

Sangfielle 07: The Hymn of the Mother-Beast Pt. 3

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

[Intro — Episode 6 Recap]

AUSTIN: And you make it up, out of one of these holes in the ground. You can see down into the pit, where the cathedral was.

[Music begins: [Sangfielle](#) by Jack de Quidt.]

AUSTIN: You can see the... the bridge. And you can see all around you—as the salt plains go, for miles in every direction. It's been a few hours, that you've gone through this place. And then, there's another thing you notice—the suns are in the same position, still before noon. Time does not seem to have passed while you were in the warren.

SYLVIA: Oh, god...

AUSTIN: Mhm. Sorry. Sorry Virtue, it's gonna be one of those days.

[Ali chuckling.]

SYLVIA: [sighing]

DRE: [expectant] Mhm.

AUSTIN: You see someone... marching slow but rhythmically down the edge of the... canyon. And then you see there's another person behind them. And another person behind them. And up on their shoulders is a sack. One *extremely* long sack—it just goes, and goes, and goes... *You* remember this, Pickman. Where'd you see this? Oh right, you saw it in a dream.

And you're also close enough to see their faces. And this is the first of these nuns you've seen. It's as if *all* of the moisture has left their body. Their faces are like... dust, or ceramic about to shatter. And in, just like, *all* the effort in the world they can muster, tumble this thing down the river bank, into the fire.

Jack (as PICKMAN): [frantic] There's someone in the fire! They threw someone. They threw someone into the fire, they're in the sack. I dreamt about this!

AUSTIN: And it is... it is like, kicking as it's doing it, but once you get free of the fire, it... stops. *Inside* is the furred and scaled, and... slowly dying eighth leg of... the dragon that was in there. Um, I think, upon closer inspection, it becomes kind of clear that this is like... this is

something the nuns made. You know, you see needlework, here in the light of day. You see that this is, like... um, that *this* leg, at least, is something that... they built.

AUSTIN: As you've made it now past this fire, and you've dealt with the canvas sack and what was in it, um... you see this abbey, or this priory in front of you. Uh, as you're walking, and the kind of wind is howling, you get that thing where you see something happen, and then the sound takes a moment to echo out towards you.

First, what you see happening is one of the big stained glass windows—it shatters, and the glass goes flying everywhere. And you're too far away to see what broke it, but what you see in the sky—and what you hear afterwards—is startling nonetheless. There is... a sort of vein of red lightning strikes across the blue sky.

[Music ends.]

[Episode Start]

AUSTIN: Welcome to *Friends at the Table*, an actual play podcast focused on critical worldbuilding, smart characterization, and fun interaction between good friends. I am your host, Austin Walker. I'm joined today by Andrew Lee Swan...

DRE: Hey! You can find me on Twitter at [@swandre3000](https://twitter.com/swandre3000).

AUSTIN: Alicia Acampora.

ALI: Um, hi! You can find me over at Twitter... Ali—[laughing] Wait, sorry, why do I always fuck up on this?

AUSTIN: I dunno!

ALI: Um, over at [@ali_west](https://twitter.com/ali_west) on Twitter.com. You can find the show over at [@friends_table](https://twitter.com/friends_table), and there is another podcast that lives [chuckling] over at [@more_civilized](https://twitter.com/more_civilized).

AUSTIN: Oh...! Or, patreon.com/civilized.

ALI: [amused] Uh-huh...!

AUSTIN: Ali and I, our pod— our *Star Wars* podcast has a patreon now, [Sylvia chuckling.] and we got */civilized*, and I'm happy about it.

[Ali laughing.]

AUSTIN: Uhh, also joining us, Sylvia Clare.

SYLVIA: Hey, I'm Sylvi. You can find me on Twitter at [@sylvibullet](https://twitter.com/sylvibullet), and you can listen to my other show *Emojidrome* wherever you get your podcasts.

AUSTIN: And Jack de Quidt.

JACK: Hi! You can find me on Twitter at [@notquitereal](https://twitter.com/notquitereal), or buy any of the music featured on the show at notquitereal.bandcamp.com.

AUSTIN: All right! Um, today we are continuing to play our game of *Heart: The City Beneath* by Grant Howitt and Christopher Taylor. Uh, my goals are to, uh—instead of planning, ask questions; reuse details, but always evoke an atmosphere of wonder, horror, and humanity; build and break tension; pay attention to what the players want, both long and short term; and play to find out what happens.

Um... All right, so... We were walking—[while chuckling] or you were—uh, walking towards the... the priory when, um... a—I guess, to zoom out a little bit more: Y'all were hired, to find someone, right?

DRE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Does anyone remember this person's name?

DRE (overlapping): Ohh, I wrote it somewhere...

SYLVIA (overlapping): Uh... Yes, Janek.

AUSTIN: Janek, yes. Janek Polyte, was the name of... that you were given.

SYLVIA: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Um... who is, um, a... a Kay'van, which is the... species, or culture of kind of seahorse-like folks, um, part of the kind of group of young folks who initially found the strange heart... sac. Or not heart sac, sorry—*egg* sac, um, that was... in the altar underneath the... the, uh, abbey up in... in your... up in Blackwick.

Um, and then... went missing, you know, a few days a— [breathing] a few days ago. Was seen, seemingly being pursued by someone, maybe, um—or, I guess you learned later was being pursued by someone. *Seemingly* being pursued by one of the Magistrates from the Pale Magistratum, the kind of... goat folk home, [chuckling] where there's a bunch of... super religious, like... martials, who, uh, enact justice all by themselves—you've no idea what that's about, necessarily. You traced...

ALI: Can...

AUSTIN: Go ahead.

ALI: Can I ask a clarifying question, 'cause the like...

AUSTIN: Always.

ALI: There was like a song, and they had to sing it together, but did it seem like there was like, a fight before that?

AUSTIN: There was a fight, absolutely.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: In fact, you found... you found a knife that you would believe to be Janek's, um, shot through with the sort of corrosive bullet [**Ali:** Oh, right right right.] that... that you then found the remnants of in the Residuum. Um, so there was some sort of fight, and *yet* they still sung whatever that hymn was, in order to like, transition into this space—into this place, the uh, the abbey that was at the... or the cathedral that was at the bottom of the kind of like, salt pit.

But yeah, they seemed to fight. And also, where that was was inside of a chapel, underneath... underneath Blackwick, where there was a White-Flower Beast, or a White-Flower... um... Ca... what was it—Caretaker—a White-Flower Caretaker, which was a big... flower... monster, [chuckling] that was guarding an orange tree, and the oranges seemed to potentially be eggs, or some other sort of... uh, you know, creatures on the way to being born—um, or changing maybe. You got past that, anyway, you did the s— You did the hymn, you—

JACK: That thing's still alive though, right?

SYLVIA (overlapping): Yep.

AUSTIN (overlapping): *Oh*, yeah. You just left it there.

JACK: Interesting to know, for sort of... departing.

[**Ali** laughing.]

AUSTIN: The future? Yeah, uh-huh.

JACK: Uh-huh.

AUSTIN: Sure! We'll see how Blackwick's doing. Um...

ALI: Yeah, I, um... When I hung up the call I was like, "We should have killed that so like," [while laughing] "people could go down there again," but it's fine.

AUSTIN: It's— I'm sure it's fine. I'm sure!

ALI: Uh... yeah, no worries there.

AUSTIN: No, like, that was one of the things I was— I didn't wanna—/ didn't wanna be the one to say that, but like... that thing isn't just gonna chill...

[**Ali** laughing.]

AUSTIN: That situation isn't gonna vanish because you didn't... you didn't come to a closure with it.

ALI: Uh-huh.

AUSTIN: That creature will continue doing the thing it was doing before, and we'll see what that is, down the road [chuckling] at some point. Um...—presumably. In any case, you are here now. You made your way out of the salt pit, through the tunnels, uh, where you ran into like, a walking bat. You found some bones of some other people who'd made their way here.

You made your way up to a bridge, you managed to locate, uh, the right direction to go. You saw a vision—or you saw reality, uh, that was drawn from a vision, or that— that, I guess, that, um... Pickman had seen in a vision, uh, of hers before—of people carrying a huge, like, burlap sack—and then, you saw it get tossed onto like, a fire pit in the middle of this canyon. Um... and then, opened it? And revealed a... a dragon leg?

DRE (overlapping): Mhmm...

AUSTIN: Is that correct? Uh, a leg of the beast that was...

JACK (overlapping): Like, a kind of Frankensteined dragon leg, right? It was like...

AUSTIN (overlapping): It was like a Frankensteined, yeah.

[Ali chuckling.]

JACK: It was *made* of—you could see that it had been sewn together.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: And then *Marn* said... "Sick. Time for— [chuckling] Time for me to get some... some stuff!"

AUSTIN: Mhm! That happened. That's true.

DRE: Mhm! Me too!

AUSTIN (overlapping): Yeah, both Marn and... and Chine.

JACK (overlapping): And Chine! This taboo... uh, taboo dragon... bone.

AUSTIN: Yeah! Uh-huh.

ALI: If people are walking around— [laughing] putting dragon legs back together, [Jack chuckling] that's— that's, you know, I wanted to see the techniques there.

AUSTIN: Mm! Mhm.

JACK: [amused] There's lots to learn!

AUSTIN: Um...

ALI: Yeah! [chuckling]

AUSTIN: And then... you got past that, and then, a— you could see the priory in the distance. And when you, uh... when you kind of grew closer to it, um, a shot rung [sic] out, the glass—the kind of stained glass window at the front of it broke, and a kind of, um... a kind of streak of red lighting spread across the sky, and stuck in place, and kind of pulsed, kind of in the same sort of... corrosive, red—with the same kind of corrosive, red coloring as the bullet that you saw—or the remnants of the bullet that you saw in the Residium, that Virtue cleaned up, um, so that it wouldn't spread everywhere. [chuckling] Uh... And then— And that's kind of where we were, you are again gonna approach the priory. I—I believe, I guess you're not— You're probably not turning around at this point. Um...

SYLVIA: Oh, no, I wouldn't— I mean,

[Austin chuckling.]

Sylvia (as VIRTUE MONDEGREEN): Y'all can do whatever, but... I'm checking this out.

[10 minutes]

AUSTIN: *Can we*, before we go any further, go over our... beats?

SYLVIA: Mhm! Yeah.

AUSTIN: Virtue, you wanna go first, since... You know.

SYLVIA: Yeah, sure. So, um... Uh... After la— Do we wanna talk about the one I marked off last time?

AUSTIN: Tell me— Tell me if you marked one off, yeah yeah yeah.

SYLVIA: Okay. Um, so I marked off "Gain access to knowledge that someone tried to conceal."

AUSTIN: Mhm.

SYLVIA: Um, that was like, the spell, among some other stuff that we found there, I believe.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

SYLVIA: Right?

AUSTIN: Mhm!

SYLVIA: And then... My two current active ones are "Gain favor with a faction that might help you learn more about your goal," and my new one is "Take minor Mind fallout."

AUSTIN: Um, and your goal, again, is about trying to find a way to return to the sort of immortal undeath that you had before?

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay.

SYLVIA: Um, it is... It... Do you want me to go into the thing that I messaged you, or do you think that would be more fun to... [**Austin:** Um...] like... to have that as a secret for... for her?

AUSTIN (overlapping): I think— In— You could say, in broad strokes, do you know what I mean?

SYLVIA: Uh, y—

AUSTIN: You could say where you think your... that sort of research is going.

SYLVIA: Yeah. So... Um... Virtue believes that basically, the way for her to... get back to her vampiric powers, or even surpass them, is through using the, um... energies, and like, life of— life and death energies that pass through the Residuum. Uh... I think that's probably the easiest way to put it right now.

AUSTIN: Sure. Great. I love to steal... life energies from...

SYLVIA: Yeah!

AUSTIN: A... a realm of beauty and... [chuckling] and, uh... finality.

SYLVIA (overlapping): It all goes *somewhere*. So...

AUSTIN: Right. So what if it came to *you* instead, is what you're saying?

SYLVIA (overlapping): [cheerful] Exactly!

AUSTIN: Yeah, uh-huh! [chuckling] Uh...

