Transcript of Dust and Blood Episode34 - P.S. We Miss You

Transcribed by Gale Parker.

[*Dust and Blood* by Arne Parrott plays: *Dust is in my eyes, my blood is on the ground. A quiet little chuckle, and the shuffling of the boots of the coward that shot me down. He turns toward the sunrise, and I hear him softly say "I guess you've met your match, old man," as the colors fade to gray…*]

Keith: Howdy Pardners! Dust and Blood is a rabble-rousin', rootin-tootin', bronco-bustin' podcast, not suitable for the ears of youngins! Take a gander at the content warnings and listen with care.

Blake: Welcome to Dust and Blood, a narrative-play podcast set in the wild, weird fantasy west. I'm Blake, your GM, and our players are Keith Curtis as Jasper Graves, Corinne Hill as Myra Sting, Zach Parker as Moz Copernicus Prior, and Gale Parker as Bonesaw.

Last time on Dust and Blood, our heroes fought the rapidly-turned undead Reginald, and reeled as Moz fled from an unexpected bounty on his head!

[Early morning ambience.]

Blake: Moz—

Zach: Hm?

Blake: You walked into Arcanium Industries as Mozzarella Copernicus Prior, you walked out with a Hat of Disguise looking like a gnome fella. What is going through Moz's head?

Zach: He's going to try and acquire as much information as he can, because right now all he has are bits and pieces, and he wants to see how they all fit together. Where was the location that Moz was supposed to meet his uh… his family at?

Blake: It's actually not too far away from your…where you're at right now.

Zach: Okay.

Blake: Where they told you to meet was the Crown Valley Hotel, which is where you had initially met them.

Zach: Okay.

[Town ambience creeps in.]

Zach: Moz is going to meander his way down there, just keeping an open eye out. Uh, he's looking for anything relating to his family, whether that be uh… people under their employment or uh, just clues, just… anything of note.

Blake: Okay. Uh, go ahead and give me just a Perception check.

Zach: Okay.

[Dice rolling.]

Zach: Nat twenty!

Blake: Fuck!

Corinne: Nice!

[Gale laughs.]

Blake: Okay!

Gale: Wow! Starting off fire!

[Laughter.]

Blake: All right! [laughs.] That's interesting… So, as you're heading over, you don't see anything initially. You know, you're looking around, seeing what you can spot. It's not until you get almost to the hotel that you actually spot two people walking down the street. It's much warmer this morning, it seems like there's been a bit of a uh… thaw, and the two people that you recognize—one is kind of Reggie's second-in-command.

Zach: Hm!

Blake: A consigliere, for lack of a better term. The other person that you see is somebody that you didn't know for most of your life, but is incredibly familiar, because he is the engineer that was on the train—

[Gale gasps.]

Blake: —that you and Bonesaw stole the plans from.

Keith: That poor, poor man!

Zach: Oh shit!

Blake: Yes.

Zach: I thought we gave the plans back!

Blake: You gave *some* of them back, like eighty percent, I think?

Gale: We… we gave—!

Zach: Right, right!

Gale: We gave him a–a copy of the original.

Zach: Oh, yeah, yeah! The–the–the notes. The–the… [laughing] The 'cliff notes.'

Blake: Yeah.

Zach: Okay.

Blake: And you see, they're walking together. The engineer looks a little bit frazzled and a little bit nervous. The consigliere has an arm around him, and is… you actually overhear, with a twenty-nine. you overhear—

Blake (as consigliere): —it's fine! They're gonna treat you just fine! Don't worry! So you lost some of the notes, that's nothing that need to be too concerned about!

Zach: Hm!

Blake: They're walking away from the hotel at the time that you encountered them.

Zach: Have they spotted Moz yet?

Blake: How stealthy is Moz being?

Zach: Kind of the moment that he—he catches wind of the the pair, uh, assuming that they haven't really noticed him yet, I–I think Moz will kind of duck uh, around a corner and maybe touch up his appearance a little. So I–I think Moz looks like Jim Ziplack currently, but it–it would be Moz's most recent memory of Jim? Which would have probably been uh, immediately after he–he lost the bet, so…

[Laughter.]

Zach: Moving forward through time, I think Moz is going to touch up how Jim would look now, he assumes.

Blake: Okay.

Zach: So I think he's going to grow out a little bit of the hair, maybe a little disheveled. I think he has like a quarter bottle of scotch?

[Gale giggles.]

Zach: —and I think he's gonna kind of pour it around his… really soak up all that uh, stench, in–in his fur. Uh, but he he's going to make sure his clothes are all tattered, and—

Blake: Okay!

Zach: Time has not been kind to Jim Ziplack.

[Laughter.]

Blake: Yeah, it definitely has not been kind to him. It is the perfect disguise, their eyes kind of skate over Moz, they just kind of ignore you and walk past. The consigliere just says—

Blake (as consigliere): Yeah, just go by room 2B in a little bit after they've woken up, had some meal, and you'll be fine! Nothing you need to worry about!

Zach: Hm!

Blake: They continue to walk on.

Zach: With that information, Moz is going to try and follow up on uh, that room they were discussing?

Blake: Yeah, you go into the hotel. He could pretty easily see from the outside, and if he does kind of a lap looking inside, this will be the last thing that that twenty-nine, that nat twenty gives you, but you're able to figure out, based on the information that you have, which room is 2B.

Zach: Can Moz access the room from the outside? Like is there a door? Is there a window?

Blake: There are a couple of windows. Uh, it looks like it has a balcony that you could go in through an outside door, but there's no ladder or anything, for some second-story work.

Zach: Okay. Are there people around? Uh, is–is Moz alone? Or is… would he be spotted if he tried to uh, scale a balcony?

Blake: You guess that maybe there's a chance that somebody's stirring inside the hotel, but it's still early enough that most people are probably still asleep.

Zach: Uh, well Moz, I think, is going to discreetly uh, try and… try and pull some rope off of uh, maybe a horse or–or something that's nearby, and uh, he's going to briefly pull out his stradivarius and cast Animate Rope, and send it up to the top of the balcony so that he could uh, easily scale it.

Blake: Yeah, there's no roll necessary. You absolutely are able to just—[rope scaling noises]—climb up nice and quiet-like. Give me a Stealth check—

[Dice rolling.]

Blake: —and can somebody please roll me 1d20 and a 1d100?

[Zach laughs nervously.]

Zach: A 1d100? Oh! That's always the fun stuff!

[Laughter.]

Keith: Eighteen!

Blake: Holy shit! Eighteen is so good for you, for that 1d00 roll!

[Gale laughs.]

Zach: Good–good to know!

Blake: You wanted less than twenty, so that was—

[Laughter.]

Corinne: Ooo!

Zach: Okay!

Blake: —and then, an… looks like an eight for the 1d20? Okay. Perfect. Moz, you scale up and you glance inside… Fifteen stealth? You're pretty quiet, and you know, there's enough snow still out here that you're able to muffle your footprints a little bit. As you look into the room, you can see it's a suite with two other rooms off to the side. It looks like each one has a door out to the balcony, and 2B, which you're at, appears to be like a kind of a common room—

Zach: Hm!

Blake: —with a bed pulled out, and as you kind of go between each window, you see five figures. In one room you see two mouse-folk—

Zach: Shit!

Gale: Awww!

Keith: Aww!

Blake: —with brown fur, one with brown hair that's done up really nice, the other with more golden hair. They're each in their own separate beds, full on sleeping. The one—the blond-haired one, you see has a knife next to her as she sleeps. You recognize both of them as your sisters: Feta and Cotija.

Gale: Awww!

Zach: Yeah, I was afraid of that.

[Laughter.]

Blake: When you go to the other room, on the right, you see a figure that you recognize from just the other day, a gray-furred big-eared mouse-folk with a fake mustache on, and a white-furred mouse-folk nicely done up, your brothers Reggie and Cheddars

Zach: Huh!

Blake: And in the main room on a cot that's been pulled out, hat pulled down over his face, shotgun right next to the bed, you see Monty—

Gale: Ohohoh!

Zach: Shit!

Blake: —asleep at the post.

[Laughter.]

Blake: Uh, it looks like he was supposed to be on guard, and has fully fallen asleep.

Zach: Maaan! Gang's all here!

Blake: Yes.

Zach: Shiiit.

[Gale laughs.]

Zach: Yeah, are…? You said they're–they're all asleep? Like no one's… no one's up and around doing anything?

Blake: They are all asleep. That's what the 1d00 roll was.

Corinne: Oh!

[Gale giggles.]

Zach: Okay…

Blake: It's to see how many of them were awake.

Zach: Are there any items lying around? Pieces of paper? Uh, something that's out of place that they would have brought inside?

Blake: Give me a Perception check.

[Dice rolling.]

Zach: Eh, fourteen.

Blake: Okay. A couple of things that you notice… because you're outside, you're not going to get quite as good of a view as you might normally?

Zach: Mm.

Blake: You do see, however, what appears to be several architectural drawings, a chalkboard that has been sketched on and appears to have like, building drawing diagrams and stuff? A large carrying case made out of wood, and a diagram on the table that you recognize from inside the journal of the engineer.

Zach: Hm! I–I remember he was working on a–a fancy engine. What–what was the uh… the concept or…? What–what was the appeal of it again?

Blake: It was an arcane engine for a railroad train—

Zach: Hm!

Blake: —and as you look at it, you can see it's this long… looks like it's made out of iron, with several green gems attached to it, a lot of piping going in between uh, the various pieces of it. That's what you can see with a fourteen from the outside.

Zach: Okay, all right! This is… this is uh, getting interesting. Huh… So, seeing all of his family here is–is nice, and uh, having all the information on the table is really good, but I think what Moz is really uh, trying to discern is… why his family flipped on him. Uh, and I don't think he's going to get that just from uh, observing them sleep. So I think Moz is actually going to pull The Sheriff out of his pocket—

Gale: Haha!

Zach: And say—

Zach (as Jim): [British accent] All right little buddy! Why don't you… take a little peek and see what's going on in there?

[Laughter.]

Zach: Uh, and he'll remove—

Corinne: Was that an accent change?

Gale: New accent!

Zach: He not— he's not Moz!

Gale: 'Cause he's in disguise!

Zach: Um—

Blake: He's not Moz! He's Ziplack!

Corinne: Mm, that's right!

Zach: So, I think Moz is–is going to remove uh, The Sheriff's hat—

Zach (as Jim): Just for now!

Zach: —and leave him on on the window sill to keep an eye on things. Uh, and Moz I think, is–is probably going to scale down the balcony, and probably just find like a–a warm corner where he can uh, pretend to be homeless for a little bit, while he keeps uh, an ear on things through… through The Sheriff.

Blake: Ah, fantastic!

Zach: Oh, he's also going to remove the–the rope.

Blake: Okay, yeah, it takes probably about half an hour before anything comes up. Monty wakes up first with uh, kind of a jolt, going for the gun, and just like—

Blake (as Monty): Uh… Oh… shit. [yawns]

Blake: —gets up, stretches, goes, knocks on uh, women's door, goes over, knocks on guy's door, stretches, goes over to a potbelly stove, starts building a fire—or rebuilding the fire, it's been going all night. Five to ten minutes later, everyone comes out in shifts. Monty's pouring various drinks for people—tea for Feta and Reggie, big pot of black coffee for Cotija, Cheddars, and himself, before they all gather around. Now, how are you hearing through The Sheriff? Wha—How is The Sheriff paying attention?

Zach: Uh… I–I believe it's the same way that Bonesaw hears through Goiter.

Gale: I can only get emotions.

Zach: Oh, shit.

Gale: [reading] …the master has an empathic link with his familiar, to a one mile distance. The master can communicate empathically with the familiar, but cannot see through its eyes. Because of the link's limited nature, only general emotions can be shared. The master has the same connection to an item or place that his familiar does. If the master is fifth level or higher, a familiar and the master can communicate verbally as if they were using a common language. Other creatures do not understand the communication without magical help.

