like aerials and backflips—

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: That's the thing—we didn't get into that with the original distracting circus act, but I imagine it was very much, like, passing off true form shit as like, really good acrobatics. This is more just real good acrobatics.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Love it. Great. And Hazard, you're able to get some distance here, and duck behind an alley that's out near them, and the three of you are able to withdraw safely.

SYLVI (as HAZARD): [CATCHING BREATH] Thank you.

JACK (as PICKMAN): What have you got there?

SYLVI (as HAZARD): Long story. Um... I got some notes for the Wrights guys some of y'all were looking into.

JACK (as PICKMAN): Mm. Yes.

SYLVI (as HAZARD): [QUICKLY] Don't worry about the bag.

JACK (as PICKMAN): Okay.

JANINE: I'm getting a lot of questions—[LAUGHING] about my bag that are answered by me saying don't worry about the bag.

[JACK AND AUSTIN LAUGH]

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. So, I guess we should figure out what we're doing, because it feels like either this is coming to blows, or it's the big shrug—it might be coming to blows. Like, it does not seem like words are going to convince Chine of this, at this point. And it seems like, Lyke and Duvall, you are not going to let this fucking happen.

[30:10]

KEITH: Uh, no.

AUSTIN: Or maybe I'm reading too much into Duvall. Lyke definitely seems, again, consistent on this with the Virtue version of—like, this is—we're here again. We're here again. There's one—there's three PCs. One of them wants to dramatically change the environ in a way that will probably hurt a lot of people—

SYLVI: And the other two are Lyke and Duvall. [LAUGHS]

[KEITH AND ART LAUGH]

AUSTIN: And the other two are Lyke and Duvall. And Lyke is deadly committed to doing it, and Duvall is philosophizing. I mean, I guess, Duvall was politic-ing last time, but.

KEITH: That's a kind of philosophizing.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

JACK: God, it's kind of great how stories rhyme.

AUSTIN: I love it.

KEITH: Yeah. We all make fun of George Lucas, but maybe things do rhyme.

AUSTIN: Things rhyme.

ART: And don't make fun of George Lucas, he's doing his best.

ALI: Eh.

SYLVI: You can make fun of George Lucas. I think that's fine.

DRE: You can make fun of him.

SYLVI: Listener, listen to my advice. Make fun of George Lucas.

KEITH: He hasn't even done anything in like a decade. What is there to make fun of?

ART: I don't know.

KEITH: He keeps doing hilarious things like going on speeches and saying, like, his favorite character from Star Wars is Jar-Jar.

[ALI WHEEZES]

AUSTIN: That's pretty good.

SYLVI: [OVERLAPPING] You know what, nevermind. Stop making fun of George Lucas, just encourage him.

KEITH: [OVERLAPPING] It's hilarious. It's so funny.

AUSTIN: [LAUGHS] That's very funny.

KEITH: [OVERLAPPING] It was like 2019 and he was like, 'oh, of course my favorite character's Jar-Jar.' It's hilarious that he would do that.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: I like that he calls them laser-swords. I just like that.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Me too. Me too. Big fan. Alright. So, what's this—what's the next step here? I think in terms of answering the question of 'are we going for 30 minutes or an hour or 2 hours,' it really depends on what this answer is.

DRE: I mean, I will say this. If it comes—Chine does not want to commit violence again, Lyke or Duvall, and will not.

AUSTIN: But will turn them into dust-clowns.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Because that's not violence, in Chine's eyes. Okay. I think that that's consistent with Chine's own weird philosophy, I just want to emphasize the—again, the irony in that statement.

JACK: Wait, also—Chine, correct me if I'm wrong, how would Chine feel if Lyke and Duvall said 'we don't want to be turned into dust-clowns'?

DRE: They should leave.

ART: Yeah, I'm not on anyone's side—I'm not on a—well, I mean, I am on a side, but I do think that we, player characters, certainly have the ability and agency to leave before we get turned into dust-clowns.

AUSTIN: Yeah, you do. Seems like it.

ART: And I mean, we could even try to get people out. My point is—

AUSTIN: I mean, that's already happening. Marn is doing it.

ART: Yeah. We shouldn't turn anyone into dust-clowns against their will. I just want to be clear how I feel about dust-clowning.

AUSTIN: Gotcha. Yeah. I appreciate it.

ART: Against.

AUSTIN: Anti-dust-clowning.

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: What is the next step here? Do we think that this—so, Chine, it sounds like you will not initiate violence. Would you return violence?

DRE: No.

AUSTIN: Would the incoming threat of violence stop you?

DRE: No.

AUSTIN: You would have to be killed to stop, but you wouldn't defend yourself.

DRE: No. Yes, and then no.

AUSTIN: Yes you have to be killed, no you wouldn't defend yourself.

DRE: Correct.

AUSTIN: How do you think It would—I mean, we should wait to answer that until—unless it happens.

DRE: Well, I mean, if it is clear that they will commit violence, I think that Chine would communicate that, and then—honestly, would probably have a conversation with Duvall about taking It with him.

AUSTIN: Then let's have this. Let's—Lyke, are you showing that you're ready to do violence to stop this from happening?

KEITH: Yes.

AUSTIN: How do you do that? What's that look like?

KEITH: I—

AUSTIN: Is that a verbal threat, is it a physical threat, is it a posture?

KEITH: Yes. It is a verbal threat. Lyke is going to tell Chine that if they don't stop, then we're gonna have to stop them.

DRE: Yeah.

KEITH (as LYKE): You haven't left much of a choice, Chine.

DRE (as CHINE): Sure I have.

KEITH (as LYKE): Everybody but you agrees that what you're doing is terrible.

DRE (as CHINE): Eh, that's not true.

KEITH (as LYKE): It is true.

DRE (as CHINE): I mean, who's everybody?

KEITH (as LYKE): Everybody that you're doing the terrible thing to agrees that it's terrible.

DRE (as CHINE): Did you hold a town hall?

KEITH: I attack Chine. I'm not—I'm not dealing with that. I think that's bullshit.

AUSTIN: Okay. It sounds like there's no defense here.

DRE: No.

AUSTIN: Are you attacking with a gun, are you attacking with magic, are you...? What's the visual that we see as Lyke is pushed verbally to do this?

KEITH: I guess it would—I guess it would have to be, actually, Fire of the Red King, because that's currently my only ranged thing.

AUSTIN: Yeah. So you—yeah. So you summon fire and toss it towards—

KEITH: Right. So this is an unarmed 1d4, is what that is.

AUSTIN: Right. Yeah. Okay. So that—you know. You're burned. You're not killed by this at 1d4. We don't have to roll it, because I don't think—this does not feel like it's coming down to dice at this point.

DRE: No.

AUSTIN: This feels like we're narrating. So, yeah. The fire burns you, Chine. Probably pushes you back. There's a physical aspect of it. It growls at Lyke, and then kind of like moves in front of you, Chine. Between you and Duvall and Lyke.

DRE (as CHINE): You could have said something.

KEITH (as LYKE): [EXASPERATED] We've been saying stuff all day! What are you talking about?

DRE (as CHINE): Well, yeah, I don't want—

ART (as DUVALL): We've been talking to you.

DRE (as CHINE): I don't want It to hurt you.

AUSTIN: It like looks up at you for guidance, as if to say like, 'is that a—are you telling me not to hurt them?'

DRE: Yeah. Chine nods.

DRE (as CHINE): Duvall, can you take It?

ART (as DUVALL): Uh, yeah, but—you don't have to—it doesn't have to go like this.

DRE (as CHINE): Apparently it does.

AUSTIN: It looks up at Chine again. At you, Chine. A little sad, but mostly confused.

DRE (as CHINE): You need to go with Duvall.

AUSTIN: It like, headbutts your shin a little bit.

DRE (as CHINE): I know, I don't like it either.

AUSTIN: I guess It goes over to Duvall's side, and kind of like, mewls at you a little bit. Like it's—[CHOKED MEWLING] 'Nyagh—' Like it's—you hear it almost try to vocalize a syllable. And it can't quite do it.

ART: I haven't had any interaction with this thing, right? This is, um...

AUSTIN: I mean you've been around It, right?

ART: Yeah. Not on camera.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: Duvall has, I haven't. I think Duvall kind of like, crouches down to be at eye-level with it. Probably something Duvall heard about kids at some point.

[AUSTIN LAUGHS]

ART: Sort of feels like something that Art has heard about kids at some point.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I've heard that about kids, sure.

ART: Yeah, right? Go down to a kid.

AUSTIN: Is that what they—do they say 'do that' or 'don't do that'? I don't know, but they say something about it.

