

**Quinn:** We see the sun setting on Firmament College, casting long shadows over its stately halls and verdant campus. The first week of spring semester has arrived, bringing with it an unvarnished sense of promise and possibility. Gone are the troubles and anxieties of fall finals. The stagnant emptiness of the holidays swept away. The school is alive again, crackling and teeming with excitement and energy. We see a young man making his way slowly across campus. His unsteady gait, a clear sign that the back-to-school celebrations have already begun. Behind him, in the distance, we can see the remnants of a house party being broken up by campus security. A handful of other students are dispersing into groups of twos and threes into the growing darkness.

The boy pulls out his phone as he stumbles back towards the dorms, its soft blue light straining against the swelling darkness around him. He opens a dating app and begins idly swiping through potential matches. His thumb flitting back and forth in rote behavior until one profile catches his eye, a dazzling woman in a fiery red dress. For a moment, he stops dead in his tracks, dumbstruck, before hastily swiping right. Almost immediately, there's a buzz in his palm indicating a match. A message from her appears on the screen, saying simply, "Can you meet tonight?" He pauses for a moment, not wanting to appear too thirsty, before furiously tapping out a reply. "Totally. Up for a drink? I'm near FC."

He waits eagerly for a response as he arrives back at his dorm room, but none comes. He waits and he waits and he waits. But there's nothing. The hours grow long as he sits at his desk, staring at the picture on his phone. Until at last, in the early hours of the morning, he gives up, tossing the device into the corner before pouring himself into bed.

The next morning, we see another bleary-eyed college student slowly approaching the dorm room. He fumbles with his keys for a moment before pushing the door open. Inside, he sees his roommate, Brad, lying on the floor, unmoving and unresponsive, curled up in a ball in the corner.

[Monster Hour theme]

**Quinn:** Hello, everyone. And welcome to Monster Hour. I am Quinn, your Keeper of Monster and Mysteries. With me today are Hannah.

**Hannah:** Hi. I'm Hannah. I play JR the Crooked

**Quinn:** Teo.

**Teo:** Hi. I'm Teo. And I play Constance the Expert.

**Quinn:** And Kyle.

**Kyle:** Hi. I'm Kyle. I play Alvin the Monstrous. Now, Quinn, I know this might require an edit, but I just want to make sure I heard you right. Did you say he was thumbstruck? Because thumbstruck is very good.

**Teo:** It is.

**Quinn:** [laughs]

**Teo:** It is very good.

**Quinn:** I didn't say thumbstruck, but it's way better. So, Kyle, now you're the game master.

[laughter]

**Quinn:** So, before we jump into our third mystery here, Constance, you leveled up during the holiday episode. Is that correct?

**Teo:** It is indeed.

**Quinn:** Do you know what advancement you're going to take?

**Teo:** Yeah, possibly.

**Quinn:** [laughs]

**Teo:** In true me spirit and Constance spirit, really, I'd like to do something with your permission, because boy howdy, will it require some work from you. And also stretching the rules just a little bit. Just a little bit.

**Quinn:** Listening.

**Teo:** I would like to add something to my haven. I would like to add a workshop. It creates a space for building and repairing guns, cars and other gadgets. And you work out with the keeper how long any repair or construction will take, and if I need any extra supplies to make it happen. What I'm imagining here, Quinn, is that the new year is upon us. Constance, like many others, does indeed try to hold to a new year's resolution. And she has been cataloging all of the weapons, like all the antiques from her Buni.

And she has decided that it's about time that she finally take that medal and woodworking class at the university. She gets a real sweet discount through her parents, and she's going to take what she learns in that 101 class and apply it to really, like, think full-on steampunk up these old weapons to be, A, more reliable and B, able to fit in a modern woman's purse, some of which, admittedly, will be more art than function, but--

**Kyle:** Knife-brush!

**Teo:** Yeah.

**Quinn:** [laughs]

**Teo:** Or, some things are just like works of art. This is really Constance getting into her sculpture phase in a way, but via weaponry. So, yeah.

**Quinn:** So, here's what I'll say. Firmament College is a liberal arts college, and I don't think they have anything along these lines. They have a sculpting class, maybe, but it's not really what you're looking for. You go to the Front Range County Community College, and they have some classes that are more in line with what you're thinking. But you audit the first week, and there's no weapon smithing, [Hannah laughs] there's nothing along these lines. Here's how I think this move is going to work for you. You do know one person who certainly could help you create all manner of strange and weird gadgets, and that person is Stan.

**Teo:** Oh, shit.

**Hannah:** Ah.

**Kyle:** Yeah, my boy.

**Quinn:** And if you'll recall, Stan's Workshop was recently destroyed. And so, Stan would very much like to have a new place to do his tinkering. So, if you want to take the workshop move for your haven, that's totally cool. The way it'll work is that Stan is going to be your mentor, and he will occasionally want to use the workshop space for his own creations.

**Teo:** Oh, I get to be an apprentice. Oh, this is really everything to Constance. Yes, [Quinn laughs] 100% on board.

**Quinn:** We'll work out the details later. I think basic foraging item creation and repair is just a matter of time. If you want to make something real crazy, I'll probably have to come up with some sort of custom move, but we can cross that bridge when we come to it.

**Teo:** [chuckles] Oh, we will come to it.

**Hannah:** [laughs]

**Quinn:** Yeah, that bridge might be 10 minutes down the line in this episode, but we'll see.

[chuckles]

**Quinn:** So, before we get into it, I do want to do a quick recap of the holiday special, because I know some folks don't like to listen to special episodes, and there were a few important plot points that everyone should be aware of. First, we met a new character, the aforementioned Stan, who is an overall righteous dude and the owner of the ski stand where Alvin works up at the Thimble Ski Resort. Second, during the hijinks at the solstice soirée, Alvin's sister, Sarah, learned about his wolfish condition and did not respond particularly well. And third, after a wild tussle with some sentient communist Christmas toys, JR got her magical skeleton key back.

**Hannah:** Ooh.

**Quinn:** And if that sentence does not entice you to listen to the holiday episode, then I don't know what will.

**Teo:** [chuckles]

**Quinn:** So, it's been about three weeks since the incident at the solstice soirée, and a little over a month since The Consensus. There have been rumors around town that something strange happened to the soirée, but none of the well-to-do attendees are saying anything unusual or untoward. The official police report states that the disturbance was the result of a bear that stumbled upon a case of craft beer chilling outside and briefly [Hannah laughs] decided to crash the party, which almost certainly would have made local news if there was any evidence that had actually been true. But nonetheless, with no one else coming forward, there's really not much of a story to tell.

While the last three weeks have been quiet on the supernatural front, there have been a few developments on the mundane side of things. Alvin, the morning after you all got back, you awoke to find that Sarah had moved out of your apartment. She left you a short note saying that she had got permission to move into the dorms early, and you have not heard from her since.

**Kyle:** Eee.

**Quinn:** JR, two days after that, you received a call from Chief Stoney to give you a heads-up that the FBI had opened an investigation into the break-in at the Colorado National Laboratory.

**Hannah:** Shit.

**Quinn:** An agent arrived in town a few days prior and was meeting with officials from the lab. He told you everything was okay on the FPD side, but you should try to keep a low profile until things blow over.

**Hannah:** Did he happen to mention the name of the agent or anything like that?

**Quinn:** One Agent Pax.

**Hannah:** Quinn, is this a name that I would recognize?

**Quinn:** No.

**Hannah:** Okay. Great. Wonderful.

**Quinn:** Constance, you've been poring through your library, studying the broken disc shard, but your efforts have yielded precious little new information. You're pretty sure the sigils are a cipher of some kind. But even if you knew the 13 scripts whose letters you've identified in the etchings, there are other bits that don't correspond to any written language that you can find. The one larger symbol, the eye with a vortex at the center, could have any of a dozen different meanings. And while you no longer feel a sense of dread when you are near the disc, you haven't received any useful information from your Buni since the vision of the cave.

**Teo:** Cool.

**Quinn:** Is there anything else that the three of you would like to establish has happened over the past three weeks, since the winter solstice soirée?

