

[Monster Hour theme]

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

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

Quinn: Kyle. 7

Kyle: Hey, it's Kyle. I play Alvin the Monstress.

Quinn: And Hannah.

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

Quinn: We have finished another mystery.

Kyle: We lived.

Hannah: Yay.

Quinn: You did live. How are you all feeling after our most recent arc?

Teo: Oof. Emotionally drained from all that good, good empathizing I had to do there.

Quinn: [laughs]

Hannah: I've kind of mixed feeling. I know that, Quinn, you want us to go to the special land with the secret holes and the magic Gumby Man.

Quinn: Can we please call it something else? Like anything?

Hannah: [laughs]

Quinn: As your keeper and narrator, I'm begging you.

Hannah: You want us to go to Not Candy Land.

Kyle: A hole zone. Can we call it Krispy Kreme because of all the donut holes?

Hannah: [laughs]

Quinn: [chuckles] I would take that.

Teo: Yeah. That's not copyright, right?

Quinn: That would be an improvement.

Kyle: We get to go to Krispy Kreme, you guys.

Teo and Hannah: Yay.

Teo: Krispy Kreme is pretty good. I'm just--

Hannah: But personally, I really wanted to beat the Gumby Man. I guess, narratively, it makes more sense. But personally, I'm upset that we didn't kill him.

Quinn: That's fair.

Teo: Did you have a way that we would have killed him?

Quinn: Sure. [Teo laughs]

Hannah: I think Quinn said there was a very slim possibility that if we'd all rolled really well, we might have been able to kill the Gumby Man. But I think that was probably not in the cards, given our roles.

Teo: [crosstalk]

Hannah: Yeah.

Kyle: We were in his house too. He had a bunch of traps and knives. It was a bad scenario.

Hannah: Yeah.

Quinn: By the time you arrived at the Hollow Circus, it would have been extremely difficult, given the circumstances, to defeat the Tall Man in his natural habitat.

Teo: Yeah. Home ground advantage.

Quinn: Unnatural habitat.

Kyle: Lair, if you will.

Hannah: Yeah.

Quinn: It's possible over the course of the arc, if things had gone differently. Yes, but the odds were stacked against you at that point.

Teo: For sure.

Kyle: Oh, choices and consequences.

Quinn: Mm-hmm.

Kyle: Damn you.

Teo: I'm actually very proud of us that we figured out another way to get what we wanted though, because I tell you what. The last couple of arcs, we've done a lot of getting hit really hard in order to accomplish our goals. So, it's nice to try something else, you know? We'll see what happens.

Hannah: Yeah. I would say that JR is probably feeling a bit like that as well, just like the frustration of, okay. Well, now we have to go, right? This is a real unknown is having to take Dorian back home and fill out his immigration paperwork and then, I don't know, represent him before some kind of [chuckles] of judicial body.

Quinn: Man, that would be funny, if that's what it was.

Hannah: [laughs]

Teo: Yeah. If this is literally an immigration interview, and we have to vouch for him.

Hannah: Yup.

Kyle: It sounds like a lot of bureaucracy for JR too.

Teo: Yeah, that would not-- [crosstalk]

Hannah: Oh, God. Not like seen-- [crosstalk]

Kyle: There's bureaucracy and you owe a debt now, which probably sucks.

Quinn: [chuckles]

Hannah: Yeah. Yeah.

Kyle: There was silver involved, so Alvin's not a fan of that.

Hannah: Yeah. So, I think that's kind of where I'm at, both me and my character.

Teo: I think Constance is outwardly quite apprehensive, but inwardly of really, really excited. Who knows what this place is like. Like, first of all, Constance can't afford to go on a vacation, so this is as close as we're going to get.

Quinn: [chuckles] It's all expenses paid in a way.

Teo: Yeah. Pretty much. Yeah, when does that ever happen? And also, for someone whose family has this weird connection to Weirdness, with a capital W. I think she's just excited to see what this other world looks like and see if there's anything there that makes her more knowledgeable about this world that she's trekking. She's a little eat, prey, loving it.

Kyle: [laughs]

Teo: Just a little bit of like, this is a growth experience.

Teo: [crosstalk] find yourself.

Quinn: [laughs]

Teo: Yeah. This is-- [crosstalk]

Hannah: This is fair. That's very fair.

Teo: Yeah. Clearly, there's an opportunity for danger, but that's kind of part of it too.

Kyle: Yeah. I think Alvin just feels a strange attraction to whatever this mysterious place is through his guardian lineage, and he's not entirely conscious of.

Hannah: This is your calling, man. This is like-

Teo: Yeah.

Hannah: -so what you've been training for. I know you're out there doing your-- I don't know if there's a big set of stairs anywhere in Firmament but running up and down like Rocky.

Kyle: [chuckles]

Quinn: [laughs]

Kyle: Well, it's like a generational training. It's not just Alvin, right?

Hannah: Yeah.

Teo: It's in your bones.

Kyle: So, we haven't gone there yet, but I feel like there'll be some sense of home when he gets there.

Teo: Ooh. Yeah.

Kyle: That's a bit strange.

Quinn: I know this was an arc with a lot of surprises. But was there anything that was particularly surprising to you all?

Kyle: I mean, Dorian?

Teo: Yeah, Dorian did actually surprise me.

Quinn: [chuckles]

Teo: I think when you keep calling a character a jerk as another player, you assume that you're just like, "Meh, he's just a jerk, and we're just being over the top about it." But no, he legitimately was like a baddie. We pegged that well and did it so much as a joke that I think we overlooked the very real [Quinn laughs] issues there of like, "Why is he being so difficult to work with?" That's a legit question.

Kyle: Yeah. Our goof became manifest.

Quinn: Mm-hmm.