[DRE CHUCKLES]

ART: Yeah, they—it's definitely words I've heard.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: Together. Close together. Maybe not next to each other. I think—

AUSTIN: It opens all four of its little mouth-things at you, and [LIGHT GROWL] 'Raah.'

KEITH: It peels its banana.

AUSTIN: Yes.

ART (as DUVALL): Hey, buddy. I think we should—I think we should go. Do you want to—[UNDER BREATH] I don't know, what do you—[NORMAL VOLUME] Do you want to see some more of the... horrible carnival?

AUSTIN: I think It looks over its shoulder back at Chine.

ART (as DUVALL): Chine'll be... Chine'll catch up.

AUSTIN: [EXHALES] Love to lie to a child immediately.

DRE: Oof.

ART: Well, this—[LAUGHING] how much language does this—does it understand?

AUSTIN: I don't know!

DRE: Enough.

ART: Okay, well then, I'm not gonna lie to it.

[AUSTIN LAUGHS]

ART (as DUVALL): It's gonna be me and you for a bit.

AUSTIN (as IT): [DEJECTED GROWL] Mreh. Mrr.

ART (as DUVALL): I know. I wish Chine was coming, too.

DRE (as CHINE): Listen to Duvall.

AUSTIN (as IT): [RELUCTANT GROWL] Mreh...

AUSTIN: And then it does that thing that dogs are too big to do, do sometimes, and it's annoying—it just jumps its whole huge body up into your chest to be held by you, like, in pseudo-protest, and it's so much heavier than you thought it would be.

ART: Yeah, and Duvall's not strong—I think Duvall might honestly just get like, bulled over.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

[ALI CHUCKLES]

ART: I don't want to do too big of a slapstick beat right here, but I sort of see like a—like you know, Duvall completely somersaulting over backwards, and sort of like getting to their feet in a rolling way, in an uncanny balance sort of way that some of the Apiarist moves gesture toward.

AUSTIN: Yeah. As it's falling into you, a thing that I should note is it feels like it has more muscles than—like, not like it's more musculature. Like, it has muscles in places that there should just be bones or just body. Do you know what I mean? Of just like—oh, there's like, it's like trying to hold onto you with parts of its stomach. That's not—there aren't limbs there, but it feels like it's reaching to you in that way.

ART: Sure.

AUSTIN: As if there's a dense internal structure that doesn't line up with just what you can see from the outside. You know?

ART: Like a Machop.

AUSTIN: Like a Machop, or like a baby kicking.

ART: Sure, yeah.

AUSTIN: Do you know what I mean? There's like a weird—but like a Machop, basically. Yeah. Uh-huh.

ART: I think that's in the Pokedex for them, that they are all muscle.

AUSTIN: That's true. I think that that's true. And so you leave? You kind of get back up on your feet, and any final words here?



ART: Um... I think it's like looking back Duvall, and like:

ART (as DUVALL): I'll see you down the road.

DRE (as CHINE): Maybe. I don't know how any of this works.

ART (as DUVALL): Me neither.

AUSTIN: Lyke, what has your face been like during this whole weird exchange?

KEITH: I think Lyke is confused.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

[40:00]

KEITH: I don't understand Chine's motivations. I don't understand why we're at a head here. The only clear thing is that Chine is extremely focused on either doing this or dying.

AUSTIN: Mhm. And we—I just, out of character really quick—Dre, you are—we have walked up to this ledge. There have been plenty of opportunities to like, walk back the other direction. You are choosing for Chine to choose to not do that.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay.

KEITH: Um—

AUSTIN: What are you—because you don't—I was gonna say, like, 'oh, you have that Aterika'Kaal power,' but you don't have that. And I don't know that you're like—I look at your sheet, and you don't have a lot of stuff here that's like—I'll just say this outright, where like, I don't think Lye Lychen—maybe you can tell me I'm wrong about this, but like, I don't think you're gonna use your firepower to do 1d4 damage to Chine until he's dead. That does not feel—maybe I'm wrong. Maybe you do want that sort of—but like, you don't have a gun anymore, even, right?

KEITH: I don't want—I don't want—Lyke doesn't want to do it at all. Like, I'm not itching to be like—

AUSTIN: Right, right, right.

KEITH: Like 'oh, finally. Kill Chine.'

[ART LAUGHS]

ART: Oh, there is—there's tension here.

AUSTIN: But like it's tension between outcomes—I guess it's tension between people, but it's a very weird tension. It's a very strange, unwieldy tension.

KEITH: It's not—it's the opposite of tension. It's just a noodle that doesn't stop.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: It's like I have to—

ART: I think a noodle that doesn't stop would make me very tense.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

KEITH: I have to kill a—I have to, like, a magician that's pulling a ribbon out of their sleeve, and they've been doing it for 15 minutes, and for some reason if the ribbon doesn't stop, I've gotta kill it.

AUSTIN: Oh, okay. Yeah. What is then—how do you—how does Lyke do this without wanting to do it—or like, you know. Obviously you do things you don't want to do all the time, that's life. But this is a big one. Is there some way you're trying to mitigate that, or some other—you know. Some other thing you're trying to... what do you do? Tell me what this looks like, I guess, and really, let's just open it up.

KEITH: Okay. So, I've got—

AUSTIN: Also, I just want to be clear, I don't want to make you roll for this, because if Chine isn't resisting this, like—I don't want this to become one of the like—this is not that one episode of Beam Saber where what we need to do is like, figure out how to get one of every possible bonus onto one roll. You know what I mean? So.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Don't feel like you feel like you have to like, 'rules lawyer' your way into it if that makes sense.

KEITH: Right. Well, the way that Lyke would have to kill someone, really, is by being close to them. So I guess I sort of cautiously—Lyke cautiously walks up to Chine, sort of thinking at any second that this is gonna be a fight, because it's, like, extremely weird that it's not—

AUSTIN: Right. So you have that hair on the back of your head, or back of your neck, standing up, like, fight-or-flight thing.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: But Chine is just standing there. Chine, are you still working on blocking up this tunnel, basically while this happens? Or at this point, have you just stood still?

DRE: Yeah, no, it's still.

AUSTIN: Okay.

KEITH: And that move works with a touch, so. I—

AUSTIN: Which move? Is this—this is ‘Kiss from a Rose’? Aterika’Kaal spreads—

KEITH: This is—yeah, Kiss from a Rose. “Searching roots throughout its new domain, but for a sustained blood meal it needs to search further” and then it’s like, a thorn.

AUSTIN: Right, but you don’t have that at this point. Right? Or, I guess—that’s the thing is like, I didn’t take—I should say, after that last session with the Heart stuff and Alaway and Aterika’Kaal, I didn’t like, go in and erase all of the Aterika’Kaal moves. Right?

KEITH: No.

AUSTIN: I kind of just assumed you’re a Junk Mage, right? Junk Mages pull stuff together. So, what is—instead of conjuring quote unquote “barbed vines” under blah-blah-blah—I kept reading that sentence and I was like, that’s real gross, I don’t want to read that out loud. What is it that you conjure—when Lyke calls out for this power to hurt someone, what answers? Or what shows up? What’s it look like?

KEITH: The—I think the—I don’t know how to say—I don’t know how to phrase... I don’t want to just read the Ravening Beast text.

AUSTIN: [LAUGHING] Well, what’s the Ravening Beast text say?

KEITH: “Emerging from a patch of shadows, the Ravening Beast that has been hiding in your mind appears.”

AUSTIN: [AMUSED] Oh, okay!

ALI: Hiding where?

KEITH: In your mind.

[ALI CHUCKLES]

AUSTIN: Oh! You know what, right now all you have is the Ravening Call, but you’ve never gotten rid of the Ravening Call. It’s never gone away. It has been—

KEITH: Yes, I have only—it was maybe the first or second Fallout that I ever got was the Ravening Call, and it’s been bouncing back and forth between the Ravening Beast and the Ravening Call.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: Oh, so actually, so this is the Ravening Beast text. I just don’t change the name anymore because it goes back and forth so often.

AUSTIN: [LAUGHING] Yes.

KEITH: But that’s—so that’s the Ravening Beast text.

AUSTIN: And so what emerges—

KEITH: [OVERLAPPING] Which I guess is notable because I don't actually have the Ravening Beast.

AUSTIN: Right, you only have the Ravening Call right now.

KEITH: For the Ravening Beast to emerge from a patch of shadows.

AUSTIN: Are you calling it into existence? Are you taking on its form? Is it—

KEITH: Um...

AUSTIN: Is it becoming a pet to you the way It was to Chine?

KEITH: Maybe. I'm not—I don't think I'm werewolf-ing it.

AUSTIN: [CHUCKLES] Okay.