**Kyle:** Yes.

**Quinn:** Do tell.

**Kyle:** The note and instructions for Alvin. In the week he had to do it, he drew the circle on his door.

**Quinn:** Okay.

**Hannah:** Are you fucking kidding me, Alvin?

**Kyle:** Got fine answers. It's an agreement to meet. Oh, so, you know nothing of this.

**Teo:** That's right.

**Hannah:** [crosstalk] But I know-

[laughter]

**Hannah:** -of your duplicity. JR was out of town for a solid week and was not reachable. And when she came back, she mumbled something about going to Upstate New York and gave Constance a keychain from Hawaii, and Alvin, a small potted cactus from Arizona. That is all she is going to say about that trip.

**Quinn:** Okay. Constance, anything you want to establish?

**Teo:** Yes. The first thing that she had Stan teach her is how to change a lock. She has changed the lock on her bathroom door. [Quinn laughs] It's a separate lock from all the others.

**Hannah:** You think that's going to keep me out with my key? That's so cute.

**Teo:** It's more a symbol of like-- She's reclaiming her space a little bit.

**Hannah:** [laughs]

**Teo:** Not a lot, because she knows that JR can get in there. It's like a politeness thing of like, [as Constance] *Hey, you know, maybe we split the bathroom more equally in the future.* Plus, it's an easy project.

**Hannah:** [laughs] You came home the day after you changed that lock to find JR in the tub.

**Teo:** Damn it.

**Hannah:** [laughs]

**Quinn:** And, JR, you arrived at the studio your first day back to see that part of the living room has been converted into a much more industrialized workshop. And Stan is there, and he's hammering away at some crazed contraption.

**Kyle:** [chuckles]

**Quinn:** He pulls up his metal visor, which I'm sure has a name, and looks at you and says, [as Stan] *Oh, hey, JR. How's it going?*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *Hi, Stan. What are you doing here?*

**Quinn:** [as Stan] *Constance wanted to start learning some smithing. Wanted to learn a little gadgetry. So, yeah, you know, just doing a little mentorship. Especially since, you know, my workshop got destroyed.*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *Yeah. So, I just have a little question for you, Stan. Well, maybe a couple of questions.* And I hold the key up.

**Quinn:** It's like, [as Stan] *Whoa, whoa. Hey, don't put-- You got a-- Dude, don't point that thing to me.*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *I'm not-- Stan, Stan, Stan.*

**Quinn:** [as Stan] *That thing's dangerous, man.*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *Stan, it's my key. Where did you get it?*

**Quinn:** [as Stan] *I didn't get it. I think one of the kids had it.*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *One of the kids had it. Okay. All right. Hmm. Stan, the key's not going to hurt you. It's my key. It's fine. It's not going to hurt you.* And I put it back in my pocket.

**Quinn:** [as Stan] *Okay.*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *Yeah.*

**Quinn:** [as Stan] *Well, hey, I want [Kyle laughs] to turn in that tub later. Constance said I could use it.*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *She what?*

**Quinn:** [as Stan] *Well, Constance said I could use the bathtub.*

**Teo:** [laughs]

**Quinn:** She didn't say it with her words-

**Teo:** Oh, God.

**Quinn:** -but it was implied in the whole situation of he like-- [crosstalk]

**Hannah:** [as JR] *That's fine. Yeah. Okay. So, the deal is you can use the tub for as long as you want. You can listen to as much music, but only Sarah McLachlan. But you do have to replenish the bath bombs. Constance is very fussy about them.*

**Quinn:** [as Stan] *That's fine. I make my own.*

**Teo:** Oh.

**Hannah:** Do-- Oh, boy. I am totally on board with this. He can share tub time if he also shares bath bombs.

**Quinn:** Yeah. Stan is quickly becoming your roommate in addition to your mentor.

[laughter]

**Teo:** Yeah, I don't have a studio anymore.

**Kyle:** This is his way, man. This is his way. When I first got the job, he lived with me for four months.

**Teo:** What? You never told me that.

[laughter]

**Quinn:** That is canon, for sure.

[laughter]

**Kyle:** Just ask Leon.

**Quinn:** Yeah, he was with Leon for five months.

[laughter]

**Quinn:** So, we're going to come into the story on a crystal clear, if bone chillingly cold day in Firmament. Although I'm sure you've all been in close communication and meeting regularly to discuss the strange happenings of the town, I think on this day, we find the three of you doing your own thing, JR, what does laying low look like [chuckles] for you? You're trying to avoid the attention of the FBI. So, what are you up to on this particular day, just any given day?

**Hannah:** Yeah, that's a good question. So, laying low, JR wants to keep her senses honed. So, I do definitely take short walks around the neighborhood, stretch my legs. But I am generally sticking around the apartment and checking the police scanner to see if I hear anything.

**Quinn:** Okay. I think that conversation with Stan happens one of your studio days, and he's around probably once or twice a week. Is there anything else you get up to while you're staying at the studio?

**Hannah:** Because I've got the key back, I'm probably just practicing with it. But again, I have the feeling that it's not like not a whole lot is happening, because I think the magic really only works when I am in a really emotionally charged situation or there's something online. So, I think I'm probably doing that. JR is a fan of trashy detective novels. So, there's a small stack of them on the floor that she's been working her way through. They just appeared in the apartment from a bookstore-- [crosstalk]

**Quinn:** Of course. When you're practicing with the key, you are actually able to, even in a relatively neutral scenario, make the magic work.

**Hannah:** Okay. That's new.

**Quinn:** Yeah. And you have both more control, it feels stronger than before. It's difficult to quantify, but it feels more potent-

**Hannah:** Okay.

**Quinn:** -in a way that you can't quite put your finger on.

**Hannah:** Okay. So, we've got the disc there. Does the disc do anything when I try magic on it?

**Quinn:** What do you try to do? Tell me how it goes.

**Hannah:** So, I have the key in one hand, and I put my other over the disc, and I go, [as JR] *Reveal yourself.*

**Quinn:** When you get within a few feet of it, the key starts to hum furiously-

**Hannah:** Okay.

**Quinn:** -in an exaggerated way that it usually does when you hold it near a lock.

**Hannah:** What happens if I touch the key to the disc?

**Quinn:** When you bring the key closer, it starts to pull towards the broken fragment of disc.

**Hannah:** Like, does it get stuck like a magnet?

**Quinn:** As the key draws closer, you'll recall that the disc has almost a field around it, like looking at the horizon during a heat wave.

**Hannah:** Yeah.

**Quinn:** And as the key gets closer, that field starts to grow and expand. And the sigils, the etchings start to glow a bright white light along with your key. And the field starts to distort and change. And just at the perimeter of the disc, you start to see this phenomenon, the color that you can see inverts, and it looks like you're staring at a photo negative. Everything starts to swirl and change in ways that you can't understand but seem to inherently make sense as you look at it. And the only time you've seen this before is in the fallen remnants of this strigoi. As the key gets closer, it starts to pull more strongly. And unless you physically restrain it, that key is going to collide with the disk.

**Hannah:** I don't think I want it to collide with the disk. Okay, I take a step backwards.

**Quinn:** I need you to act under pressure to keep the key away.

**Hannah:** Oh, cripes. All right. [rolls dice] 6, 7, 8. Ah, it is a 9.

**Quinn:** A worse outcome, a hard choice or a price to pay. Hmm. JR, here's the worst outcome.

**Hannah:** Oh, boy.

**Quinn:** Pulling these two objects apart is going to create a significant magical effect that will likely be visible to certain people and/or creatures for a wide radius.

**Hannah:** Okay.

**Quinn:** That's the, I guess, hard choice and/or worse outcome.

**Hannah:** Okay. Do I know that this is sent off like an alert beacon?

**Quinn:** No. If you want to pull it away, you're not going to know this is going to happen. There will be a negative consequence.

**Hannah:** Okay. I will pull it away. I, Hannah, know that I have just sent up a flare, but JR does not.

**Quinn:** So, you pull this away, and you have to wrench it. And as you do so, there is a sound, like a thunderclap, and a burst of force radiates outward. It doesn't strike you, because you seem to be at the center of it with this object, but it knocks everything off of the walls and shelves in Constance's studio. And it seems to go out through the walls, and you can hear car alarms going off outside-

**Hannah:** Fuck.

**Quinn:** -and neighbors starting to exit and wondering what's happening. And the lights flicker. And in the neighborhood surrounding you, you can see this pulse of electricity go off. And whatever you have done to stop the key from colliding with this disc has had a major impact.