Teo: Sure. Yeah.

Hannah: Yeah. Did our goof become a reality? Quinn? Quinn? Quinn?

Quinn: Dorian to--

Hannah: Quinn, was Dorian always bad?

Kyle: Did he drive Dorian to the Gumby life?

Hannah: Was he always bad, Quinn?

Quinn: Yes.

Hannah: Oh.

Teo: Well, again--

Kyle: [as Dorian] *I didn't choose the Gumby life. Look what you made me do.*

[laughter]

Quinn: Dorian, aka the Tall Man, infiltrated the Daylight Society to leverage against you.

Kyle: Yeah. He's been the Tall Man for thousands and thousands of years.

Teo: Yeah. Yeah.

Quinn: An indeterminate amount of time.

Kyle: Yeah.

Quinn: But a long time.

Hannah: I guess my biggest thing with this episode was that it really jumped the linear structure that we've been used to with our previous episodes was like, okay, the first episode is, there's right, starts off with a bang, and then stuff started happening right away. It at least for me, left me feeling even more off kilter than before, which is not a bad thing. I'm not saying like, Quinn, spoon feed us every mystery.

Quinn: [laughs]

Hannah: But it felt like, for me, I never really got my hands around it, and that was difficult just in the nature of how the mystery unfolded. I don't know if you guys felt the same way, but it just felt like things kept happening, and there was never a chance to step back as much. Literally, we show up at the festival and there's a small child turning everything into candy. So, that was kind of my feeling narrative wise.

Quinn: In some ways, that was kind of what I was going for. This was the Tall Man's crescendo of what he'd been working on.

Teo: Yeah.

Quinn: But I can see how that would be difficult to work through when threats are constantly being thrown at you.

Teo: Yup. It kind of felt like 2020, and so I was prepared.

Hannah: [laughs]

Quinn: This was not intended to be a metaphor.

[laughter]

Quinn: I assure you. I know this was this was of a challenging arc, but was there any moment that you really enjoyed, any favorites?

Teo: I actually absolutely loved the kid situation, in general, I think.

[laughter]

Hannah: It was very fun to see-- Our characters just haven't really interacted with younger folks in the same way. Like, we have a little bit, but that was always in an immediate, very obvious danger way versus this was like, yes, it's dangerous, but it's also-- how do you reason with a kid that's like turning things into candy, because that is very much a kid thing. So, I loved seeing the real instinctual relationship that Alvin had and was able to just immediately go into dad mode essentially. Versus Constance could not wrap her brain around how to deal with it. And so, she just brute forced it, which I think is a little more of a JR move.

Quinn: [chuckles]

Teo: And JR was trying to make this all work. And in a way, I almost feel like did some Constance things. It was just interesting, like how our characters change when face-

Quinn: Shuffled the deck, a little bit.

Teo: -with a child. Yeah. Yeah. So, I thought that was very fun.

Quinn: GM note. More children.

Teo: [laughs]

Hannah: No. Please don't do that.

Quinn: [laughs]

Kyle: Let's play a game where characters have to try to guess their age-

Teo: Oh, gosh.

Kyle: -based on the voice that Quinn does.

[laughter]

Teo: That one would be tough.

Hannah: Oh, God.

Teo: That's right. I forgot about that. Yeah.

Kyle: Okay. Quinn.

Quinn: That's a separate GM though.

Kyle: Now, four. Okay. Now, eight.

Teo: No, I loved it. I thought it was great all around, 10 out of 10.

Kyle: I like poor Fred.

Teo: Oh. [laughs]

Hannah: Oh. Yeah.

Quinn: Yeah. Fred was pretty down on his luck this arc.

Hannah: Yeah.

Kyle and Teo: Yeah.

Quinn: Maybe Fred will find love.

Hannah: Maybe.

Quinn: Who knows?

Hannah: There were two aspects I liked. One of them was, Quinn, the way that you did the effects of the magic spell when Birds in the Air was on stage and was jamming out, that was a good-- Because I rolled to resist it and I had a mixed success, and so you made me choose a couple of different options for what was going to happen. I thought that was a very good-- It was a good use of the game mechanic and it was an interesting thing for me to decide. Although you have to know that by now, any decision that is going to risk me losing the key that is not the choice.

Quinn: [laughs]

Hannah: Unfortunately, that sets me up for a lot of trouble down the road, however long this road may lead. It might be a very short road, but I like that a lot. That was some good DMing.

Kyle: Yeah. Some custom rules.

Hannah: Yeah. Yeah. I also really liked my she Hulk moment. That was fun.

Quinn: [chuckles] That was excellent.

Hannah: That was real fun.

Quinn: Do you have any questions for me?

Kyle: How much cotton candy per minute is coming out of JR's hands?

Hannah: [laughs]

Teo: Yeah.

Quinn: Per minute?

Kyle: Is it like a slow leak or--

Quinn: I think JR could fill a regular ice cream cone over the course of about an hour.

Hannah: Okay. Good. Good, good, good.

Teo: Oh. Right.

Kyle: I was wondering if it was constantly emitting or if it was just cotton candy on her hand and as she pulled it, it just came out and there was always more to replace it.

Quinn: It constantly grows from her palm.

Kyle: Okay.

Quinn: It goes long enough without being tended to. It'll wrap around her whole hand, but it mostly grows from the palm.

Kyle: Like a little candy glove.

Quinn: Mm-hmm. Yeah. Yeah.

Kyle: Okay.

Teo: Oh, I have one. How nervous are you about us going into this world?

Hannah: Oh, good question.

Kyle: Is this the last arc? [laughs]

Teo: Yeah. Is this your way of saying, we need to start thinking of new characters?