KEITH: I think it's just sort of like, how—you know how, like, lightning or electricity is like—has to find a path through to ground? I think there's just sort of this, like—the spell, or whatever, needs to find its target, and the closest thing that I have to Aterika'Kaal is the Rav—so it just finds the Ravening Beast, because it's like, you know. The... what are those called? The like, lightning rod. There's just like a lightning rod that is not in Aterika'Kaal anymore, but is part of the Ravening Beast.

AUSTIN: [OVERLAPPING] It's like the Ravening Beast smells this call, or it hears this call, and is like 'ah, finally. Finally the line has not been blocked by—'

KEITH: Like a different way through.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Mhm. And it leaps from your mind and from the shadows. And I'm not—again, I'm not making you roll damage, and Chine, this is like—you're a hundred percent? A hundred percent on this? This is not—do you flinch, do you—is there—do you have an attempt to defend yourself, or is this...

DRE: No.

AUSTIN: ...just over? Okay.

DRE: Yeah, it's just over.

AUSTIN: So then, I think the shadows grow with it. This is a very interesting scene, because this is such a dirty, grimy place—

[MUSIC BEGINS - ["Up on the Hill" by Jack de Quidt](#)]

AUSTIN: —and Chine, you've been like, wading through bad water to set up a dam in a tunnel of love. And I don't think that's the Chine we see—in a weird way, that is the worst version of reality for Chine to communicate what their motives have been. And I think, especially with it

being the Ravening Beast, something strange happens that moves us to a space that's more Chine-like, as the shadows move across the space, and the light gets swallowed by it.

It begins to peel away, lifting back the shadow after this is done, but it peels away the wallpaper of this decrepit old tunnel of love, and then the concrete that the wallpaper and the walls have been built upon. The water begins to rise strangely, and lift above you, Lyke. And Chine, you're seeing this too, as you are laying down on the ground seeing your final moments. And something explosive and strange driven by the Course happens; which is, this murky ugly tunnel of love becomes something like the embodiment of—or an abstract exploration of—love itself.

All of these garish colors grow in brightness and severity. The two of you, plus the Ravening Beast, are cast into a sort of psychedelic world; a vision of Blackwick that is made of too-dense pastels, everything—that kind of sickly sweet smell continues, but it kind of disperses until it—instead of having that 'oh, it smells like too much cotton candy in here,' everything just takes on this perfumed scent. You're looking out at the world of Sangfielle from this kind of tunnel of love up on a hill, and everything just gets this pristine, perfect vision.

[50:00]

We've seen the Residuum before, and it's sort of like that, except instead of this kind of splotchy collection of color, it's this very evenly painted landscape. I can't tell you how you feel about seeing it, Lyke, but if there were a world that—if in Chine's mind, there was a vision of the world that the Course could make through its terrible, strange violence that was compelling, this might be it.

There is something at ease about what you see here, but also kind of just like, impossible. You know, you can see the—there's that little lake near Blackwick, and it has turned into an ocean. You can see that it goes forever, and the waves are lapping at the shores of Blackwick, and you can see people—it starts to be things that are slipping in from Chine's mind, because this is how the Course works, we know that it pulls from the people around it—and so we see those teeth-people born from the teeth that Chine planted as a child, are like running along the beach, playing, you know, chasing each other, splashing water on one another. We see the fruit of the trees across Blackwick kind of ripen until they're perfect, and fall down into their nets and split open, and when they split open, there are thousands of other identical fruit inside.

This is a strange and compelling world, and then it fades back away, and it is you standing over the body of someone you used to work with.

KEITH: Is the Beast there?

[MUSIC ENDS]

AUSTIN: I don't know, is the Beast there?

KEITH: No.

AUSTIN: The Beast is gone. The Beast has retreated back into your mind?

KEITH: There's no—I think that that would—I think that that would be, like, a fight. Which I don't want to do.

AUSTIN: I mean, even if it wasn't trying to fight you?

KEITH: Yeah, that's the only context I know that thing in.

AUSTIN: But I'm saying if it—right. So in other words, if you were—

KEITH: [OVERLAPPING] I didn't even want—I didn't call on that.

AUSTIN: Okay, so you're rejecting the idea that you called on it, because what you did is call for power and it answered. Because you didn't say 'Ravening Beast, come help me,' you said—

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: 'I'm going to try to stop Chine from doing this' and the thing that answered was the Ravening Beast. So again, I guess that's the—I guess—let's do this then. The Ravening Beast is there sitting next to Chine's body. And just like, sitting—almost at attention. You know? Are you going to try to attack it?

KEITH: Um...

AUSTIN: And again, I'm more interested in your response than like, 'can you win in a fight against the Ravening Beast by yourself.' The end of this scene is not 'and then the Ravening Beast killed you, too,' that's not interesting. There's other interesting things. Do you know what I mean?

KEITH: Yeah, I definitely think that like, my reaction is... You know, whether it means that I would try to fight it or try to run away, or just like, scream.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

KEITH: Um, like—

AUSTIN: Scream is pretty good. I don't know if we've seen Lyke scream before. Maybe we have.

KEITH: No, I don't think we have.

AUSTIN: Are you afraid? Of—in this moment?

KEITH: I think there's like, um... There's a weight, I think, to the last, you know, ten minutes of Lyke's reality, that is disorienting, that I think makes it difficult to be afraid—I think it makes it difficult to take serious action. 'Cause it's like—I just saw this thing, I just did the whole Chine deal, there—all the sudden the Ravening Beast is here, Duvall's gone. Is there a—are there like 30 people in swan boats to my left, like?

AUSTIN: Yeah, at this point, you know, one of the—that's, maybe that's—you scream. Right? The Ravening Beast vanishes at the point at which you scream. I think—no. You scream. While you're screaming, one of these swan boats bumps into the dam that Chine had built. They all start to bump into each other. They're all backing up now. You and the Ravening Beast turn to look at the people who have begun to be like—they start screaming seeing the Ravening Beast, seeing Chine's body, and then the Ravening Beast vanishes, and it's just all of these people confused and scared in a tunnel underground in the hills of Blackwick.

KEITH: Okay, and then—now I'm realizing there's actually something that I really need to be doing, which is unblocking the river.

[ALI LAUGHS]

AUSTIN: Right. And that's where we can leave you, I think, at this point. I don't think—again, I'm not gonna make—you begin to do that work.

KEITH: I'll say this—you know, we can step back, if we do want to make a change, there's one thing that can happen, which is that I make the realization that we've got to unblock this river sooner, and the Ravening Beast helps me clear it.

AUSTIN: [INTRIGUED] Ohh. That's interesting.

KEITH: That's the only other option here, I think.

AUSTIN: Huh. What's compelling to you about that? Is it that you would finally see the Ravening Beast do something that isn't just dramatic violence?

KEITH: Yeah, I'm forced by the circumstance to just accept that I'm not being attacked by the Ravening Beast, and then be surprised that it's helping.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

KEITH: That's really—and I don't know what that means, but, um—

AUSTIN: I mean, who could say?

KEITH: Right. Um...

AUSTIN: And it's like—I just want to—I think this is the first time we've seen—I mean, this is not a well-lit area, as we've described, but seeing the Ravening Beast is a little—we've seen it moving a lot, and so I think that there's a sort of element of it that you associate with movement, like it does—its fur, its weird needle-like, pine-like fur, is always moving, even when it's standing still. And that creates a very strange, very surreal effect to look at it just sitting, or moving slowly, and in the past you haven't felt that because it's always moving fast to kill you, or the people who are with you.

KEITH: Right. Yeah.

AUSTIN: And so you just assumed that's part of its weird motion.

KEITH: It always shows up in the middle of a fight, because that's when I get Fallout.

AUSTIN: [OVERLAPPING] Exactly. That's when you get Fallout. Yeah, exactly. And so, now seeing it doing this—and I think it—yes. You know, I think it's fair to just mirror it straight out that it looks at you the same way that It looked at Chine for guidance. And seeing you begin to undo this—or there's a thing that's happening, which is like, it's not just about guidance, it's about mirroring. And about mirroring your response. And so if your response is fear, it's afraid. If your response is anger or tension, it's in that mode. And now, if your response despite seeing it, and despite everything you just did, is 'oh my god, I have to fucking clear this stupid tunnel,' it's going to similarly go over there and begin to do that. And I think people are frightened by it, but I don't know. There's weirder things happening in the world.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I think people are just as frightened seeing Chine's body laying there. And I think that that's that for—I don't think we need to see more than that in this moment. Let me just get, then, a high-level picture right now of where everyone is as this night comes to a close. Marn, you have escorted a bunch of people up through the now empty tunnel where the Mother-beast's kind of blood was running before, the lava blood, up to the top of the mountains to get them out from underneath the dust-storm just in case things went bad.