Blake: Okay. So you'll be able to talk to The Sheriff afterwards?

Zach: Mhmm.

Blake: He just won't be able to necessarily interact directly, because The Sheriff, uh… I mean, you can tell people if you would want, I can tell people if you want, or we can just leave it a secret.

Zach: I don't really… really care too much about uh…

Blake: Okay. The Sheriff is now Moz's actual honest-to-god familiar.

Gale: Aww!

[Keith gasps happily.]

Gale: Congratulations!

Zach: Thank you!

Gale: It's a frog!

[Laughter.]

Zach: Or–or a toad. We're not quite sure on the… on the specifics.

Gale: Or a toad!

[Laughter.]

Zach: One o' them.

Keith: A petrarchan of some sort!

Blake: Same difference!

[Laughter.]

Blake: So yeah, we can assume that all of this is being told to you by The Sheriff afterwards?

Zach: Okay.

Blake: You just won't be able to like, tell The Sheriff to do anything in the moment.

Zach: Okay.

Blake: You overhear them start talking. Cheddars is the one who kind of kicks things off, and says—

Blake (as Cheddars): All right, today's the big day! [scoffs] Unfortunately, looks like even after our attempts to get him back in the fold, our darling brother isn't going to be joining us.

Blake: —and Monty just smirks and says—

Blake (as Monty): Told you!

Blake: Cheddars says—

Blake (as Cheddars): Yes, yes. Quite. Now, even so, we'll be able to make this work without him. Feta, dear, you're certain that you'll be able to pull this off by yourself?

Blake: —and Feta just nods and says—

Blake (as Feta): Of course, brother dear! Nothing that I can't do. Having Moz here would have just been a nice little boon to help out.

Blake: Cheddars continues, and says—

Blake (as Cheddars): Yeah, well. Guess he's not scared of that bounty, as much as we thought he would be. [Sighs.] It's a damn shame. We'll go and take it off him later, once we're well and truly secure. Now. Everybody remember their roles for today?

Blake: Everyone kind of nods and he says—

Blake (as Cheddars): Now, the demonstration is supposed to start right around one o'clock. Me and Reggie will be there, make sure that they see us, that we're not a part of what's going on. After that, we'll go into the deliberations. We'll make sure to keep everybody delayed. Feta…?

Blake (as Feta): Yes, yes! I know, brother! I'll distract them. Make sure everything goes away.

Blake (as Cheddars): Right. And Monty? Cotija? You two just need to get up to the third floor where the'rey housing that blasted thing.

Blake (as Cotija): Right, brother! I'll be able to crack that lock no matter what. [chuckles]

Blake: —and Monty just nods and says—

Blake (as Monty): And I'll be able to make sure that that bitch Captain Faraday doesn't get in our way.

Blake: Reggie says—

Blake (as Reggie): Well, if everything goes our way, we shouldn't need to worry about her, but… Eh, if you do, shouldn't be too much of a problem for you.

Blake: They all nod and then start diving in and start making breakfast. That's all they're going to talk about for a little while.

Zach: Mmkay.

Blake: And, uh, at that point, Reggie will say—

Blake (as Reggie): All right, we're going to go get started. Monty, you go get the cart. Feta, you prepare for your 'damel in distress; routine…Cotija…do whatever it is that you do before these sorts of things. Once this day is over, we're going going to be so much richer!

Blake: And they break and start to head out. Monty, you see, takes a piece of paper, folds it up, puts it in his coat pocket, and grabs a billfold with cash before they head out.

Zach: Hm!

Blake: That's about the time that The Sheriff returns to you, and gives you all of this download. So what do you do with this information?

Zach (as Jim): Good show, chap!

[Laughter.]

Zach: He'll uh, he'll return the uh… the hat onto The Sheriff.

Zach (as Jim): Now… Where were we?

Zach: Based off of what information was on the table, uh, can Moz determine the location that they're referring to? Assuming wherever this uh, mystery uh, engine is is housed, or the plans for it?

Blake: Give me a Knowledge (Engineering) check.

Zach: You know, I don't… I might–I might have an engineering degree in real life—

[Laughter.]

Zach: —but I don't think Moz is suited for that type of… that type of work.

[Dice rolling.]

Zach: Ah, and that's a nat one—

Corinne: Oh no!

Gale: Ooo!

Keith: Ooo!

Zach: Yeah, that's–that's appropriate. That's–that's… that's fine.

Blake: Yeah, you're not sure. Like, just based on your straight-up engineering knowledge of whatever.

[Zach laughs.]

Blake: Uh, 'cause you do recognize the arcane engine thing?

Zach: Yeah.

Blake: That drawing. You would assume whatever it is, is probably involving something to do with one of the rail groups.

Zach: Yeah.

Blake: That's–that's the most you can assume from that, uh, even with the nat one.

Zach: Yeah, Moz is a slow reader on a good day. There's–there's no way that he would have been able to to absorb all that. Okay. So they're–they're definitely planning for some sort of heist, and there's–there's too many for–for Moz to track down all of them. If they're planning on moving it… that's a real heavy piece of machinery. They–they must be trying to get it onto… onto a–a train. So… I think it–it would be too much effort on–on too little notice to try and capture all of his–his family in one fell swoop? They're–they're too scattered, they're too organized. But, Moz might be able to steal the bounty from underneath them—

Gale: Ha!

Zach: —if he just intercepts the train cart, and–and manages to uh, throw them off somehow. So then he can renegotiate things on–on his own terms. But he needs… he needs that chip, that that card that he can play. I think uh… Moz has probably gotten maybe, in over his head. I was going to try and do a whole 'Lone Ranger' thing, but uh… If–if it's just Reggie? Moz can handle it, but Reggie's… Reggie's not going to be, uh… by himself. So it's…

[Blake chuckles.]

Zach: Also, we have no idea where–where shit's going, so I–I think at this point, Mo–Moz has made up his mind, and he is going to try and uh, go back to the team, and uh… ask for help.

Gale: Aaaw!

[Noire hotel theme begins playing.]

Blake: As he enters into the Flowing Waters, Jordan Yates looks and says—

Blake (as Jordan): Oh! Um… you seem to be lost, friend.

[Laughter.]

Blake (as Jordan): Allow me to let you… Uh, why don't you go outside? I don't think this is the place for you.

Gale: Aww!

Zach (as Jim): You dare—!

[Laughter.]

Zach (as Jim): I am Jim Ziplack, the best fiddle player in this side of the Mississippi! How dare you speak to me! I have been here for age—and funded your whole organization!

Blake (as Jordan): [stammering]

Zach (as Jim): This is preposterous!

Blake (as Jordan): I… I'm so sorry! Uh, Mr. Ziplack! I–I didn't realize it was you! You didn't look…! I thought you'd be… shorter!

[Laughter.]

Zach (as Jim): I need a room to freshen up! Because my past month has been miserable!

Blake (as Jordan): Oh!

[Gale laughs.]

Zach (as Jim): Now, please! Show me to my room! I need a hot bath!

Blake: Give me a Diplomacy check, just a straight diplomacy check.

Zach: Eugh… not Moz's or Jim's strong suit, I feel.

Gale: Diplomacy?

Zach: Diplomacy…

Gale: As a bard?

[Dice rolling.]

Zach: Ehh, thirteen?

[Laughter.]

Blake: Thirteen?

Zach: It's there…

Blake: The good news is that Jordan has heard of Jim Ziplack, and somewhat mysteriously, you feel a little bit of a vibration from your pack, where your golden fiddle is. One of the things that you know about it is… when you defeat someone, the word spreads.

Zach: Hm…

[Gale laughs.]

Blake: —and Jordan, looking down at you, he gets a look of sympathy, of like, 'Oh, this is a person who is down on their luck, and got their ass beat.'

[Laughter.]

Blake: —and he just says—

Blake (as Jordan): Right… well. Um. That shouldn't be a problem. Uh, we can get you set up. Uh, it will be ten silver a night.

Zach (as Jim): Pish posh!

Zach: Moz or Jim will hand over twenty, seeming uncaring about the uh, the coins.

Blake: Heh! And immediately, Jordan like, full-on switches tones, and is like, 'Oh, yes! Paying customer! Okay! We're good now! And he says—

Blake (as Jordan): Right this way!

Blake: —and he's going to grab a key off the wall, lead you up, and get you set up in one of the rooms as Jim Zipplack.

Zach (as Jim): Finally! Now leave!

[Laughter.]

Blake (as Jordan): Yes, of course! Um… Please let us know if you need anything else! Okay, bye!

Blake: —and he just exits out—

Zach (as Moz): [sighs]

Blake: —and you are alone in your room. Uh, you do know that it is right down the hall from y'all's room, if you wanted to go in.

Zach: Jim will–will poke his head out out the door, just, look left, look right. See if anyone's in–in the hall. Uh, does he spot anyone?

Blake: No, nobody's around.

Zach: Okay.

Blake: From one of the rooms down the way, he hears some caterwalling, definitely sounds like somebody who is drunk from the previous night.

Zach: Kay. If that's the case, uh, Moz will pop into his room, change back to his ‘original recipe’ appearance—

[Laughter.]

Zach: —and uh—

Blake: Okay.

Zach: —he'll walk up to the door, which he–he should still have access to, right?

Blake: Yeah, he has his key. As he goes in, make a Reflex save for me.

[Gale giggles.]

Zach: Yeah, that's not good…

[Dice rolling.]

Zach: Oo! Twenty-four!

Gale: Oo!

Blake: You duck out of the way as there's a—[caw-ing]—flies uh, and a raven flies down, swooping at you, and drops a note right on your head.

Zach: Hm!

Blake: You manage to not get caught. and as it does, the bird sits up, preens its wing feathers a little bit, and then goes in towards the window. Now that it's done it's job, it's free.

Zach (as Moz): Well! …can't say I've seen that one before!

[Gale laughs.]

Zach: Moz will peer, open up the letter, uh, and—

Zach (as Moz): Hoo! Uh…

Zach: Moz will go inside, close the door, and uh, sit down to sound out the words—

[Laughter.]

Zach: As–as he works–works through the message, uh…

Zach (as Moz): Oof! [sounding out] 'Bone…saw seh—' oh shit! 'said… I… love you—' Aw.

Corinne: Aaw

[Gale laughs.]

Zach (as Moz): 'Please… stay. We.. do.. not.. care.. about that thing… we found… in… the trush.'

[Snickering.]

Zach (as Moz): 'Please… come… back… Jay…Bee…double Enn—

[Laughter.]

Keith: Jubm! Who's 'Jubm?'

Zach (as Moz): 'Come… back, asshole!

[Laughter.]

Corinne: He got that one!

Blake: That one he knows!

Zach (as Moz): 'Myra.' Well!

[Gale laughs.]

Zach (as Moz): I guess they still love me.

Corinne: Awww!

Blake: Awww!

Gale: Ohohoh!

Zach (as Moz): Now… Where–where might I find these…?

[Laughter.]

Zach: I–I'm assuming uh, y'all cleared out by now?

Keith: We didn't think that far ahead!

[Laughter.]

['Back in time harp music plays.]

Blake: Yeah… I think this is a good point for us to go back in time to earlier that morning—

Gale: Oo-doo-doo-doo, Oo-doo-doo-doo!

[Laughter.]

Keith: [mimicking harp sounds.]

Blake: I need a–a harp, yeah…

[Gale laughs.]

Blake: Early morning, you all cast some spells, everyone got ready, and you are loaded for bear. I believe you guys had talked about going to uh, The Sacred Flame Home for the needy.

Gale: I believe Jasper has recently released something out of the window, and got the crow set up, and Bonesaw is kind of tinkering with his–his elixirs for the day, and he says—

Gale (as Bonesaw): Well, I mean we could wait around for Moz, but it could be a while, and it seems like we have some more urgent things to follow up on, what with the things we learned last night, so… Um. I guess we crack on for now, and if Moz doesn't turn up in a few days, then we can go hunt him down and bring him back! How does that sound?