**Teo:** Great.

**Hannah:** Great. That's great.

**Quinn:** Even as you remain nearby, that distorted field around the disc is still pulsating and the key is still humming furiously.

**Hannah:** Well, I think I'm going to put the key down, and I'm going to take the disc and I'm going to go put it in Constance's storage locker.

**Teo:** Sure. Why not?

**Hannah:** Then I'm going to shut it and I'm going to lock it. I'm going to go back into the apartment and sit quietly and not make any sound.

**Quinn:** Laying low is going excellently.

**Teo:** It's going super well. Oops.

**Hannah:** [laughs]

[music]

**Quinn:** Alvin, the morning after you take the chalk and mark your door, you open it to find another letter waiting outside. This one is unmarked and unaddressed. Its contents are simple. A pair of numbers. And I think you quickly recognize them as coordinates. And when you put them into your phone, they reveal a location deep within the Moonscape.

**Kyle:** Hmm. Is this after Sarah has left, or is this kind of--?

**Quinn:** I think this is after Sarah's left.

**Kyle:** Okay. Yeah, I think he keeps that on the Maps app on his phone as he goes about his morning business. He even takes a look at his Postmates app, sees if there's any deliveries between here and the Moonscape.

**Quinn:** Yeah, there's one.

**Kyle:** Great. Yeah. Taps, accept on that.

**Quinn:** So, you head across town, you successfully make the delivery. I think it's just a college student who doesn't want to go out. They thank you and they give you a lousy tip, but you're pretty close to the Moonscape at this point.

**Kyle:** He's going to roll up to the Moonscape, park the bike, lock it up and heads out, like he's going for a geocache into the Moonscape.

**Quinn:** And it is pretty desolate. The Moonscape is more popular during, like, shoulder season. It gets pretty cold in the winter, and obviously pretty hot in the summer. So, it's a little spooky walking through these canyons, these ridges, these strange formations in this bitter cold, as the sun around noon is still pretty low in the sky. But you make your way deeper and deeper until up ahead, you can see from your GPS tracker, the location that was proffered to you in the letter is just a short distance away. There is a wide valley in these ridge lines. And in the center, there are these tall cairns, these snaking stone sculptures that show all the different bands of color, the striations, dark blue and red and purple.

And as you make your way closer, standing in the center of these twisting columns is a man. He is tall and slightly gaunt with dark hair that runs down to his shoulders. He is clad in a heavy black wool greatcoat that runs nearly head toe, but you can see a crimson cravat poking up just beyond the neckline. And he doesn't move at all as you approach until you're about 10 paces away when he gives a slight nod in your direction.

**Kyle:** As I approach, looking at the coordinates on my phone. I also just tap to turn on location sharing with Leon.

**Quinn:** Okay.

**Kyle:** A little note. Going for a hike. Just, you know, buddy system.

**Quinn:** Yeah. You get a thumbs up response.

**Kyle:** Great pocket.

**Quinn:** As you approach, this man turns to face you. [as a man] *Master Hughes, I am very glad you decided to accept my invitation. I was a bit worried, given your close connection with JR, you might find it untoward. But I believe that we can reach an agreement that is beneficial for both of us while righting a wrong that's been done.*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *Well, listen, I haven't agreed to any specific action yet. I want to know what kind of information you've got.*

**Quinn:** [as a man] *What sort of information do you need?*

**Kyle:** That blows Alvin's mind a little bit. [as Alvin] *Have you got any answers for like global warming or--?*

**Teo:** [laughs]

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *That's a very broad question. I need a lot of information. Is my sister going to be okay? Is she going to do good in school? How do I talk to my folks about what's up with this? And I point to my fangy teeth.*

**Quinn:** [as a man] *I assure you, if you deliver the key that JR took from me, I will reveal everything about your history, your condition. I will ensure you have the truth.*

**Kyle:** Mm. Is the sun out?

**Quinn:** Yeah.

**Kyle:** Okay. Not a vampire. [as Alvin] *Show me your fangs. Do you have fangs?*

**Quinn:** He smiles.

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *Are you normal, dude? You don't seem like a normal dude.*

**Quinn:** [as a man] *I am about as normal as you are, Master Hughes.*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *Okay. So, not very.*

**Quinn:** [as a man] *Some have described me as a bit peculiar.*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *So, I don't know, usually how this exchange goes down. Usually, I feel like you've got to grease the wheels a little bit. I know all this stuff you said in the letter you gave me. You've got information about my background, and you want the key. So, what else you got?*

**Quinn:** [as a man] *Very well, I suppose I could proffer a small piece of information, if that will help grease the skids.*

**Kyle:** Just a morsel. Yum, yum, yum.

**Hannah:** [laughs]

**Kyle:** Just a little snack.

**Quinn:** [as a man] *Have you ever wondered why, as a werewolf, you don't give a shit about the full moon?*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *Yeah, kind of hadn't thought about that.*

**Quinn:** It's cause you're not a werewolf.

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *Oh. That makes sense. I usually don't read about werewolves, being able to at will kind of do it.*

**Quinn:** [as a man] *Is that tempting enough for you?* And he smiles, a broad and deeply troubling smile.

**Kyle:** [chuckles] [as Alvin] *That's good. It's good. Hey, why'd you pick the Moonscape?*

**Quinn:** [as a man] *It's very secluded out here.*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *I guess. People walk around all the time. You could run into a hiker at any moment.*

**Quinn:** [as a man] *I didn't want to inconvenience you too terribly going out of town, a great distance.*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *Kind of feels like this might be your aesthetic.*

**Quinn:** [as a man] *I do quite like it here.*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *Mm-hmm.*

**Quinn:** [as a man] *It's peaceful.*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *Last question.*

**Quinn:** [as a man] *Fire away.*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *Why is weird stuff like you and me happening to Firmament? Why here?*

**Quinn:** [as a man] *Oh, Alvin, you sweet boy. You think it's just here?*

**Hannah:** Uh-oh.

**Kyle:** Eww. [as Alvin] *Okay, last last question. Is it your key [Hannah laughs] or did you also steal it?*

**Quinn:** [as a man] *It is my key.*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *What does it go to?*

**Quinn:** [as a man] *I think you've seen that it goes wherever it wants.*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *Sure. But why was it made?*

**Quinn:** [chuckles] [as a man] *So that I could get where I need to go.*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *All right. Single use kind of thing.*

**Quinn:** [as a man] *If that's quite all of the questions, I believe there is a deal on the table.* And he takes a step towards you and holds out his hand. His arm seems too long. It gets way closer to you than it should.

**Kyle:** [chuckles]

**Quinn:** *Well--*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *Well, where I'm from, we do it a little different.* And I-

**Teo:** You're going to spit [crosstalk] Oh, no.

**Kyle:** -big, giant loogie in my bear claw hand and [Hannah laughs] I squeeze it real hard.

**Hannah:** [laughs] Oh, God.

**Quinn:** Just to clarify, you squeeze his hand or you squeeze--?

**Kyle:** I squeeze his hand with my gross hand.

**Quinn:** Okay.

**Teo:** Oh, my gosh.

**Kyle:** Like a handshake.

[laughter]

**Kyle:** Like a big, tough farm boy gross handshake.

**Quinn:** He cocks his head to the side, just ever so slightly, and then smiles that unsettling smile and says, [as a man] *So, we have a deal?*

**Kyle:** Close enough.

**Quinn:** And as you say that, you feel a sharp pain in your hand. And you look down and there's a prick of blood dribbling down your palm.

**Kyle:** Uh-oh.

**Quinn:** [as a man] *Excellent. I look forward to my key in possession soon. When you have it, inscribe the symbol on the door again.*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *Just a circle?*

**Quinn:** [as a man] *Yes.*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *Your symbol is like just a circle? That's your symbol? I don't know if you can do that.* [Hannah laughs] *I don't know if you can claim circles.*

**Quinn:** [as a man] *When you're as old as I am, Alvin, you can claim a great many things.*

[laughter]

**Teo:** How many patents does this guy hold?

**Kyle:** This guy invented the wheel.

[laughter]

**Quinn:** Wow. And he turns and starts walking away into the Moonscape.

**Teo:** Oh, fuck.

**Kyle:** I take a picture of him.

**Quinn:** Okay. You have a picture.

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Alvin, you are in so much trouble.*

**Kyle:** [laughs]

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Oh, my God, what did you just fucking do? Alvin.*

**Quinn:** Yeah. Kyle, you and I need to have a private conversation.

**Hannah:** Yeah. Oh, buddy, you just like--

**Kyle:** [laughs]

**Hannah:** First of all-- Oh, my God, there's five different things that are going to happen as a result of that. And I think JR is the least of them.