SYLVIA: It'd be a waste otherwise...!

AUSTIN: [chuckling] All right, who is up next?

DRE: Uh, I can go. Um...

AUSTIN: All right, tell me about Chine's... Chine's, uh, beats.

DRE: So... Uh, last session I completed the beat of “Allow something dangerous of the Heart to live when you could’ve killed it.”

AUSTIN: Mhm.

DRE: That was the, like, flower... dog thing [**Austin:** (amused) Mhm!] that we ran into initially. Um... so the beats that I have for this session are “Perform an act of service to an NPC Witch,” and “Following a long ritual, name the Heart. Only refer to it by this name from now on.” Uh, both of those are minor.

AUSTIN: Cool. I’ll note that I’m gonna say Witch in like, the broader sense, not the... [**Dre:** Yeah.] the book class the Witch, because that would only refer to a very limited set of things, and I wanna... not do that, I’d rather refer to... many things! Um... so... cool. Uh... Marn?

ALI: Um, yeah, so last session I also, um, discovered information that someone tried to conceal.

AUSTIN: Which was like, the... the... a combination of like, getting here [**Ali:** Yeah.] and also the kind of salt... the— fulfilling salt that you can eat.

ALI: Ohhh, yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah, uh-huh.

AUSTIN: That you can sustain yourself on. Yeah.

ALI: Uh-huh. Yummy...! Um... [**Austin** chuckling] [while chuckling] Anyway... My active beats are, um, “Succs—” [stumbling over words]—uh, *bweuh*—“Succeed at a task that someone else has recently failed to achieve,” and “Establish a connection on a delve.”

AUSTIN: Okay! We’ll talk about what that means... when we get to another delve, I think.

ALI: Mm!

AUSTIN: Um... All right, and Pickman. Is that right? Pickman’s last?

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah, okay.

JACK: My, uh—last time, I saw something from my dreams in the real world. Um... Pickman dreamt the image of the people throwing the... leg—or, the bag—into the fire pit, [**Austin:** Mm, mhm.] and then they saw it. Uh, so my beats going forward now are “Be rendered helpless in the Heart for an hour or more,” [**Austin** chuckling] which is a minor beat, and “Find a Heart-touched sapling on a delve, and bring it back to a haven for planting.”

AUSTIN: *Wonderful.* Great. Um, are there any other questions before we continue? In terms of clarifying things, whether that’s fiction or rules or anything else.

[Short pause.]

SYLVIA: Oh, um, do we know the domain for the place we're at yet?

AUSTIN: Um, you are going to be in a—we do, it's Religion, and I wanna say... that might be it.

SYLVIA: Okay.

DRE: [as if put off or intimidated] Wough...

AUSTIN: Uh, let me double check my notes, one second... Um... Many places are one thing, you know? Uh...

[**Ali** chuckling.]

DRE: Yeah... Mm.

AUSTIN: It's just that we've been to places that are... not one thing in the past, and... this is just [uncertain] Re-li-giooon... [checking notes] Yeah, Religion. Tier 2.

SYLVIA: Okay, cool.

AUSTIN: So, you approach this place—the Priory of the Mother-Hymn, is what it's called.

SYLVIA: Good name. Um...

(as **VIRTUE**): All right, who wants to open the door? [pausing] It's not gonna be *me*, I mean, come on.

[**Dre** laughing.]

Sylvia (as VIRTUE): How are we gonna get back? I cast the spell.

DRE: Um... I'll— I'll—

SYLVIA (overlapping): [while chuckling] By the way—

Dre (as CHINE): I'm gonna knock. I'll— I'll knock. That seems polite.

SYLVIA: [amused] I will say, out of character, she has *no idea* if that spell will get us back.

[**Ali**, **Jack**, and **Austin** laughing.]

AUSTIN: So you knock, and, uh... You can hear some movement behind the... door. Uh... But no one comes to answer it, at this point.

DRE: Um...

Ali (as MARN): Maybe they didn't hear you.

DRE: Okay. Um...

[Ali laughing.]

DRE: Yeah, sure, that's— that's a good idea. Um, I think Chine knocks again, and then like, cups, uh... a hand around their mouth and goes,

(as CHINE): [louder] Hellooo-ooo?

[Short pause.]

Austin (as UNKNOWN PERSON): [quiet] Is that...

ALI: [something very quiet, drowned out]

AUSTIN: And then someone... you do hear someone approach.

[Someone chuckling quietly.]

AUSTIN: Um... And... She says,

Austin (as UNKNOWN WOMAN): Who— Who is that speaking?

[Someone chuckling.]

Dre (as CHINE): Um, it's... me—[friendly tone] Hi! My name's... My name's Chine, nice to meet you.

AUSTIN: Uh, the door opens, and it is, uh, Sister Marisha, who would have been the Boundless Conclave... attendant, that you knew as like, a child.

JACK: Huh.

DRE: Mhmm...

AUSTIN: Um, who left, uh... Eastern Folly—then Eastern Folly—in the middle of our... uh, *Ground Itself* game. And, I think, upon seeing *you*, she says...

Austin (as SISTER MARISHA): Now, this is a *surprise*. Chine... [exhaling] [more serious tone] What are you doing here?

[Short pause.]

AUSTIN: Um...

Dre (as CHINE): [sighing] Oh, it is a... It is a *long* story, um...

AUSTIN: She is—I should just briefly, um... She is, I'd say, you know, in her... at this point, if she... if she was there when you... How old were you? Do we know how old you are?

DRE: Th... Like, mid-to-late thirties.

AUSTIN: Yeah, so I think she's probably in her sixties, her mid-to-late sixties.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: Um... She has, um... She has like, gray hair that is becoming increasingly white. She is, uh, a white woman of like, dark features—you know, she has like, um... dark brown eyes, and her skin has like, an olive hue, but, um... I will say that, like, seeing her here, it's like her skin feels a little dry, compared to in Blackwick. This place, it's not—it's a desert. [Someone chuckling] Very little humidity, clearly. [chuckling]

DRE: Mhmm.

AUSTIN: Uh, you don't know how long she's been here, but... is not moisturizing, as far as you can see. Uh, and like—

DRE: [amused] Damn, dragged! [laughing]

AUSTIN: Uh—you know, what are you gonna— Where are you gonna get moisturizer out here? I don't— You know, there... is not much.

JACK: Also... Am I misremembering, or when we saw the procession to the fire pit, um... Had the nuns been like, desiccated?

AUSTIN: "Desiccated" is strong. Um, but I do believe I described— I couldn't remember if I described this or not 'cause it's been a week, uh, but yes—their faces had become ashen, or... ceramic. When I say ashen, I mean *truly* ashen. *Her* face is not like that. Um, which I think, in this moment, Pickman, makes you wonder—"was I confusing that with my dream?" You know?

JACK: Right—yes. In that feeling of like, "Was that two weeks ago, or did I dream that completely?"

AUSTIN: Correct. Correct, yeah.

Dre (as CHINE): [sighing] Anyway, um... Sister—is... We're here looking for a child of Blackwick who has gone missing, and, um... we think has wandered in here. Wherever... here is—is this where you've *been*? The whole time, that you've left?

Austin (as MARISHA): Y—yes, my time with the Conclave [rushed] came to and end—come in, um, introduce... your friends, and we will get you situated. Do you need, um... d—we will... c... come with me.

AUSTIN: Um, and brings you in. And I think this kind of opening area is... There is like, a... um, a... a lot of—there are a lot of candles here, and little shrines, um, all of which—unlike the Boundless Conclave stuff where there'd be little shrines to a bunch of different gods—here it is all to—Here it is all variations—icons, and statuettes, and, uh, you know, little, um... kind of painted... uh, screens and stuff—um, of the Mother-Beast and her child, um, which, you know, we've now seen on screen for real as that kind of furred and scaled dragon with eight legs—or we were saying with seven legs mostly, um, with a long neck and kind of some strange shape—but *here*, I think it's largely, uh, anthropomorphized.

There's a lot of like, um... It's standing up—Or her standing up, with like, different things in different—In like—You know, six of her limbs, you know, each hand is carrying something different. There's a bunch of different variations on the different iconography here. Um... It's—Some things that you see, kind of a lot, are, um, uh... Sometimes she— you see her repeatedly holding, um, a bunch of grapes, like, a... like, a... a bunch is the word for that, right? I'm not misremembering, like, there's not another noun that we use for like, "Here are grapes on a... on a stem," right? Um...

ALI: No, I think it's "bunch," yeah.

DRE (overlapping): Mhm.

AUSTIN: So like, a bunch of grapes comes up a lot, um... which, Blackwick, as far as we know, does not have many grapes. You do see—Um, you do see it with the pomegranate, like the giant pomegranate stuff, um, sometimes, and in one of the... the kind of, uh, representations of her, she just has a—like, six pieces of pomegranate, one in each hand.

[20 minutes]

AUSTIN: Um, and in these anthropomorphized versions, obviously, she's standing on two legs, and those are other two limbs. There *are* versions of her here that *are* almost more "monstrous," quote-unquote, in depiction, and those do not seem to be any less or more... you know, highly... uh, you know, [chuckling] rated, in terms of their placement.

DRE: Mm.

[Someone chuckling quietly.]

AUSTIN: But it is a range of representations of her. Uh, but you are led out of this kind of entryway room, and you see that there is a... a, like, a room for... a *large* room for worship, off to— you know, down a hallway to the side. And then you come to a sort of big, open... almost like, a... if that— if the other room was a—I said "a lobby," but I actually mean a foyer—here is a lobby space.

Here is a central plaza to the priory, um, that is... uh, inside, but has like, *huge* open air, like, um... not even *windows*, they're just open air skylights. Like, open... open— it's open up top. It's almost like a walk-in arcade. Uh, and there's like, really beautiful tile work on the ground. Um, there's a bunch of different hallways that arrive at this place. There *is* some

plant life here, including, uh, a number of little mini... um... like, gardens, that grow things like grapes, um, and other vine... based fruits.

And then in the middle of it, is a *huge* fountain, that has a kind of, um... eight pointed, like, octagonal... structure, that has like, a bunch of different tiers, and the water is coming down—It's— When I say it's big, it's like a... You know, it's like a *big* fountain, it's—if it was a little deeper, you could swim in it, and it would take you [chuckling] some time to swim from one end to the other.

Um... And I think that there are some... places to sit around here, and you do see other... other, you know, members of the Priory, walking to and fro in the distance, but no one is quite like, in the middle of this place at this point. Uh, and there are some, like, benches at this fountain, and I think she leads you to those and like, um, asks you to be patient and wait here for a moment, while... uh—I guess she says, um,

(as MARISHA): Is there anything you need... [struggling for words, exhaling] A... a drink, or... or aid in any way?

Dre (as CHINE): Um... I'm all right.

DRE: But I think Chine kind of, like, gestures back at the rest of the party.

Sylvia (as VIRTUE): Oh, I could wait for now.

AUSTIN: Um...

Ali (as MARN): I'm good, thank you.

[**Ali** chuckling quietly.]

Austin (as MARISHA): All right, well, I will be back in a moment. I need to check in on some things—if you could just wait here, um, I would appreciate it greatly. I... I have— Uh... I'm putting trust in you, [pointedly] Chine.

AUSTIN: And like, said the way like, a teacher says to... you know, their favorite student, to like, pressure them not to fuck around [**Dre:** Mhm.] when they have to leave the classroom for a minute. You know?

[**Dre** chuckling.]

DRE (overlapping): I— I—

AUSTIN (overlapping): Um, and she walks... Oh, go ahead.

DRE: I think that hits Chine, like, more than expected, and he kinda says, like, very uncharacteristically, like,

Dre (as CHINE): [hesitating briefly] [dutifully] Yes, ma'am.

[Everyone chuckling and laughing.]

AUSTIN: Oh my god. [chuckling]

[Short pause.]

AUSTIN: Um... So, what do you... what do you get up to here? I mean, I guess I'll say something first, which is like—this is a *landmark*. Landmarks often have... alw— Landmarks *almost* always have two things: Resources and *haunts*. Haunts are places that can, um... heal your various stress totals, or help you recover from fallout. We've only had one fallout so far, and I believe it was an immediate fallout, which means it's done already... um... God, what was that fallout even? [pausing] Was that seeing... I now don't remember what— which one it was.