[Blake laughs.]

Keith (as Jasper): Sounds fine by me, I think we should go down and partake of some breakfast first, and then uh, head on over that way.

Gale (as Bonesaw): All right. Um… sure.

Gale: Bonesaw looks around the room, like he's going to find Moz likez hiding under a pile of clothes—

Corinne: Aww!

Gale: —or like, sitting in the corner.

Blake: Awww!

Gale (as Bonesaw): Breakfast, then! Moz used to love breakfast!

[Laughter.]

Keith (as Jasper): Yeah, he did, I think that when most people think of Moz, they kind of think back on how much he loved breakfast.

[Laughter.]

Gale (as Bonesaw): Definitely, it was a defining trait of his!

[Laughter.]

Gale (as Bonesaw): You know what might be a good idea, though? Um, if we wanted to stop in on the shop? Just in case we end up fighting more sudden zombies that can paralyze people? Maybe some anti-paralysis things might help?

Keith (as Jasper): Oh, that kind of shop! Uh, sure! Yeah! Let's do that! Uh, fore–fore-warned is fore-armed, as they say!

Blake: Myra?

Corinne: Yes.

Blake: Give me a Fortitude save.

Corinne: Oh, I'm still sick!

Gale: Ah!

Blake: DC is thirteen.

Gale: Uh, I think with a plus four—

[Dice rolling.]

Blake: Heeey!

Gale: —oh cool, cool, cool!

Keith: Yeah!

Gale: Nice! Didn't even need it!

[Corinne laughs.]

Blake: Yeah, a twenty… You wake up, and you still have a little bit of a fever, you're not feeling great, but after getting around, you start to feel a little bit more like your old self. You're–you're not a hundred percent, but you're feeling a little bit better. You don't take the damage, and this counts as your first uh, save. You need two consecutive saves to cure it.

Corinne: Okay. She sits up, she sniffles a little bit, rubs the sleepies out of her eyes, and she goes—

Corinne (as Myra): Okay, let's get some breakfast…

Gale: Bonesaw puts his hand—the back of his hand, on your forehead, so he can feel if you have a fever, but he's wearing gloves, so it's not very effective.

[Laughter.]

Blake: It's also cold-blooded creature, with a dead person…

[Laughter.]

Keith: I think your temperature is ‘ambient.’

[Laughter.]

Gale (as Bonesaw): Well, you're looking a lot better!

Gale: Bonesaw flicks one of his vials and says—

Gale (as Bonesaw): If you're not feeling all the way better, then I've got something for you, but if you are, then maybe I'll save it, just in case one of us gets it later.

Corinne (as Myra): Yeah… best… best hang on to that. I'm–I'm feeling okay for now. You know, I think I'll uh… We'll–we'll see how it goes. But uh, good to—good to know that we have it.

[melancholy music is replaced with kitchen ambience and hotel theme.]

Blake: You all go down you get yourselves some food. It's a delicious egg-based breakfast, lots of um… you know, frittatas, scrambled eggs, omelets, just, whole nine yards, absolutely delicious.

Gale (as Bonesaw): Moz loves eggs!

[Laughter.]

Keith (as Jasper): He did love eggs… I think if anybody thinks about Mozm the first thing that comes to mind is how much—

[Laughter.]

Keith (as Jasper): —he loved eggs!

Corinne: I love this bit!

Gale (as Bonesaw): Uh, say, Jordan!

Blake (as Jordan): Uh… yes?

Gale (as Bonesaw): Do you like, pick up a lot of rumors and things, as a sort of hotel person? Like, do you know stuff about people?

Blake (as Jordan): I…[laughs] I mean, I hear my fair share of things, but I wouldn't be… it wouldn't be prudent for me to go sharing my… the secrets that I hear.

Blake: And he holds a hand open.

Corinne: Oh!

Gale (as Bonesaw): Oh, what if it's—what if it's to help the Galloways though?

Blake (as Jordan): [perking up] Oh!

Corinne: Uh, I think he needs something to grease his palms.

Blake: He closes his hand, ‘cause—

Corinne: Oh, never mind then! Just kidding!

[Laughter.]

Blake: No, you were you absolutely right, Corinne, but…

Corinne: Good, good, that was way better! That was the much better idea!

Blake: Yep!

Gale: Bonesaw will slide over the list of incidents that the Sheriff gave us, of other people being attacked in town, and say to you two, Jasper, Myra.

Gale (as Bonesaw): I sort of got thinking… the attack last night could have been a hit, for us, we could have been targeted, so… Maybe there's other victims, if we can find a connection…? Uh, might shed some light? Maybe they’re enemies of the person doing a thing. So… Jordan? Do you see any connections?

Blake: He goes down the list, looking at it, scratching his head, and says—

Blake (as Jordan): Not many connections that I see, I mean you have… Lee Maron. She owns one of the best smoke shops in town. If you want to get good tobacco or… other things, she's the one to talk to. Oh, the Ute representative. Stand up man. Not really much got involved around. Mary works down at the Saddlesore. She's one of the ‘Ladies of the Night,’ as it were. Cornelius Tomes…? Oh! He was at the University. Honestly, his entire family it's a bit um… difficult to work with at times. Uh… they own some sorts of Lumber company up in Idaho or some such place. He uh, doesn't exactly have the best reputation, bit of a–a cad.

Gale (as Bonesaw): Hmm.

Blake (as Jordan): Ennis Tomas… not really much to know about, just that he was at the Nickel Odeon theater, around the time that Miss Moon finished up her uh, special show. And Shen Yun, well… that's interesting. He's uh, a banker uh at the Blue Scales Bank. Fairly cutthroat with his loan agreements, if I remember correctly.

Gale (as Bonesaw): Hm. So, perhaps there's, like a thread of um…? You know, people getting up to things that a morally righteous sort of person would disagree with? You've got a smoke shop, a prostitute, uh… lumber person who undercut things with his family. Uh, the only r—uh, Bankers! Dishonest all over, you know! Ennis Tomas was at the peep show. The only real outlier

here is Pahana, the Ute representative. I–I don't really know how they fit in. Um… I don't know. Well, it was worth a shot. Thank you!

Blake (as Jordan): Yes, of course! Anything to help out the uh… the Galloways, I mean… you'll remember to mention that, right?

Gale (as Bonesaw): Oh! Of course!

Blake (as Jordan): Thank you!

Blake: And last night, big game hunter Reginald became as zombie, and attacked you and Virginia Reeves.

Gale: Mhmm…

Gale (as Bonesaw): All right. Do we want to pick up some Remove Paralysis potions, and then head over and see what we can find at the Shelter?

Keith (as Jasper): Yeah, and if we can pass a General Store, or a gun shop, I'd like to top off on bullets. I used a fair few of them in that fight in the uh, Witchmarket.

Gale (as Bonesaw): Sounds good!

Keith (as Jasper): 'Murder alley!'

[Chuckling.]

Gale: Bonesaw shudders.

[Hotel theme transitions to town ambience.]

Blake: You all begin to head out. As you're walking, you see a place down the main thoroughfare called Penny's General Store. You all come to kind of the same conclusion that Moz did, that probably the best place to get magic items will be the Arcanium Industries, but you uh, slip into Penny's General Store.

Blake (as Penny): Welcome in, folks! Looking for anything in particular?

Keith (as Jasper): Uh, top of the morning, ma'am! I just wanted to buy a box of ammo to top off my six-shooter.

Blake (as Penny): Happy to help with that!

Blake: She's dressed up in a kind of nice vest, sleeves rolled up, black hair pulled back in a messy bun, a pair of glasses on her eyes. She's been writing in a notebook. While she did give you all a smile when she w—when you walked in, she immediately turns back to her notebook after she points out the ammunition, and goes into just a resting like, 'All right, I need to figure this out,' kind of face. You're able to get anything you want at the General Store, pretty easy to pick all of that up.

Gale (as Bonesaw): Moz used to love shopping!

[Laughter.]

Keith (as Jasper): Yep! I think—never mind.

[Laughter.]

Blake: Uh, Jasper? Can you please give me four d20 rolls, please?

Keith: Alright.

[Dice rolling.]

Blake: Okay. Just as you're paying for your first set of bullets, you feel a burst of like… concern? And then just like, a smugness, and then that's it.

Keith: But external?

Gale: Wha…?

Keith: Or from my inner–inner self?

Blake: External.

Keith: Then I think uh, Jasper will be revitalized. Uh he's uh, going to immediately wrap up whatever conversation he was saying, saying—

Keith (as Jasper): Thank you very much, ma'am! Uh, Bonesaw? Let's go get what you were doing, and skeedaddle over to our appointment.

Gale (as Bonesaw): All right!

Keith: And his–his languid motions that he's been having all morning, uh, he seems suddenly galvanized for action.

Gale: Hm! I want to roll Sense Motive on Jasper!

[Dice rolling.]

Corinne: I was going to say…

Blake: Okay! Give me a Bluff check, Jasper.

Keith: Okay. Uh… Bluff. Oh, I'm plus—I'm plus one on Bluff, [sarcastic] Do I even need to roll this? I mean…

[Gale laughs.]

Blake: Eh, you never know—

Keith: I guess—

[Dice rolling.]

[Cheering and exclamations

Keith: I got a twenty-one!

Gale: You got a nat twenty! Whoo!

Corinne: Oh, that's just not fair!

Keith: I am a calm deep dark pool full of secrets and mystery!

[Laughter.]

Corinne: We don't know nothin'!

Gale: Bonesaw, you are on your fucking game this morning, like you are paying attention to every single little thing, 'cause you don't want another one of your friends to leave!

[Keith laughs.]

Gale: Aww!

Blake: Jasper is a fucking mystery to you right now, though.

Corinne: Ah!

Gale (as Bonesaw): [anxious] All right, sure, if that's what you want to do!

[Laughter.]

[Town ambience returns.]

Blake: Everybody give me a Perception check as you leave and start heading north towards Arcanium Industries.

Zach: Jasper's been spending too much time with Moz!

[Laughter.]

[Dice rolling.]

Gale: Oh! I got a nat one!

Keith: [laughing] Thirty…thirty-seven! I hope I made it!

Blake: Ohh! Yeah…

Zach: Oh!

Blake: Thirty-seven—

Keith: Oh, Myra, you're right up there with twenty-nine!

Zach: Oh my God!

Gale: Dang!

Blake: You all see, going into the courthouse, you see the engineer that you met on the train—

[Gale laughs.]

Blake: —uh, another guy kind of leading him along. The engineer doesn't look too happy, he looks pretty distraught, but they're having their own little conversation as they go inside.

Keith (as Jasper): Hey uh, Bonesaw? …Bonesaw! [snapping]

Gale (as Bonesaw): What?

Keith (as Jasper): Hey, Bonesaw!

[Laughter.]

Gale (as Bonesaw): What? Sorry, I was um… lost in thought for a moment, there!

Keith (as Jasper): Take a gander over yonder. I'm cogitatin' that there fella is the one from the… from the train! That uh, engineer fella. Does that seem right to you?

Gale: With Jasper pointing him out, can I overcome my nat one to notice?

[Laughter.]

Blake: Yeah, at that point you notice him, and…

Keith (as Bonesaw): [joking] I was just thinking about Moz, and—

Gale: Oh!

Corinne: Aww!

Keith (as Bonesaw): —how much he loved not making Perception rolls!

[Laughter.]

Corinne: He used to love making nat ones!

[Laughter.]

Gale (as Bonesaw): You know, I th—I th—My memory is a bit fuzzy, but I think you might be right! Is he the one that I–I um… borrowed his notes as sort of a funny, and then they um… blew around outside and…? [struggling] um, uh… and then we gave him a copy?

Keith (as Jasper): …yeah, that's one way of describing the whole situation.

[Laughter.]

Blake: Are you going to do anything with that, or are you just going to head on out?

Keith: I don't want to bother the poor man anymore!

Gale: Bonesaw waves.