[laughter]

**Teo:** I have to say, I'm in-- [crosstalk]

**Hannah:** And you are so fucked.

**Teo:** I'm impressed. I don't imagine that Alvin of a couple of months ago would have gone this route. So, I'm very impressed.

**Hannah:** Oh, boy.

**Kyle:** Alvin has gone months now with no idea what's going on.

[laughter]

**Quinn:** Yeah. Alvin, you snap a picture, and it looks like a tall man in a greatcoat who's walking away from you in the Moonscape.

**Kyle:** Well, I'll figure this out.

**Quinn:** I think as you're looking at the phone, you look down to look at the picture, and you look back up and he is gone.

**Kyle:** Hmm. I inspect my hand.

**Quinn:** There's a small red circle on your palm.

**Kyle:** Huh. Circle.

**Quinn:** It looks like blood.

**Kyle:** Yeah.

**Teo:** He invented that too.

**Kyle:** He invented blood.

[laughter]

[music]

**Quinn:** Constance?

**Teo:** Yes.

**Quinn:** My question for you is, have you taken Cecilia up on her offer to join a meeting of the Daylight Society?

**Teo:** Yes. I've decided I want to do it.

**Quinn:** Then I think that is where we find you today.

**Teo:** Okay.

**Quinn:** You are at the Prospector. It's pretty early Sunday morning, I think earlier than you would willingly get up of your own volition. And so, it's quiet as you make your way inside. All of the tables are pushed to the side, and there's just a circle of chairs in the center of the room. And you can see Leon, Jasper, Cecilia. You can see Detective Galvan off in the corner on her phone, and she's leaning on a pair of crutches. And a handful of other people. I think you recognize Rahul, the young boy who was taken over by the Consensus, as well as two other kids, and one or two other folks that you don't recognize. When Cecilia sees you, she gives you a smile and a wave and pats at an empty chair beside her.

**Teo:** I see, smile at her, and I go and I sit down.

**Quinn:** [as Cecilia] *I'm really glad you decided to come, Constance.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Thanks. I'm pretty sure I'm glad too. I guess we'll find out.*

**Quinn:** And Leon steps into a small space in the circle and says, [as Leon] *Hey, everyone. It's good to see you all this morning. Welcome to the Daylight Society. I believe we have a new member, a new visitor, at least. Constance, and he smiles at you, we saved this opportunity in the beginning for folks to introduce themselves if they want to. If you would prefer to sit and listen, that's okay. But if you feel like sharing, if you want to tell folks why you're here, that'd be welcome. A few tales of your exploits may have already made their way here.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Yeah. Seeing who's in the room. Some of you are there for that. Hi. As you all obviously know, or most of you know, my name's Constance. Side note. Cool name,*

*Daylight Society. Dig it. We are meeting still in the dark though. May I suggest, just as a new member, a start time after the sun rises. Just a thought. Consistency. Anyway, that's my type five. I'm working on it.*

*So, what to say? Well, I guess the short thing to say is that I now believe in magic, vampires, creepy takeover. I don't even know how to describe the Consensus. But let's just say weird, mind controlling entities. And I'm open to other things to pop up in our world too. It turns out my family is well versed in this stuff, especially my grandma, my Buni. And I am now playing catch up. So, I would love to hear what else has been going on that I wasn't a part of--*  
[crosstalk] *Yeah, that's why I'm here.*

**Quinn:** [as Cecilia] *Welcome, Constance and the group.* Not in unison in a creepy way, but everybody says hello and welcome. The meeting unfolds relatively how you would expect it. The vast majority of the time is an open mic situation. People share stories, news tidbits, their own experiences, as well as things that they've heard. Most of it is, based on your experience, pretty trivial and coincidental. But some things could be useful. And obviously, the emotional support element is certainly useful for the folks that are gathered around here.

Rahul talks about some of the others who were affected by the consensus and the stories that they have shared with him. Jasper shares some of the tales that he's heard from patrons at the Prospector, most of them pretty outlandish. Everybody laughs. It's a good time.

**Teo:** [chuckles]

**Quinn:** Cecilia gives a rundown of some potentially suspicious injuries and deaths at Firmament general, although everyone agrees that it's, at least for the time being, pretty mundane. And Detective Galvan doesn't say a lot. She looks a little sullen, but she provides a brief update on what she's seeing at the Firmament police department.

**Teo:** Is there anything that I should know that's going on within the police department?

**Quinn:** Nothing strikes you as particularly interesting. At the end, Galvan is the last to speak besides Leon. And Leon says, [as Leon] *Thank you, detective. And we're continuing to evaluate leads on the source of the strange happenings here. We're still investigating what role the chief may have in covering some of this up. So, if you have any information, please share that with the detective and I.* And you can see the sullenness on Galvan's face grow. And now, it's just a moment of almost contempt.

**Teo:** When you say that, she has a look of contempt, is it at Leon who's saying this or is it when she's thinking about Stoney?

**Quinn:** It's at the mention of Chief Stoney.

**Kyle:** Ah. Okay. Interesting.

**Quinn:** And then, Leon says, [as Leon] *Unless there's any good of the order, this meeting of the Daylight Society is adjourned. Be safe and speak the truth.*

**Teo:** Okay.

**Quinn:** People start to stand up and mill around. Cecilia puts a hand on your shoulder, like to check how you're doing, if you're doing okay.

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Hey. Yeah, I think that went well. I'd love to chat. Do you mind hanging out a moment? I want to try to catch Detective Galvan before she heads out the door.*

**Quinn:** And you can see she is headed that way, actually.

**Teo:** Okay. I'm going to try to catch up to her, but I've clearly told Cecilia I want to chat with her afterward.

**Quinn:** [as Cecilia] *Yeah. No, that's totally fine. I need to go talk to Jasper anyway. I'll catch you in a bit.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Great.* All right. I'm going to run after Detective Galvan.

**Quinn:** She's still on crutches, so you're able to catch her pretty quickly. And she turns around a bit surprised and says, [as Galvan] *Yes, Constance.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Detective, how are you doing? How's recovery?*

**Quinn:** [as Galvan] *Poor.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Okay.*

**Quinn:** [as Galvan] *I'm poor, Constance. I'm in poor spirits and poor health, if you cannot see.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Yeah. You went through a lot, but I'm glad to see that you're here and that you're taking steps to get better, it seems like.*

**Quinn:** [as Galvan] *I am trying.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *I couldn't help but notice that you seemed a bit apprehensive-- Some might say, actually, sullen at the mention of Chief Stoney. Just curious. How are you holding up? Being a detective--?*

**Quinn:** [as Galvan] *I am quite convinced that the chief has been covering up an unseemly threat to this city for an extended period of time. My boss, the person that I look up to, the person that this city looks to keep them safe, has been keeping it in danger for an unknown purpose. I am struggling with that. But if anything, this is an opportunity to bring the truth to light.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *When you say the truth, do you mean about the strange happenings in our town? Are you--?*

**Quinn:** [as Galvan] *The strange happenings, their source and anyone who has been concealing them.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Hmm. I've had my fair share of run-ins with your department in various ways, so you can hardly call me sympathetic to the police force. At the very least, cautiously apprehensive. So, you know that I don't say this lightly, but I feel like there's a lot we don't know in this town and there are a lot of terrible monsters that seem to lurk around our community. But the one thing that I feel quite confident about is that our town leadership, Stoney included, you included, the people here in this room, we all want the same thing. It seems like we are all trying to make Firmament a safe place.*

*We may not always agree on how to do that, but I have to say, I'm pretty confident that we all have that goal. And that's why I'm here. I want to be around more people who have that goal and figure out what the next best step is for the town.*