ALI: Hm?

SYLVIA (overlapping): [very quiet] Yeah, I [drowned out]

AUSTIN: I know it was for Marn. 'Cause you got... you got it, right?

ALI: Ohh, yeah—I got a Blood fallout when we... [uncertain] Was it something with the shadows?

AUSTIN: [confused] Was it a *Blood* fallout? Why do I think it was a Fortune fallout? Wasn't it Fortune?

[Ali making an uncertain vocalization.]

SYLVIA (overlapping): I think you may have removed it.

AUSTIN (overlapping): You have a Blood *stress*.

AUSTIN: But I think your big thing was Fortune, and I wanna say it was like, foreshadowing something bad happening. Oh yeah, *Foreboding*, here we go. [reading] "Something bad is about to happen. GM, hint at an ominous future event:" [Sylvia and Dre chuckling] "Smoke in the distance, tremors before a pulse, the frantic music of the Carnival. This can be upgraded to *Crisis*."

SYLVIA: Love it!

ALI: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. So...

SYLVIA: So, speaking of the place we're at... I am curious...

AUSTIN (overlapping): Oh, wait wait wait, sorry, let me— let me finish—sorry, I was gonna... give you what these things were.

SYLVIA (overlapping): Oh. You've got more stuff? Oh, sorry.

[Ali chuckling.]

AUSTIN: My—I got distracted.

SYLVIA (overlapping): My bad! That's ok, I got excited.

AUSTIN: Um, haunts let you recover—yeah, haunts let you recover from... uh... stress, or from... fallout. So, for instance, if Marn wanted to get rid of this *Foreboding* [Ali chuckling], uh... fallout—which *could* be upgraded to *Crisis*— she would have to... go to a... a haunt, that let her heal, um... that let her heal, uh... Fortune fallout. I... *will* say, there is one of those here!

ALI: Ohh!

AUSTIN: So, I will—and maybe this happens, uh... maybe—[searching for words] in character, this kind of tour, or this sort of like—maybe— In fact, maybe before she goes, Sister Marisha gives you the kind of overview of this, um, and says,

(as **MARISHA**): Well... um... While you wait for me to return, there are some things we can offer you.

AUSTIN: Um... um...

(as **MARISHA**): If you like to, I can lead you to... to Klava, a nurse,

AUSTIN: Who is, on my sheet, [quoting] “Klava, unpracticed nurse. D4 Blood,” [Jack chuckling] who has... who has the ability to like, [chuckling] sort of heal you, [Dre: Love it.] in terms of, like, physical stuff. Um... she says, uh,

(as **MARISHA**): If you need to pray with me, and reflect on... uh, aspects of your journey which are unsettling, and find your, um... find— find a way to center yourself again, and cleanse yourself of the touch of... what you've seen, I'd be happy to sit and pray with you, as I did in... in ages past at the Conclave.

AUSTIN: Um, and this is that she herself is a D6 Echo haunt. And then she says,

(as **MARISHA**): Finally, I hope that you, um... If neither of those appeal, you can of course sit here, in the pleasing presence of... um, the fountain—um, I would not drink from it though, as the... the water is... [deliberately] *brined*.

AUSTIN: Um, and this is a saltwater prayer fountain, which is a D8 Fortune, um... Fortune haunt, um, and so if you *did* want to address that, we can talk about how that... how that

goes—uh, what the rule kind of is for... recovering stress at a haunt. Or, recovering from a fallout—but we can talk about that.

The *other* thing that happens at all landmarks is, again, there are resources, and, um... I guess—What I'd say is like, from—from the list that I have here, the stuff that I would say that you could *see*, [chuckling] um... Actually, let me just read you from the book about, like, how resou—[enunciating] *resources work*, so that you understand what it means to say that, like... there are resources here. Um...

Buh-buh-buh-buh-buh... [reading] “Value—Resources are valuable material that delvers can harvest or *steal* from a landmark. The higher a resource's value, the harder it'll be to safely acquire.” You can also, like, *buy* these—or, like, *trade* for these resources, right, um, but, it is... often the case that these are the sorts of things that like... are expensive to take in that way [chuckling]—uh, or to trade for in that way—or are just things that no one... that someone might not want to... to trade for you.

In this case, some of these things are things that like, maybe no one would even notice. Um... the two that you—the two things that you pick up immediately, are that there are these—in the bottom of these, um... of—in the fountain, are these kind of *very well* polished stones. You can... You get the sense that... um, they've been rounded almost to be, uh, coin-like in shape—or they've been polished down to be almost coin-like in shape—uh, which you must imagine takes a *lot* of time and effort for them to almost all be, um... kind of the same exact, uh, shape, in terms of... in terms of their symmetry, and their size, and everything else.

Um, and so—I'll just say that the nuns here have a practice of... maybe it's a meditative practice, maybe it's a spiritual practice, depending on who they are—of kind of polishing and sanding down these stones until they are these kind of, perfect little coin-like shapes. Um, and so those are a D4 resource that you could... [amused] take from the fountain. [Someone chuckling] Um, they are polished stone offerings, those are D4 Religion.

Um, the other thing in this room, is that there is *music* coming from somewhere—and it takes you a moment to find it, but like, sitting behind a screen in the garden, almost as if to hide, um, its presence—is a... what we would recognize as a phonograph player. Um... like an early record player. Um, and the crank is like, running itself, as if it's been cranked up and then let go, and now like, the tension in it is playing the music.

And, it—[relinquished] *I don't know* the specifics of what this music is—in *my mind*, it's like, “French parlor music”—I don't know what that *means*, but you know what I mean, right?

[Sylvia laughing.]

JACK: [chuckling] Yeah! Oh, yeah!

AUSTIN: Um, so those are two things that—

JACK: We have these... on... the surface? Uh, “the surface,” I don't know where we are...

[30 minutes]

AUSTIN: Um... You've seen people find these before. Um, Chine: This is something that [Dre: Mmm!]*—*you're almost *certain**—*this is something that, uh, Sister Marisha brought here with her, because she had this at the Boundless Conclave, and it hasn't been there since she left. She probably got it from one of the miners, who went into the mountain—into the mines—and came back with it. It is a piece of technology from... a potential future.

[Short pause.]

DRE: [thoughtful] Interesting. Okay.

AUSTIN: Um, so yeah, those are some things.

JACK: So we— We could *steal* these, but we could also, like—the book says like, “acquire them,” [Austin: Yes.] right? We could, like... broker with the nuns, we could say, “Hey, can I have some of those cool stones?” and like, the difficulty of that challenge would be dependent on the... size of the resource? Or...

AUSTIN: Yeah... So, [reading] “To buy items, the GM decides on the cost involved: D4 for minor purchase, D8 for *moderate*, D12 for really expensive or exotic materials. Some items can't be purchased,” um, and, uh... [reading] “You then mark stress to Supplies to represent the total— uh, the lowered total cash flow. Or you can trade resources of equal value, rather than marking stress to Supplies.”

JACK: Mm.

AUSTIN: So, in other words, you could be like, “Yeah, I'm gonna mark D8 stress to... take, um, that... that, uh, hand-cranked phonograph... phonograph and record collection,” which—to Supplies—which is you being like, “Okay, well, what if I give you this, this, this, and this,” [Jack chuckling] and just, it's abstracted out, basically.

Or, you could be like, “I'm going to give you”—so like, Pickman, you— one of your resources is, uh... this Magistrate's badge—you could be like “I'm gonna give you this badge, you're gonna give me” [chuckling] “that record player.” Um, and so that is... that is the...

JACK: Good trade! [chuckling]

AUSTIN: That's a good trade, right? [chuckling] Um... You could then also do other stuff, about like, trying to find a lower price. If you're in a haven, especially, you can kinda like... ask around and make Compel rolls [Ali chuckling] to try to like, bargain and find stuff. Um, uh... and likewise, um... if you're looking for something rare, or trying to sell something rare, you could roll Discern + Haven to try to like, find something, so that's... that's how that stuff works. [breathing in] Uh... Sylvi had something before I was going deep on this rules stuff.

SYLVIA: No, yeah, no worries. I've actually, uh, thought of a *different* thing [**Austin** chuckling] *because* you did that, so it was very helpful.

AUSTIN: Oh, okay, good!

SYLVIA: Um... Are— So... Are— Am I able to check... [exhaling] I wanna look at this hymn book, [chuckling] um, and see if...

AUSTIN: Mmm! So, I didn't— I have that— I had that typed out, [**Sylvia:** (quietly) Okay.] but I have not mentioned that yet, because I don't think you've *seen* it yet.

SYLVIA (overlapping): Okay, cool.

AUSTIN (overlapping): So... there— Somewhere here—

SYLVIA (overlapping): [sheepish] Nevermind, then.

AUSTIN: No, it's fine.

[**Ali** chuckling.]

AUSTIN: Somewhere in here, uh, is a hymn book from the, uh... from this place, it is a D10 Religion thing—Hymn Book of the Mother-Beast—[**Sylvia:** Okay.] but you don't see— that's not in this lobby room, that is somewhere else.

SYLVIA (overlapping): I... So, I just—

AUSTIN (overlapping): But what you could tell me is, you wanna start looking around for shit.

SYLVIA: I wanna start looking around for something that can, like, give me confirmation that the... hymn I had— we had to sing to get here... [**Austin:** Mhm.] is from this church.

AUSTIN: Sure. I don't th... That, to me, sounds like a scene, and we should do that scene, because— [**Sylvia:** Okay.] But it will take you out of this lobby space, and so...

SYLVIA: Oh, yeah, no, I'm leaving—sorry, Chine—I'm— I was planning on leaving [**Ali** chuckling] the lobby space the *entire* time.

AUSTIN: [chuckling] Um...

Sylvia (as VIRTUE): We have to f— We *have to find* Janek, of course. No other reasons.

[**Sylvia** chuckling.]

AUSTIN: Chine?

Dre (as CHINE): [muttering, conflicted] Uh... [**Austin** laughing] Yeah, no, you're right. You're right. Um... Yeah. No, we should... we should... we should try and find the kid.

AUSTIN: Um... Okay.

SYLVIA: Okay!

AUSTIN: Before we go, do you want to try to heal this Fortune fallout? Or do you wanna let it ride?

ALI: Yeah, can I hang out at this fountain?

AUSTIN: You can!

[**Ali** chuckling]

AUSTIN: Let me explain how that works. Um... [reading] "Removing ongoing fallout," here we go. "The *easiest* way to remove ongoing fallout is to access a haunt with the appropriate resistance tag"—which this... fountain is—"and to pay for its services by spending resources. It costs D6 resources to remove minor fallout, and a D8 resource to growng—downgrade a major to a minor." So... what are you putting in this fountain to kind of rest at it, and clear the... the ongoing... uh... the ongoing... uh, *Foreboding* sense. And also, what do you have, resource-wise, at this point?

ALI: Um... [chuckling] Resource-wise, I have a, um, bottle of Wisteria Oil, [**Austin:** Mhm.] um, I have some...

AUSTIN: Which is D... 6, right?

ALI: D6 Haven, yeah. Um, I have some Savory Salt, which is D6 Warren, um, and then I have a [chuckling] Slice of the Mother-Beast Leg, which is Cursed, Taboo, [**Austin:** Ahh.] and that is a D10.

AUSTIN: Mm! Okay.

ALI: Um... I gotta give something to this fountain?

AUSTIN (overlapping): Yeah. That's how you use haunts.

ALI (overlapping): That's a very healing... um... [laughing]

AUSTIN: Mhm!

ALI: Um... sure, um...

AUSTIN: You know that like... there are shrines and stuff where, you know, you give something and you Fortune shit happens, you know, luck stuff happens, this is on...

ALI (overlapping): No, yeah. No, yeah. I'm— I'm... Yeah. I'm familiar with the— [laughing]

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: [laughing] Just— You know.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Um, I thought the... the healing, um... noises would— would help me, I didn't realize this is a trade situation.

AUSTIN: Oh, it's all trades, this is a resource game.

