

Season 7 Trailer & Announcement
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(MUSIC STARTS - a low wailing moan)

AUSTIN: People'll tell you that the Heartland got sick about 200 years ago. When the dust came, reality left and the panic set in. But trust me. It was ailing long before that.

(instruments kick in)

Don't get me wrong, you could understand why someone would die for it in the old days. Greens and golds, red and honey. But around the time those well-dressed devils of Aldomina swept in five, six hundred years ago, that's when things started to turn. They wanted to fence it in, rows of corn and cane, columns of people. Nations reduced to gardens. Is it any wonder the ground itself started to ache?

No one noticed until about two hundred years ago, of course. See, the truth of the Heartland, the truth of the world is it cannot be fenced in. So, the storms came, and they brought a deep sickness to the plains and valleys. Soil turned barren, animals twisted and forming character. Unkind spirits swept through the fields, farmhouses, and birds. Reality began to draw its own course, unpredictable, but never dishonest. And as if in response, a rigid, mechanical malediction arrived, delivered by the cursed railway called The Shape. To be near places touched by such fearsome structure was to hear a drum played *too* on-beat, to see a circle drawn so smoothly as to make you stumble from its perfect curve.

Those who could, those who held the whips and the pocketbooks, fled. Those left behind tried to find stability. Tried to make a home on this refrontier of ash, metal, and ichor. Aldomina called this territory San Fielle. But there ain't nothing saintly about this place. Now we use the name that our ancestors, those forced to work this land or forced from it, called it under their breath. Sangfielle. The Bloodfields.

SYLVIA: I am haunted by, sort of the spirit of the vampire hunter who killed me.

ART: I guess you'd have to say what went wrong was, he got a little too much knowledge?

ALI: Cause I think that they're like, interested in being able to make life more sustainable, especially post-bad shit happening.

DRE: Surprising people gets you shot, impressing people makes you too available, intimidation, though, that filters out the people who would waste your time.

KEITH: I slightly destroy the building trying to demonstrate a new way I found to start fires.

JACK: Here I've written, "forsaken child of The Shape."

JANINE: There's a lot of like, friendship and body horror.

(MUSIC ENDS)

AUSTIN: Hello, this is Austin. This is not a regular intro, this is not a full episode, but this is our trailer drop for season 7, Sangfielle. S-A-N-G-F-I-E-L-L-E. A fake word that we made up by pulling from real words like field and sanguine, and all of their predecessors and derivatives.

This season, we are going to be playing... I guess we're kicking things off with Everest Pipkin's The Ground Itself, which is an excellent worldbuilding game that everyone should check out. And then we are going to be playing a campaign of Heart: The City Beneath, by Grant Howitt and Christopher Taylor. We are already done with the worldbuilding episodes, we are already through our first arc of Heart: The City Beneath. It should go without saying that because we're opening with a big worldbuilding game, and because we do critical worldbuilding, along with smart characterization and fun interaction between good friends, this is a season in which we are doing a lot of lifting in terms of changing the world of Heart, a world I think that's super interesting and really cool, into our own place.

The name of that place is Sangfielle. And it is a place where we're going to tell, kind of, interesting, hopefully episodic procedural stories about a group of people who investigate supernatural occurrences for a haven in this kind of cursed Heartland. I don't wanna go too deep into what the setting is, or anything like that, we do a lot of that in both in the upcoming worldbuilding and character creation episodes, along with a ton of Patreon stuff that we've already pre-recorded. I've done a Drawing Maps episode with every single person on the podcast for their character and the way that their character intersects with the world, so that's really interesting? Like, for instance, Ali is playing a character class called the Hound, but the Hound in Heart is like, a group of soldiers who used to-- a group of cops who are kind of haunted by the soldiers who used to wear their badges. It's a really interesting character class in that game, but Ali didn't want to play a cop. But did want someone who was utilitarian, could help communities, etc. So like, completely rebuilt that class in terms of the wallpaper, in terms of the flavor, in terms of the theme and the skin of it. So we did a lot of that, and that goes the same for the setting.

Tonally, thematically, I think you're gonna see, what we touch a lot of spaces here. I think the intro probably puts you in the weird west mode, I think that's appropriate, that's right. I think that we're drawing on gothic horror, on dark fantasy, on a little bit of cosmic horror. We're doing our best to hit those things the way we wanna hit those things, which is to say, from perspectives that are engaged with them critically. Obviously, we are engaged with questions of indigeneity, of frontiers, of what it means to have a place that is haunted, you know, both by its own past and by a potential future? I don't want to give too much spoilers around that, because that is a key focal point! That didn't make it into this intro, because we had to make it into a trailer, and not just a regular intro, but trust that when I say that this is a place haunted both by its past and a future that is approaching it, uh, well. I guess I'll put it this way. Sangfielle is the only place in this

world, in the entire world, where there are trains. And it wasn't people who built them. So. That'll be fun to deal with.