[1:00:00]

AUSTIN: Right? Is that correct?

ALI: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Okay. Es and Pickman, you had been trying to calm things down in the streets and in the circus area. Hazard, you managed to get away safely from recovering your head. Who is—Duvall, you are—I don't know what you're doing, Duvall.

ART: Yeah, great point.

AUSTIN: I guess, should we at this point advance to the next morning and see where we go from there? Or do you think—does news get out about Chine? Do you tell people about Chine, Duvall?

ART: I don't know what I would tell people about it.

AUSTIN: I mean, you have It. Which is the biggest conversation starter in the world.

ART: Yeah, but I don't know about the Ravening Beast—

AUSTIN: You don't know about the Ravening Beast.

ART: —which is the meat of the conversation.

AUSTIN: Right.



ART: It's like, 'what happened to Chine?' 'Not sure. Pretty sure Lyke killed him.'

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: Despite that literally being what happened, I think that's—I think there's more to say about that than just that I killed Chine.

AUSTIN: Here's a question—

ART: Yeah, I agree, it's like, 'Chine wouldn't stop.'

KEITH: I would say 'Chine died.'

AUSTIN: Um, a real question—

ART: Okay. But then some people will ask how. And I don't know.

AUSTIN: Yeah, a real question is, is this a scene we want to put on screen, or is the ambiguity among the Blackwick Group about what happened more interesting long-term?

ART: I think I put that to the members of the Blackwick Group, I don't—

AUSTIN: Oh yeah, sorry, the Blackwick Group, of course, has been disbanded. There is no Blackwick Group at this point, according to—

ART: But we all still know each other.

AUSTIN: Yes, that's—yes.

[DRE CHUCKLES]

AUSTIN: So I guess that's the question for me. It seems like Marn, you're far away now, so you—unless, I mean, we could see if we have this conversation, you know.

ALI: Oh, I don't think Marn's coming back.

AUSTIN: Okay. That's—I wasn't—are you basically—go ahead.

ALI: Yeah, like, it's Marn in this viewpoint of the entire city.

AUSTIN: Yes.

ALI: With like, the people she barely saved. And like, whether or not we want to do the thing of Marn, like, looking at the tunnel and waiting all night to see if people come out or not, just like, looking at the devastation of the town and being like, 'I'm not going back down there with these people. This is how I get out, and I'm getting out, and these people should get out too.'

AUSTIN: Yeah, I mean, I think that the people who have come with you are the people who've lost their houses in this. Right? Do you stick around to see what it looks like from the top-down the next morning, or are you just like, 'we gotta keep fuckin' moving'?

ALI: I think it's a matter of waiting for the storm to settle, and I think that Marn knows enough to be like, 'oh, if I'm going to travel with people who are vulnerable, I have to do it during sunlight.'

AUSTIN: Yeah, that makes sense.

ALI: But I think like, the sun comes and it's time to go, you know?

AUSTIN: The sun comes, it's time to go—the thing I want to paint from your particular perspective is, the town—you know, we got a couple steps in on that clock, and we talked about what would happen if that clock got filled was going to be the absolute consumption of the town into the carnival. Right? There are parts of it that are just gone, that you can assume whatever was there is part of the carnival now. There are parts of it that just look devastated as if—not in the right way. Not like hit by a terrible tornado, as if hit by cannon fire or something. As if destroyed by bombs. And there are other parts of it where it's just like, 'oh, there's a garden here now. Oh, there's a little park bench.'

There is, in one place, the carnival left behind—let's say near the ruined abbey, the carnival left behind a big fountain with electric street lights. Which, electric lights are not a thing—the only electric lights that we've seen on screen so far have been the time Chine ate a light bulb in Alaway's basement, and then the electric lights of the carnival. The carnival had those electric string lights. And that's kind of all we've seen of actual—and then trains, I think, maybe occasionally have had electric lights, but trains are trains. And I guess images of the Sleeping City, we've kind of talked about as being more like jazz-age Harlem, which would have lights in that way. You know, we haven't seen like, non-gas lamp style lights. So it's strange that there is just a fountain in place of the ruined abbey.

So yeah, you see all of that. And that doesn't convince anybody to go back down, to be clear. I think everyone who is like—no one's like 'aw, my house used to be here, now it's a garden. I want to go back there and rebuild.' No. Anybody who came with you, they're ready to leave like you.

ALI: Right. Yeah, I don't want to like—I mean, obviously, we just had a big player character death, so I don't want to underplay how traumatic some of this stuff is, but I think for Marn, some of those faces are also the faces that she saw when she was just locked up a little bit ago.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: And like, to have this town go from the Magistrates to Alaway to this big carnival right away is just like, cut your losses. [CHUCKLES]

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: This place blows.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Is—I can't remember if we—

DRE: Listen, I'm sayin'.

[AUSTIN LAUGHS]

ALI: True.

AUSTIN: Did we—did Bucho come with you? Last I remember talking about Bucho is Bucho was all resting up—

ALI: Bucho came with me. I left the carnival because I went to find Bucho.

AUSTIN: Right, right, right. You went to find Bucho. Yes, okay. Right. Sorry. A lot has happened, it turns out.

ART: And I want to just circle back to, if anyone wants to have the Chine conversation, we can do it.

AUSTIN: [OVERLAPPING] Yes, sorry, yes. If—

ART: I'll have as many of those in as many groups as we want to do.

KEITH: I defin—

AUSTIN: Go ahead.

KEITH: I was just gonna say, I definitely don't feel like 'not interrogating me about Chine'—I don't feel like that's atypical of the group. Like, this definitely feels like a group of people that would be like 'what happened? Why did you kill Chine?'

AUSTIN: Yeah. Uh-huh. Yes. And that group at this point would be Es, Pickman, and Duvall. Right? At this point. With Hazard off doing their own thing.

ART: I mean, I think Duvall can get most of the way there.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Again, that's my—so yeah. Do y'all want to have that conversation, and if so, Es and Pickman, do you want to be part of that conversation?

JACK: Yeah. I mean, I'll be present. I don't know how useful Pickman's gonna be in terms of being able to emotionally process the events, but I think it would be something—

JANINE: I do feel the same, yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: Pickman went to see Chine and could not articulate her case, and shrugged and left. So I think she is interested in what the consequences of that are.

AUSTIN: Yeah. We should have this conversation. It's the next morning. You still have Blackwick H.Q. until the end of the—or Blackwick Group H.Q. until the end of the month.

ART: True, but also, the person who told us that's dead.

AUSTIN: That's true.

JACK: No, no, Maleister is still alive.

AUSTIN: Oh yeah, Maleister is alive. The person who told you is still alive. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yes.

ART: Hm.

JACK: For now.

AUSTIN: Oh, boy. Is the Ravening Beast gone at this point? Or is the Ravening Beast just hanging with you?

ART: Great question.

KEITH: Yeah, Ravening Beast gone.

AUSTIN: Okay. You can kind of call on it and summon it like a—is that—

KEITH: I don't know. I haven't done it. I haven't tried. I haven't had cause.

AUSTIN: [OVERLAPPING] I guess we haven't done it—right, right. We have not—yeah. Uh-huh. We can talk about it.

KEITH: You know, as much as Lyke is the kind of person to just sit in his bedroom and be like, 'Can I, like—Ravening Beast, pop in. Ravening Beast, pop out.'

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

KEITH: Like, 'can I do that?' No, I didn't do that.

AUSTIN: Right. Maybe in a week once things have calmed down and you're a little more—feel a little safer.

KEITH: Yeah, or maybe next time I'm like, 'I really need that move.'

AUSTIN: Yeah. Uh-huh. So who opens the conversation? I mean, Duvall has it. Right? I guess Es and Pickman—

ART: A real conversation starter, if there ever was one.

AUSTIN: If ever there was one.

ART: And Duvall's just terrible at this. I think Duvall's gonna grow into it, but first day Duvall is not good at cryptid parenting.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: So, we're all—you know, not all here, but who's left is here?

AUSTIN: The four of you are here, yeah.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: I think Hazard—Sylvi had to step away, and we'd already talked about whether or not Hazard would be part of this conversation, and Hazard would not be part of this conversation, so Sylvi said to go ahead and have this one without Hazard.

JACK (as PICKMAN): Oh, you've got another one of those Chine things.

ART (as DUVALL): [SOLEMN] No... No, I don't.

JANINE (as ES): Why is it with you?

ART (as DUVALL): Lyke and I went to try and make Chine see reason, and it didn't go well.

JACK (as PICKMAN): Ah.