ALI (overlapping): It's all trades, yeah... [laughing]

AUSTIN (overlapping): Yeah. You get nothing free.

ALI (overlapping): Um, I guess, I mean—

AUSTIN: The—Uh, There is one way— There is one way to free— to heal stress for free, and it's to make a bond with another person and to put it on them instead.

ALI: Ohh, sure.

[Sylvia laughing hard.]

ALI (overlapping): Ain't that always the way.

AUSTIN (overlapping): Um... and then that can blow up, eventually.

ALI: Uh-huh...

SYLVIA: *Wow!*

AUSTIN: Yeah. Uh-huh.

SYLVIA: Yeah, we've all been there.

AUSTIN: Mhm!

[Jack chuckling.]

ALI: [laughing] We've all been there... Um... I mean, I should be willing to... to... part with these resources, right? Um...

AUSTIN: Yes.

ALI: Um...

AUSTIN: Spend— Dri— Use your potions. You know, that is, that is what...

ALI: [laughing] Yes.

AUSTIN: This is a game about actually drinking your potions, you know?

ALI: Um... So I think what Marn ends up do— W... Wh... What if— Would it feel weird if I like, put my hands in this... fountain?

AUSTIN: I don't know.

ALI: I know she said "Don't drink it," but...

AUSTIN: She did say "Don't drink it," yeah.

ALI: [laughing] I just...

AUSTIN: But she said "Don't drink it 'cause it's *salty*," you know what I mean?

ALI: Right, right ri— I'm just— I— [stumbling] If it seems like I'm being rude, I'm not doing [laughing] this, but...

AUSTIN: No one is watching you, as far as you can see.

ALI (overlapping): [chuckling] Okay. Um...

AUSTIN: Like, you seem... not—I mean, I guess... [pausing] Uh, if people are watching, it's at a great distance. She didn't leave guards with you, do you know what I mean?

ALI: Okay. Um...

AUSTIN: Um...

ALI: Because essentially, what I— What I to do [sic] was like, wash my hands in this fountain, with the... the bottle of oil that I have, [**Austin:** Mhm.] and... this cool water.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Just sort of, like, a... a grounding moment. [chuckling]

AUSTIN: Yeah. I like that. So yeah, so that— Th— You do that, erase that bottle of Wisteria Oil, you've spent it. Um, and you clear the on— the *Foreboding* ongoing stress, which means I don't get to upgrade it to *Crisis*, which... is good for you, I guess. [chuckling]

ALI: [laughing] Sorry...! [mumbling]

AUSTIN: Um... No, no, no no no, it's good.

ALI: Um... And then, how do— How would I— 'Cause that was one of my like, class resources. How would I... If I was like, "Hey, I noth— Oh, I want another one of those later on," what the pro—

AUSTIN: Where would you get it... Tell me where you would get it from, and then we would go there, and then you'd have to get one.

ALI (overlapping): [amused] Okay, sure, fair enough, okay.

AUSTIN: Mhm! [chuckling]

ALI: Uh-huh. Okay.

AUSTIN: Uhh-huh. Yeah. Uh, what I would say is like—maybe what I would do is let you take Supplies stress to buy another one at like, an increase, if you're like, ordering it from home, do you know what I mean?

ALI: Sure, sure, sure. Okay, cool.

AUSTIN: Like, it's a D6 thing, but you're gonna roll a D8 and take that much Supplies stress, because you have to actually have it shipped out to you—you know, or whatever it ends up being, so... um...

ALI: Okay. That sounds good. Okay. Just curious.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yep, you're good.

[Ali chuckling.]

AUSTIN: Um... Duh-duh-duh-duh... I think— I think... Uh, Dre, are you gonna ask that question, or are you good?

DRE: Yeah yeah yeah, I was just gonna ask what the processes is [sic] to heal stress as opposed to fallout.

AUSTIN: Fallout—It's basically the same thing, you're spending a resource to... uh, get that much healing. So like, let's say you had a... Let's say you wanted to clear Fortune stress. You could spend—in this place, that is a, um... buh-buh-buh, what did I say, I already said this—a— this is a D8 Fortune fountain. You could spend up to a D8 resource and roll that die to heal that much stress.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: Do you know what I mean? So like, you have—What do you have? You have 2 Blood stress.

DRE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: You could spend up to a D4 resource to... uh, to get treatment from Klava, the unpracticed nurse. Um, but you couldn't roll like, a whole D6, you'd have to break that D6 down into smaller... units, which, we can talk about if you have to do it.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: Um...

DRE (overlapping): Gotcha.

AUSTIN: That said, you're at 2 stress in Blood, I don't think you're in a... particularly rough spot quite yet, but...

DRE: Okay. Yeah yeah yeah.

[Ali chuckling.]

AUSTIN: Um... Up to you, you know.

ALI: [quietly] How do—

DRE: I'll, uh, I'll hold on to my oranges and whatnot.

[Ali chuckling.]

AUSTIN: [chuckling] Okay. [inhaling] Uh—cool. Um... So, it sounds like—

JACK (overlapping): Is there—

AUSTIN: ...Virtue—oh, go ahead. Go ahead.

JACK: Um... Like... Are there any nuns visible?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: Like, after the gunshot [Someone chuckling] and the... and the lightning strike, [Austin: Mhm.] what's the kind of mood of this place? Just from like, our immediate surroundings.

AUSTIN (overlapping): [emphatic] *Placid*, Jack.

JACK: Like, uncharac— Like, we're like... did we—we all saw that lightning strike, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: And that... gunshot? But everyone here seems that they're just... pretty chill?

AUSTIN: [searching for words] You know, um, I would say that you probably saw—you probably saw... brooms and buckets near where the glass was broken, in— near the front entrance, but there's no glass left on the ground at this point.

JACK: [in thought] Hm.

AUSTIN: *Completely* placid.

JACK: [in thought] Hmm.

AUSTIN: As far as you can tell—you haven't rolled Discern or anything, you know?
[chuckling]

JACK (overlapping): No, yeah.

[Someone breathing in, long pause.]

JACK: Yeah, just like an image of, like, Pickman, you know, leaning to look through an archway, and seeing a nun walking down a corridor towards the end, and like, leaning back into the... [**Austin:** Right.] into the lobby.

AUSTIN (overlapping): Well like, and turning to look—turning to look at you, and it is a face of... of dirt and ash and... and, you know...

JACK: Like, a polite nod, or...? Do they— just—

AUSTIN: I mean, even— I just wanted to emphasize that like... kind of... um... Just little... Just little, like, inward—is that concave? Concave... is inward?

[40 minutes]

SYLVIA: I think so, yeah.

JACK: Y... yeah. 'Cause of the "cave".

AUSTIN: Just little concave indentations where eyes should be—you know?

JACK: Aw, yikes. [chuckling]

AUSTIN: Turns and looks at you, and then turns and— and then keeps walking. Not like, an angry turn-and-look-at-you.

JACK (overlapping): No, just like... [mildly curious] "Oh...!"

AUSTIN (overlapping): Just like a... [deadpan] "Presence." A slight nod. Moves on.

JACK: [mildly curious] "There's a... caprak in armor over there."

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

JACK: [disinterested] “Off we go.”

[**Austin** chuckling.]

JACK: Um... Yeah, I think Pickman just, you know, shakes her head.

[**Austin** chuckling.]

SYLVIA: [inhaling] Yeah... So... I really wanna find anything that, like, has... like...

AUSTIN (overlapping): Yeah.

SYLVIA: Language similar to the hymn we had to recite to get here.

AUSTIN: Yeah. So that sounds like me [sic] like you're exploring this place a little bit.

SYLVIA: Yeah, for sure. Um...

AUSTIN: Um... Give me a Discern Religion.

SYLVIA: Oh, hell yeah, I got both of those.

AUSTIN: There you go. Um... Are— Is everyone else coming with you?

SYLVIA: Yeah. [drowned out]

AUSTIN: Let's just— I just wanna be a hundred percent clear. You washed your hands, you've taken this moment to center yourself, you're not foreboden... Eh, “foreboden”—I guess that's right—anymore. [chuckling] Close enough, Marn. Um... But now, you're ready to move on with everybody. So, Virtue, go ahead, give me your...

SYLVIA: Uh, Standard or...?

AUSTIN: S—Standard, yeah.

SYLVIA: Okay. Success at a cost!

AUSTIN: Uhh, success *at a cost*. Which means you take stress. You're not in a fight, so there's not like, a— this monster that has— that does X damage. You're not on a delve, and a delve of course has stress to it, but *p/aces* also have stress. You might remember that from our worldbuilding conver— or character creation conversation, where we talked about “What does the stress in Black— What sort of stress does Blackwick do?” This place does D6 stress, so can you roll D6 for me?

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Or I could roll, it's up to you.

SYLVIA: I got it. [short pause] It's a 3.

AUSTIN: Take 3... stress—you take this to Fortune, [**Sylvia:** Okay.] as you're wandering around places you shouldn't go. And then I need you to do a fallout test. Your total stress right now is 5, because you also have 2 in Mind.

SYLVIA: No fallout!

AUSTIN: No fallout. Okay. Um, you just—what that Fortune stress looks like is, as you're walking around in these places, uh, you know, and leading the group around, um... towards your personal end, by the way—you did not roll a test to try to find Janek, you tried— you rolled a test [**Dre** laughing.] to try to find stuff for you...

SYLVIA (overlapping): Yes, I have priorities.

AUSTIN (overlapping): So that's what I'm— Yeah, uh-huh. [chuckling] Uh...

SYLVIA: Mhm. If one of the other people wants to do that, be my guest...!

[**Ali** and **Austin** laughing.]

AUSTIN: You see some of the nuns kind of walking past each other—you basically get seen as you're exploring this space.

SYLVIA: Okay.

AUSTIN: No one, like, rushes over to stop you, but you do see a couple of the— the nuns talking to each other about like, what's going on here, you know? Um, and uh—but that doesn't stop you from finding your way. You make the smart play—you make the classic *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade* play of being like, “Ah, I bet the good stuff is not kept in the huge, open church, I bet it's kept in some smaller, more, like, sacrosanct place.”

And it is. You find a small—again, a little chapel, um, down one of the— one of the hallways—um, and, uh... the door is unlocked. You go in, it's lit by candlelight, and again, there is a, um... there is—it's almost like a dark room, but there is a skylight here that's casting that perfect 11... 11:45 light down, um, as the clouds still begin to gather. Not foreboding clouds, because we got rid of the Foreboding fallout—not foreboding anymore, just regular clouds.

[**Sylvia** laughing.]

AUSTIN: Um... [chuckling] And the... the— the candles— Between the candles and everything else, you can kind of make stuff out here, and at the very front, at the lectern, is a book, that is, um... a little— it's like, a *big*... it's like, a hefty tome, um, and it seems like... um, it has been—it has a bunch of different like, bookmarks in it, those kind of like, long cloth, uh,

bookmarks that are kind of connected to the book itself—and this is the Hymnal of... of the Mother-Beast.

This is a D10 Religion resource, and would be exactly the sort of thing that you are looking for, in terms of learning about this place, and everything connected to it. Um, this is like, the holy text of this cult. And it's clearly like... the sort of thing where you'd be like, "Oh, that's a first edition." This might be the only one like this. There might be copies of hymns from here. There might be, you know, people who've practiced and memorized parts of it, um, but... this is the—this is *the* thing.

SYLVIA: [excitedly] Okay!

AUSTIN: And it's right there in front of you.

SYLVIA: [short pause] I mean, I'm gonna start looking... I mean, I'm gonna check the bookmarked pages first, to see if the spell—like, the... [**Austin:** Yeah.] the hymn we recited is one of those.

AUSTIN: [quietly] Mhm.

SYLVIA: Um... And then if not, I'll just start flipping through at random. [chuckling]

AUSTIN: What, uh, what's everyone else doing in this little room?

[Someone sighing contemplatively.]

DRE: Hmm...

JACK: I think I am going to leave the room.

AUSTIN: Mm.