Quinn: But no, it's not the last arc. Well, any arc could be the last arc, [Kyle laughs] depending on how you approach it and how you roll. But it's not meant to be.

Teo: I've told you, I have no allegiance to keeping Constance alive. I will put her in danger.

Kyle: Listeners, clap if you believe in Monster Hour.

Hannah: [laughs]

Kyle: Clap if you believe.

Quinn: [laughs] I didn't feel like you had a question I didn't actually answer. What was it?

Teo: How nervous are you about this arc? Like, is this upcoming arc the most dangerous, most challenging one that we've done so far?

Quinn: That's hard to say. It's going to be the most different from what's happened before, because you're going to a whole different place and it's going to be very strange. I mean, every arc is dangerous. This arc will be dangerous in different ways. The last one was different, and the previous ones were different.

Hannah: We are all going to die.

Quinn: The threats always have a theme. There's a danger theme.

Hannah: The theme for this adventure will be duff.

Teo: [chuckles] Quinners, was there anything that we did that surprised you or a favorite moment that you had?

Hannah: Ooh.

Quinn: Oh, gosh.

Teo: Turn the tables.

Quinn: I will say I personally was surprised when JR invited Pax in. I didn't expect her to do that. There was no way that the Tall Man was going to mess up his whole plan by bringing a federal agent in. I guess I didn't expect that. It ultimately didn't come to fruition, but the response was surprising.

Hannah: I figured at this point, JR was feeling like, [as JR] *I have nothing to lose right now. Perhaps, if somebody there who's invested in arresting me, they may be invested in keeping me alive.*

Kyle: [laughs]

Hannah: So, that was my thinking, is I have somebody else who's invested in me not dying, and I can possibly address being in custody later, but I cannot address being in custody if I am, in fact, dead. So, that was my thinking.

Quinn: Oh, I don't think it was a bad decision.

Hannah: [laughs]

Quinn: I guess I was just slightly surprised given the lengths you've gone to avoid being captured by them.

Hannah: Yeah. Yeah.

[laughter]

Quinn: I'd say that was the biggest surprise. Yeah.

Hannah: Okay.

Quinn: Well, I think it is now time for some end of session questions.

Kyle and Hannah: Yay.

Quinn: Did you conclude the current mystery?

Hannah: Yes.

Kyle: Yeah, we found out The Hollow Circus is behind all the goofy stuff going on in Firmament.

Teo: Yeah.

Quinn: And the Tall Man is behind The Hollow Circus. I agree. Yes, you did conclude this mystery.

Teo and Hannah: Yay.

Kyle: Figured it out.

Quinn: You have solved my circus puzzle.

Teo: Yay.

Quinn: It was Dorian.

Kyle: [chuckles]

Quinn: Did you save someone from certain death or worse?

Teo: I think so. Yes.

Hannah: Yeah. We got the-

Kyle: Probably, a couple folks.

Teo: A couple people. Yeah.

Hannah: -the buffalo, we got it out of town before it ran into anybody.

Kyle: Got the buffalo out.

Teo: The band.

Kyle: Something may have happened to the Roots if everyone charging the thing. You saved Leon from jumping off a tall thing in the circus.

Hannah: Trying to sat on him.

Quinn: You did sit up Leon.

Hannah: [laughs] I got that straight from Constance.

Quinn: [laughs]

Hannah: Teo, you were right. That was a Constance move when you sat on that kid in the forest. [laughs]

Teo: Like, Sit down.

Hannah: Sit on him.

Teo: Oh, also Cecilia. Pretty sure Cecilia would have died if we hadn't cut a deal in some way.

Quinn: Also, JR saved everyone on the Ferris wheel.

Teo: Yeah.

Teo: Yeah.

Teo: Damn right.

Kyle: Yeah. Lot of people there.

Teo: And the kid too, probably. Who knows what would have happened to that kid.

Quinn: Certainly, anyone the kid might have come in contact with for an extended period of time.

Teo: Yeah,

Quinn: Vincent. Jonah probably saved them. So, yeah, you definitely saved some people from certain death or worse.

Hannah: Yay.

Teo: Yeah, we did.

Kyle: Mm-hmm.

Quinn: Did you learn something new and important about the world?

Kyle: [chuckles] Yeah.

Hannah: Yeah. Yeah.

Kyle: We learned quite a bit about the Tall Man.

Teo: Yup. He's just an immigrant trying to go home.

Quinn: I mean, you're not wrong.

Kyle: May have learned a little more about the world in this one than any other one.

Quinn: Yeah, I think you definitely learned some new stuff about the world and the Tall Man.

Kyle: Mm-hmm.

Quinn: Did you learn something new and important about one of the hunters?

Kyle: Yeah, I suppose, if we're considering this one, starting with the fake key deal. Was that before the spider?

Quinn: That was technically an interlude, but yeah, I think that kicked things off.

Kyle: So, we learned Alvin's a guardian?

Teo: Yeah.

Quinn: Learned a lot about Alvin.

Hannah: Mm-hmm.

Teo: Yeah.

Kyle: Mm-hmm. Learned some good stuff about JR's backstory and the flashbacks.

Quinn: Yeah.

Teo: That's right.

Quinn: Learned that JR is, in some ways, responsible for the Tall Man's escape. Intentional or not.

Hannah: But that does not mean I am responsible for his actions. Let's be-

Quinn: Oh, no.

Hannah: -very clear. [laughs]

Quinn: But he has an interest in you and the key, for sure. I'm trying to think, did we learn something new about Constance?

Teo: We, as players, learn something new about Constance's mom via the photos. But Constance-

Quinn: That's true.

Teo: -doesn't know that.

Kyle: New hat.

Quinn: That's true.

Teo: That's only JR. And new hat.

Quinn and Teo: New hat.