ART (as DUVALL): Chine made it clear that destruction was the only end.

JACK (as PICKMAN): Sounds about right.

JANINE (as ES): Does it?

ART (as DUVALL): Well, you didn't interact with Chine very much at the end there.

JANINE (as ES): No, I was quite busy.

[1:10:00]

ART (as DUVALL): Yeah. I think we all had a rough day yesterday.

AUSTIN: Lyke is here, right?

KEITH: Yeah, I'm here. I'm, you know. Having breakfast or something.

AUSTIN: I just wanted to make sure that—okay.

[ALI CHUCKLES]

AUSTIN: Yeah, quietly.

JANINE: Just eating in the background.

JANINE (as ES): So the little one's just with you, now?

ART (as DUVALL): Yeah, Chine gave It to me, and then I left.

JACK (as PICKMAN): You didn't—

JANINE (as ES): Is it okay?

ART (as DUVALL): It's really hard to say.

AUSTIN (as IT): Mrah?

ART (as DUVALL): Seems it.

AUSTIN (as IT): Chrah?

KEITH (as LYKE): What did it say?

JANINE (as ES): Did it say trot?

AUSTIN (as IT): Chrah?

KEITH (as LYKE): Trot? Trot.

AUSTIN (as IT): Chine?

KEITH (as LYKE): What?

JACK (as PICKMAN): Oh, god.

AUSTIN (as IT): Chine?

JANINE (as ES): I thought it was doing some trotters.

KEITH (as LYKE): Okay, hands up if you knew this thing talked.

AUSTIN (as IT): Chi-i-ine?

ART (as DUVALL): Chine's not coming, buddy.

AUSTIN (as IT): [SADLY] Mrah.

AUSTIN: It kind of, like—

ART (as DUVALL): Chine's not coming, right?

KEITH (as LYKE): Uh, no. Chine is dead.

JACK (as PICKMAN): What happened?

JANINE (as ES): Do we know what—

AUSTIN: It just lays down next to you, Duvall, and like—you know, paws out, head flat down against the ground. Then turns its heads sideways.

ART: Yeah, I think Duvall tries to comfort—you know. Pets, scratches, I'm still working it out. Encouraging words.

KEITH (as LYKE): That's not how you do—

JANINE (as ES): Which chin do you scratch, you know?

ART (as DUVALL): I've been focusing on the peripheral ones, kind of like... like ears.

JANINE (as ES): Pickman, you had a question, didn't you?

JACK (as PICKMAN): What happened, Lyke?

KEITH (as LYKE): Um... Chine said, you know.

JACK (as PICKMAN): Uh-huh.

KEITH (as LYKE): You know, 'kill me or, you know, let me mess everything up.'

JACK (as PICKMAN): Yep.

KEITH (as LYKE): And, uh... so I, you know. Definitely stopped the carnival from consuming the whole town and making us all trapped inside it.

JACK (as PICKMAN): Good. I appreciate it. How?

KEITH (as LYKE): He did not try and stop me.

JANINE (as ES): You know that inferring things and saying things are basically the same thing?

KEITH (as LYKE): I—yeah. I killed Chine, but it wasn't like, a fight. It was just—I just did it. Is that what you mean?

JACK (as PICKMAN): Es, he used Aterika'Kaal in some way. He's been holding onto this thing forever, he let the power of it—

JANINE (as ES): [OVERLAPPING] Well, I think we all assumed that.

KEITH (as LYKE): [OVERLAPPING] I did not use Aterika'Kaal.

JACK (as PICKMAN): [CHUCKLES DISBELIEVINGLY] Uh-huh, yeah, okay.

KEITH (as LYKE): I do not have access to Aterika'Kaal presently.

JACK (as PICKMAN): Oh, right.

AUSTIN: [LAUGHS] Y'all never really talked about that either, huh?

ART: A lot was going on.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH (as LYKE): To the best of my knowledge, Alaway stole Aterika'Kaal.

ART (as DUVALL): [LAUGHS] [SARCASTIC] Oh my god, who would have thought that something bad would happen?

KEITH (as LYKE): I never even met that guy!

JANINE (as ES): 'Stole' is a fascinating word to me in this context. Aterika'Kaal is sentient and has a will as well.

KEITH (as LYKE): But it is planted.

JANINE (as ES): That is not a permanent state by any means. Why would it be?

KEITH (as LYKE): I—I will admit that you can technically move a tree, but I will still argue that trees are sort of permanently where they're at, unless someone steals them.

JANINE (as ES): And if a tree says 'hello, what if you steal me and we go do bad things together?'

KEITH (as LYKE): That would absolutely be on the scope of what we know.

JANINE (as ES): Okay.

KEITH (as LYKE): This was supposed to be about Chine. Don't you want to know about Chine?

JACK (as PICKMAN): How you killed him.

KEITH (as LYKE): It wasn't tough. He didn't make it hard.

JANINE (as ES): It's—okay. I don't know if the way to answer this question is to talk about how it was super easy for you to do.

[KEITH LAUGHS]

KEITH (as LYKE): I'm just—

JANINE (as ES): I don't know that that's—I think we all agree that the thing you did was the thing that needed to be done, probably. I don't think the things we want to hear are how, like, fast and easy and no problem at all it was.

KEITH (as LYKE): [INCREDULOUS] It seems like all you want is the gory details! I don't understand why you want that, either! Isn't it nice to know that it, you know, it wasn't an extremely difficult and painful thing, and was instead quick and easy?

ART (as DUVALL): Oh, it was peaceful?

KEITH (as LYKE): [STAMMERING] It was an experience.

ART (as DUVALL): [WHEEZES] What?



JANINE (as ES): Do you remember it?

KEITH (as LYKE): [FRUSTRATED] Yes!

JANINE (as ES): You're kind of talking like you weren't even there, even though we know you were.

KEITH (as LYKE): There was... a long... [SIGHS]

JACK (as PICKMAN): Lyke.

KEITH (as LYKE): Yes?

JACK (as PICKMAN): Have you found another god?

KEITH (as LYKE): No.

JACK (as PICKMAN): Are you telling the truth?

KEITH (as LYKE): Yes!

JANINE (as ES): You said no like you were hiding something in your mouth.

KEITH (as LYKE): [SIGHS] The exact vehicle for the killing, if you must know... is slightly mysterious, but did involve, the... you know. That animal.

JACK (as PICKMAN): Oh, no.

KEITH (as LYKE): Pickman, you remember from the library.

JACK (as PICKMAN): Mhm.

KEITH (as LYKE): It showed up and it, you know. It did it. And then there was... well, I can't exactly describe what then there was, but then it was over.

JACK (as PICKMAN): Alright. I've had enough of this.

KEITH (as LYKE): See, we could have just left it at it was over, and it was easy. And now everyone's all upset.

JACK: Shaking her head, you know. Slouching off towards some side room in the headquarters.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH (as LYKE): And, I'm sorry, what was the vehicle of the life you took yesterday, Pickman?

JANINE: Literal vehicle.

[JACK LAUGHS]

AUSTIN: A literal, uh—'Train. It was train.'

JACK (as PICKMAN): I killed Dayward YVE with a train.

KEITH (as LYKE): Right. So, this is a fucked up town, and we do fucked up things, and so I tried to kill Chine to save everyone's life, and it just so happened that a big bad wolf did it for me, and then it was over, and now it's all fine.

JACK (as PICKMAN): Mhm.

JANINE (as ES): Until the wolf comes back, I think that's—it's—I can't—

KEITH (as LYKE): I didn't give me the wolf.

JANINE (as ES): Well, you gave yourself one of the wolves that were—there's multiple wolves in this picture, really.

KEITH (as LYKE): Which is the second wolf?

JANINE (as ES): Aterika'Kaal is—

KEITH (as LYKE): Oh.

JANINE (as ES): You found a little wolf that you thought was very sweet, and said 'this will never grow up.'

KEITH (as LYKE): [OVERLAPPING] It had potent—sweetness potential.

JANINE (as ES): 'I'll keep you a puppy forever.'

KEITH (as LYKE): I don't see how we're not all collectively blaming Aterika'Kaal for ruining the good job I had been doing to the point.

JANINE: Oh, that's not how I thought that sentence was going to end when you started it.

KEITH: So, wait, what—did I say it wrong?

JANINE: [LAUGHING] No.

KEITH: Alaway. I meant to say Alaway ruined it. That's what I meant to say.

JANINE: Oh, sure.

KEITH: I think I said Aterika'Kaal.

JANINE: Yes.

KEITH (as LYKE): I was doing a great—Alaway's a bad, you know... whatever Alaway is. Alaway ruined this.

JANINE (as ES): [SIGHS] This is just a mess.