JACK: I think I'm gonna go and stand outside—like, lean against the wall [**Ali** chuckling quietly] outside the room, sort of like—far enough away down the corridor that [**Austin:** Ahh!] I'm clearly not with these people, [**Austin:** Mhm.] but close enough that I could maybe make some sort of, uh...

AUSTIN (overlapping): Make a bird call if some guards start coming?

JACK (overlapping): Make myself useful, if like, someone started coming— Yeah, make— [chuckling] [amused] Make a bird call.

AUSTIN: Yeah. [chuckling quietly] [short pause] Marn and... and Chine?

DRE: Um... Is there like, a... a mirror or anything in here?

[Short pause.]

AUSTIN: What are you... What are you looking to do? Tell me the thing you're looking to do.

DRE: Okay, so... Mechanically, the thing I'm looking to do, is—I want to use my Red Feast move [**Austin:** Mmm.] to eat this Thread of the Mother-Beast.

AUSTIN: [short pause] Ooo, interesting.

DRE (overlapping): [mumbled or cut off]

AUSTIN: To what end?

DRE: Um... So, when I eat a resource, I get to gain any domains associated with the resource until the end of the situation.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

DRE: Um, that Thread of the Mother-Beast is a Religion, uh... domain tag [**Jack:** Ohh!], so... uh, I feel like that would be helpful.

AUSTIN: Totally. I'm gonna give you— I'm gonna tell you something *important* now...

DRE: Mhm?

AUSTIN: Um... Because that Thread of the Mother-Beast is D10, right?

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: A D10 resource is like—that's a lot of resource to eat all at once to get a resource for one thing.

[**Ali** and **Jack** chuckling.]

DRE: Fair.

AUSTIN: Um... So, uh, an important thing to know is... that you can break down, uh, resources, um... [**Jack:** Oh!] uh, from—like, big resources, into littler versions of the resource.

DRE: [intrigued] Ooh!

ALI: Ooo...

AUSTIN: Uh... If the... If you— *If* it makes sense to be able to break them down, right? So let's say you did not need to use that whole Wisteria Oil—let's say you had D8 Wisteria Oil before, Ali, instead of D6—is that correct? You had a D6, right?

ALI: It was D6.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Um, but you needed to spend that D6 to get rid of fallout, so that... that doesn't count. But let's say it was a D8. You can break down a resource—again, when it makes sense—into two of the dice below it.

SYLVIA: Ohh...!

AUSTIN: So, a D8 resource get be broken down into two D6s. A D6 can get broken down into two D4s.

DRE: Mm!

ALI: [while yawning] Oh, wow!

AUSTIN (overlapping): Um...

SYLVIA: I was expecting, like, D8 into two D4s. That's way better.

ALI (overlapping): Yeah...

AUSTIN: No, yeah, it's pretty— It's pretty... It's pretty... useful, right?

DRE: Okay!

AUSTIN: Um, so, you could, in this moment for instance, break down that Thread of the Mother-Beast from a D10 into two D8s—and if you wanted to keep going down that road, I think you could, but I— what I would say is... I'm gonna... just put limits on it to where it's like...

DRE: [agreeing] Yeah yeah yeah.

SYLVIA: [amused] Yeah.

[Ali chuckling, overlapping.]

AUSTIN: Where it makes sense, that like—oh, you know, you're gonna thr— You're going to... [enunciating] You are going to ruin the thread, at a certain point, and it won't be a resource anymore. Um...

DRE: Yeah. Absolutely.

AUSTIN: So... In a case like this, I would say you could split this... at least one time, and then if you wanted to split it again, I'd make you— I'd make you, uh, roll for it, you know what I mean? Um...

DRE: Yeah, no. I'll just split it the once.

AUSTIN: Okay. And then you're gonna eat this thread—So wait, what was the mirror for? I'm gonna give you a mirr— I— You could just *have* a mirror, in your supplies, right?

DRE: Yeah yeah yeah. I was gonna– I was gonna floss my teeth first.

ALI: Ahh...

AUSTIN: [amused] Ah. I see.

DRE: Yeah!

AUSTIN: With the Thread of the Mother-Beast?

DRE: Uh-huh!

AUSTIN: With the thread that held together the beast leg, the dragon leg? Great.

DRE: Yeah!

AUSTIN: [sarcastic] Good.

AUSTIN: Listen, I haven't seen the Sister in like, twenty-thirty years. I don't wanna look all, like, unkempt.

[Sylvia laughing, overlapping.]

AUSTIN: [going along] Okay.

ALI: [quietly] Mm... Mhm.

DRE: She'll lecture me!

ALI: Mhm...

AUSTIN: [amused] Yeah, she'll lecture you about *some*thin'. Um...

[Ali holding back a laugh.]

AUSTIN: Go ahead and eat the... eat the... [short sigh] floss, and, uh... [amused] add the Religion domain for the rest of the situation.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: Or the rest of the... the session. [chuckling quietly] Eugh... Um... What, uhhh... So that's– That's two, that's Chine. Marn, are you just hanging out in this room as Virtue goes through this book?

ALI: Is there stuff to like, ruffle through?

AUSTIN: [to evoke surprise] No!

ALI: Is there... No...?

AUSTIN: This is a weird room. Virtue was like, “Found it! It’s this—I found what I’m looking for, it’s this book.” [chuckling] “The th—” [chuckling]

[Someone chuckling quietly.]

ALI: Sure, um... [laughing] Can I— Can I look over Virtue’s shoulder, [**Sylvia** laughing] and like, take notes too? Like— [laughing]

AUSTIN: [amused] Yeah, sure.

[**Ali** still laughing.]

AUSTIN: [amused] Uh-huh? Um...

ALI: Um...

AUSTIN: This is stuff that you— You’re not a Religion person, right, Marn? You don’t have the Religion... domain, right?

ALI: No...

AUSTIN: Yeah, there’s— This is Religion stuff, this is like, hymns and stuff for you. Um...

ALI: Sure...

AUSTIN: Virtue, go ahead and give me— give me your Religion... Ver— uh, Discern again here.

SYLVIA: Oh, again? Okay.

AUSTIN: Yeah—in fact, I will give you one helping die—not from Marn, no offense Marn.

ALI: Yeah...

AUSTIN: But for, um... [**Ali** chuckling] Pickman watching guard outside.

SYLVIA: Okay. [chuckling] M— [chuckling] It’s half a die Pickman, and half a die from Marn
[**Austin:** (amused) Right. Correct.] holding a candle for me.

ALI: Uh-huh, uh-huh, uh-huh...

AUSTIN: Holding a candle is not bad. That I like.

SYLVIA: Yeah.

ALI: Oh, sure...

AUSTIN (overlapping): Uh... Is that right?

SYLVIA (overlapping): 1D6 again? Yeah, I only rolled it once, okay.

AUSTIN (overlapping): Yeah, 1D– 1D6 again, yeah, you– Success at a cost again.

SYLVIA: That's a 2.

AUSTIN: Take 2 more, in... again, in Fortune.

SYLVIA: Oh, boy... Okay, I'm up to 5 in Fortune.

AUSTIN: Actually, you know what?

SYLVIA: Oh?

AUSTIN: In this one– In this one, put it in Mind.

SYLVIA: Okay.

AUSTIN: Put this in Mind, because the thing that you start reading about, um...

[50 minutes]

AUSTIN: You determine: yes, the answer—first answer—is yes, uh, it is... [searching for words] the– the... way you got in is the... way you got in, right? That's what you were kind of looking for, [**Sylvia:** Yeah.] was like, did you do the thing right, and did it bring you here? Yes. Um... The second– The thing that gives this– makes this Mind, is you find a lot of passages about the... guilt that this Priory has, in trying to extend life—and that attempts to extend life, are... um, uh... selfish, [**Sylvia** chuckling quietly] um... They make every second lived worth– every minute lived worth less than a second.

SYLVIA: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Um, because it is in limit that time has value. My favorite *time.is* quote. [chuckling]

[**Sylvia** and **Jack** laughing.]

AUSTIN: [amused] Um... Um...

SYLVIA: God, give it time and you will have a time.is quote, Austin, I believe that.

AUSTIN: [quietly or leaning away] Oh, nooo...!

[**Ali** laughing.]

AUSTIN: [amused] Miserable! Um, and— and it just, like, sucks to keep reading, for *you*, [Sylvia: Yeah.] someone who is immortal twice, sort of, um, to keep hitting... these things saying that you are not, um... that— that— the— your pursuit is—it's not even like, "It's evil," right? Because it's about their guilt at doing this. Um, and think you *do* start to put together the story a little bit here. Give me a fallout test before you continue, [Sylvia: Sure.] because now you're at... *seven* total stress.

SYLVIA (overlapping): I rolled a 12. No fallout.

AUSTIN: But you rolled a 12! No fallout for you.

AUSTIN: Um... You start to piece together a little bit of what's happened here based on the hymns. You're kind of, like, poring through them. There are ones from—[enunciating] there are ones from *hundreds* of years ago. Um, none I would say so far back as before Aldomina conquered and settled this place, and pushed the folks who were— probably were first in these mountains away.

SYLVIA: That's some shit that's older than *me*.

AUSTIN: *Definitely* older than you.

SYLVIA: [quietly] Okay.

AUSTIN: Um, and that's like, very early worship of the Mother-Beast, and I think that that falls into what we would think of as, like, very traditional, um... uh... you know, religious beliefs about a maternal spirit, you know? Um, but in these early ones, it's all about the Mother and... and her Child—the Mother-Beast and her Child—and the Child is like, both... a...

[searching for words] I'm making you into a religious scholar here as quickly as you're tracking through all this, [Sylvia chuckling.] but like, it— Sometimes it feels as if... the Child is a literal child, but often it feels like the Child is just a metaphor for the community, do you know what I mean?

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Um... Uh, but, over time it seems like that community shifted to be *just* the religion. There had been maybe a town here at one point, there'd been other people here. Um, in fact, I would say— I would go so far as to say, even, that once this... uh, religion was set up, like, it was still—it *was* probably tied to a local religion from before Aldomina, uh, conquered this place, and then kind of... was adopted by this variation on... on a church.

Um, and then over time, it becomes more and more about the material, literal Mother-Beast, um, and her Child. And then... about 200 years ago, around the Panic, around the time that this place became Sangfielle, um... the Mother-Beast began, herself, to panic. *Worried*. Um, lots of hymns and lots of like, marginalia about this era of deep worry, and fret, um... and, uh, you find lots of, like... um...

There are actually, like, little notes left in different parts of this book, from people in the church about the eras that they're in, and what you kind of put together is there was this moment where the Mother-Beast became... afraid. The Prioress, um, the [with a soft g] Saga— the Sagacious? [with a hard g] Sagacious. Probably sagacious, right?

SYLVIA: I believe it's [with a hard g] sagacious.

AUSTIN: Yeah, the [with a hard g] Sagacious Prioress—capital S, capital P—um... kind of, felt a— Through a... a sort of, um, an oracular gift, through the Mother-Beast, that terrible times were coming—um, that the Child would be lost, and that this would send the Mother-Beast into peril, and then the world soon after.

And... as expected, the Child disappeared at some point. There are *many* theories about what happened. Some people just think, like, the Mother-Beast Child... left. Like, grew old enough to leave. Other people think that there was a fight between the two of them, or that there was a, uh, sickness, or, um, or something else—there's *lots* of different debate on it. There was a trade, there was, uh, something about the— A lot of people talk about the Empress coming. You know, the Empress Altapasqua was on the way, and like—did the Child go to fight the Empress? Is that why the Empress never made— Like, *all* sorts of theory, right?

Regardless, though, the Child at some point... disappeared. There's *lots* of little hymns about the sadness of the Mother-Beast. And then... there is, um... There is the moment where, driven by this fear that the death of the Mother-Beast would mean the death of their... Priory—or that— basically, that the sadness would lead to an illness, which was already beginning to happen, and that illness would lead to death, and that death would lead to, like, great ruin—not only for then-Eastern Folly, but for at least the entire region, if not the whole *world*, because this is how their deep their faith is in this being—they began to...

They made a decision, which was to stop time, for the Mother-Beast, to prevent the Mother-Beast from dying. And to do that, they needed to build a place to put her, um, and that place is the Hymn that you are currently inside of. Um... which Jack predicted, [chuckling] just before we started recording.