So, I hope you look forward to it. We're gonna drop the first episode of this next week? Our normal Thursday timeslot. There is a chance we won't have art for that. That is not to put any extra effort on Craig, who's once again doing the art for us. Craig's already sent over some early stuff, and it looks incredible, so Craig, if you are listening, keep it up. Hopefully this inspires you to add some extra details here or there based on what was in the intro. But, but, just as a heads up, if the art hasn't changed yet, that's just cause it's not finished yet. Likewise, I think Jack is probably gonna wait until that episode goes up to put this theme up, but when it does go up you can go to notquitereal.bandcamp.com to support Jack and to pick up that track. It's an incredible song, I love it so much, I can't wait for people to hear it in its kind of, final state next week without me talking over it. I've very excited for this season to start, I'm very excited for what we already have recorded. The characters are incredible, the setting is really cool. We're really enjoying both-- We enjoyed The Ground Itself as a world-building game, we're really enjoying Heart as a main game, as a campaign game, and we hope you enjoy it too. Alright, that's gonna be it for us this week, we'll be back again next week. As always you can support the show by going to patreon.com/friends_table, that's not ever how I sell that. It's always friendsatthetable.cash, so you can go there. And again, once the season starts dropping, we're going to be doing-- releasing a ton of this pre-recorded Patreon stuff, so. Look forward to all of that stuff if you're already a subscriber. And if not, and you end up liking this season, please go there and check it out.

Also say, really quick, because horror is a thing that we've touched on here or there in Live at the Table games, or in certain episodes or arcs, but we've never really gone into it. Two things: one is, Heart comes with its own content warning that we read at the top of our first session of Heart, but we're also going to be very explicit with our content warnings in the episode descriptions this whole season, so if there's a particular topic, it'll be listed there. We have our own internal Lines and Veils that we discussed at length, so in terms of having a safe table and a place where we know where-- what places we can push on, what places we can't, what stuff is off the, you know, off the table entirely, what stuff we ought to be careful around. Internally we took that very seriously, we found that. And horror is an interesting space, because it's playing with stuff that is uncomfortable, often. And so we're doing our best to be thoughtful about that stuff. We're doing our best to explore that in a way that is exciting for us, and scary for us, in some places, but not necessarily something where we're trying to shock or gross people out? Outside of ourselves (chuckles) and I will say that like, I think that there are ways in which-- I think that, as always, there's such a diversity of opinions on the cast that it becomes easy to find a way to, a way through a topic like this, or a theme like this, while still touching on things like-- Like, I'll say this. The episodes we've recorded are funny as hell. We're not in, you know, cryptkeeper mode the whole time, where I'm like, trying to spook my own players. But we're playing in horror as a theme, and as a space, and I think that that is fun for us.

You know, it's, it's-- I've pitched this season internally before as being something like drawing on influences like Hellboy and Ghost in the Shell and that style of procedural storytelling, but with, y'know, looking at all these other dark gothic fantasy, like cosmic horror stuff, all the other

touchstones that go in there. There's a huge list that I have internally that I'll probably put into a Patreon post at some point. And that stuff is all very... There's a range even inside of that stuff, right? Like it's not always dark spooky scary mode a hundred percent of the time, sometimes it's high adventure, sometimes it's, it's, you know, mythological in nature, sometimes it's poetic. And so we wanna hit as many of those things as feels appropriate for us.

So, all that said, I just wanted to make sure that it was clear that I don't think that this is a season that like, you should not listen to because you don't like horror, or not give it a shot. Give it a shot, if you don't like it, you don't like it. But at the very least, I would say, stick around until you hear about these characters, see if they are interesting enough for you to stick around and listen to, because I definitely think that they're great. Very grateful to have the players that are at this table, or not have them, to work with them. To play with them. I love everyone who helps us make this show, both internally and externally, all the, the incredible support that we get from everybody. Shout outs also to #15daysoffatt, which is going on now, on Twitter. People should check out the incredible fanart that has gone up already. And, and yeah! That's gonna do it for this announcement, trailer, thing. We will be back next week with the first full episode of Sangfielle. Which is super fun to say, 'cause you get to put that little bit of like a, that French accent, that New Orleans, lil bit, (affected) "Sangfielle," it's just fun to say it that way. Alright, that's it. I'm done, I will see you, or talk to you, in one week.