[Laughter.]

Blake: Uh—

Gale (as Bonesaw): Hello!

Blake: The guy doesn't seem to notice, he—

Keith (as Bonesaw): Coo-ee!

Corinne: Myra just like jumps on it, on Bonesaw, and is just like—

Corinne (as Myra): [Castigatory spluttering]

[Laughter.]

Blake: Oh fuck… Yeah, they–they don't seem to notice as they head in.

Gale (as Bonesaw): Oh, that's okay! I'm sure we'll… see him around!

Corinne (as Myra): We–we–we–we–we really–really don't want them to recognize us! In–in particular.

Gale (as Bonesaw): Why not?

Corinne (as Myra): Well, 'cause… 'cause we–we–we kind of… We–we kind of did done stole their notes, and even though they not—they don't know that? Uh… any kind of ties—

Gale (as Bonesaw): But like—I gave them back! Mostly. Sort of. Like a copy. There were no hard feelings!

Keith (as Jasper): Hey, do you remember what it was he was working on? It was something to do with railroading, weren't it?

Gale (as Bonesaw): Some sort of… arcane engine, I think. But, you know…

Keith (as Jasper): Hm… You know who used to love arcane engines?

[Laughter.]

Gale (as Bonesaw): Oh! Moz loves arcane engines!

[Laughter.]

Keith (as Jasper): Anyway, let's make our way on over to that there uh, potion purveyor.

Gale: Okay. We–we go to Arcanium Industries.

[Laughter.]

[Jaunty music starts up.]

Blake: You make your way up to uh, Arcanium Industries. You see the woman behind the counter looking decently perky, she has a big pot of coffee that she's drinking out of, just straight out of the pot? Like not even pouring herself cups, uh, and it looks like it's about half full?

Gale (as Bonesaw): [teary] Moz used to love coffee!

[Corinne snorts.]

Blake (as woman): [yawning] Welcome to Arcanium Industries!

Gale (as Bonesaw): Hi! Um…

Blake (as woman): Hi, what can I get for you?

Gale (as Bonesaw): Uh, have you got any scrolls of Remove Paralysis?

Blake (as woman): Yeah, yeah I think so. Over there. Uh, they're alphabetized by the effect that they have.

Gale (as Bonesaw): Oh, perfect!

Blake (as woman): —so it's not like 'Scroll of—' It's just like 'Remove Paralysis.' We're–we're having a special! Buy two scrolls, get two scrolls free—

Gale (as Bonesaw): Oh, lucky day!

Blake (as woman): Er, sorry, uh, no, I need to—

[Gale laughs.]

Gale (as Bonesaw): No, I'm holding you to that!

[Laughter.]

Blake (as woman): 'Buy two scrolls for the price of two!' That's what it was…

[Laughter.]

Gale (as Bonesaw): That doesn't s—

Keith (as Jasper): Well, I don't see how someone could rightly turn down a bargain like that!

Corinne (as Myra): Mhmm.

[Gale cackles.]

Blake (as woman): Yeah…

Gale (as Bonesaw): Uh… have you got potions of Remove Paralysis?

Blake (as woman): Yeah, uh, right over there, go ahead and, whatever you need. Prices are listed behind me for scrolls and potions…

Gale (as Bonesaw): Cool, and have you got any dowsing syrup?

Blake (as woman): Dowsing syrup? Um…[thoughtful noises] I think that's downstairs. You'll have to go downstairs.

Gale (as Bonesaw): Oh! Sure, okay!

Blake (as woman): [yawning] Excuse me, yeah, it's just right down with all of our other uh, magic items.

Gale (as Bonesaw): I think I'm going to hold off on that one for now, I just wanted to know if you had it in stock.

Blake (as woman): Oh, okay, yeah, um, yeah. Some of the more high-price stuff we usually keep downstairs or upstairs.

Blake: You know from when you walked in, this is a one-story building.

[Gale laughs.]

Keith: Could still have a cellar!

Gale: I assume it's like a magical or a hidden downstairs.

Blake: You do see a uh staircase that goes up and down.

Gale: Oo! Magic space, I love it!

Gale (as Bonesaw): All right! I'll take these two scrolls, and this potion.

Gale: Uh, and he's going to hand the potion to either Jasper or Myra, kind of hold it out, and say—

Gale (as Bonesaw): This is in case I am not able to cast the scrolls. Uh, the scrolls are a lot cheaper, but if I get paralyzed, we need to have options, so, one of you should hold on to this.

Keith (as Jasper): Sure thing! You want some uh… You want some remuneration on that there, Bones? Looked like it was a mite pricy.

Corinne: Uh, Myra pulls her pockets inside out.

[Blake snickers.]

Gale (as Bonesaw): Oh—!

Keith: Do you want me to pay you some money for it?

Gale (as Bonesaw): Well I did get the scrolls at a discount, it was two for the price of two, so…

[Laughter.]

Blake: Oh no!

Keith (as Jasper): Oh, well, there is… There is that.

[Laughter.]

Keith: Uh, I don't know, uh, I'm going to I'm going to offer uh, I'm going to offer Bonesaw, what? About three-hundred dollars?

Blake: Okay.

Gale: That would cover the potion!

Keith: Okay.

Gale: Uh, and I can buy the two scrolls, if you want.

Keith: All right. I'll uh, I'm putting down two potions, I'll only take one of them, but I'll–I'll cover the cost of them.

Blake: Awesome.

Gale: Thank you!

Corinne: Myra looks sheepishly over at them, and a few flies come out of her pockets, and she goes—

[Laughter.]

Corinne (as Myra): Sorry, I–I kind of spent it all in the Witchmarket.

[Laughter.]

Keith: Ahh!

Gale (as Bonesaw): You know, you got some good shit there! I don't blame you!

[Laughter.]

Corinne (as Myra): Actually!

Keith (as Jasper): Yeah, I paid… I paid something for… something, but I can't quitely recollect what it is I paid…

[Commiserating noises.]

Keith (as Jasper): …more I try to think about it, the more it seems to kind of slip away from me. Oh well, it couldn't have been too important!

Corinne: Ohohoh!

Blake: Ohoh!

Gale: Ohohh!

[Jaunty music switches to town ambience.]

Blake: You all leave and start heading south. Give me a pure luck check. Uh, one person, 1d20.

Gale: I nominate Jasper!

[Laughter.]

Blake: You want it to be above a fifteen!

Keith: All right, here we go!

[Dice rolling.]

Keith: Sixteen!

Gale: Yeah!

Zach: Sixteen!

Blake: Sixteen!

Keith: That is above a fifteen!

Gale: That was a… that was a great decision!

Zach: Good nomination!

Corinne: Nice!

Gale: You've been rolling gangbusters!

Blake: As you guys are heading south, past the crossroads, you've passed the courthouse, obviously you're not going all the way down, 'cause you have to cross over to Five Points, but you see a group of six drow crossing the street, the one at the front standing very tall. She's wearing some big blue glasses, and one of the drow behind says—

Blake (as drow): Captain Farraday—

[Gale and Keith gasp.]

Blake (as drow): —we are all prepared for the demonstration today.

Blake: The drow in the front nods and says—

Blake (as Captain Farrady): Very good. Prepare… Don't know if one of these people is going to try something stupid, but I wouldn't put it past them. These surface folk are always trying something.

Blake: Uh, and they continue on in the direction of the railroad companies.

Keith: I think the only drow we've had contact with before was the–the gunmaker?

Gale: Zen Orkwren!

Keith: Good job!

[Chuckling.]

Blake: You also recognize they are the same drow that you saw teleport in on the first day that you arrived, carrying a large box.

Gale: Oo!

Corinne: Is the box with them?

Blake: They are not carrying it at the moment, no.

Corinne: Mm.

Keith: Huh… Well. That is an oddness, but I think we've got other things that we're planning on doing.

Blake: You all cross the street, continue down the road, you see the rodeo and horse racetrack in the distance. You all continue on, you pass a pawn shop, looks like there's just a ton of junk inside as you pass by, and start making your way towards the Sacred Flame Home for the Needy,

Keith (as Jasper): Hey there, we're passing Silver's Photography. Wasn't there something we were supposed to do there, Bonesaw?

Gale (as Bonesaw): Uh… we were going to check in on my mask and see about getting it fixed? But uh, it's patched for now…

Keith (as Jasper): Yeah… how you holding up there, Bonesaw?

Gale (as Bonesaw): I'm feeling pretty clear today! Aside from, you know missing… missing Moz, but um… I–I feel like this is more urgent.

Keith (as Jasper): Yeah.

Gale (as Bonesaw): I mean… people are dying…

Keith (as Jasper): Iffin we survive what's to come—

[Laughter.]

Keith (as Jasper): —we'll hit it on the way back!

Gale (as Bonesaw): Sounds good!

[Music shifts to the Noire hotel theme, signalling a transition.]

Blake: Right around the time that you guys are arriving at the Sacred Flame Home for the Needy is about when Moz is reading the letter. You just read this letter from your friends saying how they still love you. What are your–what are your thoughts? What are your plans?

Zach: Well… Moz came here to ask for their help, and they're not here, but he has a pretty good idea of who might know where they went. Uh, so he is going to go march right downstairs to speak with Yates.

[Gale laughs.]

Blake: Jordan's like—

Blake (as Jordan): [stammering] Oh! Mr. uh—Mr. Longt—um.

Corinne: Mm!

[Keith gasps.]

Blake (as Jordan): Mr…uh…

Keith: Oh, what a giveaway!

Blake (as Jordan): Sir! Uh, what can I do for you?

Zach (as Moz): Where are they?

Blake (as Jordan): Uh…?

Corinne: [threatening Batman voice] 'Where are they?!'

[Laughter.]

Blake (as Jordan): I um… your–your–your friends? I assume?

Zach (as Moz): Where'd they head off to? Have some catching up.

Blake (as Jordan): Yeah, I think they were headed towards uh… they had some questions about… some of the–the people who had been attacked…

Blake: Let me see if he overheard you guys talking about where you were going.

[Dice rolling.]

Blake: Holy shit! That's a nat twenty!

Gale: Oooh! Nat twenty!

Keith: Whoo!

Corinne: Niiiice!

Blake: Um—

Gale: Jordan eavesdrops on all the guests, it's canon.

[Laughter.]

Blake: Yeah, yeah he does, and he says—

Corinne: He has aaall the cheese!

Keith (as Jordan): I just happened to be accidentally scrying on them…

Blake (as Jordan): Um, I believe they were headed towards uh, the south end of town. I believe they said they were going to some sort of mission? Or uh…? Oh, it's that place that helps out down-on-their-luck folks. Uh, the–the Sacred Flame Home place in the Five Points.

Zach (as Moz): Well, I suppose they would have turned up there eventually. That'll be all.

Zach: Moz will uh, give him a nod and uh, walk briskly out the door.

Blake (as Jordan): All right! Uh, yeah! H-happy to help!

Blake: Okay. So you are some distance behind—

Zach: Mm.

Blake: —as they enter into the building.

[Noire theme gives way to snowy exterior ambience.]

Blake: What's your game plan as you approach? You see a couple of homeless people milling about keeping warm, uh the door opens and closes occasionally as they go in. People come out carrying bowls of soup.

Gale (as Bonesaw): Yeah, so, what's the plan? We need like, proof against this guy, right? You said there were weird smells in the basement?

Keith (as Jasper): Yeah, hold on here, before we get a little too… too close, here. I notice there's a couple of barrels over there, let's sit over there and have a palaver about this.

Keith: And he is… he's talking *to* you, but he's not looking at you.

Gale: Oo!

Keith: Instead, he seems to have his concentration on the building itself. And uh…

Gale: Oo!

Keith: I'm going to whisper something to Blake here…

Corinne: What are you doing?

[Laughter.]

[Short pause while Keith types.]

Blake: Okay. You take a seat. Everybody except Jasper give me Perception checks, and Jasper, give me a 1d20 roll, please.

[Dice rolling.]