KEITH (as LYKE): It's less of a mess than it could have been, and almost was. What do you think, Duvall?

ART (as DUVALL): I think this was an unfortunate circumstance, and what needed to be done happened, and that maybe you play a little fast and loose with unspeakable powers sometimes. I think I've made that clear.

KEITH (as LYKE): I didn't ask for it. It just showed up.

ART (as DUVALL): You find yourself in weird situations a lot.

KEITH (as LYKE): It is unbelievable that these are the people taking me to task for this. I'm the normal one here.

[JACK LAUGHS]

KEITH (as LYKE): They said that. I can't remember who said that.

JANINE (as ES): Someone very normal, surely.

AUSTIN: Oh yeah, definitely, a real normal person.

ALI: Oh, it was the vampire guy.

KEITH: [LAUGHING] It was, yeah.

AUSTIN: Oh, that's true. It was—was it Lenore? Lenore. Yeah, it was.

ALI: [GIGGLING] The librarian.

JACK: God, when a vampiric librarian is like 'you're the normal one...'

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: Yep.

JACK: Pickman is gone. She has left the room completely.

AUSTIN: Then we should talk—I think that's a good spot to break at this point. We should talk about final images here. And again, I do want to come back for one last kind of—I think a series of one-on-one scenes makes sense to kind of see as the Blackwick Group kind of scatters and goes about their various business, but let's set some of that up here.

[1:20:00]

AUSTIN: Pickman, what do we see you do? What's the next image we see of Pickman?

JACK: Pickman is rolling and smoking a cigarette on the street opposite Maleister's house.

AUSTIN: Is this a show of force, or is this a—are you watching, what are you doing?

JACK: I think this is a combination of a show of force—I mean, this is—I’m absolutely trying to get that Spaghetti Western vibe of—which you see both from the protagonists and the antagonists in Spaghetti Westerns of either it’s the people inside peering out through the blinds, or twitching the curtains to see the people standing outside, or it’s the gunslinger standing outside keeping an eye on the person’s house to figure out where they’re gonna go, or also to dis-incentivise them from coming out, unless they want to make a show.

AUSTIN: Yeah. The camera sees Maleister’s sides bandaged from where he was shot. You know, pistol up on the—like a shelf next to the window, kind of leaning and looking, and turning and saying something to a deputy who heads outside, you know. And he goes about some other business. But he is definitely—you know, I think—

JACK: Lying low.

AUSTIN: Lying—it’s lying low, but it’s like using that influence a different way. ‘I don’t have to be out there in this moment.’ I think interspersed with that we probably get flashbacks of y’all looking over the papers that Hazard stole, and the papers are making it very clear. Basically, Dayward YVE has done a set-up with the Wrights of the Seventh Sun. He is not a true believer, he is not someone who is like ‘oh yeah, I can’t wait for Zevunzolia.’ I mean, I’m sure he would love to visit what they’re talking about, but he doesn’t even know that he believes it’s real. Or he didn’t believe it was real, before he was killed.

KEITH: The money’s real.

AUSTIN: He’s more—the money is real. It’s always nice to get an agreement from someone that they are going to buy stuff from you not just today, but tomorrow and next year as well. Right? That’s guaranteed money. And so, you know, he had made business arrangements with them tied to the Bluestone Quarry, tied to here. A lot of those arrangements will stick, it’s just that he won’t be in charge of them, whatever his business operation [is] will. Presumably someone back in Aldomina is getting a fucking letter sometime next week or the week after being like, ‘you have to move to Sangfielle to inherit your weird uncle’s business and run it.’ You know? But that’s a lot of time. And that might be a lot of time where the Wrights just take it over for themselves. Certainly that is probably what Maleister’s plan is.

JACK: Out of curiosity, do the notes give any sense as to where in Sangfielle they’re trying to build the tower?

AUSTIN: We’ve seen it. It’s Bell Metal Station. Bell Metal Station, which exists at the crosspoint of the Shape, where two of the major lines cross, one of the most—and it’s towards the kind of center of the Shape’s structure, is one of the most, you know, kind of magically powerful places in all of Sangfielle. It’s—there’s this great resonance and structure here. It’s part of the reason why the Red Zephyr hasn’t been able to tear it down yet. It’s like there is this sort of underlying super-foundation. It is part of the Shape.

And it’s growing every day with this bright blue stone, this stone that’s incredibly light but also very dense being pulled up from the Bluestone Quarry, called—I think it’s called welkin or welkin stone, that looks like the sky. It’s like looking at it is like looking at the blue sky. To the degree

that if it's an overcast day or if the sun is setting, it's like, for a pillar in the middle of the sky, the sky is blue. It's hard to even see the edges unless you really know what you're looking for. And it's getting taller and taller.

I mean, at this point, you know, you look through the paperwork and there are things in there that are confusing, like—there's lot of calls for things you know like pulleys, but 'ooh, we really want to get a crane. We really want to get, like, heavy construction machinery out of the mines.' Which they will not get now. Or if they will, it's gonna be the last of it. They won't get more and more of it. Right? They also now aren't going to get to trade the silver coin, which I guess is gone now. Did no one take the silver coin? Yeah, I guess not.

SYLVI: I don't think I ever found out where it was.

KEITH: Yeah, only Es was there.

JANINE: And I never—did I ever know that, like—

SYLVI: No, that one I played close to my chest.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Uh-huh. This is true.

JANINE: I was—I was like—I was looking for a way where it would feel reasonable to insert it, but just, our paths really didn't cross until that fight thing, and like, eh...

AUSTIN: [OVERLAPPING] This is how it happens, right?

SYLVI: Yeah. A lot's happened.

AUSTIN: Yeah, no, I think it's—that—this is—but listen, at the very least it's not going to be used to extort the Caravan of the Coin. Right? The Caravan of the Coin will continue its—we know this coin is now floating around this carnival, maybe someone else will pick it up and it'll find its way back one day. You know? So we got Pickman intimidating a cop, love it. What else do we got going on? As kind of final images as we close this out?

SYLVI: I think Hazard snuck off somewhere with their inconspicuous bag.

AUSTIN: Do we see it? What's—do we see their head or do we—

SYLVI: This is what I was gonna say, is I think what we see is like—Hazard keeps their hood up and takes the mask off, like we can see them putting it aside, and then they're opening this bag up, and like, the expressions are sort of mimicking what you'd expect someone who is looking down at this to be doing, like, it's doing all the things Hazard wants to be doing, it's just not connected.

AUSTIN: Interesting.

SYLVI: And I think that like, they sort of gently take it into their hands, sort of bring it up to their neck, and then we don't know what happens next. I'm gonna pull the curtain over there. People can sort of figure it out.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

SYLVI: Two horns on the devil, by the way. Just to—just so people don't think...

AUSTIN: Two—regular two horns. Yeah, you're not also—uh-huh. Your mask's single horn, I think, probably grew even more as you killed Uno. Right?

SYLVI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: It has to be, like, some sort of fun—keep that mask—

SYLVI: Yeah, Venom Snake.

AUSTIN: Yeah, Venom Snake. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

SYLVI: Oh, the mask isn't going anywhere. Like, Hazard might still wear the mask.

AUSTIN: You're keeping the mask on. Yeah, that's fun.

SYLVI: I haven't thought that far ahead. I just know that there's—no pun intended in 'thought that far ahead.' Anyway.

AUSTIN: Lye Lychen.

KEITH: Hello.

AUSTIN: What do we see of Lye Lychen?

KEITH: Uh, I don't know. It was weird. It was a weird day. I guess I'm like, 'wow, today was such a wild diversion from our job. What we were doing was trying to stop Alaway.' I guess I'm trying to figure out Alaway stuff.

AUSTIN: Yeah, okay.

KEITH: I think I'm sitting, I'm trying to use—I have a move—

AUSTIN: Yeah. Oh, I thought you were gonna—sorry, I thought you were gonna try to Boundless Conclave—or, whatever, Stone Chorus.

KEITH: Oh, I am gonna do that. That's part of this. But I didn't use a move today. One of my attacks is, it's—we've wrote it to be Aterika'Kaal-y.

AUSTIN: Right. Totally.

KEITH: It's the—it's like the water one. I can't remember what it's called.

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah. But now it's supposed to be like, flowers and vines and stuff instead.

KEITH: Yeah, yeah. It's the Kissed by a Rose one.

AUSTIN: You can feel the sense of power, as if it's telekinetic, but it is not the thorns and the vines.

KEITH: It's not.

AUSTIN: It's not.

KEITH: And what about if I use Sanctum of the Stone Chorus?

AUSTIN: Give me a number from 1-10.

