

Sangfielle 15: The Candle Factory Pt. 2

Transcriber: robotchangeling

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.

Austin (as villager): It's missing! Someone took the damn egg sac!

[Music begins: "Sangfielle"]

Austin: You're able to see the Weather Room, this observatory, that has some light on inside of it at this point. You can hear, as you approach, the sound of people celebrating. No one else seems to be up here, and it's very easy for you to kind of find a window in on these three. They seem to not have an egg sac with them but very much have a lot of food and drink.

Austin (as Agdeline): Well, you're looking at a group that is worth investing in, if I say so myself. We are coming off of an absolutely incredible success.

Sylvia (as Virtue): I was wondering if you could tell me a little bit about what led to such celebrations.

Austin: They basically tell you the story, which is they spent the last little bit being toll collectors, and then they got a job from these three big caprak, which are the goat people. They describe them as one of them having really big eyes, one of them having really big ears, and one of them having a really big mouth, and that they...one of them talked, but they all had letters with them that were pre-written and anticipating what the kind of conversation would be in a way that feels weird. And somewhere in there one of them mentions that "and it wasn't even that hard to get the damn egg!"

Sylvia (as Virtue): I imagine you had to meet your employer somewhere or leave it somewhere for them? Because the closer you leave it around here, the more prying eyes you're gonna get, and nobody wants that.

Austin (as Agdeline): Well, I could tell you how to meet our client and give you my mark of recommendation if you promise to pay me back with interest.

Austin: And so she gives you a single coin made out of a cheap metal but that has this trio's mark on it. And they tell you that those three caprak that they worked with and handed the egg sac off to earlier tonight, they came from a place to the south that people just call Yellowfield. They tell you in the conversation that Yellowfield has...they make a bunch of candles there. In fact, you probably know that there's a common phrase that gets said about the Yellowfield Candle Company, which is all the candles in Sangfielle were made with only twenty hands.

[music ends]

Austin (as Rana): Before the panic, this little yellow valley of flowers belonged to a wizard, a petty little man. He called it his Xanthic Demesne. These days it is just called Yellowfield. [sighs] The story goes that after the panic, his subjects turned on him. Once they were frightened or beguiled, but in an era of magic and supernatural strangeness, his magic did not cow them. And so they took over the field and built the factory. Perhaps with a little help from the Shape, which was young then. Decades after that, the church was built, and the leader of the church took over. And then she lost power, and the factory foreman took control. And then they lost power and the village elder took over. And for the decades that followed, that cycle has continued. Today, it is a man of the cloth who runs the village. High Vicar Regan Alaway. Kaitankro tells me there's more to the story than that. I'd hoped that Bucho would come back and tell me about it after his visit, but he has not returned.

Dre (as Chine): Maybe *he* took over.

Austin (as Rana): Maybe! He doesn't seem like much for leadership. More of a man of daring do! If you could find him, I would appreciate it.

Austin: This is me noting, briefly, that Chine, you have "perform an act of service to an NPC witch."

Dre: Oh, yeah.

Austin: So, keep that in mind

Dre: I think Chine kind of sighs and says:

Dre (as Chine): [sighs] What does he look like?

Austin (as Rana): Oh, you would not miss him. A big man, a devil. Big, beautiful horns. And you would see him because of the huge walking armor tank he lives inside of. He's a Shape Knight!

Dre (as Chine): Ah. Okay, yeah, no. Hard to miss.

Austin (as Rana): Hard to miss.

Dre (as Chine): How do you say that name again?

Austin (as Rana): Bucho!

Dre (as Chine): Okay.

Austin (as Rana): B-U-C-H-O. Bucho. Two-Step Bucho. Sometimes called...

Austin: There's another one. There's another one. What's the other one I've written down here somewhere? I thought I said it earlier. Oh!

Austin (as Rana): Big Bucho. [chuckles]

Dre: [laughing] Big Bucho.

Dre (as Chine): Alright. I'll find Big Boochie, and—

Austin (as Rana): Bucho!

Dre (as Chine): Bucho. [Sylvia laughs] What if he doesn't want to come back? What if he's in charge?

Austin (as Rana): Oh, just tell me...just ask him to give you something that would let me know he's okay. We're old friends.

Dre (as Chine): Yeah, okay. Alright, we'll find him.

Austin (as Rana): Thank you for your company. I would love if you visit again. Send your friends, also. It gets very boring up here.

Sylvia (as Virtue): Yes, well, I do hope you find some way to entertain yourself. Take care.

Ali (as Marn): Until next time.

Austin: Yeah, uh huh. [chuckles] And watches you as you go. Presumably down the rest of this mountain path and into this MS Paint picture of yellow flowers. [Dre laughs] I've moved you all over to Yellowfield, this terrible drawing I've done. You can see here the pagoda with the kites, and then you see into the fields. What you see is fields of rapeseed flowers, canola basically, right? And they're cut through down the middle by a huge train line, which I've only drawn as a single line here. I didn't want to go down and do each individual, you know, railroad track, so I just did a single line instead of making it look like track. And at the center of the kind of...so, it's a huge field of yellow flowers that's kind of cut in half horizontally by this train track. On the north side of that train track is a little village of, you know, five houses and kind of a longer building, very shack-like. Bigger than a shack, but not much bigger than shacks. And then a much bigger building, which, you know, you're able to see in all of its glory here is a factory. There's a single smokestack on it, which I have not drawn, and smokestacks are rare. You may have never seen a smokestack before. Those of you who have traveled very far, I would say Es is someone who

I feel like has been to lots of places across many different hosts, you've maybe come across them before. Marn, as someone who works with factory equipment and sharpening tools and stuff, maybe you've come across them. But factories in the industrialized sense, in the powered sense, are pretty rare. They are tied to the technology domain, and the technology domain is rare, right? And so they are kind of the other coin of cursed, right? They're instead of the wild—or not wild, because wild's another domain. Instead of the weirdness of animals and flesh and plants, it is the weirdness of technology that hasn't been invented yet outside of the ringed city, and so here is a smokestacked factory. And from it's top, you see this wisty trail of yellow smoke rising high above the valley, and again the smoke itself has that same kind of yellow tincture to it that the flowers do. And then you also notice a second line of smoke in the air, and this is from a train, in fact, that's stopped at the kind of rear of this factory, right here where I just pinged, where people are...very far in the distance, they're like little ants to you because you're very high up at this point, but they're clearly moving back and forth between this train and loading things up. You can only guess that these are candles from the candle factory. Finally, the last thing, besides the village, you see the big factory. The front of the factory is a sort of...instead of the industrial facade with big windows and a warehouse door or whatever, you see a church facade. You see the front of a church made with dark wood and brick, that feels kind of out of place among this, especially literally connected to the factory. And this is it. This is the Yellowfield Candle Company. These flowers come up, you know, to your lower legs, maybe in some cases even higher, up to your hips. And you're walking through the pathway. Or, there's no pathway. It's just these flowers grown...not wild, but not as rigorously as you might think a farming operation would grow them. And you can head where you want to head. Where are you going? What's the play?

[0:10:10]

Dre (as Chine): Mmm. I can see why she didn't like the flowers here. Too yellow. [Sylvia and Austin laugh]

Janine (as Es): I think they're cheerful.

Dre (as Chine): Eh, you can't trust yellow.

Janine (as Es): [scoffs]

Sylvia (as Virtue): Any other, uh, sort of hues that you have a problem with?

Dre (as Chine): Uh...

Sylvia (as Virtue): How do you feel about blue?

Dre (as Chine): Eh, blue's fine. I guess orange, depending on how yellowy it is. [Austin laughs]

Sylvia (as Virtue): You're an interesting one, Chine.

Sylvia: So, I guess just a clarifying question. So, the lead we got was just that they were headed...it was three...is it cap-rock or cap-rick?

Austin: Cap-rock, yeah.

Sylvia: Cap-rock, okay.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: There were three caprak headed here, and then the big thing in this town is the candle company, right?

Austin: Yeah. I mean, it's hard to even call it a town, right? It's five houses.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: A bigger building, and then the factory, and that's it, right?

Sylvia: Okay. It kinda feels like we should either check out the factory or would you guys rather ask around with the people that live here?

Ali: The factory seems to make sense, just because it's kind of the biggest structure.

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Dre: Mmm.

Sylvia: Also feels like where any authority here might be, is kind of...

Austin: She did note that the current leader of the town and de-facto authority is the current vicar, high vicar of this place.

Sylvia: Okay.

Austin: Uh, whose name is Regan Alaway.

Sylvia: Right.