Gale: Twenty-one!

Keith: Okay…

Gale: Nice, Myra!

Corinne: Thirty…

Keith: I can locate them on an action, iffin that matters.

Blake: Yeah, very easily, it takes you just a second and you have them located, and they start making their way towards you.

Gale: Hee!

Blake: Bonesaw, you don't notice anything in particular…

Gale (as Bonesaw): Moz used to love sitting on barrels!

[Laughter.]

Keith (as Jasper): Don't recollect that…

Blake: Thirty doesn't make it either!

Corinne: Oh, damn!

Gale: Oh dang!

Corinne: It's a spicy secret!

Blake: Yeah, you guys don't notice anything, as Jasper takes a seat. Jasper, they are making their way right up towards you.

Keith: Okay. Uh, so, I'll hold out my hand. You see a couple of uh, iridescent beetles—

Gale: Oohhh!

Keith: —fly up to Jasper's open hand.

Gale: Hee hee!

Keith (as Jasper): I'd like you to make the acquaintance, this one here is called Rosie, and this one here is called Gildy.

Gale: Oh! Oh!

Keith (as Jasper): …or maybe it's the other way around.

[Laughter.]

Gale (as Bonesaw): Hello, new friends!

Keith (as Jasper): Uh, hold on just a second here. Uh, all right there uh, fellers. You done some reconnoitering. Let me know what you found. What's underneath?

Blake (as beetle): Uh… well…

Blake: For what Myra and Bonesaw can tell, it looks like Jasper is just talking at a couple of beetles, and staring intently at them.

[Giggling.]

Blake: Uh, and don't hear anything.

[Laughter.]

Blake (as beetle): Well, we did what you said. One of the big ones took a swing at me and saw me, but missed! [pleased chuckle]

Keith (as Jasper): Um. I'm right—I'm right–right glad of that.

Blake (as beetle): We got down into the room, and it smelled very weird, it made us not want to be down there. Lot of dirt, some storage, big piles of barrels. And we saw some people in white robes down there and looking around, and then they disappeared.

Keith (as Jasper): Disappeared how? Did they just suddenly vanish or did they go behind something you couldn't see ‘em no more?

Blake (as beetle): I think they… they went behind something, but when we tried to follow them, there was nowhere to go.

Keith (as Jasper): Interesting…

Corinne: Myra leans over into Bonesaw, and–and is like—

Corinne (as Myra): You think this zombie brain, or…?

[Keith chuckles.]

Gale (as Bonesaw): Ah, let's give him a second!

Corinne (as Myra): I mean, I–I didn't know we–we could have—we could have bugs on our side! Imagine all the–the snooping we can do! We could–we could–we could spy on every establishment!

Gale (as Bonesaw): Sure1

Keith (as Jasper): Did you see any folks what was uh, tied up, or tied down, or in any way restrained? Perhaps in a cage, or by chains? And uh, did you see any uh… strange bubbling concoctions of uh… some sort, like big glass bubbles filled with liquid?

Blake (as beetle): Um… yes, there was this… smelled really weird. Uh, several barrels of it. Didn't smell good. And we… we didn't want to go near it. That was about where the… the people disappeared. Uh… nobody tied up.

Keith (as Jasper): All right, one last thing. I thought I felt a sense of uh… satisfaction coming from a'one of you. Is that true?

Blake: The one on the left kind of perks up a little, and says—

Blake (as beetle): Yeah, uh, one of the big ones saw me and tried to smush me because he thought I was a little bug—

Keith (as Jasper): Ahhh!

Blake (as beetle): Uh, but he–as he swung down, his axe that he was carrying got caught on the doorway and ripped it out of his hands, and he hit himself in the leg!

[Laughter.]

Keith (as Jasper): All right, then! Well… well done! I'm sure that uh… not–not a'one of them has a patch on your ability to remain un-squashed. I'm–I'm mighty proud of you. All right, now! Rosie, I want you to stay with me. Gildy, I want to go I want you to go back to where I summoned you from, and if you see a ratfolk—

Keith: —and I'm going to send a mental image—

Keith (as Jasper): I want you to hightail it back to me. Got that?

Blake (as beetle): Yeah. I can do that!

Keith (as Jasper): All right, good luck, Gildy!

Blake: Gildy—[beetle wings]—flies off.

Keith (as Jasper): Rosie, you stick with me for right now.

Keith: —and I'm going to put Gildy under my hat.

Blake: Gildy goes under the hat and just—

Keith: Okay.

Blake: [rustling]—burrows into the hair!

Gale: Oh, no! [laughs]

Keith (as Jasper): All right! I know it looks like I was getting a mite… like, plum loco, there, but uh… That ain't the case. This is uh… this is uh…

Gale (as Bonesaw): I mean, you talk to Smokey all the time!

Corinne (as Myra): That's true!

Keith (as Jasper): Well–well, that's true! But, you know… Smokey's a horse. Smokey doesn't talk back.

[Laughter.]

Corinne (as Myra): Could… could you also maybe tell either Rosie or Gildy that uh… if I might have squished one of their cousins, that I'm real sorry about that? Uh…

[Gale laughs.]

Keith (as Jasper): they're not real sentimental-type folk.

[Laughter.]

Keith (as Jasper): Uh, I–I don't think that, for instance, that–that Gildy was like, too bothered that Rosie almost got smooshed, so… I think you're fine there.

Corinne (as Myra): O-okay.

[Laughter.]

Keith (as Jasper): But uh… if it comes up in ca–casual conversation, I will pass that on.

Corinne (as Myra): Okay.

Keith (as Jasper): All right, but anyway. Now this is–this is–this is uh… This is like Ranger-type magic. This is some stuff that I never really could get the hang of, but I've been a'practicing on it, until finally I got uh… It just, it just clicked last night as I was falling asleep, I thought… I bet I could do that that now!

Gale (as Bonesaw): Oh!

[Corinne laughs.]

Keith (as Jasper): —and I gave it a shot the morning, sure enough! I was able to accomplish it!

Gale (as Bonesaw): Very cool!

Keith (as Jasper): Uh, but anyway—Yeah! Yeah, so… That is something we have in our back pocket, so to speak, for future reconnoitering. Now, keep in mind—they're a bit limited. They are bugs. They can't understand speech, and uh, they–they're really not too good at like, interpreting social things going on, like knowing who's in charge in a group of people, or something like that. But they can describe the environment, and they can describe what's going on in 'bug-like perception terms.

[Corinne chuckles]

Keith (as Jasper): So anyway—Yeah, underneath, uh… there is uh, there is a cellar down below filled with boxes and and barrels and crates and such, and it does indeed seem like there is uh, barrels filled with uh, something unnatural-smelling. And that might be, either ingredients for or related to that uh… that uh, stuff you were talking about, Bones, for accelerating the uh… what'd you call it? The ghoul virus, the…?

Gale (as Bonesaw): Ghoul fever!

Keith (as Jasper): Ghoul fever, that was it! Do we know if ghoul fever is transmitted through the air? Or is it something where ghoul fever, like, you have to be bitten or scratched?

Gale (as Bonesaw): Ah, usually you get bit, I think it's transferred through the saliva.

Corinne (as Myra): Okay.

Keith: It's a 'ZTD'

[Snorts of laughter.]

Gale: Uh, can we–can we presume that Jasper relayed all of the information from the beatles?

Keith: Yes!

Gale: Okay.

Gale (as Bonesaw): Sounds like there might be sort of a secret passage, secret room? That they weren't able to get into? That would be worth examining, if we could get in!

Keith (as Jasper): Well, I do, uh… I do know where the door is to a cellar, but it does have a big old lock on it, and I was really hoping that Moz would be back by now, because I think that uh… that's kind of his forte, I think, uh… picking that sort of thing.

[Zach laughs.]

Gale (as Bonesaw): I'm… I'm not *great* at it, but given a little time, I can jiggle most things open!

Keith (as Jasper): …I'd like to make a joke out of that but I don't uh…

[Laughter.]

Keith (as Jasper): Well, we can give that a shot. Also, the time I did see it in use, one of them did have a particular knock they used. So, I think that uh… we need to kind of get in there unseen. Any ideas about that, Bones? I know you uh, you have pulled Invisibility out of your pocket sometimes.

Gale (as Bonesaw): Yes! I've got uh, one elixir of Greater Invisibility prepared. That one doesn't last as long—ten, eleven minutes, but you can attack people with it. Uh, beyond that, I have—Mmm…I can mix up an elixir of regular Invisibility, which will last about an hour, but I've only got the one.

Keith (as Jasper): How long would it take you to mix that up? And can you do it here?

Gale (as Bonesaw): Oh, yes, I—! Just a minute. It's not super effective during battle, because things happen so quickly, but um… I usually save a little of my… 'magical charge,' you might call it, for mixing up more utility-type things. Uh, so I could prepare that in about a minute.

Keith (as Jasper): All right, well here's–here's my thoughts. If we can at least get some of us in there invisible in order to get the way open and make the way for whoever might not be invisible, that would be a good start, and there's two things that could happen if we are discovered. Uh, one is they're completely innocent, and they may call the Sheriff on us, and we might uh, we might be able to explain our way out of that one, given what uh, what we suspect. Uh, or they're a bunch of bastards, in which case they're not going to call the Sheriff, but they're going to try and take care of it themselves, in which case… uh, you know, that's–that's when the guns come out, 'cause it's–it's okay to shoot total bastards.

Corinne (as Myra): Since–since we only got two invisibility potions, if one of us goes in the front, acting like a patron, a homeless individual, and kind of run interference on the aasimar guy—

Keith (as Jasper): Yeah…

Corinne (as Myra): Uh, in case he has um… you know, True Sight. I–I don't know, I don't know how that, how aasimars work, but… Or to at least give kind of like a–a lookout and see where people are walking, and if they start walking toward the cellar door, like, 'Oh, can you help me with something please!' Or–or–or something of the like.

Keith (as Jasper): So acting as a distraction.

Gale (as Bonesaw): I like this idea—two teams! One for distraction, one for infiltration. Uh, I've got um… you remember when I removed my skin?

Blake: God damn it!

Zach: Ugh!

Corinne (as Myra): How could I forget?

Keith (as Jasper): No, I'm tried to keep a block on that!

[Laughter.]

Gale (as Bonesaw): Well, I… this–this isn't quite as bad, I promise, but I've got a spell that is similar, where I can remove just an ear and send it along with the other team, and I can hear what's going on!

[Corinne gasps.]

Corinne (as Myra): That's amazing!

Gale (as Bonesaw): Uh, and then they can also take Goiter, and that way, if something happens with me, Goiter can flap around and act as a warning for the other team. So we've got some… some sort of communication—

Keith (as Jasper): Sort of, yeah.

Gale (as Bonesaw): —at least for uh, things going badly. I need to infiltrate, 'cause I'm picking the lock. Uh, who wants to distract? And does the third person want to infiltrate, or also distract? Either way is fine, but if we have two infiltrating, we'll have to make it really quick because the Greater Invisibility only lasts about ten minutes.

Corinne (as Myra): Okay.

Keith (as Jasper): I think ten minutes should be plenty.

Corinne: Myra goes to tug on Bonesaw's ear, does it come off?

Gale (as Bonesaw): …I haven't drunk it yet, Myra!

[Laughter.]

Corinne (as Myra): Oh, sorry!

Corinne: She's just like, pulling on his ear like, this–this is like, detachable?

Keith (as Jasper): All right, all right, well—

Gale (as Bonesaw): It will be!

Keith (as Jasper): Uh, my ability to bluff is like… non-existent.

Gale (as Bonesaw): All right, so Myra distraction…

Keith: I don't know what Myra's is…

Corinne: My Bluff is pretty good, it's uh… plus nine.

Keith: Okay.

Corinne: So I think I'll go…

Keith: Alright, mine's plus one so I–I—!

Gale: Oh, dang!

[Laughter.]

Keith: —volunteer you!