SYLVIA: I *love* that.

[Ali chuckling.]

AUSTIN: But no one heard it. Um, and so—yes, that Hymn is effectively a spell, or part of a spell, that they all sung to bring part of the Mother-Beast into this place that would live forever. What this book does not tell you, is like, what was up with—I mean, I guess I'll give you the legs thing. They needed... They needed godly materials to cast the spell, and took them from the Mother-Beast, who was wounded and sick from her Child disappearing, and could not stop them from using her own legs in this ritual. Um, and that is why—

JACK: A ritual to preserve her?

AUSTIN: To preserve her. Um, and the—

JACK: But they were like, “Oh, we will take your legs to do this”?

AUSTIN: “And then we will build you new legs, trust us.” Um...

JACK: [pained] Ooo, that’s not going... super.

AUSTIN: Well, it went well for seven of them.

[**Jack** chuckling.]

AUSTIN: Where’d the... What were those legs made of? [coy] Who could say...

[pause, **Jack** sighing.]

AUSTIN: ...what the timing was on any of that stuff. Who could say. Um, what’s not clear is what’s going on now. There’s nothing about the Mother-Beast dying, which, now you know, the physical presence of the Mother-Beast in Blackwick is dead. Um, you haven’t seen the Mother-Beast down here, like, kicking it, [chuckling] you know— you know what I mean?

SYLVIA: Hmm...!

[Someone chuckling.]

AUSTIN: Um, and... There is not much in the way of like... You know, a lot of religions have *some* version of, um... you know... [searching for words] some part of their text about the end of the world, right? Some part of... of... um, apocalyptic... you know, literature. Some sort of... um... vision of the— the ways in which it’s all going to end.

This is a faith that already... that believes they’ve already... gone through it, and stopped it, [chuckling] right? Um, there is a—there was that style of literature, and it was from when she was sick. And then the Hymn stopped that, and so like, they never returned... to eschatological... writing.

JACK: Huh.

AUSTIN: Um, and so... They are just like, “This is it forever. We’re here forever now.” So that’s what you learn. Um... I would say... I— Yeah, that’s what I would say you get.

SYLVIA: *Okay!*

[**Ali** chuckling softly.]

AUSTIN: So...

SYLVIA: That’s exciting!

[**Austin** chuckling.]

SYLVIA: Like, personally speaking, the fact that they're doing some sort of dimensional, uh, ri— like, ritual here... very exhilarating.

AUSTIN: All it took was eight legs from... a god-beast. And also, you know... *a god-beast*.
[chuckling]

SYLVIA: Oh, yeah, for sure. But I mean, we can, like... you know. There's gotta be other organs out there.

AUSTIN (overlapping): Yeah, we'll work it out.

JACK: Also, that— that beast has limited legs, right?

AUSTIN: It had eight.

JACK: W... what... what happens when they run out completely? They have to start making more?

AUSTIN: That's what happened. They used *all* of her legs. And then, for the last two hundred years, or hundred and fifty years, they've been replacing them.

JACK: [inhaling and exhaling heavily] Hence thread...

AUSTIN: Thread, and meat, and... everything else.

Sylvia (as VIRTUE): Hey Chine, you wanna know where that thread you just ate is from?

[Someone holding back a laugh.]

Dre (as CHINE): I mean... sure.

Sylvia (as VIRTUE): What do you know about god-beasts?

Dre (as CHINE): [sighing] H—ohh... I, uh, I didn't pay attention really well, when I was a kid, to that kinda stuff.

Sylvia (as VIRTUE): [clapping hands] Okay, well, I guess we'll catch Pickman up on this when she gets back here—*but*, important to know that what you just ate was the thread being used to bind together a leg for the... what they refer to hear as "the Mother-Beast".

Dre (as CHINE): Okay, uh-huh!

Sylvia (as VIRTUE): Um, and... we are currently—

Dre (as CHINE): Okay, that sounds familiar.

Sylvia (as VIRTUE): Yeah—we are currently in sort of a pocket dimension that they’ve created where time is at a standstill, [begrudgingly] which explains those damn suns... um, so that their Mother-Beast could live? Um, so I just figured you’d, you know... um... Let me know if you start— If you’re— If you start having any effects. I don’t know if there’s any sort of... residual... magic, or like, some sort of— something going on there, but you know...

[1 hour]

AUSTIN (overlapping): What does gaining— To that effect, what does gaining the Religion domain... mean?

[Jack chuckling.]

DRE: Hmmm. That’s a good question.

AUSTIN: Like, we’re in the realm of fable and metaphor with you, you know what I mean?

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So I don’t want to, uh... So like, you— you can tell me a little bit here, or you can—you know, in some ways, does this maybe start us down the “Following a long ritual, name the Heart” path? In that like, having consumed this thing has started to give you some sort of early... you know, tremors, of... of a connection to something.

DRE: Maybe. The other thing I would think of is that it’s... it is less about, like, imbuing the domain, [Austin: Mhm.] like, that specific domain, and it’s more of, it opens that domain up to the Heart.

AUSTIN: Oooo, I love that! It’s like there’s a tributary connecting... [Dre: Yeah.] the— what we know as—what we know, but Chine doesn’t yet call—the Course, to this place and to this domain.

DRE: Yeah. Yeah.

AUSTIN: I like that a lot. Yeah. [something drowned out]

DRE: So it’s not technically that I have access to the Religion domain, it’s that I’ve diluted the Religion domain with the Course.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I love that a lot. That’s fun. Um...

ALI: They made this whole damn portal and now [breaking into laughter] here you are!

[Austin chuckling.]

JACK: [amused] God...

SYLVIA: Um...

(as **VIRTUE**): I guess, important to say, is that there *is* no mention here on how to... um... leave. So, we may have to ask around a bit about that. Um... But it shouldn't be a problem. We figured out how to get in.

Dre (as CHINE): I just— Yeah, I just figured we'd go back... through the door, that we... you know, that we started from.

AUSTIN: I did say, really quick, I did say that there was a whole cathedral there, [**Dre:** Uh-huh.] that—you were able to go back through, like, the open door into the cathedral, and it was just a cathedral in there.

SYLVIA (overlapping): Yeah, like... It's different there. [chuckling]

AUSTIN (overlapping): So th— uh...

SYLVIA: Right?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

SYLVIA: Okay.

AUSTIN: Yes. Correct. Just to reiterate, so we're all on the same page.

DRE: Okay.

[Short pause.]

Sylvia (as VIRTUE): [exhaling] Anyway...

Dre (as CHINE): Okay.

Sylvia (as VIRTUE): Yeah, um...

Dre (as CHINE): Um... So, w... okay. That— I feel like that it— *One:* Good to know.

[**Austin** chuckling.]

Dre (as CHINE): *Two...* Why did a kid end up here? [stammering, emphatically] H... How?

Sylvia (as VIRTUE): Yeah, um... I h— I don't want to, you know... speak ill of anyone, but, um, I feel like we could probably ask your Sister Marisha friend about that. Um... You know. It... like, there needed to be multiple there to cast that spell, um... and... I'm assuming someone from the church was involved, so, uh... My only thing here is

that we just, you know... Really need to ask the *right* questions, so they don't... kill us.

ALI: Mm...

Dre (as CHINE): Wait. That's...

Sylvia (as VIRTUE): Now...

Dre (as CHINE): I mean... I guess that could always happen, but...

Sylvia (as VIRTUE, overlapping): You did—

Dre (as CHINE, overlapping): I mean, they—

Sylvia (as VIRTUE): You did see the... that there was a fight in the abbey, right? I'm just saying I don't entirely trust the people burning up their... bur—uh, I mean, I don't know if they're *actually* burning it. I mean, I guess they were outside. Anyway, I'm getting distracted again. I'm *not* saying— I don't wanna be, uh... like, rude here, but I *am* just saying, if you're doing something like that, you probably don't mind killing four strangers to keep it all a secret.

Dre (as CHINE): Yeah, fair. I mean, I think once you start going into, uh, ontological creation, there's not a lot of, uh, of... uh, *etiquette* left, so...

SYLVIA: I think I'm good in this room now. That's out of character, [amused] but it could be in character, if we want it to be.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. [laughing] Um... At that point, Pickman, down the long hallway you see—not coming down this way, but, like, crossing one of the, like, intersecting hallways—is Sister Marisha, now heading back towards the central plaza where she left you.

JACK: Um, I'm going to... Hmm. I'm gonna... follow her. I'm gonna try and catch up to her. I think, you know, it's unlikely that I'm gonna be able to get into the... the room before her, [Austin: Uh-huh...] but I am gonna try and catch up to her. Um... I— [conflicted] Do I make a bird call? I— Ah, I think I probably do make a bird call, or something. Just, like, a whistle. Um...

[Sylvia laughing.]

JACK: But I don't know that this is something we've necessarily... I assume people in our line of work are just like, "When you hear that noise..."

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: "You better watch out." But yeah, I'm just gonna—

AUSTIN: [bird-like voice] "Ca-caw!" And like, "Oh shit, we gotta get outta here." [chuckling]

JACK: [chuckling] Yeah.

AUSTIN: “Cheese it!” Um... Yeah, you’re gonna catch up— You catch up with her. That’s— She’s not like, sprinting back, do you know what I mean? If you fast-walk, you’ll catch up with her. Um... And you... uh... you get close. Are you just like, saying something from behind her when you near her? What do you— What— How do you get her attention? Or do you mean to? Or what do you mean to do when you catch up?

JACK: I think I want to talk to her. Um...

AUSTIN: Like, in the hall— Like, like... stop her in the hallway and be like, “Hello, I’m here, I’m behind you.”

JACK (overlapping): I think it’s like, a really awkward moment.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: I think that Pickman says, like,

(as **PICKMAN**): Sister Marisha...

JACK: And Sister Marisha turns, but Pickman is sort of still trying to get into the lobby, [Austin laughing] so they [chuckling] sort of end up, like, walking together, um, towards the lobby.

AUSTIN: Yeah, well, I think—See— I— No, I think, seeing you, Sister Marisha stops in place. Um, and says,

(as **MARISHA**): What are you... *doing* here? Where’s Chine?

Jack (as **PICKMAN**): [gravely] I don’t know.

SYLVIA: [laughing] Oh my god!

AUSTIN: [taken aback] Give me a... Compel. You’re lying to this woman! Um...

[Sylvia laughing.]

ALI: Jack. Jack. Smart thinking, Jack.

[Ali laughing.]

SYLVIA: Bad, great excuse!

ALI: [while laughing] About taking the move, about not— About taking the move, not lying.

[Ali and Sylvia laughing.]

ALI: [while laughing] This is—

AUSTIN: Jack took Compel before— Yes.

ALI (overlapping): [while laughing] I'm being genuine, like, [drowned out] [laughing]

AUSTIN (overlapping): [amused] Gonna be Compel Religion.

[Sylvia still laughing.]

JACK: Okay, I do not have the Religion domain.

AUSTIN: No.

JACK: Uh, so I'm just rolling, uh... two—

AUSTIN: Nor do I think Cursed or Technology are applicable here.

JACK: No. I'm rolling two die...s. Uhh...

AUSTIN: Yep. Base one, and then Compel, so it's 2D6.

JACK (overlapping): Standard.

AUSTIN: Remember, you're looking for... anything over a— 6 or over is a success, 8 or over is a success without stress.

JACK: That's a 7!

AUSTIN: That's a 7! So, uh, again, give me a D6. For your stress.

JACK (overlapping): [pained] Oo!

AUSTIN (overlapping): [exhaling]

JACK (overlapping): That's 5.

AUSTIN: Take 5. You... um... You are gonna take 5 to...

[Sylvia chuckling quietly.]

AUSTIN: Hm... Um...

SYLVIA: Blood. She stabs you.

[Jack laughing.]

AUSTIN: She stabs you. Take it to Fortune. Take it to Fortune. Um...

JACK: And do I make a fallout test immediately?

AUSTIN: You do. Immediately.

JACK: Okay. [pausing] Ooh, shit!

AUSTIN (overlapping): Take minor fallout, Jack!