Teo: What's up with the--

Quinn: Okay.

Kyle: And your good friend, Brie.

Teo: Yeah. And we learned about Brie. Yeah.

Quinn: Yeah. So, I think we learned something new about all of the hunters. That's one extra--

Kyle: That's 1 XP each, right?

Quinn: No.

Kyle: Oh, ah dang.

Quinn: But it is good storytelling though. And that's experience you can take to heart.

Kyle: Right. But not to my muscles.

Quinn: That's a yes to all four questions, which means each of you gets to mark two experience.

Kyle: Woo.

Hannah: Yay.

Quinn: Has anyone leveled up?

Teo: Me!

Kyle: Yes, sir.

Hannah: Yeah.

Quinn: Okay. All three of you have leveled up. That's exciting. Does anyone know what they would like to take for their advancement?

Teo: Yeah. Mine is very easy. I am taking a plus one to charm.

Kyle: [chuckles]

Quinn: Okay.

Teo: The end.

[laughter]

Kyle: Where's that put your charm at?

Teo: One. [laughs]

Hannah: Yay.

Quinn: Okay. One more charming.

Kyle: Nice.

Teo: Just a skosh [00:18:39].

Kyle: Prepping for some good conversation.

Quinn: Is this a result of your empathy, all of your empathizing that you had to do?

Kyle: Right.

Teo: Yeah. I'm reflecting on the way that I handled the candy kid and then the way that I handled Dorian at the end, and I'm like, [as Constance] *All right. I think things turned out slightly less bad listening to people first and attempting to understand them.*

Kyle: In this arc, Constance learned that other people have value.

Teo: Yeah. Well, no, no, no.

[laughter]

Kyle: I know. I agree.

Quinn: It's like a Berenstain bear moral.

[laughter]

Hannah: Mine is also quite boring. So, I am now in the advanced improvements, which is very exciting, but also means I'm just taking plus one to any rating and I'm taking a plus one to weird, which puts me at two weird.

Quinn: Getting weirder.

Hannah: Getting weirder, getting spookier.

Teo: Spooky.

Kyle: I'm also in the advanced improvements. I'm going to take the mark two of the basic moves as advanced, and-

Quinn: Nice.

Kyle: -I'm going to pick kick some ass. Classic.

Quinn: I'm shocked.

Kyle: Total Alvin move. And then, the other be that I'm very excited for is Quinn has provided an alternative advanced rule set for Alvin's no limits.

Teo: Ooh.

Quinn: Yes. The advanced no limits in the Tome of Mysteries is good, but it doesn't quite fit Alvin's character. It's on a 12 or more, you can continue to ignore your body's limits for 30 seconds. Alvin's no limits is supernatural in nature, and so we've developed an alternative that fits him slightly better. Kyle, do you want to read through it?

Kyle: Yeah. So, the alternative advanced no limits is on a 12 plus pushing yourself to the limits activates the power of your supernatural ancestry. You may choose an extra effect. Either heal one harm or stabilize an injury. Your show of force inspires and intimidates. You and your allies, each take one forward. You escape your current situation, no matter how well contained. Or, you awaken a memory from your bloodline that provides insight into your current situation. Now, if I choose one of those extra effects on a 12 plus, my true nature will be revealed, obviously, and undeniably, to anyone nearby.

Quinn: So, this really reflects your guardian ancestry. And the more you push into that field, as you have with no limits and embracing your coyote nature, the more powerful you can become. But the drawback is that it is obvious what you are.

Kyle: Yes. [as Alvin] *Hey, everyone.* [Quinn chuckles] *Look at me.*

[laughter]

Quinn: Great. So, we've got some advanced improvements and some stat boosts. That's exciting. Well, are we ready to get into this interlude?

Teo: Yee.

Kyle: Yes,

Hannah: Yeah.

Quinn: All right. Let's hit it.

Kyle: [scats]

[laughter]

Kyle: Interlude.

Quinn: I'm not going to put actual music there. I'm just going to keep that.

[laughter]

Kyle: No.

Hannah: Yes.

Teo: And [crosstalk] to the original.

Quinn: Take it to the bank.

Kyle: At least, remakes me.

[laughter]

[Monster Hour theme]

Quinn: The three of you land on your backs with a thud. Dust kisses your face, as the sun beats down overhead. A quick look around reveals your new location. All around are the vibrant pigments and alien formations of The Moonscape. As you get your bearings, you notice a small letter sealed with a circle of red wax propped up against a rock just a few feet away.

Kyle: I nudge JR.

Hannah: You want me to open it?

Kyle: I think it's for you?

Hannah: I think it's for all of us. But yeah, fine. I'll reach over and open it.

Quinn: Inside is a short note which reads, [as Dorian] *So lovely to have us all on the same page now.*

Hannah: Fucking Dorian.

Quinn: [as Dorian] *The residents of your city have been returned safely to their homes. Consider them in escrow pending the fulfillment of our agreement. For more on that matter, please return to this location 24 hours upon receipt of this letter. Come prepared for adventure. D.*

Kyle: Raincoat?

Quinn: [laughs]

Hannah: All right. [as JR] *So, friends, it looks like we have 24 hours to put our affairs in order, and then we need to come back here.*

Kyle: Mm-hmm.

Hannah: [as JR] *Should we just go to Constance's place?*

Kyle: [as Alvin] *Yeah, let's not be in The Moonscape. This place gives me weird memories.*

Hannah: [as JR] *Yeah. That's fair.*

Teo: [as Constance] *Oh, are you all looking at me to drive?* [Kyle [laughs] Because—

Hannah: Well, I don't know if there's a car there or what. We were at the circus, and now were--

Teo: That's true. [as Constance] *Oh, God. I got to go back and get my car. Okay. All right. Let's go.*

Kyle: [as Alvin] [crosstalk] *got phone. Can we call Lyft?*

Teo: [as Constance] *We do that. We call Jared, the one Lyft driver in all of--*

[laughter]

Kyle: We just have his cell number right now.