Keith (as Jasper): I'm a pretty… pretty straight and honest feller.

Corinne (as Myra): Uh-huh.

[Laughter.]

Keith (as Jasper): A straight shooter. Call 'em like I see 'em.

[Laughter.]

Zach: Um… plus eighteen, maybe?

[Laughter.]

Corinne: Oh, shit!

Keith: Yeah, I know! But you're not here!

Blake: Yeah…

[Laughter.]

Corinne: This is–this is the job we need Moz for!

Zach: Yeah, sorry about that.

Corinne: For the lock-picking, for the bluffing…

Gale: Maybe when Moz shows up late, he can join 'Distraction Team.'

[Laughter.]

Gale (as Bonesaw): All right. So, Jasper and I into the basement, Myra distracting.

Corinne (as Myra): Mhmm.

Keith (as Jasper): And who gets–who gets the Goiter ear, then? That would be Myra gets the Goiter ear?

[Laughter.]

Gale (as Bonesaw): Yes, and Goiter. That way if we're in distress, uh Goiter will flop around and let you know we're in trouble.

Corinne (as Myra): Okay.

[Zach snickers.]

Gale (as Bonesaw): But because you have the ear, we'll be able to hear if you're in trouble.

Corinne (as Myra): Okay. Will… will um… Goiter know how to look like a…? Like a natural tumor on me? I–I know he kind of–he kind of fits–fits you in your skin, but would he be able to kind of…

Gale (as Bonesaw): …so he is green, and you have scales. Um…

[Zach laughs.]

Gale (as Bonesaw): I don't know if he'd really blend, but he can hide really well, he's quite malleable.

Zach: You can ‘Ratatouille’ him with your hat!

Corinne: Oh my god!

Blake: Oh my god!

[Laughter.]

Zach: You can have a little Goiter flapping around on your head!

[Laughter.]

Corinne: She looks at Goiter, and looks at her hat, and goes—

Corinne (as Myra): Well, all right, then!

[Laughter.]

Corinne (as Myra): Hop on in!

Keith (as Jasper): I'll put up with a beetle in my hair, but there are some points where I got to draw the line.

[Laughter.]

Zach: It’s a disturbingly perfect fit!

Corinne: Squishes? Ooo…

[Laughter.]

Corinne: Well, that would feel so strange!

Blake: Yeah, Goiter goes from Bonesaw, like detaches, and just scrunches down a little bit and—[slorping noises]—right onto Myra's head, and just—[blobby movement]—fits up into the hat shape.

Gale (as Bonesaw): All right, Goiter, I want you to stay really still, except if you feel distressing emotions from me? Not like, ‘grief’ and ‘heartbreak,’ but like ‘Ah, we're being attacked!’ emotions, just to… clarify. Um…

Blake (as Goiter): Okay! Yeah! I can do that!

Gale (as Bonesaw): Yeah, if you feel–if you feel ‘we are being attacked emotions,’ then flop around a lot so Myra can feel you, and then she'll come save us!

Blake (as Goiter): Okay! Yeah! I can do that!

Corinne (as Myra): But–but just… Just flop a little bit? Like not a lot? 'Cause… 'cause… 'cause that'd be weird?

[Laughter.]

Corinne (as Myra): Just–just–just like a gentle tap, or some–something.

Blake (as Goiter): Okay, yeah!

Blake: Just to remind you of the layout of this building, there is a front entrance that appears to be like, where everybody is coming and going into, a bunch of windows, several back rooms, and then the actual like back room-back room that had a locked door behind it, that you could go into, and that's the room that the uh… trap door was in.

Keith: So there's an outside door to the room with the…what I call the trap-door?

Blake: Yeah.

Gale: Bonesaw will take a few minutes to stir up various elixirs. Um… he will drink two, hand one to Jasper, and hand one to Myra, along with his ear.

[Laughter.]

Keith (as Jasper): Myra, did you want to leverage in Myra Three anywhere into this?

Corinne (as Myra): Oh!

Keith (as Jasper): I know Myra Three's got some pretty good abilities that you might be able to make use of.

Corinne (as Myra): Yeah!

Corinne: She pulls uh Myra Three out. I have so many ideas for this one. Um…

[Laughter.]

Corinne: It's like, ‘what kind of chaos…?’ Okay, so she looks at Myra Three, and is like—

Corinne (as Myra): Okay, um… Can you be a, um… Uh, a belt buckle?

Blake: Let's roll…

[Dice rolling.]

Blake: Uh, Myra Three turns into a belt buckle, but it is like, ostentatiously big.

Corinne: Okay…

[Gale laughs.]

Blake: It's the kind of eye-catching big that is like, ‘really?’

[Laughter.]

Corinne: Well, I mean we are distracting, so, maybe…

Keith: Like, like bigger than a saucer, but smaller than a hubcap!

Blake: Exactly, yeah!

[Laughter.]

Corinne: Oho, that's a big range. Um… She looks at Myra Three and says—

Corinne (as Myra): Okay, well, you're going to be um… You're going to be my–my belt buckle, and if–if some real…real shit hits the fan and we need to get out of there quick, um, I'm going to yell uh, ‘Geronimo!’ and you're going to go bounce around the room while we–while we escape. Think …think you can do that and cause some pandemonium?

[Gale giggles.]

Blake (as Myra Three): [affirmative sound.]

Corinne (as Myra): Yeah?

Blake (as Myra Three): [affirmative sound.]

Keith (as Jasper): Bonesaw, you think you're up to causing some pandemonium?

[Laughter.]

Gale (as Bonesaw): I thought we were supposed to be sneaky?

Corinne (as Myra): If–if–if worst comes to worst, if it's like a… like a safe word like, we need to get out of there ASAP. um…

Gale (as Bonesaw): In–in the event that we need it, abso-fucking-lutely!

[Laughter.]

Corinne (as Myra): Excellent!

Gale (as Bonesaw): Pandemonium is my middle name!

[Laughter.]

Blake: And your first, and your last…

Corinne (as Myra): [snickering] And your first, and your last…

Gale (as Bonesaw): Bonesaw 'Pandemonium'... ah…?

Keith (as Bonesaw): Throckmorton…?

Corinne: 'Chaos?'

Gale (as Bonesaw): …anywho…

Keith (as Boensaw): Something!

Gale (as Bonesaw): This elixir, Myra, will let you Detect Thoughts!

Corinne (as Myra): Oh!

Gale (as Bonesaw): You might pick up on some things from that aasimar dude, so…!

Corinne (as Myra): Yeah, Abs–absolutely, thank you!

Gale (as Bonesaw): …you know, use it well!

Corinne: Uh, how long does it last?

Gale: One minute per level.

Corinne: Okay, so twelve minutes.

Keith (as Jasper): All right then, I say uh… we coordinate, wait about five minutes before we all drink, but get kind of into position first. While we're waiting that five minutes, I'm going to take Rosie out and have her uh, infiltrate—

Blake (as Rosie): [scurrying]

Keith (as Jasper): —slip under the door into that room, dip down there, take a look about, come back out, and tell me what they saw, and if they get back in time, that's great, if not, I'll pick it up along the way.

Blake: Yeah, Rosie will get back just in time, just before, and say—

Blake (as Rosie): Uh… I didn't see anyone!

Keith (as Jasper): Good beetle! Make note… find out how to determine sex of beetles.

[Laughter.]

Keith (as Jasper): …don't know if you are a girl beetle or a boy beetle, but ‘good beetle!’

[Laughter.]

Gale: Bonesaw's ear flaps wetly in your hand.

Corinne: Hnn!

Gale: It is a magical creature now.

[Laughter.]

Gale: It–it can flap around like a little butterfly.

[Blake makes bouncy noises.]

Corinne: [laughing] She she kind of puts it, lifts her hat and just is like—

Corinne (as Myra): Okay, Goiter, you–you got… You got control the ear.

Blake: Goiter eats the ear—

[Laughter.]

Corinne (as Myra): Oh! No! no! Don't, don’t—!

Keith (as Jasper): Goiter, no eating the ear!

Gale (as Bonesaw): Oh, that sounds so weird and… and ‘gooshy’ in my ear!

Corinne (as Myra): I'm so sorry! Uh, Goiter, Goiter, we kind of… we kind of need the ear? So–so hang on to it, but don't– don't–don't like… don't like eat it!

Blake (as Goiter): [spits out]

Keith (as Jasper): [radio static] Going through a tunnel!

[Laughter.]

Gale (as Bonesaw): All right! Coming through, loud and clear!

Corinne: Can he feel that too?

Gale: Um…

Corinne: Is it just sound or can he feel his ear?

Gale: Just sound, I think!

Corinne: Okay.

Gale: …luckily. That would be pretty distracting!

[Laughter.]

Corinne: Eternal wet willie…

Gale: Alright. We uh…

Keith: Alright!

Gale (as Bonesaw): Good luck, Myra! We'll see you soon!

Corinne (as Myra): Yeah, good luck–good luck, you guys too!

[Plotting music fades and is replaced with tense intrigue music.]

Blake: Let's start with Myra. You are welcome to enter the front door, Myra.

Corinne: Okay.

Blake: You see people going in and out freely.

Corinne: Before she goes and stands out in the open, she kind of makes herself kind of look disheveled and–and greased up, she rubs some dirt on her face, and then she swigs the potion of Detect Thoughts, and then she slithers up to the building, kind of hunched over, looking cold and hungry. And so she slithers through the door, to see… see what'll happen.

Blake: All right, uh, give me a Disguise check.

[Dice rolling.]

Corinne: Oh…

Blake: All right, fourteen! Guess we'll see how it goes. You step inside, and as you do, you are greeted with a very warm tableau. You see the room is set up very similarly to how Jasper described it, several different pews set out, tables where quite a few folk are gathered around, eating soup and some fresh meals. You see in particular two large half-orcs, each with hair kind of cropped short. Both have mustaches that they're growing out, and both are wearing very plain white robes with some yellow accents, carrying amulets, walking around, kind of passing out food and blessings to various homeless folk, and both are carrying very large axes—

Corinne: Mm!

Blake: —that appear to be very ceremonial in nature.

Corinne: Okay.

Blake: As you enter, one of them steps forward over to you and says—

Blake (as Half-orc): Welcome, my child! Do you need some respite from the cold?

Corinne (as Myra): Yes! Yes, please! I'm–I'm–I'm so sorry, I… I–I–I know that you help many people, and I–I will try my best to not be a burden, but I… I need food, but more than anything I need some guidance. Is… is the good sir around today?

Blake: You pick up on about twenty different minds in this room, which… a quick count shows that accounts for everybody that you can see.

Corinne: Okay.

Blake: Are you going to try and focus in on this guy more? Or just catch surface thoughts in three rounds?

Corinne: She'll focus on the guard, er, the cleric, and see what his reactions may be to her asking her about where the Master of the House is.

Blake: Okay. Uh, are you diving deeper? Or just grabbing surface thoughts?

Corinne: Surface thoughts for now.

Blake: Okay. Give me a Bluff check.

Corinne: [scatting] Come on, Bluff!

[Dice rolling.]

Corinne: I got a twenty-three!

[Dice rolling.]

Blake: Myra, you go to read his mind as he smiles… and you encounter a fucking steel wall of a mind—

Corinne: Oh, shit…

Blake: —when you go to try and read him. He continues to smile and says—

Blake (as Half-orc): Come on in, come on in. Grab–grab a seat. We'll get you some food… Friar Livingston is attending to some matters, uh, that came up last night. But I am certain that he would be willing to speak with you once he is finished.

Corinne (as Myra): Could–could you at least give me some–some guidance?

Corinne: —and she like grasps one of his hands, um, and tries to kind of like lead him over to the table, um, so she can sit down and basically talk his ear off while she's looking around.

[Gale laughs.]

Blake: Absolutely. Definitely, as you're doing this, he kind of starts to protest, like—

Blake (as Half-orc): [stammering] I… really need to… take care of some business and… make sure that—O–o–okay.

[Laughter.]