Austin: So yeah, you can make your way to...again, like there is sort of a...I imagine that there's a clear front door to the church...you know, I'm gonna say that the two ways in are the church front facade and then the kind of rear where the train line is. There's some sort of, you know, it's a loading dock basically that goes right out to the train line. Also, that train that was

being loaded now pulls away and heads east, at this point. But yeah, you're able to walk up to the front of this church. And you can see as you get closer, it's not a particularly, you know, fancy-looking building. There's not a lot of statues. There aren't any paintings on the outside, and if you go inside you'll see that that also holds there. There are some figures etched into the area above the door as you approach. You see that this a church to a god of...I guess you know it's called...let me find my god list here. Here we go. Subsolum. And it says, or I guess the images that you see are like spades, shovels, plants growing. Some sort of fertility, you know, plant god, soil god situation. And the big church doors are open and open up into a kind of lobby and beyond that lobby is an open-aired— or, not open aired, but you know, it's a big church in there. [chuckles] You know? With an altar. I'm gonna say the altar is in the middle, and people kind of...there are pillows placed on the ground around it, and presumably when services are held, it's people looking inward. But there's not...it's a bigger church than you imagine there are people here total, but it's also clearly not a particularly ostentatious place. The altar in the middle and the kind of speaker's podium are not especially decorated. We're not talking about a church with a bunch of stained glass. We're not talking about a...you know, it's lit by the candles that are made in the factory. Maybe they're extra long candles, but they're not even on particularly expensive-looking candle holders or torches, you know what I mean? It's kind of a very reserved feeling as you walk in, and no one seems to be in this part of the building at this point. What do y'all do?

Sylvia: I kind of want to check out this altar.

Austin: Sure.

Sylvia: Partially because, you know me, I'm just fascinated with this sort of thing.

Austin: Yeah. Of course.

Sylvia: But also, my brain immediately just made the connection to the egg being on an altar and this being an altar.

Austin: Fair, yes. You kind of walk up to the altar, and as far as you can tell, it is a flat, you know, wooden counter basically, that's on some wooden...it's a wooden structure made of the same material that the facade of the building is made of, this local dark wood. It's been, you know, sanded down, but none of it's treated wood. There are no books or anything here at this point. Whoever holds service must keep those. There are some...a couple of things underneath the altar. There is a little spade, like a little golden spade, or it's a metal spade. It might be gold-plated, it might not be gold at all, but it's a shiny spade [Sylvia laughs] that presumably is used in a symbolic way more than a...you know, no one's digging. I don't know, maybe digging is part of the service. You'd have to sit in on a service and see if there's any actual digging done with this thing. It sounds like you're looking around. Are you trying to— do you want to roll some dice to see if you can pick up on anything here?

Sylvia: Yeah, sure.

Austin: I mean, I guess you do have this Fallout now that is that you're fascinated by strange religions.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: And get mastery on these rolls, so that's nice.

Sylvia: Oh, awesome. Okay. So, this would be discern and religion?

Austin: Yeah, that sounds right. And then mark mastery. Is anyone helping, before you roll? Is anyone poking around this altar looking for other stuff?

Janine: I could. I'm wondering what I'd be poking around for, but...

Austin: Yeah. Feel free to take the pen a little bit, in terms of detail in this place. If you're like, "oh, is there a blank?" my answer will probably be yes in terms of places you could look for something, you know?

Janine: Yeah. Is there like...I guess maybe I'm looking for some kind of text or a hymnal or...

Austin: Mm-hmm. You can take the plus one for that roll, then, Virtue.

Sylvia: Okay. I think I did this in the character sheet okay, so I'm gonna click the roll button.

Austin: It should be—

Sylvia: Oh, is this— I'm assuming standard still?

Austin: Standard, yeah. It should be one base, we'll see what it rolls, plus religion and discern, so that brings it up to three, plus mastery plus help. So, all that and you still only got an eight, which is a full success, but, you know.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: Damn, close one. Yeah, I think between the two of you, the two things you note: one, what I already said, this is a very humble-seeming church. Two, there is not any sort of text anywhere, in terms of what is...outside of, again, the word Subsolum, which is on the front, you know, The Church of Subsolum written on the front. There's nothing here written on the altar, on the walls. There are no texts. There is no hymnal. There is nothing like that. The thing you pick up on is looking at this, again I'll say it's a D4 religion Subsolum icon, is that it's like cheaply made? You get the sense that a lot of this...I mean, you succeeded. You get the sense that this is a front of sorts. Something feels off about this place, that the like...there's humility and then there's half-assedry, you know?

Sylvia: Mm-hmm.

Austin: It doesn't feel...you know what it takes to run a church or a temple in a small community like this. This place should feel lived-in. This place should feel like...someone should have been here, you know? And so you're getting the vibe that this just isn't...something is wrong here. It smells wrong. And again, you can take that D4 icon of Subsolum. I think you even notice—

Sylvia: That's religion?

Austin: Yeah, it's a religion domain, yeah, thing. A resource.

Sylvia: Okay.

Austin: So yeah, that is the vibe that you're getting, that this doesn't feel true.

Sylvia: Okay. Yeah, I'm gonna tell the crew that this place feels like some sort of front, as if the completely empty church didn't tip us to it already.

[0:20:05]

Austin: Uh huh.

Sylvia (as Virtue): I don't know how much use this church is actually seeing for what it's intended for.

Austin: Right, yeah. you can hear, also, from the rear of this room, there's a big double door. And from behind that, as you're investigating, you can hear the sound of machinery working, which presumably leads into the factory part of this building.

Sylvia: Okay.

Austin: Anything else?

Ali: I have a skill that I got, I think, in between the last session and downtime.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Ali: Which is "Once per session, when you enter a landmark, you learn of an injustice, threat, or danger that's worrying people there. Some folks might even pay you to help them.

Austin: Ah. [chuckles]

Ali: And I don't know how to start that on my end, but... [laughs]

Austin: You can just tell me when to trigger it, and I can...yeah, so I think...I mean, the thing that happens is you've now poked around in here for long enough that someone's noticed, and a young woman...my facecast for this character is Erin Kellyman, who's been in like...she was in *Solo*. I think she was just in *Falcon and the Winter Soldier*, but I have not watched that. Light skin Black woman with red hair, very light skinned. Kind of pokes her head in the front door, and is like:

Austin (as young woman): [hushed, urgent] Psst! Psst, over here! Hurry!

Ali (as Marn): Oh, hey, hi.

Austin (as young woman): Hi. [frustrated] Mmm.

Austin: Like, waving you all over.

Austin (as young woman): You're not supposed...you're not—

Sylvia: Okay, yeah.

Austin (as young woman): Come with me. Stay low. You're not supposed to...we don't get many visitors.

Austin: And before you can even respond, she's closed the door and is already walking away towards the village.

Sylvia: Rude.

Ali: [laughs] I mean, I'm willing to go, if y'all want to hang back and still explore, or.

Austin: I just realized that your head is probably under the flowers, the height of the flowers. [Ali laughs]

Sylvia: Aww!

Austin: Makes it perfect for you to sneak out and get some, you know.

Ali: Yeah, uh huh.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Ali: I'm a good flag down. [??? 0:22:32]

Austin: They thought three people came to town. [Ali laughs]

Sylvia: Perks of being a funny little guy.

Austin: Uh huh. [Ali and Dre laugh] Stealth!

Ali: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Stealth mode activated. So yeah, Marn, do you sneak out to get the run down here?

Ali: I do, yeah.

Dre: I'll go with you.

Austin: Okay.

Dre: She might have seen Bucho. She might have a lead.

Ali: Oh, yeah.

Janine: I mean, I'll be honest, I don't want to hang out in the church if we've been told more or less that we shouldn't be in the church. [Ali laughs]

Sylvia: Yeah. There's like a really bad vibe here, and I don't feel like staying.

Janine: And I don't want to stumble into anything.

Austin: Uh huh, fair. Fair.

Sylvia: Yeah, exactly. I'm gonna stick with the group too.

Austin: Then yeah, I think that she leads you—this is a character named Gala—leads you through the fields, back to the village as quickly as she can, not even looking back to look at you, as if to do so would be to risk putting someone else's eyes on you, you know what I mean? And after a quick kind of...a quick walk there, very much speedwalking, to one of these houses, she opens a door and then leaves it open. Not all the way open, but leaves the door, you know, unlatched and like, you know, almost leaves it a crack open so you can quickly open it yourselves and get in without making too much noise. And when you come in, it's a very poorly-appointed little, you know, hut basically, with a small fire going, a pair of beds in opposite corners, not much in the way of personal effects. You know, again, it's like, maybe you see one little book, not even on a table, on a little crate, and some vegetables hanging on a hook. And she is sitting on her bed. There aren't other chairs in here or anything. And she says:

Austin (as Gala): Where are you...are you associates of the Shape Knight?

Dre (as Chine): Oh, Bucho.

Austin (as Gala): I don't...perhaps.

Austin: Actually, she would have seen...yeah, she says:

Austin (as Gala): I did not know that was his name. I saw it written on his armor.

Dre (as Chine): Big?

Austin (as Gala): Big. Large. Huge devil man.

Austin: She's human, by the way.

Dre: Yeah.

Dre (as Chine): Uh, not associates, but somebody asked us to go look for him.

Austin (as Gala): [sighs] Well, I think it may be too late for him.

Ali (as Marn): What happened?

Austin (as Gala): The vicar did not appreciate his presence or his questioning nature. I don't know where he is now, but he made a lot of noise, and...

Dre (as Chine): Yeah, he's big.