JACK (overlapping): I rolled a 1!

AUSTIN: You did roll a 1. Thankfully.

JACK: Wait, but— [uncertain] So, I am successful... [chuckling] I *am* successful, this isn't a failure?

AUSTIN: Correct. It's not a failure. That's correct.

JACK (overlapping): But I am also gonna take fallout.

AUSTIN (overlapping): Um, but you're still gonna take fallout.

JACK: Okay.

AUSTIN (overlapping): So— So—

JACK (overlapping): [amused] That's a fun system!

AUSTIN: Uh-huh? Um, which means I have to consider what that fallout should be... Clear your Fortune stress, because whenever you take a minor fall— Whenever you take a minor fallout, you clear the stress in the place where the fallout is. Whenever you take a *major* fallout, you clear *all* stress. Um... And... Um, in the... [chuckling]

Uh, in the, um... this kind of like, bump-into-her thing, you kind of like, [evoking the sort of awkward noises you might make while trying to get past someone in a tight space] “Wuh—Eeh—Uhh”—and then you say, “No,” right? And you're trying to like, get your footing—your... your... gun? You es— What's it called, an espign... espignole? Barbed espignole?

JACK (overlapping): Yeah, the espignole.

AUSTIN: It... falls off your shoulder, um, and... and fires itself, into the ground.

[Someone suppressing a laugh.]

AUSTIN: Um, and—

DRE: [while chuckling] Jeez!

JACK: Jesus.

AUSTIN: Because of the closeness to the ground, and the barrel, uh—so you go, like, “I don’t know where they are”—[rapidly] gun fall, [clapping hands] boom! [chuckling] Um...

[Jack chuckling.]

AUSTIN: And it breaks it. Until you— You’ve taken the Fortune, uh, minor fallout, [quoting] “An important item is damaged. You cannot use it until you take the time and resources to repair it.”

JACK: Shit!

AUSTIN: So your gun is broken.

JACK: Is this Supplies?

AUSTIN: This is Fortune.

JACK: Oh, this is Fortune? Okay.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah.

JACK: Uh, the... espignole...

AUSTIN: Uh, it—it’s actually both, uh, is in both Fortune and Supplies, [Ali chuckling] because [while chuckling] things breaking can hit either of those things.

JACK: [while typing] I cannot use it until I take time... prepare it—I think Pickman... Pickman is kind of awkward in speech, um, and I think, having fired a gun—

AUSTIN: W— Wait wait wait, a *gun* just went off—yeah, yeah yeah yeah. So I think Marisha, like, jumps back, um, for a moment, and then [amused] scolds you—and is like,

(as **MARISHA**): [hurried, haughty] Someone who loses track of their... weapons should not have them, especially in a place as holy as this.

Jack (as **PICKMAN**): [meekly] I’m— I’m sorry, my apologies, Sister.

Austin (as **MARISHA, interrupting**): Hand me that.

AUSTIN: And points to your gun.

[Short pause.]

Jack (as **PICKMAN**): W— What are you gonna do with it?

[Sylvia laughing.]

Austin (as MARISHA): We are going to keep it for you— for the time that you are on our premises. Clearly, you *cannot* have it.

JACK: [chuckling] Um... I think Pickman just, like, picks it up—steps back, picks the gun up from the... the ground—and kind of shrugs and hands it over to... to Sister Marisha.

AUSTIN: She, like, looks at a— one of the other, like, nuns comes over, this one with the kind of smoother, ceramic face, um, and hands it to that other nun, who, uh, begins to walk away with it.

Jack (as PICKMAN): Sister Marisha... You were gone for a time, and we did not know when you would return, and... we are here on a matter of... urgency, so... uh, my colleagues and I decided to try and find you.

[1 hour 10 minutes]

Austin (as MARISHA): Yes, I... [exhaling] I appreciate that I was taking longer than... than I in— than, uh, I indicated—longer than I *intended*—[slowly, enunciating] it is difficult to advocate for outsiders here. I hope that is understandable, now *take me* to your *friends*.

JACK: I succeeded at lying to her, right? When I said I don't know where they are?

AUSTIN: Yeah, so she's— Yeah. That's... That's—Oh, right right right, I forgot that was— the lie was that you don't know where they are. W— [searching for words] So then she says,

(as MARISHA): I understand that, then—[quietly frustrated] how have you lost track of the *people* you came here with?

Jack (as PICKMAN): The... priory is... new to us.

Austin (as MARISHA): [sighing]

Jack (as PICKMAN): And, in an attempt to cover more ground... we split up.
[pausing]

Austin (as MARISHA, overlapping): [sighing] *Fine*.

Jack (as PICKMAN): We are here on a very important purpose, Sister.

Austin (as MARISHA): [quiet frustrated noises]

AUSTIN: Like, begins to rub her temples.

(as MARISHA): [sighing]

AUSTIN: When she does, and like, pulls forward, it's as if she's leaving chalk on her face [someone making a disapproving noise] as her fingers move past. And like, her hands don't look chalky, but that is what it seems like—um, as if the stress itself is having this effect on her.

[**Jack** and **Austin** chuckling.]

AUSTIN: The... [pausing] I think at this point, she says,

(**as MARISHA**): Fine. You may... come with me, and I will ask the other Sisters to look for your friends.

AUSTIN: Um, and... and begins to walk back towards the big plaza—the fountain plaza—in the middle of the... of the priory. Busy, this time.

JACK (overlapping): Did Chine tell her that we were looking for the Kay'van?

DRE: Uh...

AUSTIN: No, did not.

DRE: [uncertain] Uhhh...

JACK: Oh!

DRE: I said that— I said that we had come here because someone— a child from Blackwick had gone missing.

AUSTIN (overlapping): Ohh, so, you said someone was missing.

AUSTIN: That's correct, you said "a child from Blackwick," yeah. Again—not a child... *twenties*.

[**Ali** laughing.]

JACK: No, yeah, I think that—

DRE: [indifferent, mumbling] Eh, yeah, I dunno...

JACK: This is like...

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: Pickman called them a kid early, [**Austin:** Yes.] because that's the kind of person Pickman is, and I think that... [amused] we got stuck.

AUSTIN (overlapping): I mean, we— In the—

SYLVIA (overlapping): I— I also called them a kid because I am hundreds of years older than them.

AUSTIN: Correct. In the worldbuilding game we talked about them as kids, but in their twenties, so...

DRE: [agreeing] Yeah yeah yeah.

JACK: Um...

AUSTIN: But yeah.

JACK: Do I see— Like, there is an opportunity here for the party to get back together again, which is just like, over Pickman's— over Marisha's shoulder, [**Austin:** Yeah.] Pickman sees the crew—if we want. But if we wanna stay split up, and kind of approach this from different angles—although nuns clearly hate it—um...

[**Austin** chuckling.]

JACK: I'm— [chuckling] I'm up for kind of either option. I've immediately broken my gun, so I couldn't really— I'm... You know.

ALI: I—

JACK: I'm just willing to [chuckling] take what happens.

ALI: I feel like at your signal, and then a gun immediately going off...

JACK: Yeah, that's true, [laughing] yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeahhh...

DRE: [agreeing] Mhmm...!

ALI: [laughing] It's like, you've become the priority. [laughing]

AUSTIN: So, does the rest of the just kind of rush around the corner, only to see...

JACK (overlapping): [amused] Pickman handing her gun to the... [chuckling]

AUSTIN (overlapping): Pickman slowly talking with Lady Marisha— Yeah, handing her gun over? [chuckling]

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Then yeah, if the party wants to be back together, they totally can. Can be. It's up to y'all.

DRE: Yeah, I think that makes sense.

[Ali chuckling.]

AUSTIN: Did you take that book, by the way, Virtue, or did you leave it?

JACK: [exacerbated] Jesus...

SYLVIA: Uhhh... I... I don't think I'm going to take it.

AUSTIN: Okay.

SYLVIA: [uncertain] Uh—hm... [weighing it over] Ehhhh... hmm.

[Several chuckling.]

ALI: Think it through!

SYLVIA: I'm thinking now.

[Ali laughing.]

AUSTIN: [expectantly] Uh-huh?

DRE: [egging on] Do it!

SYLVIA (overlapping): Yaaaahhh, no...

JACK (overlapping): It's theft from these—

SYLVIA: It's definitely got some stuff in there that's useful.

AUSTIN: All right!

[Jack groaning worriedly.]

SYLVIA: And, you know what, like—you know, I'm sure I'm gonna have some questions.

AUSTIN: Yeah, sure, Hymnal of the Mother-Beast.

ALI: Mhmm.

AUSTIN: D10 Religion resource, write it down.

SYLVIA: Hell yeah.

AUSTIN: Very important. Unique item. Um... The, uh... the— Also, just really quick: Chine, Marn, you're good with this? [pausing] Virtue slips this into some sort of... something?

[Ali exhaling.]

DRE: [frankly] Yeah.

ALI: It's the only one?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

SYLVIA: [while chuckling] It's the only one.

AUSTIN: It's the only one.

ALI: [laughing] I...

SYLVIA (overlapping): I'm bringing it—

DRE (overlapping): Yeah, so it might be the *only* thing that can tell us how to get home.

SYLVIA: Yeah, I'm curr— [indignantly] My excuse is— [chuckling]

ALI: The *nuns* could tell us how to get home! [laughing quietly]

DRE: *Maybe.*

JACK: This is like, th— not a holy book of these nuns, it's *the* holy book of the [chuckling] nuns.

ALI (overlapping): [laughing] [mumbling something that is drowned out]

SYLVIA (overlapping): [laughing] It's like stealing the Dead Sea Scrolls.

[Ali and Sylvia laughing.]

AUSTIN: It's— It's... [amused] Yeah, uh-huh?

ALI: I— I mean, y— *do it*. [amused] I'm just not not giving you shit for it.

[Dre laughing.]

SYLVIA: Okay!

AUSTIN (overlapping): Yeah. Uh-huh!

SYLVIA (overlapping): [amused] Yeah, you can totally give me shit for it, I'm playing a bad person.

ALI: Yeah, yeah yeah yeah, have fun. [chuckling]

SYLVIA: [amused] Yeah.

[**Austin** sighing.]

ALI: These are the moments. [laughing]

SYLVIA: Yeah, exactly!

AUSTIN: [flatly] These are— These are the moments, it's true.

[**Ali** laughing.]

AUSTIN: All right, so the group— Your group, uh, reunites here. Sister Marisha, seeing the rest of you show up, says,

(**as MARISHA**): Finally. [sighing] We have prepared quarters for you for your stay, and, um... If you have any questions, I— [sighing] Your... The *knight*,

AUSTIN: Said with *all of* the... you know, sarcasm, because who calls people knights anymore.

(**as MARISHA**): The knight mentioned that you're here on some sort of mission, uh—come with me, we can speak in private.

AUSTIN: Um... and leads you to a room that she managed to have made up for you, that is like... quarters, basically. You know, there's four beds, there's like—I'm imagining this as being very kind of, like... beiges and blues and whites, and then there's like, big windows in here—not *big* windows, but you know, like, nice size windows that have the light from outside coming in.

You can— You can still see the... the clouds gathering, now that the clouds are like, the backdrop for that lightning, uh, strike from before, that's still up there. [chuckling lightly] Um, and... [portraying uncertainty] and maybe it's getting bigger? Hard to say.

Um, and she brings you in, and there's also like, uh, you know—some chairs, and a table in this space. It's almost like you have like, a little... like... [clicking tongue] almost like a, uh, barracks, but with like, a... a dinner table in one of the... not the corner, but [searching for words] kind of the back. Um... [scrutinizing tone] It's not... It's not a bad place— Like, you could stay here, it'd be all right. Uhm— [chuckling]

[Someone chuckling quietly.]

AUSTIN: You've stayed— You've slept on *the ground* before, and these are *beds*, so... better than that.

DRE: [approvingly] Mmm!

AUSTIN: So yeah... She brings you here, and then sits you down at this table. Um, and, I think there *is* a pitcher of water here with some glasses, and she says,

(**as MARISHA**): [contained frustration] Now, tell me about this... [exhaling, clicking tongue] *mission* that you're on. [pausing] Something about a kid? [pausing] Something about a child?