Quinn: Firmament is a small city. There's more than one Lyft driver.

Hannah: I just really hope it's not-- [laughs]

Teo: Jared has just cornered the market, okay? He's very nimble.

Hannah: He's not my [crosstalk] driver.

Quinn: Is Jared the driver that you always wind up getting?

Teo: Yeah, 100%.

Quinn: He's not the only one, but--

Kyle: He's the one you want, because he's got the little Christmas light set up in the back, he's always got plenty of water, he'll put on whatever music you want.

Teo: Mm-hmm.

Quinn: Does he have the karaoke set up, the car karaoke?

Teo: Oh, sure.

Kyle: It's got karaoke. It's also got a trivia game plugged into it, which Alvin likes that part.

Teo: Yeah. Look, so many snacks. He knows which ones we like, so he doesn't even ask anymore. He just hands them back to us. Look, if you get Jared, you're in good company, you're going to have a great ride, make sure five out of five stars, you want to keep him in business.

Quinn: So, the three of you make your way out of The Moonscape. Alvin, I think you realize that this is the same spot where you met the Tall Man to make the exchange with a fake key. It's that same sunken valley. So, you know your way out, more or less. You make your way

back to the entrance and you get in Jared's lift. What car karaoke song do you sing on your way back?

Kyle: *Let it go.*

Quinn: [laughs] Excellent. Outstanding. So, the three of you arrive back at Constance's studio. I think this studio has become a second home to many. But for now, I think we'll say it's empty, so the three of you have a chance to debrief, if you would like to do so.

Hannah: So super fucked up, right? Yeah.

Kyle: I went through a lot of trouble to try to fool that guy. Huh.

Hannah: Look, I'm not feeling terribly optimistic about my chances of getting out of this. Who knows? Maybe we'll all walk out of this unscathed. Well, in the interest of full disclosure, Leon came to me with some pictures.

Teo: Oh, I don't want to look whatever you two are doing.

[laughter]

Hannah: No.

Teo: I don't. I don't. I appreciate. I appreciate you wanting to be more open with us.

Hannah: [laughs]

Teo: I actually can see that makes a good pairing, but I don't need to see the evidence, you know?

Hannah: No. No, no, no. No, no, no, not those kinds of-- No. I realize I should have phrased this better,-

[laughter]

Hannah: -because I could see where it was going, the minute the words left my mouth, then I was out there, and there was nothing I could do because Constance jumped on that, just real fast.

[laughter]

Teo: I think you guys do make a great couple. I'm very happy for you.

Kyle: Dorian's out of the picture.

Hannah: [laughs]

Teo: Yeah. Yeah. That's great.

Hannah: Oh, boy. Leon is emotionally a child, so, no, thank you.

Kyle: [chuckles]

Hannah: No Constance, I don't think you're going to like to hear this either, but he took some photos of the gondola. And in the gondola was Stoney, and your mother, and the mayor and

one of the scientists from the lab. Remember, the one that wouldn't let us in when the fungus was after us? I think, Constance, didn't you say he was the one you were going to have the interview with?

Teo: Yeah. That didn't go well.

Kyle: Mm-hmm.

Teo: Did Leon get these photos as part of his whole operation? Sting operation?

Hannah: Oh, yeah. He was following Stoney. I will tell you, the photos, granted, they're pictures, so you can't know what's going on. But it did not look like it was a particularly pleasant, light conversation. I don't know, maybe everybody in that photo is just a super aggressive talker. And so, even about things like the weather, it's just super confrontational. But--

Teo: Can I see these photos?

Hannah: Quinn, did he give me the photos? He gave me the photos, didn't he? Did I get the photos?

Quinn: Let's say yes.

Hannah: Okay. And I go rooting around through my stuff, and there's a somewhat comical scene of JR rooting around through things and like, [as JR] *Oh, a shoe goes flying, and then a waistcoat, and then a tie and then another dress shoe, and then aha.* And I've got the manila envelope, and I pull them out and show them to everybody. [as JR] *That's your mom, right?*

Teo: [as Constance] *Yeah. Yeah, that's her.*

Kyle: Strange committee to get all these people together. A gondola is a pretty good spot to not be overheard.

Hannah: But not overseen, not spotted.

Quinn: I will just, as a narrator's note, add that in addition to those four, there is also one other individual who JR, Leon identified as Jorgen Eklund, the publisher of The Firmament Daily Herald.

Hannah: Oh, okay.

Teo: Oh, shit.

Kyle: Right. Yeah.

Hannah: All right. Well, I point him out, and I'm like, this guy from the big newspaper, the one that's not based on a fictional animal.

Kyle: [chuckles]

Teo: Well, I was already debating whether to tell my parents where I'm going. This seals the deal on that. Till I know more, I can't really trust them, I guess.

Hannah: [as JR] *I'm sorry, Constance.*

Teo: [as Constance] *Wow. I really wish that you were just dating Leon. That would be so much easier.*

[laughter]

Teo: [as Constance] *Like, I'll take a dick pic now instead.*

[laughter]

Hannah: Oh, no.

Teo: [as Constance] *But all right. Thanks for telling us.*

Hannah: [as JR] *Yeah.*

Kyle: A couple times now, the mayor's come up in strange circumstances.

Hannah: I'm going to let you guys know that at some point, I'm going to duck out, because I want to let Stonie know that we're going to be gone for a while. I don't know if he's going to give me any answers, but I'm going to let him know I've got those photos.