Austin (as Gala): He was very big. Things have been strange here.

Austin: What's the move say again, Ali? What's the...I want to make sure I don't give too much away.

Ali: Uh, "You learn of an injustice, threat, or danger that's worrying the people here."

Austin: Okay, so yeah, I think she says:

Austin (as Gala): [nervous] I've been here my whole life, and I...we're a small out of the way town. People don't come to visit. In some ways I feel connected to the rest of Sangfielle, because nearly...we feel— I feel connected to the rest of Sangfielle, because our candles are in every home across the heartland, but this is not a place we...we get no visitors, and I'm happy to have few. It's a quiet life. But recently the vicar has eschewed his duties as a leader, and I fear that strange things happen inside the factory. My mother has been gone for a week. I do not know where she is.

Dre (as Chine): Has the vicar started acting differently? Like, than he used to?

Austin (as Gala): His countenance is sharper, his sermons shorter.

Dre (as Chine): How long ago did that start?

Austin (as Gala): Months.

Dre (as Chine): How long have the flowers been yellow?

Austin (as Gala): [confused] My whole life. We use them to make candles. What?

Ali (as Marn): [apologetically] I—

Dre (as Chine): Just checking. [Ali and Austin laugh]

Austin: She looks at the rest of you now, doubting that she should have brought you into her home.

Ali (as Marn): Have other people gone missing?

Austin (as Gala): No, just...I don't think?

Ali (as Marn): Okay.

Austin (as Gala): None that I know.

Ali (as Marn): Well, we'll figure this out. When did you last see your mother?

Austin (as Gala): [sighs] Last week. It was after service. My mother said she had a question for the vicar; she would see me for dinner. She did not see me for dinner.

Dre (as Chine): [sighs] If we want to have a conversation with the vicar, where do we find him? Church seemed a little empty.

Austin (as Gala): Well, that is the thing. I had supposed he would have been there, and that he would have seen you already. But when I peeked in and saw it was only you, I thought I should get you away from there as quickly as possible. That's where he would have been. Perhaps he was attending to something inside the factory, though. Normally he defers the management of the factory to Agar, the foreman. You'll recognize him because his face is wrapped. I think there was an incident, a burn. Could you...? I don't have much, but I would find a way to pay you, if you could find my mother.

Ali (as Marn): Yeah, yeah, of course. This is, uh...I wouldn't want to leave you upset.

Austin (as Gala): I'm afraid it's too late for that, but I just want to know she's okay.
[sighs]

Dre (as Chine): Are *you* safe here?

Austin (as Gala): For now.

Austin: She reaches, you know, under her pillow and produces a big iron key, and says:

Austin (as Gala): This will get you access to the supply room in the workshop in the factory. I work there. We all work there. We all work in the factory. And if you need anything from there, if this can help you in any way.

[0:30:03]

Austin: And hands over the key to the supply room, basically.

Ali (as Marn): Do you know of three caprak people who would work together?

Austin: Her expression grows dour or worried.

Austin (as Gala): [nervous] Oh. Y- yes, of course. They work with the vicar closely. They don't speak. They don't say much, at least, I haven't heard. We call them Eyes, Ears, and Mouth, for reasons of excess.

Ali (as Marn): Mmm.

Dre (as Chine): Wait, like they've got a big mouth, or...?

Austin (as Gala): Big eyes, big ears, and big mouth, yes.

Dre (as Chine): Ah, okay.

Ali: [softly] I hate that show. [Sylvia laughs]

Austin: God dammit. [Ali laughs]

Sylvia: I guess this would be an in character question.

Austin: I think, real quick, she would, you know, extend. She said they work for the vicar. She will say, like:

Austin (as Gala): They live here in town. They live in the village.

Austin: Actually, maybe they don't. Maybe they live in the factory. Yeah, I think she says:

Austin (as Gala): They live in the factory. They have quarters there. They ensure that quotas are met and that all deliveries are done on time and that no product goes missing. They are his enforcers.

Sylvia: That actually leads into a question I had, which we might have gotten the info just from seeing the inside of the church.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Sylvia (as Virtue): Does the vicar live in the church or in the factory? Or does he—

Austin (as Gala): Yes.

Sylvia (as Virtue): Okay.

Austin (as Gala): He has quarters attached to the factory. Or, inside of the factory.

Sylvia (as Virtue): This is more for my own peace of mind. How often do you see the vicar during the day?

Austin (as Gala): Often. He...he patrols the factory floor.

Sylvia (as Virtue): [relieved] Okay. Thank god. [sighs] Was really worried it would turn out to be someone I knew. [Ali laughs softly]

Austin (as Gala): I'm sorry, I don't understand.

Sylvia (as Virtue): It's fine. They do.

Sylvia: She gives her a smile. [laughs]

Austin (as Gala): Strange. [realization] Are you—

Austin: Gives you a look as if she's trying to piece together the puzzle of are you asking if he's a vampire.

Sylvia (as Virtue): You can never be too careful.

Austin (as Gala): Don't vampires hate the light? Why would a vampire run a candle shop? Or, a candle factory?

Sylvia (as Virtue): They hate the sun, sweetie. It's a little different. But I think either way, if you've seen him out and about in the sun, there's nothing to worry about. Well, nothing to worry about vampirically. Which is good news for your mom, in my opinion! Someone else please talk to her. I'm not good at the comforting thing. [Ali laughs softly]

Austin (as Gala): I should correct. I said I've seen him in the day. I didn't say I'd seen him in the sun.

Sylvia (as Virtue): [strained] Great.

Ali (as Marn): This is valuable information, thank you.

Austin: She sort of slouches.

Austin (as Gala): He couldn't be a... [Ali laughs] They don't even exist!

Ali (as Marn): Mmm.

Sylvia (as Virtue): Of course not.

Austin (as Gala): This is a...

Austin: Es?

Janine: Uh, I was...mmm. This is kind of foolish, but it doesn't say I have to roll for it, so I figured I'd do it anyway.

Austin: Uh huh?

Janine: When I observe someone for a few seconds, I can read their aura and discern their surface-level emotions, whether they're angry, happy, frustrated, or so on. I feel like I kind of already know.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Janine: But I've also been sitting here and observing this person, so.

Austin: Yeah. She's upset, genuinely, a hundred percent. Like, this is not someone who's lying to you, right? She's not worried that you're gonna— you know what I mean? So, I think, one: genuine worry, fear. Two: there are flashes of another aura. It is not the same as a heratrix. I think you would recognize that, right? I'm guessing. I guess I should ask you. Do heratrixes have different marked auras? Are the auras of heratrixes marked differently visually to you in that way?

Janine: I think, given how we've described heratrixes as like completely nonphysical beings—

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Janine: —that kind of possess the physical, I feel like you would be able to recognize.

Austin: Yeah.

Janine: And that's also, you know, when we were talking about the place where the heratrixes go, the special thing about that place is that the hosts can converse without the heratrixes.

Austin: Yes.

Janine: So I feel like the heratrixes can still recognize each other and converse, probably.

Austin: Yes. Yeah. So then, yeah, I think— this is not a heratrix, to be clear. This is not a host of a heratrix. But there is like a...I kind of used this metaphor last time with Chine's vision, like the canvas is revealed on top of the image itself. This is a situation where like, on top of seeing the aura, you can recognize the medium on which the aura is. It's almost like the aura is caught inside of— okay. You know how a candle flame has both the outside light and then the interior light and those can be different colors, right? There can be a burning hot white center and then the exterior of it, the edge of it can be blue or orange or something, right, depending on heat and stuff and whatever's burning and all that. This is a situation where her aura is the center, right? And it's this very...I don't, you tell me what this looks like, I guess, if this is a certain color or something, but it's worry and concern and sadness and upset. She's worried for her mother. But there is like, at the edge almost, a second color here. Or maybe that's reversed. The key is that there is a second color here, inside of or behind the first, that indicates a second attached aura to what's happening here. Which does not mean this other one is a lie. There's not lying happening, there is just a co-presence of some sort. Or maybe not a co-presence. A residue might be a better word? It's hard to know what it is, I guess. Anyone else have any fun moves around looking at people and feeling out the truth or anything like that?

Dre: Oh, I do.

Austin: Oh, word?

Dre: Uh huh. Let me find it here. [thoughtful noise]

Austin: Ah, yeah, right.

Dre: Yep. My Twisting Territory move. Once per situation, I can ask the GM who's in charge of the immediate area around me. "By smell, sight, or some other esoteric sense, you gain an intuitive understanding of the apex predator or alpha creature, whether that's a person or a beast, in the local area."

Austin: Yeah.

Dre: However, when I use this power, the target also gets the uncanny feeling that they're under threat.