**Quinn:** [as Galvan] *Well, Constance, I share that goal with you, but I am afraid that your optimism is perhaps a bit misguided. Perhaps, the truth will reveal the Chief to be not culpable. But until we know for sure.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *I guess that's fair. But you and I experienced a couple of things together and I'd like to think that I hopefully have your confidence. I would appreciate a heads-up if you decide to make any big moves. I could use all the help I can get. And frankly, so can you, because I guarantee you there's a lot you don't know either.*

**Quinn:** [as Galvan] *Yes, your help, and she looks down at her broken leg, [as Galvan] has been beneficial in the past. I'm keeping Leon apprised of my activities. We're working closely together.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Okay.*

**Quinn:** [as Galvan] *If you want to know what's happening, talk to him. And she turns and crutches away.*

**Teo:** *All right, I'll put a pin in that. I'm going to send her a fruit basket. Okay. I would like to go chat up Cecilia and Leon, frankly, if he's still around.*

**Quinn:** *Yeah. I think the two of them are actually talking now.*

**Teo:** *Okay. Cool.*

**Quinn:** *To make it easy, so that we can do them both at the same time.*

**Teo:** *Yup. Okay.*

**Quinn:** *Leon looks sat you and beams a broad smile. [as Leon] Constance, I'm glad you came. I surprised but glad.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *You know, me too, [chuckles] to say the least. I got used to seeing you around, and then I didn't for a while. And boy, if you didn't grow on me.*

**Quinn:** [as Leon] *Oh, I have that effect on people.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *So I've heard, you know? Alvin says a lot of the same. I'm kidding. Alvin's loved you since the moment he laid eyes on you, as you know. Look, I'm really proud of what you've built here, and I really appreciate you getting people on board, because, boy, Detective Galvan is not a friend of mine, apparently.*

**Quinn:** [as Leon] *The consensus was hard on her, for sure. She'll come around.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Yeah, I'm sure she will. She has a good heart. My bigger concern with really everyone here and with our town is that it won't be soon enough. Things just seem to be escalating, and I'd really like to talk to you both about maybe having a, to put it bluntly, some sort of crisis plan for when the big one hits, when the next big bad shows up. I would like to set up my studio as the evacuation safe space, if you will, or check in safe space if something goes terribly wrong in our town. Next time it goes terribly wrong, we have to start thinking that way.*

**Quinn:** *Leon and Cecilia look at one another and Leon smiles a little bashfully. [as Leon] We were already planning on coming there if things got bad.*

[laughter]

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Oh, okay.*

**Quinn:** [as Leon] *Constance, it's so nice to have your permission to do that.*

[laughter]

**Quinn:** [as Leon] So, thank you.

**Teo:** [as Constance] Yup. Well, and she produces two keys or three keys, actually. And she hands one to Leon and two to Cecilia and she goes, [as Constance] Well, now it'll be a little easier. I've made you all keys. The studio is home base. Replenish the bath bombs, bring anyone [Quinn laughs] who needs protection. And that second key, Cecilia, that's for Jasper. At the end of the day, if we're all safe, that's what matters.

**Quinn:** [as Cecilia] Thank you, Constance.

**Teo:** [as Constance] Yeah, of course.

**Quinn:** And Leon pulls out his phone real quick, and he looks at it, and he smiles slightly and then looks at the two of you and says, [as Leon] Oh, hold on, I need to take this. And he takes a step away.

**Teo:** Okay.

**Quinn:** And you can hear his conversation, or at least one side of it. [as Dorian] Hey, how's it going? [as Leon] Yeah, we're just wrapping up here. Yeah, I wish you could admit-- What's going on? Oh, you think it's-- [as Leon] Okay. Galvan and I are-- Yeah. And he looks at you, Constance. [as Leon] I think I have a solution. Constance is going to go. Yeah, no, it'll be-- Yeah. Yep. All right. Yeah. And he blushes a little bit and says, [as Leon] Yeah, I miss you too. All right. Bye. And comes back.

[as Leon] Hey, so that was Dorian. He's another member of the Daylight Society. He said there's something strange going on at Firmament college. I guess they just found some kid in his dorm room in a coma, and it might be connected to something else. Galvan and I were going to do some investigative work on the Chief Stoney lead. Constance, would you mind meeting him on campus and taking the lead on this?

**Teo:** [as Constance] Yeah, I would love to. And hey, on that Stoney stuff, I'm all for due diligence, can you keep me apprised of what's going on there? I feel like he has had our back quite a few times. I wouldn't want to throw him under the bus if all he's doing is protecting us from bureaucracy, you know?

**Quinn:** [as Leon] Yeah. No, I know he and JR are close, but he seems to know way more than most of us, if not all of us, about what's happening in this town. He's sure known for longer. So, I think we have to chase this lead.

**Teo:** [as Constance] I think you do. I just think once the cat's out of the bag, like, if you make that stuff public, you can't go back on it. And you know as well as I do, some of the people in this town, they don't react well to the strange and scary. So, collect all the information we want. But I would love it if we all are in agreement before we do anything with it.

**Quinn:** [as Leon] Yeah. I'll keep you posted. We won't do anything until we all talk.

**Teo:** [as Constance] All right.

**Quinn:** [as Leon] You should be able to find Dorian at The Stacks. You remember where those are?

**Teo:** [as Constance] Yeah.

**Quinn:** [as Leon] Great. It's probably nothing but stay safe out there.

[music]

**Quinn:** Hey, folks. Quinn here. Thanks so much for tuning in to Episode 16 of Monster Hour. We are beyond excited to be kicking off the new year with our third feature length mystery. I know the real monster is overly optimistic New Years resolutions, but I think this is going to be our best one yet. I mean, it only has to be two others, but whatever.

Thank you to everybody who's been sharing the show with their friends, both in person and on the series of tubes that is the internet. If you're enjoying the show and you haven't already, we'd love it if you could drop us a rating and review or fire off a tweet using *#monsterhourpod*. Don't forget that if you tweet about the show, you might wind up with a character named after you. New mystery means lots of new faces, so now's the perfect time to get tweeting.

One more thing before we get back to the show. During these intermissions, we're going to start periodically highlighting other pods that we enjoy here at Monster Hour and think you will too, in a new feature we're calling our Spooky Spotlight. For our inaugural edition, check out this promo for the awesome folks at Roleplay Retcon, who reimagined bad movies using great games.

[music]

**Quinn:** Constance, I assume you loop JR and Alvin in on Leon's charge to you?

**Teo:** Oh, yeah.

**Quinn:** So, the three of you make your way just off the Firmament College campus to The Stacks. Constance, you know, as a former Firmament College student, The Stacks is a café/bar just off of campus that used to be Firmament's original library before it was converted into a literary heavy meeting spot. It remains an extremely popular place for students to meet, study, hang out.

**Teo:** And Constance hates it, because she feels like it's selling out, and also because they use books as decoration rather than rating them and also, they rejected some of her paintings when she tried to put that.

**Quinn:** Yeah. Totally. So, the three of you make your way to these stacks. It looks very much from the outside, like an old library. On the inside, you are greeted by the robust smell of espresso. And once that billows passed, you can pick up a softer, more subtle scent of aged wood and old books.

And this rather expansive space is indeed filled with stacks and stacks of books. And they form almost a labyrinthine layout. There are tons of different little nooks, and pockets and small areas for groups to congregate, but also for people to sit and do their own individual studying.

And as the three of you are standing there, approaching in what can only be described as a saunter, is a skinny young man wearing khaki pants and a sharply tailored blue blazer. He has bright red orange hair that is perfectly coiffed, and his face has a little bit of a boyish countenance. The touchstone I want you to envision here is basically a 19-year-old version of Joe Kennedy from Massachusetts.