AUSTIN: she says.

Dre (as CHINE): Um, a– a, uh, a young man.

[Short pause.]

Austin (as MARISHA, overlapping): A young man from–

Jack (as PICKMAN, overlapping): Accompanied by a Magistrate.

Austin (as MARISHA): From Eastern Folly?

Dre (as CHINE): Yes.

Sylvia (as VIRTUE): Uh—*Blackwick*.

Dre (as CHINE): Oh, right, yeah. That's– That's what it's called now.

Austin (as MARISHA): S... They renamed the town?

Sylvia (as VIRTUE): I'll be honest, it's the only name I've heard for it. But... you know.

Austin (as MARISHA): [disdainfully] Yes, I didn't recognize *you*.

[Short pause filled with quiet chuckles from several people.]

JACK: [while chuckling] We got– We– [**Sylvia as Virtue:** Most people know...] We got a highschool English teacher nun... [trailing off, chuckling]

[**Austin** and **Ali** laughing.]

SYLVIA: [amused] Oh, great!

AUSTIN: [chuckling] Ohhh... [chuckling] [in Marisha's voice] "Ms. Mondegreen, you're just not living up to your potential."

[**Ali** and **Jack** laughing.]

SYLVIA: [amused] Oh, please, we can't do this. [tripping over words] I can't— That— We— I— Fan— Fucking cannot deal with th— Getting flashbacks now.

[Austin and Dre laughing.]

AUSTIN: All right. So yeah, wants more infor— Clearly wants more information on this.

Jack (as PICKMAN): We... tracked them down through the basement. [pausing] Uh, in an old chapel... where, thanks to... Ms. Mondegreen's help... we found ourselves here. It seemed that the kid had been... taken prisoner, by a Pale Magistrate. And as we approached... your Priory,

JACK: And Pickman just like, looks up, at the streak of lightning, visible through the... the window, [Austin: (chuckling) Uh-huh.] and then like, turns back to the nun and narrows her eyes.

Austin (as MARISHA): It is the official... position, of the Priory and the Prioress, that we do not get involved in political matters. And so, anything about a Pale Magistrate seems abov— Uh, seems beyond our ken.

Sylvia (as VIRTUE): Yes, well, I— We weren't asking if you had any opinions on their, you know, political stances. We were asking if they had come through, at all. Um... So, I'm taking that as a "No"?

AUSTIN: Um... She says...

(as MARISHA): That is correct. We've... not had any encounters with any *kids* from [enunciating disdainfully] *Blackwick* or any Pale Magistrates.

Jack (as PICKMAN): What happened to your stained glass?

Austin (as MARISHA): It was broken in some sort of accident.

Jack (as PICKMAN): [pressing] What accident?

[Someone chuckling quietly.]

AUSTIN: Give me a Discern Religion roll. Or something else—or Compel, would also work here.

JACK (overlapping): Yeah, I'll take the...

AUSTIN (overlapping): 'Cause you're trying to pressure... pressure her, right?

JACK (overlapping): I'll take a Compel roll, yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: Um...

SYLVIA: I'm happy to help here. I have the Religion domain, so...

AUSTIN: What's that look like, though?

SYLVIA: Um... [pausing] I— So, I actually kind of to... This might be un... related, um...

AUSTIN: Mhm.

SYLVIA: I was going to... bring up that... not anything that I'd read in the book yet, [Austin chuckling quietly.] but the verse from the basement.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

SYLVIA: But I think that's, uh, not—this isn't the moment yet. I think it's just like—

AUSTIN (overlapping): Yeah, probably not.

SYLVIA: [pausing] I'm... [sighing] I'm able to tell [chuckling] if she's giving... um, Pickman, like, the run-around about, like... the more religious-based shit, you know?

AUSTIN (overlapping): Sure. Right right right.

SYLVIA (overlapping): Like, if she's trying to obscure things.

AUSTIN: For stuff about... about "The official position of the Priory is blah-blah-blah,"
[Sylvia: Yeah.] yeah, sure.

[1 hour 20 minutes]

DRE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Okay, so yeah, take one extra die for that. I'll let one person help here.

JACK: So, the way I... [sighing] Is a way to do this that I just set Religion in my thing, or... will that have a different result? Should I leave that blank and +1?

AUSTIN: N... Just add the +1. Just add the +1.

JACK: Okay. Cool.

AUSTIN: Just to keep it— Because otherwise, if we start going down that road, it's like, "Oh, I forgot to uncheck Religion," you know what I mean?

JACK: [chuckling] Yeah, totally. Okay...

AUSTIN: That's an 8. 6, 5, 8. That's a success with no stress. I think that you see her— Your goal here was to kind of... **[Jack:** She said—] see if she was lying, right?

JACK: Well, sh... I said, "How is it broken?" and she said "There was an accident," and I said, "What accident?"

AUSTIN: Yes. You asked what type of accident. What was your goal? What was the outcome you were looking for?

JACK: I mean, I think she's— I think the fucking Pale Magistrate is around here firing bullets and things. Um...

AUSTIN: Right, so you want— You want confirmation on that, basically?

JACK: Or some... Or for some openness from her as to how the thing got broken.

AUSTIN: Yeah. I think she says, um...

(as **MARISHA**): [sighing, pausing] [speaking slowly, clearly, tensely] Yes, there is a Pale Magistrate. We *cannot*... intervene in any way that would draw attention to our presence greater than it already *has* been drawn. And that means... giving *you* the... the *prey* of the Magistrate.

[Short pause.]

JACK: She's essentially saying that if she gives us, uh, Janek, that will draw the ire of the Magistrate? Or, of the Magistratum?

AUSTIN: That seems to be the— **[Jack:** Yeah.] Yeah, that is— That is what she's saying, basically, right? Um...

JACK: [thoughtfully] Huh.

AUSTIN: I think she'll lay it out for you all the way, right, which is:

(as **MARISHA**): I don't know the details, and frankly, I do not care. The... Magistrate had quarry, the quarry was the boy from the Folly, the— the boy, uh, and the Magistrate found their way here—*somehow*—and, uh—

AUSTIN: Actually, she would not say "the boy." Um, I think she would say... she would say: Um... Uh...

(as **MARISHA**): I don't know what led the, uh, [short chuckle] the Magistrate and the Kay'van here, but, um... and frankly, I do not care. I am—I am not interested in political rivalries from beyond the Heartland, and... I much less want them to arrive at our doorstep and ruin our windows in what is already a difficult and stressful time. I would advise you to leave. To return to [disdainfully] *Blackwick*, and tell whomever

sent you, "I am sorry. The 'boy' has been lost." Such are things in Sangfelle.
[correcting] Sangfielle.

AUSTIN: [chuckling]

JACK: [chuckling] [amused] Ho-ho-ho, that was— She was *way* beyond the times there for a second.

AUSTIN: Yeah, she was like, [chuckling] yeah, "San—" [chuckling] "San F—" She is *not* that old. There might be nuns here that old, but... not her.

JACK: [exhaling] Hum... Just like— I think Pickman just, like, looks round, to like, glance at the other three to be like, "How are we taking this answer?"

ALI: [clicking tongue] We... saw him... alive, right?

DRE (overlapping): That is... Hmm...

JACK: Yeah, totally!

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

DRE (overlapping): Multiple times, right?

AUSTIN (overlapping): She isn't saying he's dead at this point. You know.

JACK: Just that they probably will be. [chuckling]

DRE: She hasn't said anything about what will be done with them, at all. Only that they will not be getting involved, or stopping the Magistrate from... doing whatever the Magistrate is here to do.

JACK (overlapping): [sighing deeply] 'Cause they're like... "Keep our mouths shut and..."

SYLVIA: Yeah. But they *did* confirm that they're here! [clearing throat]

AUSTIN (overlapping): Oh yeah, definitely.

DRE (overlapping): Mhm.

SYLVIA: Um...

Austin (as MARISHA): I am sorry I could not offer you more. Chine, you know that as someone from the Folly, I... have a great fondness for... all of... for *everyone*... there.

Dre (as CHINE): It seems that you used to, yes.

Austin (as MARISHA): Yes. I used to. And now I have other priorities.

JACK (overlapping): That's a pun. [chuckling]

Austin (as MARISHA, overlapping): Just as *you* do.

AUSTIN: [chuckling] [amused] *Boo.*

[Dre, Jack, and Austin laughing.]

JACK: [chuckling] Sorry.

Austin (as MARISHA): You are not the... little child who once ran in the streets, arms wide. Not ever since what happened in your garden, no?

DRE: I think Chine just bristles.

Sylvia (as VIRTUE): Sister? I have a question, and... I may seem... uh, I guess a little silly at first, but... you're asking us to leave, and unfortunately, the way back is a little... fuzzy. Um... Now, I'm assuming the way *we* got here is similar to the way *you* get here, um... and I'm just... I mean, I guess I'll lay it out there. Do you know what the incantation is to do re– to do the spell back to Blackwick, or do I have to sort of figure that out by myself.

Austin (as MARISHA): [spitefully] The “*incantation.*”

AUSTIN: she says.

Sylvia (as VIRTUE): [dismissively] I mean, what else am I supposed to call it?

Austin (as MARISHA): It is... [proudly] A spiritual song...

Sylvia (as VIRTUE): [disinterested] Mhm.

Austin (as MARISHA): To the Mother-Beast. It is not... some lowly spell that the scholars in the Republica would... It– [exhaling] It is something holy. Whether you can recognize that or not. [pausing] There is a way... back. In a sense.

Sylvia (as VIRTUE): And?

Austin (as MARISHA): If you take it, you will never be able to return.

Sylvia (as VIRTUE): Mmm.

Dre (as CHINE): [flatly] Shucks.

Austin (as MARISHA): [sighing]

Sylvia (as VIRTUE): Well, then I suppose we should find Janek, then, before we try it, then.

Austin (as MARISHA): [inhaling] The man you call Janek will not be going with you.

AUSTIN: she actually says.

Austin (as MARISHA): [exhaling] You'll leave, and... tell whomever sent you, that your mission is complete. I will draw you a map, and tell you the words you must sing. I truly wish there was another way, but... in the condition that... we are in now, we can risk no mistake.

Sylvia (as VIRTUE): I understand. I do think it would be difficult to... [pausing, exhaling] I'm... *sympathetic* to your situation here. I think what I need to get out, though, is that we need some sort of... [exhaling] We're not coming back with a body, you're now what I mean?

[Someone chuckling quietly.]

Austin (as MARISHA): You're not.

Sylvia (as VIRTUE): But if we could have one of his possessions, you know—something along those lines, um... just so, you know, nobody asks any questions. Am I right?

[Short pause, someone chuckling quietly.]

AUSTIN: She looks at the rest of you for like, confirmation that this is... an acceptable trade.

Jack (as PICKMAN): We're gonna leave with the kid.

SYLVIA: [sighing] [chuckling]

Austin (as MARISHA): [sighing] You are asking to put... the life of a man you do not know in front of that of all of my Sisters. If you leave with this... with this agent of Kay'va, then the Magistrate will leave as well, and return to the Magistratum—and *return* with many more.

Jack (as PICKMAN): No. We're gonna kill the Magistrate.

Dre (as CHINE): Yeah. What— What she said.

Austin (as MARISHA): You're going to kill the person whom... *came* here—came to *the Folly*—in pursuit of... a quarry that seems to have done some great wrong, to... [searching for words] to the Magistratum, and you think that making them disappear will have no consequence for *you*? Then fine. Y— You know...

[Ali laughing.]

Dre (as CHINE): I don't see why that bothers you, 'cause all you care about is consequences for you.

Austin (as MARISHA): I... I am fine with this. You— [single chuckle] **[Sylvia chuckling]** I— I will go speak to the Prioress on your behalf. *You* will take the mark on your head. You and yours.

[Music begins: [*Sangfielle*](#) by Jack de Quidt.]

Jack (as PICKMAN): Sounds about right.

AUSTIN: And she raises up from the... from the table.

JACK: As soon as she's gone, Pickman turns to the group and says,

(as PICKMAN): Does anybody have a spare weapon?

[Music plays out.]