KEITH: Seven. [QUICKLY] Eight, eight. Not seven. That's a bullshit answer.

AUSTIN: Eight. Yeah, that's fair. "The god of travelers takes the form of an adult man. He's very tall, and has a wide-chested build. He has very tangerine-colored hair worn in a precise style. His narrow eyes are peach-colored. He has lavender skin. He's usually portrayed as wearing a simple suit of armor and an armband. He carries a crescent. He has eight faces, but not all on his head. He sometimes takes the form of a living portal." And he's dead in the middle of his own realm. Covered in vines and blood.

KEITH: So what does that mean?

AUSTIN: You tell me. I think it means Lyke has something to try to stop. Lyke has a pretty clear objective.

KEITH: I'm getting an evil sense from this thing?

AUSTIN: You're getting a 'someone killed this god and sapped his power' from this thing. You're getting 'a vampire feasted here.' A pair of parasitic gods feasted here.

Duvall. Where do we see you next, Duvall?

ART: Um... I think—

AUSTIN: And It, presumably.

ART: Right, yeah. Which is I guess gonna make this next thing a little tricky, but I don't think completely impossible. I think Duvall puts the painting together.

AUSTIN: Interesting. How are you keeping It busy enough for you to do this?

ART: I think with some sort of—hold on, let me see if I can come up with a fun answer for this.

AUSTIN: Are you going to like, a pet store website to find a fun toy?

ART: No, I'm going to my Resources.

AUSTIN: Ah, good.

KEITH: It's a Kong full of red meat.

ART: You know, like, maybe a stake would be a fun thing to chew on. I don't remember where I got stakes, Haven Religion d6.

AUSTIN: You just have steaks? [LAUGHING] Oh, S-T-A-K—

ART: Well, it's S-T-A-K-E-S.

DRE: Like vampire stakes. Not like, 'from a cow' steaks.

[GROUP LAUGHTER]

ART: You wouldn't chew on a steak, you would just eat a steak.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I was confused.

JACK: I don't know, if you've got four mouths, you're chewing on basically anything.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Chewing a lot. Yeah.

DRE: Also depends on what the cut is, and...

AUSTIN: Yeah, exactly.

JACK: Right, right. And in this case it's wood.

AUSTIN: How fatty is it, how lean is it, yeah, exactly.

ART: I don't remember getting these at all.

AUSTIN: Me either. I believe that this is real, but who could say from when?

[1:30:04]

ART: Or if it's more funny chewing on a Red Zephyr torch.

AUSTIN: No, that seems dangerous to me.

[KEITH AND ALI LAUGH]

ALI: [LAUGHING] Duvall just not paying attention to his dog and then from behind the fucking choo-choo train.

AUSTIN: [LAUGHING] Exactly, yeah. [IMITATES TRAIN WHISTLE] Yeah, uh-huh.

JACK: Red Zephyr is like 'you called?'

AUSTIN: Yes. Oh, that's so funny.

ART: Maybe Jolyon knows how to train a dog.



AUSTIN: Yeah, maybe. So yeah, so you're putting this back together. We have it in the back, kind of chewing on these wooden stakes, one at a time. [IMITATES GNAWING] You know, doin' that. Teething, almost.

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And you're doing this ritual, finally, to put these two halves of this painting back together.

ART: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Which is magical in some way, and—are you using your bugs to do it, somehow?

ART: Yeah, I think so. I think it's like, sort of like stitching it together in their really small little hands.

AUSTIN: Oh, sure. That's fun. Yeah.

ART: Not like, literally stitching it, like thread or anything, but you know.

AUSTIN: No. I mean, it could be. And that could be fun, too.

ART: Sure.

AUSTIN: But I think—or magically, or enzymatically, or something. There's just lots of ways to do this, you know. I bet you have bugs that produce some sort of silk. There's all sorts of ways this could happen, and maybe it's a mix of them all.

ART: Yeah, statistically gotta, yeah.

AUSTIN: I think you notice something—and I don't know—it's like, I'm gonna give you the metaphor, you know, I'm gonna give you the image, and I don't know if you want to answer this now or save the answer or never answer it, but I think this is getting an answer for you in some way. Whatever that answer is.

You, for the first time, looking at this painting—which again, it's called *Remembering the Zahir*, and it's two figures. It's one person sitting to be painted for a portrait, and a second person in the background, kind of in dark clothes, walking across a sort of garden landscape behind the room out the window, or a kind of open door, into the—a pair of big open doors into a garden or something, or the woods, I've described it as being natural in the past. And kind of walking from right to left. And you've had these two halves before, and you've seen some sort of smaller version of it in print before, but it's only in doing it this time that you realize that the two figures are the same figure.

The person who is sitting in steady repose to have their painting drawn, and the person kind of walking away with a vengeance, there's like a—there's a real heat to the step of the back figure as they move. I think both of those figures are the same, and it's the first time that you've recognized that there is something about them—maybe they look different on first blush, but

there's some particular facet that makes you realize that they're the same. Maybe there's something else, I don't know. But you realize that, and that hits something deep into you.

And I think there's one other thing, which we've not talked about, because it wouldn't have been visible until now. As you stitch it together, you catch something that was hidden in the missing material. And I wonder if you even—I will leave it ambiguous as to 'has it always been there, or did the Structure, through the bugs, add it,' but there is a mirror in the room. And you don't see much in the mirror because of the angle that it's at. But you catch the hand of the artist in the mirror, painting the portrait. And it feels, to look at it, there is a sort of optical illusion of motion, as if it's doing the painting as you—as your eyes—it doesn't, you know, if you stare at it, it stops moving, right? But if it's—if you're looking at the mirror in the painting from the corner of your eyes, it's as if it's painting it as you look at it.

ART: Alright.

KEITH: Adding more to it or painting—

AUSTIN: I mean, it's a hand—it's an image of a hand moving as if it's painting. You know? It's like looking at a TV screen of someone's hand painting, but it's a little mirror in the background of this image. You know, in the room that the person is sitting in. You know? There's like a classic—this is like a—you know. The mirror in a painting, you know, is like, such a—an established old thing, that I do not have the art history to pull those references very quickly from, but I'm sure some of our listeners are shouting at me the names of like, all of the most important famous paintings that do this.

KEITH: Me. I made that up.

AUSTIN: Oh, you made it up. Okay.

KEITH: I made up doing that, yeah.

ART: Wow.

AUSTIN: Incredible. Cool.

KEITH: Yeah, I did that, I also did the hand painting itself. I did that too.

AUSTIN: Oh, okay. Okay. Yeah, yeah, yeah. The one that I am thinking of is *Las Meninas*, which is Spanish for 'the ladies in waiting,' which is by Diego Velázquez, which is the one that I think I probably learned about 15 years ago in school or whatever. But I'm not saying that this painting looks like that. I'm just saying that that is a—that is a famous painting that does something interesting with mirrors.

KEITH: Oh, it's got that dog. It's got the dog.

AUSTIN: Yeah, there's a dog in that painting. So, anyway.

KEITH: I did th—I know it because I did that one.

AUSTIN: That's the opposite, there is a mirror showing the subjects of the portrait in the mirror, instead of it being a portrait of the subjects, if that makes sense. It's interesting. Anyway. So yeah, that is that. And I don't know what you take from that. I mean, I feel like there are—I can give you emotional feelings associated with both these people. I guess what I would tell you from studying it is, you get the sense that the—it's hard for you to tell whether the person sitting and the person moving—you know it's the same person now, but you don't know 'were they moving first, or sitting first?' And I don't know how to analyze whether—is motion—how do you read motion and stability? Is stability—does that mean that identity is always the same, does motion mean that we're always always changing, I'm not going to answer that for Duvall, that is Duvall's big enlightenment question. But I think it's fair to say that you can check off that Zenith beat of figuring it out. But I don't know what it is, you'll have to tell me, [CHUCKLING] or decide you don't want to tell me, but you'll have to decide it in some way for what Duvall decides here or figures out, so.

ART: I mean, we can see what happens between now and the little epilogues, but I think you're gonna have to tune in to—

AUSTIN: A follow-up, yeah.

ART: Tune into the... final event.

AUSTIN: And who knows, even then, right?

ART: Yeah, and who knows?

AUSTIN: Alright.

ART: And I think it's like, Duvall sits and studies the painting and you see like, the insects also study the painting, and I think eventually, like, Duvall calls over... calls it over, and they sort of spend a little time, you know, getting to know each other/staring at a painting—

AUSTIN: It's like sniffing the painting and goes to lick it once to see if it tastes good.

ART (as DUVALL): No, don't lick it. Don't—don't do it, bud.