**Teo:** All right.

**Hannah:** Oh, I was thinking more like a Pokémon trainer.

**Quinn:** Well, it depends on the Pokémon trainer, but--

[laughter]

**Teo:** Tomayto-tomaato.

**Hannah:** It's like the kind that only has Voltorbs.

[laughter]

**Hannah:** We'll go with Joe Kennedy, It's fine.

**Quinn:** Yeah.

**Hannah:** [laughs]

**Quinn:** And he comes up to you and says, [as Dorian] *Hey, I'm Dorian. Let's see. Fancy suit? You must be JR, and I guess that would make--* [crosstalk]

**Hannah:** [as JR] *Creepy that you know that.*

**Quinn:** [as Dorian] *You, art girl.*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *I'm Alvin. Hi. Stick hand out.*

**Quinn:** He shakes your hand. [as Dorian] *I'd recognize that muzzle anywhere. Leon's told me everything about you.*

**Kyle:** Oh, God.

**Hannah:** [as JR] *That's not good. Oh, okay. Leon and I are going to have to have a conversation about the circle of trust, because right now, sir, you are not in it, even though-*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *JR, me too.*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *-Leon has let you in.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *He's in the Daylight Society. It's cool.*

**Hannah:** [makes, angry frustrated noises]

**Teo:** [as Constance] *It's cool. It's cool.*

**Kyle:** [as JR] *What?*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *Is it cool?*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Nothing. We'll talk about it later. Don't worry. They don't actually meet in the Daylight. I've told them this is an issue. We'll deal with it later.*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *Well, it's bad--*

**Quinn:** Dorian shoots you a look, Constance, and says, [as Dorian] *Maybe we should get out of the main area here. I've got a table in the back. Why don't you come with me?*

**Hannah:** All right.

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Sure.*

**Kyle:** Okay.

**Hannah:** I'm just muttering about circle. Trust circle. [crosstalk]

**Teo:** As we walk back there, Constance pulls a tiny printout of her jacket pocket and sticks it up so that it looks like it was intended to be there in the space and looks around, keeps walking.

**Hannah:** Doing guerrilla art.

**Teo:** Yeah.

**Quinn:** [laughs] Okay.

**Teo:** [laughs]

**Quinn:** So, the three of you make your way towards the back, and you can see Dorian has a small booth back there and he takes a seat. [as Dorian] *Well, I suppose if Leon sent you all, that's the team we're working with. How much did he fill you in?*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *You do know that we're the ones who filled him in, because we're the ones who did all the fighting and the things, right?*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *We're the A Team.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Yeah, we're the A Team. You're looking at us like we're the C Team, and that's--*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *A different show.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Yeah.*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *Trust circle.* [Kyle laughs] *Trust not in the circle. Yeah.*

**Quinn:** He smiles at the three of you. [as Dorian] *Well, I'm excited to see what the A Team can do. This morning, there was a student taken to campus health after his roommate found him unconscious on the floor of their dormitory. No injuries to speak of, but word is he still hasn't woken up. I know that might not seem that out of the ordinary for you all. But last week, the same thing happened to a freshman over at Ponderosa Hall. According to Cecilia, she passed away a few days later and not one of the doctors can explain why. Now, that doesn't seem like a coincidence to me.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Nope, not in this town. Okay. We definitely have a case. Did these students know each other? Did they go to any of the same places? Let's see what you can do, B team. I'm kidding. I'm kidding. But no, you know what else did you find?*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *He's not the B team. He's like the F team.*

**Quinn:** He smiles at you.

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Now, make friends. Got to make friends, JR.*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *In circles. Fucking circle trust--* [crosstalk]

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *F for fancy.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *There we go. That's positive thinking.*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *Looking sharp. Any clues?*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *Mm-hmm.*

**Quinn:** [as Dorian] *As best as I know, the two of them didn't know each other. Different dorm rooms, different social circles. One was a freshman, the other one was a junior, I think. And*

*of course, one of them's dead and the other one is just in a coma. So, not much in terms of commonality. I would recommend checking out Brad's dorm room over in Aspen Hall. I think he's still at the student health center. The woman who died, her family already took the body, so there's not going to be much for you to recover there. But perhaps, you could interview some of the people that she was close with. I don't know her that well, but she was over in Ponderosa, third floor, room 304.*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *What's your interest in the Daylight Society, Dorian?* And I squint at him-

**Kyle:** [chuckles]

**Quinn:** [as Dorian] *It's a mighty strange--*[crosstalk]

**Hannah:** -menacingly.

**Quinn:** [as Dorian] *It's a mighty strange town and I'm mighty curious. What about you, JR?*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *Mmmmmm, Circle of trust. Not in yet, buddy.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Honestly, JR--*

**Quinn:** [as Dorian] *Neither are you.*

**Teo:** I say this as Dorian is there. I'm like, [as Constance] *Honestly, JR, for a friend of Leon's, that isn't Alvin, first of all, checks out totally what I expected. And second of all, also not as bad as I was expecting. So, hey, I think we can work with this. Dorian, you're exactly what I thought you would be. And that's a compliment.* [Hannah laughs] *Look, Leon's growing on me.*

**Hannah:** I don't think you mentioned it as a compliment.

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Leon's growing on me and I'm sure you will too, bud.* And I pat him on the head and I get up to start getting going. I'm very motivated.

**Hannah:** [as JR] *Yeah, let's beat this popsicle stand.*

**Quinn:** Dorian smiles at you as you say that and says, [as Dorian] *Good luck, A Team.*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *Oh, fuck off.*

**Quinn:** [as Dorian] *Can't wait to see what you have in store.*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *Oh, fuck off. Oh.*

**Quinn:** And Alvin, he winks at you on your way out.

**Teo:** Oh, jeez.

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *You keep those cameras rolling. It's going to be quite the show.*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *No, don't say that. Don't. No. No, no, no.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *I like that with the rawr, rawr.*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *No.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *It's already done. It's already done. We need to just walk out now. It's real cool.*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *We're three for three.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Real cool.*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *No. No, no, no. And I drag you out. I drag you out.*

[laughter]

**Teo:** Look, I'm saying this is canon. I ordered a coffee and said that it was on his tab. So, yeah.

[laughter]

**Hannah:** Yes, I approve of this. Where do we want to go? Do we want to go to the dorms first?

**Quinn:** So, you have three leads. Go to Brad's dorm room in Aspen Hall. You could go to the student health center, where Dorian said that Brad is still being held. Or, you could go to Ponderosa Hall, where the other victim was found unconscious.

**Teo:** I think we should hit up the dorms.

**Hannah:** I don't think I can go. This is going to sound bad, but I don't think I can go anywhere by myself. And my reasoning for that is a woman striding around in a three-piece suit and a trench coat, all by herself on a college campus, like, going into dorms and stuff, is going to draw a lot of the attention that JR is trying to avoid right now. But if I'm with somebody who looks college age, then I can be like, I don't know, you're cool older cousin or something.

**Teo:** I think we should do the mom and kids visit dorms routine. [as Constance] *Hey, gang?*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *Yeah.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] [crosstalk] *about that.*

Yes, my child. Despite the fact that I'm like ten.

**Hannah:** Yes.

[laughter]

**Hannah:** [as JR] *Yes, my child, despite the fact that I'm 10 years older than you.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Yust age very gracefully. That's all.*

**Hannah:** [laughs] [as JR] *Are we daughters or are we sisters? We get that all the time.*

[laughter]

**Hannah:** [as JR] *Do we want to go to Brad's dorm or the other dorm first?*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *I'd go to Brad's, because it's fresher. But I'm not the one with the nose, huh, Alvin?*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] [sniffs] *Brad.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *All right.*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *All right. Can I go check out Brad's dorm?*

**Quinn:** So, you make your way to Aspen Hall. Aspen is one of the newer dorms. It's not reserved for juniors and seniors, but that tends to be the most folks who wind up there. I think Dorian told you the room number as well, which is 212.

**Kyle:** 212.

**Teo:** I would also like to point out JR asked for my opinion and advice on where we should go, and I did indeed give it, and we are indeed following it, which-

**Hannah:** That's right. True.

**Teo:** -would incur a plus one ongoing while we follow said advice.

**Kyle:** [chuckles]

**Quinn:** Yeah, I'll give it to you.

**Hannah:** Okay.

**Teo:** Plus one.

**Hannah:** Cool.

**Quinn:** So, yeah, you head to Aspen Hall, you make it up to 212. You open the door to the room. And inside, it looks like a nicer dorm room. We talked about way back when the dorms at Ponderosa Hall, which are very standard, drab, kind of small dorm rooms. This one is bigger. It's still a double, but it's not a bunk bed. There's two separate beds, like a lot more space. There's a couch and a TV.