Kyle: [as Alvin] *Are you going to tell him where we're going?*

Hannah: [as JR] *Maybe not the specifics of where we're going, because frankly, I also don't know.*

Teo: Yeah.

Kyle: That's true.

Hannah: I know that it's like another dimension, but it's hard to leave a note when you're like, okay. Goodbye. I'm going to the space between spaces. Please make sure to water my plants. I'll be back. Maybe yesterday. I don't know.

Teo: Yeah. Well, I already wanted to talk to Cecilia and Leon of about what happened. But I think there's more that we need to ask of them there, especially knowing we can't even trust my own family.

Kyle: Yeah, gang. If we're heading somewhere and we're not entirely sure we're coming back, sorry, but I got to spend these 24 hours with Sarah.

Teo: Yeah.

Kyle: Like, do something memorable.

Hannah: That's fair.

Quinn: I think we fade away on that scene as the three of you go your separate ways, preparing for your departure.

[music]

Hey, folks. Quinn here. Thanks so much for tuning in to Episode 31 of Monster Hour. The real monster is how long our interlude episodes get, so I'm going to get right to it. I've got a

couple of announcements for you in case you missed the Stoney special, although I really recommend going back and listening to it if you have not already, because it is wild. Austin came back to reprise his role as Chief Stoney in a flashback episode, and he absolutely killed it. So, definitely go back and listen to that if you have not already.

To the announcements. First, we have a Discord now. If you want to come chat with us and with other fans about this episode, the most recent arc, also wild, or your theories about what's really going on in Firmament, come join us. There's a link to the channel in the show notes. It'll take you right there.

Second, we have also launched our Patreon. This will help us bring you more and better content, from better equipment to mystery modules to bonus episodes and campaigns. I'll be walking through the different tiers and perks starting next episode. But if you want more info or you're already sold, you can head to patreon.com/monsterhour, or click the link again in the show notes.

We also know this is a wild time to be asking for money. So, while we'd love to start reaching some of our goals and putting out bonus content, you can always support us by leaving us a rating and review or recommending us to a friend. Thank you to everyone who has done that so far to help get us to this point.

Our spooky spotlight this week is Roll for Weird, a fellow Monster of the Week podcast set in Louisville, Kentucky.

[Monster of the Week podcast theme]

DJ Qualls: From the city that brought you Kentucky Fried Chicken comes Roll for Weird, a Monster of the Week actual play podcast. Join Filbert Focal, Doomsday Prepper and Expert.

Filbert: I'm of like the linchpin that's keeping everything together.

DJ Qualls: Laceth, the Divine.

Laceth: And I still owe him my life, so I would have to end yours. It would be a mess.

DJ Qualls: Shadow, the edgy Initiate.

Shadow: I trust him with my life. I don't know if I trust him with my car.

DJ Qualls: Misty Charlotte Paladino, Spellslinger.

Charlotte: But I haven't set anything on fire that I haven't meant to set on fire.

DJ Qualls: Silas Lancaster, Elderly Vampire.

Silas: They broke the mold when they made Philbert

DJ Qualls: Roll for Weird on Twitch streaming monthly. New podcast episodes every other Friday.

Quinn: That's it for me, folks. We'll be back with the start of our journey through The Looking Glass in Episode 32 on September 1st. See you then.

[music]

Quinn: Constance, you want to have a follow up discussion with the Daylight Society, but specifically Leon and Cecilia, correct?

Teo: Yeah, the leaders of the group.

Quinn: What invitation do you extend them?

Teo: I send them an email invitation, but it's one of those fancy ones, like you do when you send out.

Quinn: I knew you were going to do this.

Teo: [laughs] Oh gosh. Unpredictable.

Quinn: It's all because I know you.

Teo: Yeah, that's fair. You do for weddings and things like that, it's like the fancy version of a digital letter and it says like, [as Constance] *You are cordially invited. You are an incredibly important member of the team. Please attend. I must speak with you both. You are needed right now.*

I think that for each of them, there's a little hand drawn little flower thing that has Leon's name drawn into the flower and Cecilia's name drawn into it, so that they know that I made these personally for them.

Quinn: I think you get a reply from Cecilia pretty quickly, like an email reply, like an RSVP via the Eventbrite or however you set this up. And Leon texts you 30 minutes later saying he'll be over in a few.

Teo: Perfect.

Quinn: And shortly thereafter, the two of them arrive. They both look quite bleary and weary as they trundle into the studio. You can see Cecilia still has some marks from where the net tightened around her. And Leon is notably physically drained from the whole encounter. They head inside and take a seat on your couch.

Teo: Can I tell you what they see as they walk in?

Quinn: Of course. Please do.

Teo: First of all, they smell the best scented candle of their lives. It just is. It's hands down the most wonderful, amazing scented candle they've ever smelled.

Quinn: What is the scent, Constance?

Teo: Yes. Yes.

Quinn: [laughs]

Teo: And on the-- Yes. 100% yes.

Quinn: Okay. Okay. Got it. Got it.

Teo: [chuckles] On the coffee table, there is tea and coffee and these little-- They're like a little mini roller things that you can roll on your leg to just loosen up your muscles.

Hannah: Oh, yeah.

Teo: There are two of those wrapped up, almost like you'd get in a gift basket. And then, there are two big envelopes. Then one says Cecilia, and one says Leon.

Quinn: Leon sits down, and pounds the entire cup of coffee, and then pounds the cup of tea, and then leans back, and takes the envelope, and looks at it and then just of looks at you. Cecilia sits politely for a moment, and then takes one of the rollers and starts rolling out her muscles. You can see is is visibly pained in the process, but continues doing it.