AUSTIN: It does not taste good. It stops licking it. Um, Marn.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Is it just more of those shots of you going across mountains and stuff heading towards—where are you going?

ALI: I think up north. I think, um... yeah. I think it's like Marn and a group of people, like—like, Marn and Bucho going out, walking up the road a little bit to try and find a wagon or whatever.

AUSTIN: Right. It's like a bunch of people.

ALI: It's like a lot—well, yeah.

AUSTIN: I mean, it's not like five people. It's not like—I think it's probably more like 20 to 30 people, right?

ALI: Yeah. I—yeah. I was thinking like—

AUSTIN: Maybe more. It's in that double digits zone.

ALI: Uh-huh. 15-20 was mine.

AUSTIN: Yeah. That makes sense.

ALI: Which is an ambitious... [LAUGHING]

AUSTIN: Yeah. Are you—I guess let's maybe—I'll give you some time to think about where you're going if you don't quite know yet, but.

ALI: Yeah, it's tough, I was thinking either the Telluricists because I bet Kerr Kern is probably there.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Or Marn's own home neighborhood is kind of on the way.

AUSTIN: Yeah. That's true.

ALI: And then just sort of like, a place that I trust enough to think that these people would be safe there.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Because I think the thing for Marn is like, the, like—being a part of the Blackwick Group had become like a compromise of being able to help people. [LAUGHING] And—

AUSTIN: Right, well, you agreed to help people in this one particular way, which is 'I'm going to go to Blackwick and help people in Blackwick,' but that really got in the way of your larger project of helping people at large through medical research and study and all that other stuff. Right?

ALI: Right, yeah, yeah, yeah.

[1:40:00]

ALI: And I just—I think some of—'cause like—some of Marn's disappointment about herself and what she's done really comes to a point when you think, like, the history of Blackwick vis a vis the decision around Alaway, or the decision around the decision they made with the Wrights via Polyte and stuff like that, so like there's a guilt that she has to carry with her to like, cut this off, you know, and be like 'I'm making a stand in this way.'

AUSTIN: Yeah. Alright. Well, we'll come back to that in our vignettes. Es. I think we have an open conversation waiting with Dyre based on the previous night's opening conversation about

potentially recruiting you for a thing. Es, are you leaving with Dyre Ode to Concentus for whatever this supposed—yeah.

JANINE: Yeah, I think—I think like—I don't know where Dyre would be found. I'm presuming—

AUSTIN: I think at the saloon sipping a latte.

JANINE: Oh. [CHUCKLING] That's convenient.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. Well, probably a tea. Probably a tea.

JANINE: I think, like—yeah. I think when Es realizes that, at some point, she comes downstairs with like a—I imagine, again, I imagine Es, despite being extremely fancy, travels relatively light. So I kind of picture her with a sort of hat box-style suitcase where it's like round, and you look at it now and it's like, how did you put anything for even a night in there?

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

JANINE: But somehow people were like, 'yeah, this is enough for a couple weekends.' So I think she comes downstairs, you know, gets a tea of her own, and sits down at the table and says:

JANINE (as ES): So you're going to Concentus.

AUSTIN (as DYRE ODE): I am. While it's just us, I can tell you a little more. How much do you know about the history of Sangfielle? Actually—

JANINE (as ES): [UNCERTAIN LAUGHTER]

AUSTIN (as DYRE ODE): You know about the Wrights, don't you?

JANINE (as ES): Not as much as some people I know do, but I'm aware.

AUSTIN (as DYRE ODE): How to explain what I'm working on...

AUSTIN: And, you know, I think, takes six sugar cubes and places them on a plate, and dips their spoon into the tea to make it warm, and says:

AUSTIN (as DYRE ODE): There was a time when there was only one world. Now there are six. One for each sun. And each... the history here is murky. The reasons, I have theories, but nothing I can be confident about. Each has come under the sway of one of the great powers of the world. In each, they learned about Zevunzolia.

AUSTIN: And I think, with a long, bony finger, places the sugar cubes one on top of another, as if to indicate the tower, before toppling them back to six on the ground. Or on the plate. Not on the ground. That'd be rude.

AUSTIN (as DYRE ODE): In the world of Unschola, they still debate what Zevunzolia is and whether it's something that should be built, or something that should be avoided.

AUSTIN: And then he reaches out with the spoon and melts that one.

AUSTIN (as DYRE ODE): In the world of the Kay'van, they work to prepare for what terrible thing may come from a city such as that. Such excess. Such luster.

AUSTIN: Melts that one.

AUSTIN (as DYRE ODE): Those in Ojan believe it to be a metaphor. Each person, their own Zevunzolia. A Zevunzolia of the heart, a Zevunzolia of supreme eternal and internal godhood. And I am not sure they're wrong, in their world.

AUSTIN: And melts another.

AUSTIN (as DYRE ODE): The Pale Magistrates hunt any who say the word in their world. They've covered the continent. A new excuse for witch hunts. It will be a terrible thing if they learn that it already exists.

AUSTIN: And melts that one.

AUSTIN (as DYRE ODE): Aldomina's already built it. The Zevunzolia you've seen is that which they've already built. They set out to construct it immediately. Seeing its power, and wondering if this was the ladder to god. We are the sixth world. This world used to be something else. A history older than I think most know. There are gods before our gods. Time before our time. And in our world, we were to prepare for whatever comes next, with all of the vigor and strangeness of this land. But as they are wont to do, and as they have done throughout history, they boxed us in with a wall called Concentus.

But this is not the old world, and this is not one of the other five powers. This world is Sangfielle. Would you like to come with me as I break down a wall?

AUSTIN: And like, leans forward a little.

JANINE: I think, very deliberately in this moment, Es says:

JANINE (as ES): We would.

AUSTIN (as DYRE ODE): I don't want to mislead you. Do you have any questions about what our endeavor is?

JANINE (as ES): I think it's a case of not quite knowing what I don't know. There are a lot of implications here that I'm not quite sure about.

AUSTIN (as DYRE ODE): I'll frame it like this. The actions I will take will admittedly bring pain to a great many people. That pain is... is a reflection of what was done to this place. Sangfielle is the way it is because of what was done to it. The people of Aldomina, of the Republica, of the Magistratum—these people came here and brought suffering with them. They cut the land until it bled, and instead of suturing the wound, instead of repairing the body, they fled and locked the door behind them. And, unfortunately, the people of Ojan and Kay'va helped them. A myth was told.

AUSTIN: And I think that there's like—you've only ever seen Dyre Ode calm, but something is shaking inside of them here. And you see something very strange, which is—as he speaks, you begin to see the first tiny tendrils of musculature and skin forming, until there is a face behind his mask. It's as if they're so angry that they are resuscitating themselves to some other form.

AUSTIN (as DYRE ODE): They knew what they were doing here, and chose to—instead of confronting the harm done—build a myth. A myth that the land was sick. A myth that Sangfielle was haunted by the Course, by the Structure, by the Shape, as if those things were anything but echoes of what they had done. When we break the wards and walls of Concentus, the blood will spill out of the room, and into the rest of the house. I suspect some people may get soaked in the process.

AUSTIN: And the skin fades away, and, I think, you know, he's back to being bones. And back to—they found their calm a little bit again.

JANINE (as ES): I guess my question then is... I understand the course of action. I suppose what remains is the spirit of it. The heart of it. The—

JANINE: I don't mean to keep just reusing words that we use. [LAUGHS]

AUSTIN: That we use. Yeah. Uh-huh. Yeah. The Heart, the Course, yeah.

JANINE: Uh-huh, yeah. It's fine. It's good writing.

JANINE (as ES): I do not want to leave bodies to bleed. Bringing down the wards will hurt people, and at the same time I understand the importance of it. I understand... I understand why in the bigger picture it's desirable. But someone who was born 20 years ago, and who lives their life day after day making chairs—if they're suffering, I don't want to close the door on them. I want to still be able to treat them better.

[1:50:12]

AUSTIN (as DYRE ODE): I would have it no other way. When the walls come down, when Sangfielle spreads out until it is the world, when the Course and the storms thereof move across the green plains of Aldomina, and the Shape extends its rails until they touch on the other side of the world, I would hope that your kindness escapes this place, too.

I want Sangfielle to cover the world, but I want all of Sangfielle to cover the world. I want the comradery of the Telluricists. I want the ambition of Queen Virtue. I want... every strange day to become the calendar by which everyone lives by. I would never ask that you vow not to aid those who live by those days, because those who commit to aiding them here in Sangfielle now are part of what makes this place what it is.

[MUSIC OUTRO - [“Sangfielle” by Jack de Quidt](#)]

AUSTIN (as DYRE ODE): I will be the hammer. You be the mortar after.