Austin: Ooh, I love that. It is, despite your removal from the church at this point...we can read this move in different ways, right? What's the immediate area? Is the immediate area the entire village? Is it the village plus the factory? Is it just this room? Even in the just this room sense, the vicar has control of this space, so authoritative is his control. How you want to read that, it's up to you. I think maybe it is just the overwhelming smell of these candles, the canola oil candles that are being...actually, it's not a canola smell. This is the thing that has this secondary characteristic. This is the thing that makes it...that marks it with this other smell. It is like a sweet, earthy scent that's different than what the field of the flowers is. It's like a different type of natural oil that you smell. And in that moment, somewhere inside of the factory, you know, we get an image of the vicar. We get an image of vicar Regan Alaway, whose facecast is Michael Ealy. Returning to Friends at the Table for I think maybe a second or third appearance, Michael Ealy. Dressed as a very, again, humble vicar, all black with a white collar and sitting at a table, just looks up from a piece of paper and kind of just looks into the camera. And you can feel someone gazing at you, probing at you actually, Chine, as if looking for an opening, and doesn't find one.

Dre: Okay. Good to know it's not some sneaky shadowy presence or whatever.

Austin: Mm-hmm. [chuckles] I mean—

Dre: I mean—

Austin: I ain't not that, in some ways.

Dre: Yeah, it's the sneaky shadowy presence that we know about. [Sylvia and Dre laugh]

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Ali: Marn would start asking about her family as a way to calm her down but also...like when you talk about a thing to get away from like—

Austin: Yeah, yeah.

Ali: —the sucking part of it, the part of it's that traumatic, but also try to get more information about the disappearance.

Austin: Yes. So what do you ask?

Ali: [laughs] That's the thing.

Janine: "What's life like here?" or something along those...

Ali: Right. Yeah, just about the work they did in the factory or whatever.

[0:40:02]

Austin: I think she says:

Austin (as Gala): It's simple. We have big machines. We process the wax. We dip the wick. It grows every time you dip it. The candle gains volume. And then we ship them out. It's repetitive work, but it takes care of everyone here. There's enough food to go around, and outside of punishments, I can't complain much.

Sylvia (as Virtue): Punishments?

Austin: She says:

Austin (as Gala): Less food, time spent praying for guidance. You have to attend to the south field, which is far and hot in the sun. Sometimes if you are very bad, there's violence, but no one has ever been...we all take care of each other here in the village.

Janine: How many people live in this town?

Austin: Are you asking me, Austin, or are you asking her?

Janine: Um...I guess I'm asking her. Probably not in as firm a way. [Austin and Ali chuckle]
Probably nicer.

Austin (as Gala): There are...

Austin: And she begins to say names.

Austin (as Gala): Myself, um, Wayne, Agar, Nara...around twenty. If you count the caprak and the vicar. They say that all of the candles in Sangfielle are made by twenty hands. Well, twenty people, forty hands, I suppose.

Janine (as Es): So the vicar also makes candles?

Austin (as Gala): He knows how the machines work, and when we get big orders we all have to work. He's been very busy though, lately. I have not seen him on the floor in any meaningful capacity in days.

Janine (as Es): And the caprak were probably absent for a little bit recently, right?

Austin (as Gala): That's right, yes.

Ali (as Marn): You know where they'd be at around this time?

Austin: I think that...I think she looks out the window to see where the sun is at and gauge what time it is at this point.

Austin (as Gala): Likely on the floor, the factory floor. Unless the vicar has them doing a chore or an errand.

Austin: And on that beat, in fact, you can hear footsteps outside, and a shadow passes the window, and you can see a red cape passing the window and a big black jacket underneath it, or a black shirt underneath it. And, you know, they can't see you, they don't see you in here, but it's clear one of these caprak at least is outside now kind of walking through the village. You know, I don't think they're sniffing the air, but they have that vibe, he has that vibe of, you know, scanning the area, looking for people.

Janine: I'm guessing we—

Ali: Wanna tail— [laughs]

Janine: Sorry, what did you say, Ali?

Ali: I was gonna say, can we tail them? You go on before...

Janine: I was gonna ask if they had applications. [Ali and Sylvia laugh]

Austin (as Gala): You would...

Austin: I think, very quietly, having seen this caprak pass, Gala just holds the finger up to her lips to be like, shh. And then in a moment says like:

Austin (as Gala): [hushed and horrified] Why would you stay here?

Janine (as Es): No, I wouldn't. I'm just assuming they wouldn't offer tours, and it's an alternative option.

Austin (as Gala): We do actually give tours now and then, if there's a potential buyer. The vicar makes a big deal of it. Everyone has to look their best. And...

Janine (as Es): Oh, that sounds wonderful.

Austin (as Gala): [confused] Uh, yes. [Sylvia laughs]

Austin: She's a little confused as to why that would be good.

Dre: As she says they have to look their best, Chine picks like a leaf out of his hair.

Austin: [chuckles] Uh huh.

Ali: I'm in the market for some candles, I guess.

Austin: Alright. Is that the plan? This is not a Forged in the Dark game, but are you choosing deception as your...? [Ali and Janine laugh]

Dre (as Chine): [sighs] One of them's right out— we could just go...

Janine (as Es): And then what? What's part two?

Dre (as Chine): Punch? Hit? Kick? [Sylvia and Janine laugh]

Sylvia (as Virtue): Brilliant plan, Chine.

Janine (as Es): Okay, that's part 1A, 1B, 1C, 1D. [Ali laughs] What's part 2?

Dre (as Chine): Oh.

Sylvia: Yeah, we already have a key, don't we? Didn't Gala give us a key?

Austin: Gala gave you a key to a storage room inside of the factory, correct.

Sylvia: Yeah, mmm.

Dre (as Chine): Okay, so we don't even have to do part two, which is break in, because we have a key.

Janine (as Es): We still have to break into the exterior.

Dre (as Chine): Maybe he has a key to do that.

Austin (as Gala): The door should be open. It's daytime. People are working.

Dre (as Chine): See?

Austin (as Gala): We don't get visitors. We don't have...we're far from everything, and...

Janine (as Es): It feels like we'll be very conspicuous if we just wander in without any kind of cover and also one of their friends is unconscious in the canola field. I guess no one would see him for a bit, but we can't really control the timing on when they do.

Austin: She nods.

Ali (as Marn): We can sneak in at night, but then it's risky because of the, uh...night activity. [Dre laughs] At least, we're assuming.

Austin: She squints.

Austin (as Gala): [confused] Night activity? The factory, most of the time, doesn't run at night.

Ali (as Marn): No, no, no, the creepy guy. [Sylvia laughs]

Austin (as Gala): The vicar. [Janine laughs] It— [sighs]

Austin: And then she realizes she's not gonna get anywhere by arguing that he's not a vampire. That same caprak marches back this way. For a moment, everyone goes quiet again, or she goes quiet again, and then you see that he begins to head off south, past the village, and at some point you lose sight of him in the fields.

Ali: I'm...can...I want to follow him! [laughs]

Austin: Sure!

Dre: No, yeah.

Austin: Go for it.

Dre: Let's do it.

Ali: I feel like I can, because we established last time that I'm shorter than the flowers. [laughs]

Austin: You're gonna have mastery on these rolls. No, absolutely.

Dre: Oh, hell yeah.

Austin: Uh huh.

Ali: Oh, I actually have a skill for this.

Janine: We can take him out if we want to take him— if he's getting farther away, that makes taking him out a little more appealing. 'Cause it feels a little bit...

Sylvia: Especially if he's going towards the punishment fields, too. [Ali laughs]

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Austin: He's going towards the punishment fields. That is where he's going, yeah.

Ali: Okay.

Austin: It's not a punishment field. It's just...I mean...

Sylvia: It's just shittier there.

Austin: It's just shittier there, correct.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Ali: I have an important skill, which is that if I succeed on an Evade roll, all nearby allies roll with mastery while trying to Evade.

Austin: That's great. That's a fantastic roll.

Dre: Ooh.

Sylvia: That's, yeah. [Ali laughs]

Austin: Alright, that sounds like a roll to me.

Dre: That's pretty good.

Ali: Mm-hmm. [laughs]

Austin: That sounds like y'all are gonna sneak out and follow Big Eyes.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: This is, uh...so, it's Evade. Out here it's wild, especially as you get away from everything else and just into the fields.

Ali: Mmm.

Austin: You will have mastery on this, because of the established fact that you will go underneath the flowers. [Austin and Ali laugh] You're smaller than the flowers. But you are traveling with people who are not, so even though you can kind of scout ahead and do the fun hand signals...

Janine: We're still probably crawling or something.

Austin: Yeah, exactly. I'd say one person can help here, in terms of being a lookout as you kind of move ahead and having some sort of signal if this caprak looks back.

Dre: I will help. Yeah, I've got Evade.

Austin: Okay. So then, Ali, you're rolling one plus Evade plus mastery plus help. That's four D10. You're looking for anything above a five. Eight, nine, ten are all full successes. There's an eight!

Dre: Boom.

Austin: Full success. Look at that, last one. Three, three, six, eight. Yikes, close one.

Ali: Thanks, Chine.

Dre: Mm-hmm!