**Kyle:** Wow.

**Quinn:** It's pretty nice. And at one of the desks, there is a person sitting there. And as you enter, he stands up and says, [as receptionist] *Can I help you?*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *We're the A team.*

**Quinn:** [as receptionist] *What is that?*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Funny joke.*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *No, no, no.*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *It's just fun. My name's Alvin.*

**Quinn:** [as receptionist] *Oh, okay. So, did you name the team after yourself?*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *Yeah, it's my team.*

**Quinn:** [as receptionist] *Oh, okay. Why are you here?*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Mom, why are we here?*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *So look at the dorms. This is my daughter-*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Hi, there.*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *-who is transferring in from the community college. You know, she wasn't ready for school, but I wanted to send her off to start getting her education. And now she's ready for college. Oh, my God, I'm so excited for her to be at college. Anyway, we're just touring the dorms.*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *And I'm the RA, just showing her around. Yeah.*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *Yeah. So, we're just touring-- Oh, my little girl's growing up. Oh, I promised myself I wouldn't cry. [sobs]*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *You got any good advice here for a fresh, young student?*

**Hannah:** Is this working, Quinn? Is it working? Do you need me to--?

[laughter]

**Quinn:** I'm not sure what you're trying to accomplish.

**Kyle:** [laughs]

**Teo:** We're trying to not seem suspicious, and at the same time, get a look around the room.

**Hannah:** Yes.

**Teo:** I, by the way, as this is happening, I am just full-on walking around the way that an excited student would inspect stuff, because I figure I have a limited time before whoever this is stops us.

**Quinn:** Okay. The kid looks at you JR and says, [as Zach] *Did you check in any--? Okay. Whatever. Yeah. Like, Firmament College is great. They have good professors. The RAs are pretty chill. I haven't met you. Who are you?*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *Alvin. I said Alvin.*

**Quinn:** [as Zach] *Yeah, but you're an RA?*

**Quinn:** [as Alvin] *Yeah. Oh, I just now--*

**Quinn:** [as Zach] *What happened to Aziz?*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *Aziz is on a sabbatical.*

**Teo:** [laughs]

**Quinn:** [as Zach] *The RA is on sabbatical?*

[laughter]

**Kyle:** Yeah. Well, we like to call it sabbatical, so I'm covering for him.

[laughter]

**Quinn:** [as Zach] *Do you mean vacation?*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *Well, yeah, but he's still getting paid for it.*

[laughter]

**Quinn:** [as Zach] *So, paid vacation?*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *Yeah. Well, we like to call it sabbatical, because we're at a school, you know? Professors get sabbaticals, RA, we can also do sabbaticals.*

[laughter]

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *Listen--*

**Quinn:** [as Zach] *Can I see your student ID, your RA badge?*

**Hannah:** Oh, my God.

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *Yeah, I still got my student ID.*

**Teo:** Yeah, that's right. He does.

[laughter]

**Quinn:** [as Zach] *Does it say RA on it?*

**Teo:** Remember, [crosstalk] the last one.

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *No, it doesn't say RA, but that's just because I swapped in just today.*

**Quinn:** [as Zach] *Alvin, I'm going to need you to--*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *Listen, why are you being so nosy? I'm going to write you up.*

**Quinn:** I'm going to need you to roll to manipulate someone.

[laughter]

**Hannah:** Oh, my God.

**Teo:** You do get a plus 1.

**Quinn:** For the record, I don't think you needed to lie to this guy.

[laughter]

**Teo:** We don't know who he is. Look, if we get found out, [rolls dice] we'll just tell him why we're really there.

**Kyle:** Oh, heck, yeah. I got a 10.

**Teo:** Which, plus 1?

**Kyle:** No, that's with the plus 1.

**Teo:** Oh, okay. Sweet. [chuckles]

**Quinn:** All right. [as Zach] *Yeah, so this is an Aspen Hall dorm. What do you want to know? You not touch that.*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *Exactly perfect, I believe. Ma'am, you had some questions for a student here on campus. What's your name?*

**Quinn:** [as Zach] *Oh, I'm Zach. Hey.*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *Zach. Great. And this is your dorm?*

**Quinn:** [as Zach] *Yeah, I guess. Yeah.*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *You guess?*

**Quinn:** [as Zach] *Yeah. No, it's mine. My roommate too, but he's sick. So, he might not—*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *He's sick? Is he okay?*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Did he get mono? I hear that a lot of college students get mono these days.*

**Quinn:** [as Zach] *No, I mean, he's really sick. He might have to drop out.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Oh, no. What happened?*

**Quinn:** [as Zach] *Listen, you seem nice and all, but I don't know you. I don't know if I should be talking about what's going on in his life.*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *I'm here to help.*

**Quinn:** Constance, let's resolve your investigative mystery roll. You've been waiting patiently.

**Teo:** Sweet. [rolls dice]

**Quinn:** What are you looking for? What are you doing as you look around?

**Teo:** So, at first, I'm pretending to look like I look out the window. I measure up how big the bed is. But what I'm really doing is I want to look at having been a college student fairly recently, what is on the desk? Because that's really your only table. And if there's anything on top of the dresser.

**Quinn:** Zach's desk or Brad's desk.

**Teo:** Brad's desk.

**Quinn:** Okay. What did you get for your investigative mystery?

**Teo:** I got a 7.

**Quinn:** Hold 1.

**Teo:** I'll go with, what happened here?

**Quinn:** I think you scan, really, the whole room. You're paying particular attention to the desk and to the dresser. But you get a good look around, and it doesn't look like anything happened here. There's no sign of a struggle, there's no sign that anything was disturbed. It doesn't look like anything happened here.

**Teo:** Okay.

**Quinn:** And Zach is looking at you, JR and says, [as Zach] *So, I mean, what do you--? Do you have specific questions?*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *Dude, do people get sick here a lot? Is that something that happens here?* [crosstalk] *worry about my baby.*

**Quinn:** [as Zach] *Not like Brad, that it seemed like a weird medical thing.*

**Hannah:** I would like to manipulate Zach into telling me what he knows. And using my grifter move, you have to tell me what will convince him to tell me what he knows about Brad.

**Quinn:** Brad is a person, or Brad's illness?

**Hannah:** Brad's illness. I want to know what happened to him.

**Quinn:** You could convince him that you are law enforcement, or you could make him emotionally uncomfortable by crying.

**Hannah:** Okay. We're going to go with the second one.

**Teo:** Oh, good lord.

**Hannah:** Come on, lucky dice. Come on, lucky dice. [rolls dice] It's a 7.

**Quinn:** They'll do it, but only if you do something for them right now to show them that you mean it.

**Hannah:** I am. I burst into tears.

**Kyle:** No.

**Hannah:** [as JR] *You're telling me someone got sick? How sick are we talking about? Because my baby, she's my baby. She's the only thing that I have in this room. You have to tell it.*

**Teo:** I'm rolling my eyes.

**Hannah:** I grab Constance in a bear hug, and I'm just holding her head to my shoulder.

**Quinn:** [as Zach] *Okay. All right. Okay.*

[laughter]

**Quinn:** [as Zach] *You know what? Okay. Here. If you leave-- This paper is due in 45 minutes. If you leave right now, I will tell you what happened to Brad, but you got to go. I don't know what you are-- You're making me very uncomfortable.*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *Yeah. We can go. We can go.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *You're telling me, I have to live with her?*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *It's been a very trying day. I know. Okay. All right. Okay.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Not for long.*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *Not if you move here.*

**Quinn:** [as Zach] *Listen, okay, I came back this morning.*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *We could probably get you a spot right here. You could be neighbors. Zach. Zach, these could be our new neighbors.*

**Hannah:** [laughs]

**Quinn:** [as Zach] *Okay. I came back this morning. Brad was on the ground. He was curled up in a ball. And when I tried to wake him up, he wouldn't wake up, even though his eyes were open. He wouldn't respond to anything. And finally, I called campus health, and they came and picked him up. That's all I got. I don't know what happened to him. They said he was in a coma.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Was he breathing?*

**Quinn:** [as Zach] *Yeah, he was breathing. He just wouldn't respond to anything.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Whoa.*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *Thank you, Zachary. You are a kind soul.*

**Teo:** I pat JR on the back like, [as Constance] *There, there, mother. Go outside and take a breather,* and I wink at her.