Teo: [as Constance] *Thank you both for coming. Before we get to, I'm sure and I know, Leon, I know you're already thinking what's in that envelope. We'll get to that. But first, I just want to say how incredibly sorry I am about everything that happened. To you, both, everything with Dorian, and honestly, even before today, just the way that I have treated you both and the Daylight Society as a whole.*

I am not the best at expressing my needs and emotions, so I sometimes will come off as expecting a lot from folks without giving much in return. And I feel like I owe you both a lot, my life, the life of my friends, the work that you do is so important. I feel like the first thing I should have really said every day, every time I saw you, was thank you. And I didn't. And for that, I am so sorry. I'd like us to start with a clean slate today, if that's possible.

Quinn: Roll to manipu-- No, I'm just kidding. [laughs]

Hannah: Ah.

Teo: Charm, right?

Kyle: Let's manipulate someone. Yeah.

Teo: I'm a little more charming now. I've read some books.

Quinn: No. I think Cecilia pauses, rolling out her muscles, stands up and walks over and wraps her arms around you in a tight embrace.

Teo: Oh. When you let them just run down your face, you don't address them, they just happen, that's Constance right now. She's just of letting that flow. She's not quite in touch enough with her emotions yet to acknowledge it, but she's also not trying to hide it. So, she hugs Cecilia back and just lets that happen.

Quinn: Over Cecilia's shoulder. You see Leon just of looking out one of the windows just outside. He has of a sullen look on his face.

Teo: [as Constance] *Leon, what are you thinking, bud?*

Quinn: [as Leon] *It's a nice apology. But you don't need to apologize to me, because you weren't wrong in the first place. We are a joke. All of us got played by some schmarmy fuck.*

Teo: [as Constance] *Welcome to the club. This is the true inner club. If you haven't been played by a big bad, you haven't been in the game. Trust me. JR, Alvin and I have done you a great disservice by making it seem on the outside, like we remotely know what the hell we're doing, because we don't. I'm here to tell you right now, we've all made our own deals with big bads. I've trusted the wrong ones. Alvin made a deal with the Gumby Man before you guys ever did.*

Quinn: [as Leon] Yeah, he's the only one who tricked him though. He bought time. He got his sister out.

Teo: [as Constance] He didn't know that that's how that was going to go. We all had to of pitch in to make that happen right. He made a choice in the moment. We all do. [chuckles] We haven't talked about this yet, Leon, but I just saw those photos you took of my mom. I have been telling her everything up until now like an idiot, thinking that she was on our side.

What I do know is that between you two, all of the people you have working on the Daylight Society and all of us, we've got to do a way better job of being a team and being honest with each other when we're struggling, because he sensed that weakness. He saw that we were not communicating well, and he took advantage of that.

Leon, what he did as Dorian was super, super fucked up. If I find a way to get back at him, I will. But he also knew one really important thing, which was that getting close to you was the best way to get all the information out of the Daylight Society, because you're at the heart of it. You know everything. You have your finger on the pulse. And that makes you a really good target. We need to recognize these things about ourselves and lean on each other instead of hiding our secrets away. Otherwise, this is not going to be the last time it happens, and it might be a lot worse next time.

Kyle: You really did level up, Charm.

Quinn: [laughs]

Teo: Yeah. What's up?

Hannah: Nice job.

Quinn: I think Leon weighs this for a moment. You can see him of grappling with it. [as Leon] I mean, you're right, Constance, but this laid bare how dangerous this all is and how dangerous it is for me to be leading it. Like, should there even be a Daylight Society after this? Who's to say the next monster with half a brain wouldn't pull the same trick or do it even better? We got lucky that you all pegged Dorian for who he was.

Teo: [as Constance] I don't think that's how we got lucky. I think we pegged Dorian, because we were trying to be mean and happened to be right. I think we got lucky that when it came down to it, we were able to find a way out and we were able to make that deal knowing that we have folks here who can hold down the fort while we have to go and do this thing that I'm about to tell you we're doing, which I wouldn't have been comfortable making that deal if I didn't know that you and Cecilia and everyone else would be here.

So, I can't tell you what choices to make, but I can tell you that as far as I'm concerned, and I'll go ahead and speak for Alvin and JR broadly here. Our lives are safer and easier with the Daylight Society here, and with you two running it. I don't see how breaking up the best research body available to us in this town, full of weird, mysterious secrets, is going to help us fight the quite literal cabals that are going on in our town.

Quinn: Leon looks over at Cecilia. And she nods and smiles. He looks back at you, takes a deep breath and grits his teeth and says, [as Leon] Okay. Now, where the hell are you going?

Teo: [chuckles] [as Constance] Why don't you sit back down? I first have to give you guys some initiation items.

Quinn: Leon very slowly reaches over, and takes Cecilia's coffee and pounds it.

Teo: I very ceremonially step up in front of them and go, [as Constance] *In these envelopes, which would be decorated much nicer if this wasn't happening in 20 minutes, you will find two very important things. The first, is your own special key to this studio, home base for the work that you do and just to hang out. And then, the second thing is a USB. That's going to seem very uneventful. But I promise you, this is important.*

I point to my bookcases, all of my weird books. Like, [as Constance] *My family has had its toes dipped in this town's weirdness for a very long time, and they've collected some records. Up until now, frankly, we've gotten lucky that we had enough time to look things up and figure out what was going on and rely on some of that background research. But I'm one person.*

And frankly, Leon, with your skills, your background, you're better at oppo research than I ever was. So, I have been in the process of digitizing all those records and adding my own. And this copy, you both now have a copy of all of that. You have full access to this library, to this workshop, to this studio. And I am asking that the three of us become the brain trust of researching the weird big bad going on in our town, because I don't want to lose, because we didn't put in the effort and the time with the books. I feel like if we're going to lose on the battlefield, fine. But if we lose in the information war, because we're not connecting the dots, that's no way to go. I'd like to propose that we create the first official research division of the Daylight Society.