Blake: —and he's just going to accept and sit down. You see him look over at the other cleric. Looks like he could be the first guy's twin brother? Like, identical, and gives him a nod, and the

man starts walking towards the entrance, keeping an eye on that as he starts to talk to you, Myra. Give me a Diplomacy check.

[Dice rolling.]

Corinne: Twenty-four!

Gale: Hoo-hoo!

Blake: Wow, twenty-four?

Zach: Rolling really well!

Corinne: She–she's got her game face on.

Blake: Oh! That is so good! He sits down and starts talking, and he starts doing a little bit of proselytization.

Corinne: Get him, get him monologuing!

[Laughter.]

Blake: Yep, he starts monologuing, and he starts talking about, you know, it's the duty of people to take care of one another, you know, it's important to provide a safe haven, especially for the downtrodden, and it's just so difficult in a place like this, you know, this is one of the largest cities in the west, and, you know, you have people like the Galloways, and the Denim Knuckles, who don't give one whit about the little guy and they're just off fighting their own wars, and—

Corinne (as Myra): They're terrible, aren't they?

Blake (as Half-orc): Oh, so bad!

Corinne (as Myra): Them and anybody else who works with them!

Blake (as Half-orc): Absolutely! You know, they're just… the worst kind of people, and… you know, they are the ones who support all of the vices of this city, you have all of the drinking, the imbibing of drugs and alcohol, and fornication going on in theaters, and in brothels, and most of all… You look around—the Galloways say that they can protect us from the Undead, but look what's happening? They keep coming back! And we all know that all of these bad things that are happening… it's the Undead's fault! They're what's making it bad!

Gale: [breathing out air] *So* glad we didn't send Jasper in there!

[Laughter.]

[Tense music swaps for mischievous sneaking music.]

Blake: We're going to swap back to five minutes earlier—Bonesaw and Jasper uh, at the back door.

Keith: All right!

Gale (as Bonesaw): So first off, they've got soup in there! Sounds pretty good!

[Laughter.]

Keith (as Jasper): Yeah, they were–they were ladellin' that out to folks uh, earlier. Uh, Rosie says everything's clear, there ain't nobody in the storeroom here, and there ain't nobody down below. So now is our time.

Gale (as Bonesaw): All right!

Keith (as Jasper): Maybe we don't even need to use the Invisibility potions? But keep them for an escape?

Gale (as Bonesaw): You know… better safe than sorry, really! Uh, anyone could come along? It's–it's no burden!

Keith (as Jasper): All right, then!

Gale (as Bonesaw): All right! I think I'll take the 'Greater' one, because I'm more likely to hit someone. Just saying.

[Laughter.]

Corinne: No, that's fair!

Keith (as Jasper): Yeah, when people ask me to think about Bonesaw, I always think Bonesaw really does like to hit people…

[Laughter.]

Gale (as Bonesaw): Moz used to love hitting people!

[Corinne laughs.]

Keith (as Jasper): He surely did!

[Laughter.]

Blake: Oh my god!

Keith (as Jasper): All right!

Gale (as Bonesaw): Bottoms up!

Blake: All right! Invisible, invisible! Go ahead and enter. Well, *attempt* to enter, the room. The door is locked, so if you're going to try and pick the lock…?

Gale: This a ‘Disable Device’ check?

Blake: Yes.

[Dice rolling.]

Blake: Sixteen? That is not enough to open this door! You find that the door is actually pretty well locked.

Gale (as Bonesaw): Damn, okay, one second!

Gale: Uh, [laughing] if I ‘take ten’ on this, will that wear out the rest of my invisibility? Oh—taking ten won't even help, 'cause it'll be a fourteen.

[Laughter.]

Blake: Yeah, you would have to take twenty. That would definitely work? But you would only have like, two minutes of invisibility left, if you took twenty.

Gale: Fair… How loud is a efreeti cord?

[Laughter.]

Corinne: Straight to the big guns! I like this. Let's go!

Gale: [laughing] It's better than dynamite!

Keith (as Boomstick): It doesn't make much sound at all!

Keith: —says Boomstick!

[Laughter.]

Keith (as person): It doesn't?

Keith (as Boomstick): What?

[Gale laughs.]

Blake: It doesn't make too much sound, I don't believe… I will also remind you, you looking at a wooden door on a wooden building with wooden stuff on the inside…

Corinne: [fire flaring up sound] Now that's a great distraction!

[Gale laughs.]

Corinne: Just saying…

Keith (as Jasper): Well—!

Gale (as Bonesaw): Don't you have carpentry skills?

Keith: Well, I'm going to take out my handaxe, and I'm going to try and shimmy the blade under the window here, see if somebody remembered to lock the window.

Zach: [joking about carpentry] These joints are subpar!

[Gale laughs.]

Blake: Are you trying to do this stealthily? Like, so people don't know you've been in? Or you just trying to get in?

Keith: I'm just trying to get in. I— but, I'm not hacking at the window, but if it leaves marks, I'm not going to be too terribly worried.

Blake: Okay, going at it with a handaxe, and like, cracking it? You will be able to break the lock on the window and get it up and open, but there will be very visible evidence of that.

Keith: Okay. Uh… I'm hoping we're going to be in and out before that, but, you know, if they discover us in there, 'well, duh,' we got in somehow!

[Sounds of agreement.]

Keith: All right, so, gonna jimmy the window.

Keith (as Jasper): Uh, luckily, I always carry an outsized key on me!

Blake: [laughing] Kshhhh!

Gale (as Bonesaw): That's excellent!

Blake: God damn it…

Keith (as Jasper): I'm going to look at the… the great big old padlock on the trap door, look at Bonesaw, look at the great big old padlock, look at Bonesaw…

[Laughter.]

Gale (as Bonesaw): Let me… let me, okay, I'm going to try again!

Keith (as Jasper): All right, then!

[Dice rolling]

Gale: [laughing] I got another sixteen!

Blake: Yeah, no, it doesn't do anything.

[Gale laughs.]

Gale (as Bonesaw): All right, so I've got this stuff called efreeti cord—

[Corinne laughs.]

Corinne: Back to that! Back to ‘plan A’!

[Laughter.]

Zach: How do you guys see each other? You're both invisible!

Corinne: Great question!

Blake: Yeah!

Zach: How do you know where you are in relation to each other?

Keith: I just said I was looking! I didn't say Bonesaw saw me!

Gale: We’re holding hands!

[Laughter.]

Zach: Look both ways before crossing the street!

Corinne: Exactly!

Keith: [stammering] I–I don't know, I'm–I'm imagining ‘Three Stooges’ stuff going— ‘Ah! Get out of the way, you knucklehead!’

[Laughter.]

Blake: Yeah, uh, you see the uh… trap door is right here. Did you try the knock? Or…?

Keith: Uh, yeah, let's give that knock a try!

Blake: Okay!

Keith: Maybe it's just a magical knock, and not a signal.

Keith (as Jasper): [knocks three times.]

Blake: [creaking] The trap door opens up!

Gale: I feel like Bonesaw has grabbed a hank of Jasper's shirt, and is–is—

Keith: Okay.

Gale: —coming behind him, like a toddler

[Laughter.]

Keith (as Jasper): [whispering] All right! I'll go first, you come following after.

Gale (as Bonesaw): [nervous] Are you sure?

Keith (as Jasper): Uh… yeah, I think so.

Gale (as Bonesaw): All right! Don't get got!

Keith (as Jasper): [joking] Oh my god, I disappeared!

[Laughter.]

Gale (as Bonesaw): Oh my god! What's happening!

[Laughter.]

Keith: [joking] ‘Ahh! I'm invisible! I can't see myself!’

[Laughter.]

Blake: The two of you make your way down into this basement. Now that you're down here, the smell of the antiseptic is overpowering.

Gale: Mm!

Keith (as Jasper): Oh!

Blake: It–it smells of just, alcohol, and formaldehyde, and all of these cleaning agents down here.

Gale (as Bonesaw): Wow, that takes me back!

Keith (as Jasper): Oh, lord have mercy!

[Laughter.]

Keith (as Jasper): All right, uh, I'm going to… I'm going to… [coughing] Oh, goodness gracious! I'm going to guard! ‘Cause I think this is where you got to do your uh… your shining, Bonesaw!

Gale (as Bonesaw): Right!

Keith (as Jasper): See if you can figure out if—Whoa! It’s a mite heady down here, you know that?

[Laughter.]

Gale (as Bonesaw): Oh, you know, I'm used to it!

Gale: Uh, Bonesaw will cross to the barrels that the beetles described as having… some sort of substance?

Blake: Yep!

Gale: Can I roll Knowledge (Alchemy)? To try to figure out what it is?

Blake: Yes! You can! Uh, go ahead and roll Knowledge (Alchemy). As you walk through, hard-packed dirt gives way under your feet. It seems like it has been well-trodden down here.

Gale: Mm!

Blake: You see a couple of stacks of like, extra tables, chairs, supplies down here being kept a little bit cooler—

[Dice rolling.]

Blake: —with a twenty-two, you go to crack open one of the barrels to see what's inside of it… Give me a Perception check, in addition to your twenty-two.

[Dice rolling.]

Gale: Okay, fourteen.

Blake: With a fourteen, you don't notice anything out of the ordinary at the moment. When you look into these barrels, it is so very clear to you, like this is formaldehyde. Like this is one hundred percent formaldehyde. You smell some ether coming from the… this mixture. It appears to be a mixture of like several different cleaning agents? You know that this particular type of mixture? Just based on what you're smelling and observing with it? While it would be very good at preserving bodies, somebody could use it as a part of a necromancy spell.

Gale: If I rolled either Profession (Undertaker) or Knowledge (Arcana), would that potentially get me more information on either of those aspects?

Blake: Yes. Whichever one you roll will get you more information.

Gale: I never get to do Undertaker, so I will!

[Laughter.]

[Dice rolling.]

Gale (as Bonesaw): Twenty-four!

Blake: Profession (Undertaker), absolutely! With a twenty-four, you know that this mixture would actually be too caustic to be inside a corpse. Like if you put this to try and preserve a corpse, it would actually start eroding away at the inside—

Gale: Mm!

Blake: —and in fact, as you're smelling it and observing it, you're pretty sure this would be something involved in like, dissolving a body.

Gale: Hm!

Blake: It would melt a body very quickly.

Gale (as Bonesaw): Right! Don't touch that! Uh, it's for melting bodies!

Keith (as Jasper): Doesn't seem like something you be happening to find in a uh, home for uh, homeless folk.

Gale (as Bonesaw): No! Uh, it's a lot of formaldehyde and ether and… yeah, more like pres–preservatives and uh, antiseptics.

Blake: How loudly are you guys talking right now?

Gale: Softly, softly! We're infiltrating!

Blake: Softly?

Keith: Yeah.

Blake: Okay, just making sure.

Keith: But we're on mic, so…

[Laughter.]

Blake: Yeah

Gale: Yeah.

Keith: Jasper would like to be looking around the room for several different things, and I'm going to ask a couple of questions here, iffin I may?

Blake: Okay, yep!

Keith: About how much would each of those barrels weigh offhand? Is it something that can be easily lifted by one person?

Blake: You would guess, yes. Yeah, like, I–I don't think you even need to roll or make an estimate. It's your standard, like, keg size?

Keith: Okay, so it's a keg, so it's–it's something that somebody could… one person could carry up and down this ladder, they wouldn't need a hoist or anything?

Blake: Correct, yeah.

Keith: Okay. Secondly, is there any obvious sign in this room of restraints of any kind?

Gale: Mm!

Keith: Uh, shackles? Manacles?

Blake: Give me a Perception check.

Keith: Oh!

[Gale laughs.]

Keith: I'll give you a Perception check! How about a uh—

[Dice rolling.]

Blake: Oh nooo!

Gale: Oh, noooo!

Keith: Nat one—

Corinne: Noo!

Keith: —I rolled, but it was a twenty!

[Laughter.]