**Hannah:** Yeah.

**Teo:** And then, I start to move towards the door. But as soon as mother is out of the room, [Hannah laughs] I go, [as Constance] *So, you guys like to party or something, right? What do*

*you guys really do for fun? Like, what did you and Brad do for fun? What can I look forward to here?*

**Kyle:** I leave with JR too.

**Quinn:** [as Zach] *We hung out. We played video games. We'd go to parties. We'd drink, smoke, do homework. I don't know. It's college.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Yeah. Well, from what you said, it sounds like Brad maybe partied a little too hard the night before. Am I right?*

**Quinn:** [as Zach] *Maybe. We were at different places. I don't know what happened to him.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Oh. He went to a frat party, huh? My eyes go wide and big, like, I'm thinking about frat parties.*

**Quinn:** [as Zach] *Well, there aren't any frats at Firmament college.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Oh.*

**Quinn:** [as Zach] *I mean, he was at some house party.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *House party. It's cool. Cool. Like, right off campus? And I like start to walk out of the room, because I feel a little nervous, like, I'm asking too many questions.*

**Quinn:** [as Zach] *Again, I don't know where he was.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Cool. Cool. Thanks for the room tour. We appreciate it. And I clear the room.*

**Quinn:** [as Zach] *Yeah. Hope you go somewhere else, and he slams the door shut.*

[laughter]

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *I am going to write him up something fierce.*

**Quinn:** [laughs]

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Alvin, you know you're not really an RA, right?*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *Kind of getting used to it though.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Yeah, you would be good as an RA.*

[laughter]

**Teo:** [as Constance] *I would come to you with my problems.*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *Right?*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Yeah.*

**Hannah:** Oh, boy.

**Teo:** [as Constance] *You should think about that.*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *Well, I'd have to get back in school.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Hey, we can make that happen. Also, FYI, Brad was at a house party last night.*

**Kyle:** Ah.

**Hannah:** [as JR] *Team, where do we want to go next? Do you want to go check out the other dorm?*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] [crosstalk] *other dorm.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *I think we should.*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *Yeah, let's go to the other dorm.*

**Quinn:** You make your way over to the other dorm to Ponderosa Hall.

**Kyle:** Is this the one that went to with the strigoi?

**Quinn:** It is. And I imagine the experience is a little bit unsettling for all of you.

**Teo:** Yeah.

**Kyle:** They cleaned up well? [as Alvin] *Hey, is the oven still out of order?*

**Quinn:** No, the oven has been fixed.

**Kyle:** Okay. Good.

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Not replaced. Dear Lord.*

**Quinn:** Well, okay, if it's been replaced.

**Teo:** Thank you.

**Quinn:** The dorm is much more vibrant and vital since class is actually in session and people are here.

**Kyle:** Right.

**Quinn:** But nonetheless, the specter of your clash with the strigoi, your first real interaction with the supernatural looms over you as you make your way up to 304. The door is shut, and there is a single line of caution tape over it and a sign that reads, "Do not enter."

**Hannah:** All right. Gone.

**Kyle:** It's probably for somewhere else.

**Hannah:** Yes. Rules don't apply to us. We're going in.

**Quinn:** So, you go to open the door and it is locked.

**Hannah:** Oh, well. Okay.

**Kyle:** Well, dread, foiled again.

**Hannah:** [as JR] *Yeah. That's too bad.* I pull out my key.

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *We can't unlock doors anymore.*

**Quinn:** Hey, Alvin-

**Kyle:** Hmm.

**Quinn:** -as soon as you see that key, a strange feeling comes over you.

**Teo:** Oh, fuck. Goddamn it, Quinn.

**Quinn:** You remember that nice sensation when you touch the disc?

**Kyle:** Ooh, yeah.

**Hannah:** Oh, no.

**Quinn:** You feel like that, but stronger. And your hand is going for that key before you even realize what's happening. I need you to roll to act under pressure.

**Kyle:** Hey, this is weird shit, right?

**Quinn:** This is weird shit.

**Kyle:** Dope. [rolls dice] So, that's an 11.

**Quinn:** JR, the door swings open in front of you, and you put your key away. And, Alvin, you slowly are able to stop your hand from moving forward. You clench your fist, and you dig your nails into your own palm and bring it back down to your side just as JR turns back to you.

**Hannah:** [as JR] *What's that, Alvin?*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *Hmm?*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *Do you need something?*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *No, just good to have the key back. Thought we were foiled. I forgot.*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *All right, let's go inside.*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *I just forgot how great that key is.*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *It is really great. I'm really glad to get it back. I don't know what I do.*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *It's so good.*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *Like, felt like part of me was missing when it was gone. I'm sorry, this is not a good time to talk about this, but I am deeply, spiritually fulfilled that now that the key is back in my possession. I don't know what I'd do if it went missing again.*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *That's great. That's really great. We should chat sometime about keys and stuff.*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *Yeah. Anyway, let's go inside.*

**Teo:** You're both being so weird, and usually that's me.

[laughter]

**Quinn:** The dorm that greets you has a faint scent of must. Like, it's been cloistered off for a while. There's no one in this one to greet you, but you flip the lights on, and it looks like all the rest of the dorms in Ponderosa Hall. Nothing immediately looks askew or askance or out of order, but it looks packed up.

**Hannah:** I would like to investigate a mystery.

**Quinn:** Are you just looking around the room?

**Hannah:** Yeah. [rolls dice] That's a 9.

**Quinn:** Hold 1.

**Hannah:** I would like to know what happened here.

**Quinn:** Dorian told you that this girl fell unconscious a week ago and passed away several days ago. So, what happened here is that the residence hall association already cleared out this room and her effects. So, if there was any evidence, it's probably not here anymore.

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Alvin, we might not be able to see stuff, but can you smell stuff?*

**Hannah:** Oh, yeah.

**Kyle:** I've also got a potential oops.

**Teo:** Oh.

**Quinn:** Hmm. Okay. Got an oops. You see that, on the desk, there is a cork board.

**Kyle:** Mm-hmm.

**Quinn:** There's nothing left from what's been cleared out, but it does look like student life has tried to prepare this room for the next occupant. And there's a poster pinned up that says, "Beware of phishing," spelled with a PH. And there's a big cartoon fish that is trying to open a door.

**Kyle:** [chuckles]

**Quinn:** And it says, "There have been increasing number of phishing attempts on campus. Please report any unknown or potentially spam emails to campus IT." There is your oops.

**Kyle:** Huh?

**Teo:** Hmm. Did Constance see a laptop or a phone on Brad's side of the dorm room, when she was looking around?

**Quinn:** There was a laptop.

**Teo:** But not a phone?

**Quinn:** No phone.

**Teo:** Huh. Interesting. Okay.

**Kyle:** Maybe on him.

**Teo:** Yeah.

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *Well, I may also have a lead with my sister. I need to have a talk with her eventually anyways.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Yeah, bud. You do.*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *Well, we got a couple options. We can see if anybody else in the dorm will talk to us, or we could go and see Brad.*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *The mine.*

[laughter]

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Boy, those lacrosse bros really don't stick in your head, huh?*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *No. Not unless it's attached to something shiny that I can steal.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Well, Zach just found his roommate and had very little to tell us.*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *Yeah.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *It just makes me think that whatever we're dealing with is operating on a different plane.*

**Kyle:** [as Alvin] *Maybe Brad's up. Maybe we can get some information from Brad.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Yeah. Yeah, that'd be great.*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *Yeah. All right.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Hey, you know what's weird?*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *What?*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Didn't notice a phone in the room. So, he might still have it on him. We might be able to track the house party he was at or something.*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *Yeah.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *I hear that kind of tech stuff happens, right?*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *Sure.*

**Teo:** I look at both of them, but mainly JR.

**Hannah:** I pull out my flip phone and I'm like, [as JR] *Yeah, of course. Technology.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Cool. We'll figure it out.*

**Hannah:** [laughs]

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Leon is alive, so we'll call him.*

**Hannah:** [as JR] *All right. Let's go to student health.*

**Teo:** [as Constance] *Great.*

**Quinn:** So, the three of you open the door to-

**Hannah:** Oh, fuck.

**Quinn:** -this dorm room, and carefully maneuver around the caution tape. And as you're doing that, the door to the dormitory across the hall opens, and you see Sarah step out, and she looks at you and frowns and says, [as Sarah] *Alvin, what are you doing here?*

[music]

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