Austin: Yeah. As you follow towards the south, you get to...the opening bit of this tailing this guy is not that hard because of the flowers, but then you reach this point where the train track happens, and it's multiple train tracks running back and forth. This is one of the major lines of the Shape that bisects all of Sangfielle, comes right through this canyon or this valley, and at that point, you have to be very careful, when you cross from the kind of north field across the tracks to the south field without being seen. All it would take would be for this caprak to turn around for a split second, and you'd be seen. You're completely out in the open. But with an eight, you manage to do it, and you cross over into the other field. At this point, with that success, everyone else can take mastery on any type of Evade roll that they want to make, until they next act? Or until...I guess, Ali, until *you* next act.

Ali: Until I next act, yeah.

Austin: Okay, that makes sense.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: So, as you cross over, you find a...you see him in the distance, and you see another figure there, and it takes you a second to realize that the other figure is a scarecrow, is a very big scarecrow up on a post, and it seems like...from this safe distance, it seems like he's

working to reconnect the scarecrow or something. You can't really tell what's going on. What do you do?

Sylvia: [sighs] I mean, I'm curious about this scarecrow now.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

[0:50:00]

Sylvia: But there's no...I mean, I have a trinket that would let me look closer, but that doesn't count, so I need to move closer.

Austin: What is it? What's the trinket?

Sylvia: I have a spyglass, remember?

Austin: Oh, you can use your trinkets. Like, you don't...

Sylvia: Yeah. No, for sure. I just wasn't sure if it made sense fictionally or...

Austin: Think about trinkets as things that open up fictional possibilities, right?

Sylvia: Okay, cool.

Austin: Even if they don't...it's not gonna add to your roll, but it would let you roll discern if that's a thing you wanted to do, right?

Sylvia: Yeah, that's kind of what I'm aiming for here is a discern check, just to see...

Janine: The scarecrow's a person or something, right?

Austin: Yeah, exactly. Exactly.

Sylvia: Yeah, or why he's out here doing this, when he seems to be one of the more like closer to the vicar people.

Austin: Yeah, totally.

Sylvia: So this would be...

Austin: Discern, wild, which you don't have unfortunately.

Sylvia: I don't have, no.

Austin: This is standard. I don't know how anyone could help. I guess if someone has an idea for— if someone has an idea for helping here, please let me know.

Janine: Mmm...

Austin: The threat is being seen, still, right?

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: The threat is that this could break bad, so maybe something about that.

Sylvia: I do still have my...if no one's comfortable or able to assist even—

Austin: You could take that—

Sylvia: I can take a six on this.

Austin: Yeah, it's a new session. Janine, you were going to say something?

Janine: I was trying to think of a way I could use my discern to help, 'cause I don't have wild, but I do have discern.

Austin: Right. Hmm...

Janine: But I can...

Austin: It's just hard to be like, "I'm also looking." I mean, it's...

Janine: It feels like Virtue's doing most of the discerning.

Austin: Yeah. Specifically 'cause of it being a spyglass, right?

Sylvia: The way...a thing I could think of, and it also sort of adds to the risk of being caught, is Virtue trying to quietly say what she's seeing and seeing if it rings any bells for anyone.

Austin: Mm-hmm. You could do—

Sylvia: But that's a bit of a stretch.

Austin: Yeah. You could have someone do some sort of distraction so that the dude looks away. The caprak. Or like...

Sylvia: You know what? I'm gonna take Stress on this and use Unorthodox Methods and declare it a success.

Austin: Okay.

Sylvia: Because I want to move on.

Austin: Yeah, fine. Give me a...oh, I should tell you this before you commit to this.

Sylvia: Okay.

Austin: This is a D6 Stress to you here.

Sylvia: [inhales in alarm] Okay.

Austin: Oh, no, sorry, sorry, sorry. That's not true. It's D4 here. It's D4 here. I had to remember where we were in this place. Down here, it's just a D4. So let me roll a D4. Take three Stress to Fortune as you push your fuckin' luck.

Sylvia: [strained] Great.

Austin: And then roll to see if you get Fallout.

Sylvia: I'm gonna get Fallout.

Austin: [disbelieving] Oh, you have ten? You have ten Stress? [Ali laughs]

Sylvia: Yeah! Yeah, I didn't realize that when I was...

Dre: Oh, buddy.

Sylvia: I had my thing scrolled down, and then I scrolled up and saw the seven.

Austin: Uh huh.

Sylvia: And then I just added the three to that.

Austin: Yeah, uh huh.

Janine: Did you not clear stuff at the temple?

Austin: No. She's just taken a bunch of Stress, right?

Sylvia: I cleared a Fallout at the Haven.

Austin: Yeah.

Sylvia: And I took a Fallout, but it was a Fortune Fallout which I didn't...

Austin: And you didn't take...right, and you didn't clear Stress. You only cleared Fallout, right?

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: That's what happened here.

Ali: Is there any way to just roll and see if it's a six before... [Dre laughs]

Austin: I mean, I will let you roll that, but again, that could just be a hard failure at that point.

Ali: Sure, sure, sure, sure.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: It's up to you. If you want to take this back, this three Stress back...

Sylvia: I'm gonna take this back—

Austin: Okay.

Sylvia: Just because ten is so high.

Austin: You're going to get...

Janine: I've also...

Sylvia: I did not realize I had seven Stress coming into this.

Austin: Yes. [Ali laughs]

Janine: I have a way to maybe help with a discern, which is less about discerning the scarecrow and more about discerning the entire picture.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Janine: Even though I just used this on Gala, there's no like...when I'm observing someone for a few seconds, I can read their aura.

Austin: Yeah, no, that totally works. That a hundred percent works, yep!

Janine: Just seems like a thing of like, okay, well you—

Austin: A hundred percent.

Sylvia: Oh, yeah, that's great.

Janine: Get a closer look at that thing, but I'd love to see what his whole tone is.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Janine: While he's looking at this thing.

Austin: Go ahead and take that plus one, and what are you rolling? How many dice is that? Is that three dice?

Sylvia: Three, yeah.

Austin: Okay. Three. Give me three dice, three D10. [Ali laughs]

Sylvia: Okay! I'm so scared.

Janine: Is that with mastery?

Austin: Ay, that's nine! [Sylvia laughs in relief] That mastery's only for evading, unfortunately.

Janine: There's an evasion component to the...we got a nine, it's fine.

Austin: But you're not rolling Evade.

Sylvia: It's fine. [Ali and Dre laugh] I got a nine.

Austin: Alright, with a nine. So, you know, I think you both notice two key elements to this. The first is just the raw image. So, Virtue, you see the raw image. This is a big scarecrow, very rotund in terms of its roundness and shape, and the...Eyes, the caprak, is re-stuffing it with straw that has fallen onto the ground and been picked at presumably, and re-stuffs it back in. Eyes has big gloves on while doing this, and again, that big red cape. And as he's doing that, one, you catch a glint of metal in the spyglass. The spyglass picks up something shiny inside of the scarecrow.

Sylvia: Okay.

Austin: Two, he starts to do something that's below the flower line, reaches down into a bag or a pouch and produces something that you can't quite get a good...I mean, it's a nine. I'll give it to you. It's like a little ball or cube of some sort of material, something soft, maybe gelatinous. And then it kind of...you can't quite see what happens. And then, and this is Es, your aura vision

here. Again, is this just— is it colors? What do you see? How does that work? How do you sense...what's the visual element of this?

Janine: So this is the thing of like, I don't know that I can reasonably describe it as a visual element, because it's a heratrix thing, and they don't perceive light and stuff.

Austin: Right.

Janine: Like, they don't have eyes of their own.

Austin: So it's just raw information.

Janine: It's just an energy.

Austin: Okay.

Janine: It's vibes, yeah.

Austin: It's vibes. Well, so, the vibes that you're— the vibes from Eyes, Big Eyes, the caprak, are dutiful and singularly focused, very little in the way of distraction, deeply committed to the act. Then, there is a spark, and there is a second set of vibes, as the body of Two-Step Bucho, or the armor of Two-Step Bucho, or whatever it is up on that post, sparks into life and looks down at the caprak who looks back up at him and then puts his stuff away and begins to walk away. You have no idea what just happened there, but it seems as if the Shape Knight's armor has kicked back alive and perhaps the Shape Knight himself. And Bucho— or, not Bucho, Big Eyes begins to turn around, and all of you are able to duck under the flower line as he begins to head back northwest towards the factory.

Ali: Two vibes happen at once.

Austin: Two vibes happen at once, that's right. [Sylvia and Ali laugh]

Dre (as Chine): [sighs] Do we gotta go talk to a scarecrow now?

Janine (as Es): Uh, mmm, I don't know that that's the best idea.

Ali (as Marn): Chine, don't you do that all the time? What are you talking about? [Austin laughs]

Dre (as Chine): Yeah, that's why I don't wanna do it. It's just boring. [Austin, Sylvia, and Ali laugh]

Ali (as Marn): I mean, I'm willing to continue tailing this guy, but I feel like talking to Bucho is...

Sylvia (as Virtue): Yeah.

Dre (as Chine): No, yeah.

Janine (as Es): Are we confident that Bucho's not just going to Minecraft golem us?

Janine: That's...I can't say that. [laughter] Es doesn't know what Minecraft is.

Ali: [laughing] Is that an industry term?