Corinne: It's still a twenty! That's insane!

Blake: You got a fucking twenty with a nat one!

[Laughter.]

Keith: That's… that's the dirtiest twenty you can get!

[Laughter.]

Corinne: That's the nastiest…Filthy disgusting twenty!

Blake: Fuck, that broke my brain a little bit right there!

[Laughter.]

Blake: I–I'm trying to think…

Keith: I'm failing upwards!

Blake: Yeah, okay. Here's… here's the dealio doodle with this.

Corinne: [laughing] Here's the dealio doodle…

Blake: You don't notice anything of that nature in particular, 'cause that… that is what you were looking for. You don't notice any restraints. You see some rope, but it looks like it's kind of moldering and has been there for a while? You don't see any shackles, you don't see anything just from a cursory glance around the room.

Keith: All right, third question. Do I see anything like a tub? A basin? A drain? Anything where something could be dissolved, and the–and the bits that are left over carried away? Or does this look like it might just be a storehouse for such chemicals, and they are taken away and the deed is done elsewhere?

Blake: This one I actually want a Survival check…

[Dice rolling.]

Keith: All right! There is a regular twenty, not a uh…

[Gale laughs.]

Blake: Wow! That must have been a low roll for you, though!

Keith: Yeah, it must have… it must have been! It was uh…

Corinne: It was a three!

Blake: Wow!

Keith: Let's see, I actually rolled a three!

[Laughter.]

Blake: Okay. You do notice that there doesn't appear to be any sort of basin or bin or anything that could be used to dissolve a body. You do notice some scrape marks along the ground, going from the ladder straight back to the barrels.

[Gale laughs.]

Keith: Scrape marks? Not wheel marks? And it doesn't look like a barrel drag or roll mark?

Blake: No. It looks like somebody dragging a table or something about that width—

Keith: Okay?

Blake: —straight back, and you do see that the scrape marks go underneath the barrels.

Keith: Under the barrels! That was going to be my next question.

Keith (as Jasper): I think there might be something behind them barrels. Let's see if we–how quickly we can shift those!

Keith: —and I'll, uh, I can't point out, but I'll say—

Keith (as Jasper): Look underneath! There's some tracks.

Keith: [joking] Look where I'm pointing! I'm pointing right here!

[Laughter.]

Gale (as Bonesaw): Let's look… let's look for a switch real quick! Maybe we don't have to move the barrels themselves, maybe it's like a ‘flip around wall’ kind of thing!

Gale: Can we search for a…a switch?

Blake: Yeah, absolutely! Now give me another Perception check, both of you.

[Dice rolling.]

Gale: Alright, twenty-six.

Keith: Thirty-seven!

Gale: Oh yeah! Yeah!

Keith: [laughing] I'm back!

Corinne: Back, baybee!

Gale: Bonesaw, listening in on the ear, says—

Gale (as Bonesaw): Wait a minute! Uh, the guys upstairs said that uh, Livingston? Friar Livingston? Is attending to some matters that came up last night? If there is a secret room… there's a possibility he's in there!

Keith (as Jasper): Well, good! 'Cause this is suspicious enough, this I h—I think this will catch somebody in the action!

Gale (as Bonesaw): All right! Let's go in!

[Laughter.]

Keith (as Jasper): It's not like we're going to be visible! It's like, 'Oh, it opened up! How strange and mysterious!' And if they're like, if there's somebody tied up or something like that, then we have a justified cause to go in and cause mayhem, and uh… and–and–and… antics.

Blake: And it takes no time at all between the two of you looking, before you find mind the bottom leftmost barrel is not actually filled with anything, and it has a lever inside, that you're able to pull—

Gale: Yes!

[Zach laughs.]

Blake: —and it slides the barrels to the side, that gives you a view of the door.

Gale: Yes!

Keith (as Jasper): Good call, Bones!

Keith: I have my guns drawn.

Gale (as Bonesaw): Moz used to love secret levers!

[Laughter.]

Blake: Moz is about halfway to the place right now.

Zach: Get there eventually, guys!

Blake: Bonesaw! Do you want to open the door?

[Gale giggles.]

Gale: Yes!

Keith: [laughing] What a—

Gale: I clicked on it, it's open!

Keith: What a question!

[Laughter.]

Zach: Too slow!

Gale: Oops! There's people in there! Oo… oh no!

[Haunting tension-filled music begins.]

Blake: As you look inside, Bonesaw, you see a massive green altar with twin green flaming braziers, and a set of large scrolls written in this green text. The entire room is suffused with this energy that both you and Jasper immediately feel waves of just… It feels sickening.

Gale: Hm…

Blake: An aasimar man, two large bronze wings spread out, with a censor filled with incense that he's swinging back and forth—

[Gale gasps.]

Blake: Bronze skin, glowing gold eyes, red hair that just glows with this metallic sheen. And as he speaks, he says—

Blake (as Livingston): My brothers… while I did not succeed in eliminating the interlopers last night, rest assured that this is not the end for us. And in fact, our mission continues unabated. As this town, with its decadence continues to thrive, we will continue to fight! We will be able to turn this to our side, drive out the Galloways, make this a haven for those who hate the Undead. We follow in mighty Samson's footsteps—

[Corinne gasps.]

Gale: Oo!

Blake: —as we continue to ensure—

Blake: —and the… somebody in the back notices the door is open

[Tense music beings.]

[Corinne makes a startled sound.]

Gale: Yeah, Bonesaw's fucking frozen.

Keith: I am nudging Bonesaw like crazy.

Blake: One of the people steps up to the open door, and is going to look. I need both of you to please make a Stealth check—

Corinne: Oh my god!

Blake: —with the invisibility modifier.

[Gale laughs nervously.]

[Dice rolling.]

Keith: Thirty-one to begin with—

Gale: Uuuuh!

Keith: —plus whatever the modifier is.

[Laughter.]

Zach: Well, Jasper's probably safe! We'll see how Bonesaw fares!

[Dice rolling.]

[Corinne gasps and Gale giggles.]

Blake: [hissing] What's the bonus for…?

Gale: I think plus twenty!

Zach: Holy shit!

Gale: Thirty-two with the Stealth…

Keith: Oh! So I technically rolled a fifty-two on that!

[Laughter.]

Gale: Yeah, that's–that's invisibility for you!

Corinne: Oh damn, yeah!

Zach: Goddamn!

[Laughter.]

Gale: There you go…

Blake: You see this young man with bright blue eyes steps out, a dagger in one hand, a rifle in the other, keeping an eye as he steps out, getting closer. He passes by Jasper…

Keith: I'm going to try and sneak past him into the room as he's doing that.

Corinne: Oo!

Blake: Oo!

Gale: Nooo!

Corinne: Oo! You're going to get stuck!

Blake: Give me an Acrobatics check.

Keith: Acrobatics? No!

[Gale laughs.]

Keith: Ahh!

Blake: He gets within inches of Bonesaw's mask—

Gale: [scared] Hah!

Blake: —as he's looking around—

Gale: Hoh!

Keith: Here we are, I've got a plus zero on this—

[Dice rolling.]

Keith: …ten.

[Scared waiting sounds.]

Blake: …and Jasper, as you go to move past him, you feel yourself, you're almost there, you're inches away as he is looking at Bonesaw…

[Gale breathes shakily.]

Blake: …before he whips around and starts to walk in, just in time to run into you full-on!

Gale: Oh!

Corinne: Oh n—!

Keith: Oh!

[Battle music begins.]

Blake: —and he shouts—

Gale: Nooo!

Blake (as cultist): They're invisible!

Corinne: Oh, shit!

Blake (as cultist): Get them!

Corinne: Shit! Shit!

Gale: How does he know it's ‘they?’

[Laughter.]

Keith: Yeah! That's true!

Blake: Eh, he’s using the singular uh…

Keith: Oh, okay!

Gale: Okay, fair, that's fair!

Keith: He didn't want to assume—

Blake: Yeah!

Keith: —a gender!

[Laughter.]

Gale: Upstairs on Myra's head—

[Zach laughs.]

Gale: —like an upside down water bed—

Zach (as Goiter): [thrashing]

Blake: Yeah!

Gale: —Goiter starts—[blllblllbll!]—

Keith: Yeah!

[Laughter.]

Gale: Goiter go 'Burrr!'

[Laughter.]

Corinne: [laughing] Goiter go brr… The hat starts shaking slightly, and she's like—

Corinne (as Myra): Uh…

Gale: Just vibrating!

Blake: Oh my god…

[Main theme kicks into gear.]

Dust and Blood is a Rolling Path production, featuring Corinne Hill as Myra Sting, Blake Alfson as our GM, Zach Parker as Moz Copernicus Prior, Keith Curtis as Jasper Graves, and myself, Gale Parker as Bonesaw.

Our theme song is *Dust and Blood* by Arne Parrott, and other music throughout this recording is provided by Kevin Macleod, Tabletop Audio, Dark Fantasy Studios, and the Desperados 3 Original Game Soundtrack by Filippo Beck Peccoz.

Transcripts, detailed sound credits, and more can be found on our website at DustAndBloodPod.com. You can follow us on X and Facebook at DustAndBloodPod, or support us through our Patreon at Dust and Blood, where you can join our community discord and get perks like our behind-the-scenes discussion show, The Roundup.

We are so grateful for the support of our fans, people like Ms. Blevins, Hylen, Barbara, and Sleve McDichael.

Dust and Blood releases monthly on the first, and the next episode is coming at you on August first!

Content warnings can be found in every episode description, and we hope you enjoy exploring this fantasy western with us. Thanks for listening!

[*Dust and Blood* main theme vocals cut in: *My eyes shoot open to the early morning sun. I feel that aching, pounding, poking of a bullet in my lung. Skin is sealed and bones a-crunch, and I feel that wretched itch and something drag me up to face that coward son-of-a-gun! His face grows white as he fumbles for his holster. I feel the lead pierce my shoulder, neck, and chest. I scream that I have died a hundred times and lived a thousand years, and I'll be damned if a boy like you is gonna beat the best. Yes, I'll be damned if a boy like you is gonna beat the best!*]

Zach: Bonesaw's whole 'Moz used to love this' really reminds me of that–that bit from Brother Bear?

[Laughter.]

Gale: 'I'm still here!'

Zach: 'Oh, my dear husband,' like, 'I'm not dead!'

Gale: 'Sometimes I can still hear his voice!'

[Laughter.]

[Music continues.]

Zach: Usually when someone grows a third eye, they've achieved enlightenment, or something or other. What–what did Myra do to deserve a third ear?

[Laughter.]

Blake: Oh, she knows what she did!

Corinne: I have become all-perceiving!

[Laughter.]

[Music ends.]

Gale (as Bonesaw): Uh, have you got potions of Remove Paralysis?

Blake: [typing] Um, that's a good question, I need to check…!

Gale: It's a level two Cleric spell, Blake!

[Zach laughs.]

Blake: Oh, then yes!

Gale: —so it's entirely possible!

Blake (as woman): Yeah! Uh, yeah–yeah–yeah–yeah!

Gale: Potions don't go above, uh, level three.

Blake: Yeah, that's why I was checking.

Blake (as woman): Yeah, uh, over there—

Gale: I already looked up all the relevant costs and stuff, so—

Blake: Well…! Fine!

Zach: Why–why even have a GM at this point? Just—!

Gale: I'm just role-playing!

[Laughter.]

Zach: You–you can sit in the corner, Blake!

Keith: Take a break

Blake: Yeah, I'll just go… Go to play amongst yourselves for a little bit! I'm going to go get myself more coffee!

[Laughter.]

Gale: I wanted to save you the trouble!

Corinne: Aww!

Blake: I do appreciate it!

Keith: Aww!

Blake: I'm just giving you shit!

Keith: Aww, the GM’s friend!

Gale: It's a level two cleric spell, a scroll is going to be a hundred and fifty dollars, and a potion's gonna be three hundred.

Blake: Perfect!

[Cassette End sound.]