Dre: Hmm, what is this Minecraft you speak of? [Ali laughs]

Janine (as Es): I'm a little concerned that what just happened was basically the creation of a golem-like figure where this, you know, given the imagery of scarecrows and stuff, that this is maybe now a sentinel intended to protect this area. I suppose I could be wrong. I would love to be wrong.

Dre (as Chine): Mmm.

Janine (as Es): I would love to not have to fight the shambling corpse of that nice priestess's friend, but you know, it's on the table.

Dre (as Chine): Well, it's not really *his* corpse. It's a scarecrow.

Janine (as Es): ...Yeah. Uh. Sure, let's draw that line. I don't know. [Ali laughs]

Austin: Chine sees the world in very interesting ways. [Dre and Janine laugh]

Dre (as Chine): Oh yeah, sure, it might be his consciousness. It's not his body. It's a scarecrow body.

Austin: I just want to one hundred percent, Chine...or, Dre, you understand his body is up there.

Dre: Oh, yeah. [laughs] Yeah.

Austin: Okay. This is Chine seeing the world a particular way, just to be clear.

Dre: Yeah.

Janine: Okay.

Dre: Uh huh!

Austin: Yeah, mm-hmm.

Sylvia: I want to go over to the scarecrow.

Austin: Okay. You go over to the scarecrow. As you approach it, it becomes more and more clear that the reason the scarecrow is so rounded is because there's a whole fuckin' Shape armor body, or Shape armor set of armor...Shape Knight set of armor in there, underneath the oversized shirt and pants and beneath all of the straw.

Dre: Mmm.

[1:00:00]

Austin: In fact, there's barely any straw here. There's only just enough to cover it up, and in fact, as you approach, you know, I'll say that at some point the wind, you know, kind of rolls through strong enough that between the overstuffed shirt that has been pulled over the armor and the straw that's just been pushed back in and whatever the new energy moving through this thing is, one of the buttons pops off— or a couple of the buttons pop off the top of this red checkerboard patterned shirt, and it opens up revealing the plate metal chest of this thing, and in cursive it says "Two-Step Bucho" like stenciled onto the armor. If you had any questions about who this was, they are now gone, as this figure does look down at you, but it is not clear...it is not clear. There is— I guess the recognition and the aura sight give you the sense that there is a consciousness here.

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Austin: There are no words spoken at this point.

Janine: No clear vibes?

Austin: There are the vibes of you're not sure you want to touch the metal, because it seems to be like buzzing with energy.

Sylvia: Is— [sighs] is there a way for me to tell if it's the...I mean, I feel like it's a safe guess that the armor is doing this, but just to concretely know if it's the armor animating or not?

Austin: [sighs] How do you...tell me how you investigate that. Like, how do you...what's your...visualize it for me.

Sylvia: I don't want to touch the armor, as previously mentioned, but I do have...I was thinking of this Shape-touched chalk that I have, seeing if it reacted to it strongly.

Austin: Mm.

Ali: Ooh.

Austin: That's fun.

Sylvia: And...I don't know.

Austin: You know what?

Sylvia: I want to know if Bucho is...

Austin: Is aware, yeah, uh huh.

Sylvia: ...a corpse that is being animated by Shape magic, basically.

Austin: Yeah. What do you do with the chalk?

Sylvia: I think it's like...we kind of described it, I think, the first time, as it sparking when you write with it, right?

Austin: It can, in a sense.

Sylvia: Okay.

Austin: If you draw a line with it, and especially if you draw the Shape, then...which again, as a reminder, the Shape is both the thing with call the trains but also is the sort of collection of lines that make up the primary kind of train lines of the Shape network, the train network. And so if you draw that, especially with this Shape-touched chalk, you end up with a thing where like, yes, there's a spark that can follow the line. You can also just do this with other material.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: You know, if you poured out oil or something and then lit it, it would also do this. And that shape carries magical power, kind of a warding power.

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: But also potentially a targeting power, as the Shape itself responds, right?

Sylvia: This is the thing. Yeah, [sighs] that's tough. Because I can't just...I was hoping to see if either the chalk itself reacted, just being in proximity to the armor.

Austin: Sure.

Sylvia: Or if I need to just straight-up start drawing this and see if it starts reacting.

Austin: I think you need...I think it vibrates in your hand a little bit, do you know what I mean?

Sylvia: Okay.

Austin: There is a resonance. It would not go...something would happen if you used it in some way, but you would have to intentionally do some sort of something to try to make something happen here. There is that resonance that's connecting here. You could also try to investigate without touching. You could give me a discern roll to be very careful, you know what I mean?

Sylvia: Yeah.

Austin: I know you're in a rough place in terms of Stress. [Ali laughs]

Sylvia: Yeah, you know, it's fine.

Dre: Eh, you know? [Sylvia laughs] What if Chine just touches it?

Austin: Chine feels like someone who would be like, "Fuck it, I'll just do it," right?

Dre: Yeah, no. I think as everyone else is like looking at this thing and Virtue's pulling out chalk, I think Chine just kosaunters up and says:

Dre (as Chine): Two-Step, you in there?

Dre: And goes to rap on the helmet.

Austin: I'm just going to give you Blood Stress if you do this, 'cause I've established that this is like filled with an electric pulse, right?

Dre: Yeah, sure.

Austin: I'm just gonna roll D4. But we're gonna call it basically a mixed success, because there will be a response to this.

Dre: What's the tier that we are on right now?

Austin: Out here we are in tier...you know what, this whole place is weird enough. This whole place is tier two.

Dre: Okay.

Austin: So, you have two blood Protection, right?

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Austin: And you take four Blood Stress.

Dre: Okay.

Austin: Which means you'll take two Blood Stress really, and then give me that Fallout check. I love that you just reach up there and rap on the helmet. Alright, no Fallout. That's good. You do get kind of pushed back, you know, on your butt from the jolt of electricity you receive, but the plate armor opens up, the helmet kind of gives way, and the...in fact, I'm gonna say that you touching it has expended all that built up energy, which means now people can kind of go up and poke and open and prod without it hurting them at this point. You took that shot for them. Underneath the helmet is the face of Bucho, who again is a devil, whose face...whose eyes make contact with you as if they are alive but tired, and whose skin seems sickly, a little yellowish. Again, his skin is normally red, this kind of deep red, and now it is turning yellow and increasingly waxy.

Sylvia: Huh! Interesting!

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Dre: Hmm.

Ali: Yeah, I'll say.

Sylvia: Can we...you said it seems like he's alive, but there's no verbal or anything else?

Austin: No. As you investigate, I think you come to see...Jack's described that some Shape Knight armor sets have furnaces in them, and as you poke around—I'm just gonna abstract this a little bit—you find that in this one's furnace is like a little ball of...it's not even a ball. It almost looks like a rock of kind of black and yellow material that looks like...it looks almost like coal or something but black and yellow, or gray and yellow, from here anyway. But there are parts of it that almost look amber, and that seems to be powering the armor. I don't think any of you are Shape Knight, like, super knowledgeable, but that seems to be the thing that has powered the armor and potentially the body too. It seems as if this might be a situation where the armor keeps Bucho alive at this point. On the plus side, I think you can intuit that by activating that defensive shock, the remainder of this fuel can be used to just keep the armor active, instead of burning through it with this high-powered energy field thing, you know?

Dre: Yeah. Hmm. What did you say the shape...like, what is the shape of the furnace? Not in terms of geometric shape, but does it look like it's running low on energy or is it drained or...?

Austin: At this point, this big thing of fuel will keep it going for a while.

Dre: Okay.

Austin: Again, it's hard to know, because it's not your field of specialty.

Dre: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: But I'm giving you the sense that it was burning through it pretty rapidly before; now that the energy shock has like been shot off, it doesn't have to keep up that field anymore.

Dre: Okay. So, still no verbal response.

Austin: No. It's clear the Bucho is both extremely hurt and also extremely...there has been some weird shit that has been done to Bucho.

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: The waxiness is clearly not just "I need to get a couple nights' sleep."

Dre: Mmm.

Austin: It seems as if he cannot even, like, open his mouth at this point.

Sylvia: Did we check out what Big Eyes, the thing on the ground that he was fiddling with was?

Austin: That was— the thing that he was— it was the fuel that he was putting inside of the armor.

Sylvia: Okay.

Austin: Yeah. Seeing it up close now, you can recognize it from when you looked in the spyglass at it.

Sylvia (as Virtue): It might be worth trying to get him down. Doesn't seem like he's in any condition to help us out in this state.

Sylvia: And then she just sorta gestures to the fact that he is a scarecrow.

Janine: And also a candle?

Sylvia: Yeah. Does sort of throw some suspicions on the methods in the factory, if you ask me. Anyway, which one of you is getting him down from there? [Ali laughs]

Ali: Yeah—

Dre (as Chine): I got it.

Ali: Uh, well...

Austin: Marn, what were you going to say?

Sylvia: Marn, what?

Ali: Well, I have Mend, and I don't know...I've been trying to think of...I just don't know that there would be a way to capital-H help this person.

[1:10:02]

Austin: If you can think of a way to visualize that for me and tell that story, you know what I mean?

Ali: Right.

Austin: Do you have stuff? Remember that you have supply, which just means you have a bag filled with shit in it, do you know what I mean?

Ali: Right. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: And it's not clear that this is...it's worth saying, it's clear that something weird is going on here. It's not clear that this is, for instance, Echo Stress, Marn.

Ali: Okay.

Austin: In terms of like, is this a capital-C curse, or is it something you could address with your medical supplies? Who could say? You'd have to roll Mend to find out, in some ways.

Ali: Right. Sure. Yeah, I don't know. I guess if getting him down seems like the first step of that, then...

Austin: You could totally just get him down. I'm not gonna make you roll to get him down.

Ali: Okay.

Austin: You're four people, [Ali laughs] and he's very heavy, but like...I mean, part of being a person in this big armor is he can take the fall, you know?

Dre: Yeah.

Ali: Sure.

Dre: Chine goes into great detail to pick all of the straw off.

Austin: Sure.

Janine: How yellow is the straw?

Dre: Uh huh, yeah.

Austin: Mm-hmm, that's true. And then just kind of lay him here in the field, presumably? Or...

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Austin: How would you go about trying to Mend here, Marn?

Ali: Yeah, I don't know. I keep, like...I keep thinking of trying to give him water or something, but that doesn't seem like the thing.

Austin: It could be part of a larger...we don't need to go beat by beat in terms of this, but water plus some other stuff seems like a perfectly fine thing to try to start working towards, you know?

Ali: Sure, sure, sure. Yeah. It doesn't seem to me like...

Austin: And again, you can make up bullshit. That's the other thing.

Ali: I feel like I maybe have like a topical cream or whatever for skin wounds.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: And that sort of thing.

Austin: I mean, the thing you can tell again is like, his eyes are moving, so it's not like he has no control at all over any part of his body, so maybe it is something you could treat topically place by place, you know what I mean?

Ali: Sure, sure, sure. Okay, yeah.

Austin: So yeah, that to me sounds like Mend. I would say that there's a few things you can use for the domains here. This is definitely wild, 'cause you're in a wild place and you can always use the domain of the place you're in. I don't think any of you have wild. [chuckles] It's also...I would allow occult here. I think I would allow occult here. Maybe religion, but occult seems more honest about the situation. And then technology, but I don't think any of you have technology.

Ali: Sure. Would I be able to use my...my well-stocked haversack has the Mend skill, so does that help the roll at all?

Austin: That is a...that would be if you were actually healing a person, like a PC.

Ali: Okay.

Austin: That's the sort of damage you would heal, if that makes sense.

Ali: Oh, okay, okay, okay.

Austin: Whereas this is...the thing I don't want is to have you roll a success and then say "Do your healing amount," and be like "Oh, you only healed one. That didn't count," so.

Ali: [laughs] Fair. Fair, fair, fair, fair.

Austin: I will say having that with you though, in this case, gives you mastery.

Ali: Okay.

Austin: It's built for this. This is exactly what it's for, is for mending people, so. So, is anyone helping? And if so, how?

Sylvia: I don't think I have any of the skills or domains that were mentioned.

Janine: Mmm.

Dre: [sighs] Yeah. I mean, I can't help using a resource, can I?

Austin: What's the resource?

Dre: The closest thing I think...

Austin: Maybe it's a resource where you don't even need to roll. Who could say?

Dre: Yeah, I don't think so. I was just gonna say if Marn is coming up with some sort of concoction or poultice or something—

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Dre: I've got those fallen oranges I could mix in there. [Ali laughs]

Austin: Oh, that's fun.

Ali: That's what he needs, some citrus.

Dre: Mm-hmm!

Austin: But remember, they're weird god oranges, right?

Dre: Yeah.

Austin: They're white flower beast oranges.

Sylvia: Oh, he's got scurvy. [Ali laughs]

Janine: Ohh.

Dre: God scurvy.

Austin: Yeah, his skin is turning yellow, right? Again, we do live in this...this is the world that we are in, in which it's not absurd to think: could these fallen oranges from the white flower beast have a strange effect on this person who is in the yellow fields. Like, all of that shit is exactly the sort of world logic that we are part of, you know?

Dre: Mmm. Especially if these are kind of more reddish orange than yellowish orange.

Austin: Right, uh huh. [Sylvia and Austin laugh] I'll give you a plus one on that roll. Or, not a plus one, but an extra die, if you consume those for this.

Dre: Oh, yeah, definitely.

Austin: So, I'll count that as...so yeah, they're gone. You mix them into a poultice here as you apply it.

Ali: [laughs] Okay, cool, yeah. I think Marn is doing the thing of when you see a nurse or someone trying to help someone they've just encountered of like looking into their eyes to see if it's discolored or anything and trying to touch his skin, trying to see what's up there.

Austin: Mm-hmm.

Ali: I do think that she offers up some of this vial of rainwater from the southlands, but yeah, let me do this roll.

Austin: Alright. So that's how many dice? That's one for base, plus Mend, plus mastery, plus help is 4D10. Alright! That's an 8.

Ali: Okay. That makes an eight.

Austin: That's another success. Yeah, it take a little while, and it is uncomfortable out here. The heat down here is actually, as the suns get higher in the sky, you kind of get that there is...there is something about being on this side of the train tracks that is worse, but you stick with it, and everyone sits below the flower line so no one gets seen, and soon enough you have...Bucho begins to cough and spit up something, and like:

Austin (as Bucho): [heavy, relieved breaths]

Austin: The rest of his body still does not seem to be maneuverable. He doesn't have the strength to do it, or it has become more wax-like, or there's not enough fuel, or he's saving his fuel. It's not clear. But he does say:

Austin (as Bucho): Thank you. [sighs] Did the Knights send you?

Dre (as Chine): No.

Austin (as Bucho): Hmm.

Austin: And he thinks for a second.

Dre: [hushed] Hey, out of character, what is that lady's name? I'm totally blanking. [Ali laughs]

Austin: The, uh, the woman who...that's Rana. Rana, R-A-N-A.

Dre: Rana.

Dre (as Chine): Rana from the ways over told us to keep an eye out for you.

Austin (as Bucho): [fond] Oh, the little priestess.

Dre (as Chine): Yeah. Crow lady.

Austin (as Bucho): Very good tea. She's very fun. [sighs] Well—

Sylvia (as Virtue): Big fan of yours, it seems.

Dre (as Chine): Mm-hmm.

Austin (as Bucho): Oh, well, I make quite an impression. [sighs] We should find a train and leave this cursed place.

Dre (as Chine): What, um...what type of curse are we talking about?

Austin: Shakes his head.

Austin (as Bucho): Ooh. My friend, you don't...above your grade, I suspect.

Dre (as Chine): [a little offended] Okay. I mean, we just made you no longer a scarecrow, but...

Austin (as Bucho): Above my grade, I suspect.

Dre (as Chine): Okay, that's...okay.

Austin (as Bucho): Vampire. Corruption of a minor god.

Dre (as Chine): Oh.

Austin (as Bucho): The Structure, twisted. Technology from beyond time. A vampire.

Ali (as Marn): Seems like the usual for us so far. [chuckles]

Austin (as Bucho): Did I already say a vampire? Did I say a vampire already?

Ali (as Marn): Yes.

Sylvia (as Virtue): Yes, you've been very clear about the vampire situation.

Austin (as Bucho): Not just a regular one, I think. A strange one. I had not realized it at first. Rana had told me the history of this place. Every generation, the cycle of control shifts. You've heard this story, yes? The priest is in control, then the foreman.

Dre (as Chine): Mm-hmm.

Janine (as Es): Mm-hmm.

Austin (as Bucho): I believe there has been no such switch. I believe the—

Sylvia (as Virtue): You think it's been the same guy.

Janine (as Es): Ohh. Changing outfits.

Austin (as Bucho): The vicar has been the foreman has been...has been the train guard has been the village elder.

Dre (as Chine): Ah.

Ali (as Marn): How long have you been out here?

Janine (as Es): That would be a good way to hide that you're a vampire.

Janine: Sorry, Ali, what did you say?

Austin: [chuckles] No, that's okay. I was gonna ask how long he's been out here.

Austin (as Bucho): A week. A week. If not for...

Austin: God, I feel like he should name his armor.

Austin (as Bucho): If not for Baby Blue... [slaps armor] [Sylvia laughs] I would be...tchh.

Austin: And does the...he can't move his hands, so he can't do that. But he goes:

Austin (as Bucho): Kchh.

Austin: And turns his head a little bit, looks up as if to play dead.

Dre (as Chine): What brought you over here?

Austin (as Bucho): I was on a normal train, and I could tell something here was wrong when we stopped to pick up the candles, so I came back and investigated. I sensed something wrong underground here. I saw the church. The church...a facade on a facade. Something else there, deeper, behind the walls. And then those goats, caprak. You think I look waxy, you should see them.

[1:20:05]

Ali (as Marn): I'm gonna ask you a question that's kinda out there. Uh, they say anything about an egg?

Austin (as Bucho): An egg.

Dre (as Chine): Uh, egg sac.

Ali (as Marn): [chuckles] Thank you, Chine.

Sylvia (as Virtue): So technically eggs.

Austin (as Bucho): An egg sac, no. No, I've heard nothing of this. Do you know of, uh...how big is this egg sac?

Ali (as Marn): Bigger than me. Well, maybe...imagine my height, but as an egg sac. [Ali laughs]

Austin (as Bucho): That's very large. I mean, you are very tiny, but...

Ali: That's right, right?

Austin: Yeah, that's right. Yes, that's correct. [Ali laughs] You're not wrong.

Ali: Marn going into the fucking egg sac nest to just take a snooze. Anyway.

Austin: Uh huh. [laughs] Just take a little nap. It's fine. [Sylvia and Ali laugh]

Austin (as Bucho): It is not a thing I have seen. I've heard them talking, though, about a, um...what did they call it? A battery?

Ali (as Marn): Oh.

Dre (as Chine): Hmm.

Austin (as Bucho): I've heard here and there of these things. They come from cursed places.

Dre (as Chine): Well...

Austin (as Bucho): Fuel in a different form.

Janine (as Es): I don't suppose there's any chance it's related to what that fellow put inside of your armor?

Austin (as Bucho): No, that is some sort of oil, I think, or animal product. It is strange. Have you noticed the candles smell different? It's small. If you had not—

Janine (as Es): Do you want the honest answer, or...? [Ali chuckles]

Austin (as Bucho): If you have not, then you have not. I had not noticed until I went smelling for it, but I think they're cutting something in the candle or they are...new, a different material, animal product, not the yellow flower. And I think what is in me is something from an animal.

Austin: And Chine, obviously your mind goes to the animal that you saw in the cave which had escaped from somewhere.

Dre: Mm.

Austin: The big hippo whale thing.

Dre: Yeah.

Dre (as Chine): [sighs]

Austin (as Bucho): Now we should go, yes?

Dre (as Chine): Oh, about that...

Austin (as Bucho): Oy... [concerned chuckle] No. No, no. Do not leave me here to rot as you go to your deaths in the factory.

Dre (as Chine): Oh, right. Oh, yeah, okay. Yeah, you can't move.

Austin (as Bucho): I could...

Dre (as Chine): I mean, we could drop you off on the train?

Austin: There is not a train here at this moment.

Sylvia: We could also ask that girl to help.

Janine: Train left.

Austin: Train left, yeah.

Ali: Yeah, just...

Austin: Just wait for another one.

Janine (as Es): If it's any comfort, at least two of us definitely won't die.

Austin: He looks— at that moment, he begins to assess the four of you and determine which are the two that will not die. [Ali and Janine chuckle]

Dre (as Chine): What are we—

Austin (as Bucho): She is smaller than the flowers. This gives her an advantage, it's true. [Sylvia and Janine laugh]

Janine (as Es): Very sturdy.

Dre (as Chine): That's true. I'd count on me and Marn too. [Austin, Ali, and Janine laugh]

Sylvia: Glaring.

Janine: Fanning myself smugly.

Austin: Uh huh.

Dre (as Chine): How can we get you not stuck on the ground?

Ali: Roll him onto a big sheet and drag him?

Austin (as Bucho): I have a little energy. I could make the armor carry me, but yes, not for very far.

Janine (as Es): Could you get to the temple?

Austin (as Bucho): If you could get me near a train...I could not get to the temple. I could get twenty yards. We use yards in Sangfielle, just to clarify.

Dre (as Chine): Sure.

Sylvia (as Virtue): We know that. We live here. [Ali laughs]

Janine: Does it stand for something? Ye...

Austin: Yeet.

Sylvia: Ye ards.

Austin: Yards.

Janine: Ye Auld Railway Distance.

Austin: Distance, yeah. [Sylvia laughs]

Ali: Is the village...is that person's house more than forty yards away?

Austin: Oh, a hundred percent. We're like a half mile away from there at this point.

Dre: Yeah.

Ali: Okay.

Austin: We're pretty far.

Dre (as Chine): [sighs] I mean, even if we take you to the train yard, probably not good if Eyes, Ears, or Mouth come wandering by again.

Austin: Gives you a second to be like, who...?

Austin (as Bucho): Oh, yes, yes. Very funny.

Dre (as Chine): Oh, I thought...we were told that's what their names were.

Austin (as Bucho): I did not ask. They were clubbing me.

Dre (as Chine): Yeah, that's understandable.

Janine (as Es): That's a bad time to ask.

Austin (as Bucho): I am not sure there are three of them. Hmm?

Austin: And like...as if that was enough to put together what he meant, and it is not. It is not clear if he is saying there are more than three or less than three.

Ali: Sure.

Dre: Yeah. Chine still goes:

Dre (as Chine): [understanding] Ohh. [Austin, Ali, and Janine laugh]

Sylvia: I also go:

Sylvia (as Virtue): [same tone] Ohh.

Austin: [laughs] I think he says:

Austin (as Bucho): Drag me as close as you can within the flowers still, and we will leave it up to the Shape. If a train comes, I will find my way to it. If it does not, I will die in the green and yellow.

Sylvia (as Virtue): Yeah.

Janine: I dislike that, but I don't know what our other choice is.

Ali: We can come back and check on him, right?

Austin: Totally.

Dre: Yeah. [Ali laughs]

Austin: Alright. Do you drag him as...

Janine: Yeah. Just give us a couple hours. [Janine and Ali laugh]

Austin: Yeah, exactly...I mean, yeah. It also just takes a while to drag him. He's in a very heavy magical mechanical suit of armor, you know?

Sylvia: Chine's big.

Janine: I didn't bring my dragging gloves.

Austin: Chine is big. [laughs]

Dre: Mm-hmm.

Austin: Between the four of you, you're able to... [sighs] Between whoever is helping to drag, you're able to... [Sylvia laughs]

Janine: I'm helping! I'm not not helping.

Austin: Okay. I was not asking you.

Janine: I was just saying I didn't bring my gloves.

Austin: Virtue [Sylvia laughs] is the one who tends not to help in situations like this.

Sylvia: I...

Ali: Again, I have my genius roll him onto a big sheet and then just drag the sheet. [laughs]

Janine: Where are we gonna get this sheet?

Austin: You have supplies. It's fine.

Ali: I have that haversack.

Austin: Yeah. In your...

Janine: You just have sheets? You just brought a sheet set?

Ali: You know, if we wanted to go on a picnic.

Austin: Think about your supplies as a bag filled with whatever you need in it until it takes too much Stress.

Janine: It's a tarp, and we don't have to worry about the cost of the tarp.

Austin: Tarp, exactly. There you go. See?

Ali: I had a horn last session. I can have anything I want.

Austin: That's exactly right. [Janine and Ali laugh] And you start failing rolls, and I can start taking shit from you.

Janine: Ugh.

Austin: So yeah, then you manage to drag him over to the furthest northern place here that still has the flower cover and is kind of deep enough in that you can't just see him from beyond the flowers. And then yeah, he thanks you again, and he says:

Austin (as Bucho): Left hand, pinky.

Dre: Chine sticks out the pinky on his left hand.

Austin (as Bucho): [sighs] No, mine.

Dre (as Chine): Oh.

Austin: And over the metal armor is a pinky ring on his left hand, that has a sigil on it of two shoes. I guess they're two legs crossed as if dancing.

Janine: That's a bit garish.

Austin (as Bucho): Excuse... [Janine laughs] I take my dancing skills very seriously. It was a gift from winning a dance-off.

Janine (as Es): Oh, okay.

Dre (as Chine): Oh! Eh, a two-step.

Austin (as Bucho): A two-step.

Janine (as Es): Oh, that's fun.

Sylvia (as Virtue): Ah, the name makes sense now.

Janine (as Es): I thought you were just being flashy.

Austin (as Bucho): I'm also very flashy.

Janine (as Es): [laughs] You're entitled. Everyone's entitled.

Austin (as Bucho): Now, ahem.

Austin: And I think like pulls the tarp up over him a little bit, as if... [chuckles]

Dre: [chuckles] Sure. Gotta take a nap.

Austin: Like, hide under this. Yeah, take a nap.

Ali: I want to leave him some water and some fish jerky.

Austin: And gestures with his chin as if like, leave it up near his mouth, basically. [Ali laughs] Up near the plate armor, basically.

Ali: Uh huh.

Austin: Like, the top of the torso. Again, he has movement, but it costs him a lot of energy to do that at this point, and it seems like that energy only comes from the armor itself, so. So yeah.

Janine: I'm jealous of all of Marn's useful items. [Ali laughs] All I have is like makeup and whistles and jewelry. [laughs]

Austin: Uh huh.

Sylvia: That's useful!

Ali: Yeah.

Janine: No one ever needs those things. [Austin laughs softly] I mean, I guess if he had more energy, I could play a jaunty tune for him to dance to, but...

Austin: Mmhmm. I mean, again, you do have—

Sylvia: Use makeup, make him a little less yellowy in his complexion. [Ali laughs]

[Music plays: "Sangfielle"]