Quinn: I think Leon takes the only full beverage still on the table, which is Cecilia's cup of tea, and raises it up and says, [as Leon] *All cheers to that.*

Teo: I raise my tea to meet his.

Quinn: And the two of you cheers, and Cecilia smiles on.

Kyle: [chuckles]

Teo: [as Constance] *I know you're not cheersing. But are you in, Cecilia? I need an affirmative nod.*

Quinn: [as Cecilia] *Oh, yeah. I'm in.*

Teo: [as Constance] *Great. I know you're both still recovering, but let's get to work.* And I pull out the painting.

Quinn: Your painting of the window into the world of orbs?

Teo: Yup.

Quinn: They look at it, several seconds go by, and finally Leon says, [as Leon] *I mean, I'm totally on board, but I don't quite follow.*

Teo: [as Constance] *Yeah. No. Yeah, I probably need-- Look, I wanted a cool line and I felt really like I was really in the moment there and probably hype, you know?*

Quinn: [as Leon] *Oh, yeah. No, I've been there. I've been there a lot. Like, I live there.*

Teo: [as Constance] *Yeah, I feel like--* [crosstalk]

Quinn: [as Leon] *I rent there, for sure.*

Teo: [as Constance] *Yeah. I mean, you have a timeshare at least, you know?*

Quinn: [as Leon] *Uh-huh. Yeah. Mm-hmm.*

Teo: [as Constance] *Definitely.*

Quinn: [as Leon] *Trying to sell it. Can't get rid of it.*

Teo: [as Constance] *You're stuck there.*

Quinn: [as Leon] *Yeah. Anyway--*

Teo: [as Constance] *Yeah. So, cool moment over here is one of our first assignments. This is a painting that I did that I thought came from my brain. It turns out it did not. We have seen it involved and connected to weird things.*

And I walk them through all the documentation that I've created about the painting. [as Constance] *Clearly, something is off here. Full disclosure, that's all I really know about it. You're welcome to use any resources you want. We need to figure out what this is all about.*

Quinn: [as Leon] *It's not a lot to go on, but we'll do our best, Constance.*

Teo: [as Constance] *Thank you. And then, I do the same thing with the disc and then stop my PowerPoint presentation, I look back at them.*

Quinn: See, you're going through all the things you have not told them yet. [chuckles]

Teo: Yeah. I'm just speed running it for folks, because if you've been listening to every episode, you should know what's up by now.

Quinn: Yeah. So, you fill them in on the painting, the disc. Leon already knows about the cabal, as it's been so named.

Teo: As it's been so named, yes.

Quinn: Anything else?

Teo: I finish all that, and I of look at them and I go, [as Constance] *Okay. And now, I'm going to tell you about this other dimension that we're going to. But before I do, any questions?*

Quinn: They nod.

Teo: Okay.

Quinn: [as Leon] *No.*

Teo: [as Constance] *Great.*

Kyle: [laughs]

Quinn: [as Leon] *This tracks.*

Teo: [as Constance] *Yeah. So, we struck a deal with Dorian.*

Quinn: Now, they do look shocked.

Teo: [as Constance] *We were at the end of our rope, and we didn't really have another option. He kept saying that he needed the key. When pressed about it, we found out that it's because he needs it in order to get to a world that is less toxic for him. He wants to get back to a dimension that he feels better in. And the key is vital to do that.*

So, the deal that we struck is that we would go with the Gumby Man to this other dimension, and JR will use the key to ensure his immigration residency there [Hannah laughs] is very confusing. But basically, she will use the key the way that he has said he needs to use it, and then we will come back.

Quinn: [as Leon] *That's quite a deal.*

Teo: [as Constance] *Yeah. I'm fully aware we may never come back.*

Quinn: [as Leon] *I mean, I understand why you had to do it, but try to come back, okay?*

Teo: [as Constance] *Yeah. I will try.*

Quinn: [as Leon] *Well, hold down the fort.*

Teo: I give them both a hug. Like a big group hug.

Quinn: There's a big group hug. I think we fade away.

[music]

Quinn: Alvin?

Kyle: Yes.

Quinn: Where have you met up with Sarah?

Kyle: I think you're probably back at Alvin's apartment, where they both have been staying.

Quinn: Makes sense. As soon as you walk in the door, she runs over and gives you a tremendous hug.

Kyle: [as Alvin] *Hey.*

Quinn: [as Sarah] *You're okay? Oh, my gosh. I was so worried about you.*

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

Quinn: [as Sarah] *What happened? You had to tell-- What? How'd it go? You're here.*

Kyle: [as Alvin] *It was wild. You remember Dorian, right, from the society? Leon's boyfriend?*

Quinn: [as Sarah] *Yeah, the suit guy, who's at the Air?*

Kyle: [as Alvin] *Yeah. Suit. See, here's the connection that I didn't pick up first time. So, remember also that weird tall guy who you talk to and then you started turning into a werewolf?*

Quinn: [as Sarah] *Uh-huh. Yeah. Hard to forget.*

Kyle: [as Alvin] *Get this. Same guy. Turns out Dorian is the tall guy, right? What the hell's that all about?*

Quinn: [as Sarah] *How?*

Kyle: [as Alvin] *I mean, he was Dorian, one second, and then he did a little look away and then look back and then he was the Tall Man. And I was like, [as Alvin] Wha- wha- what?*

Quinn: [as Sarah] *So, he's like a shape changer?*

Kyle: [as Alvin] *Something like that. I mean, I presume some of magic nonsense, because that seems to be the world we live in these days. But yeah, he was in the tent. We found the tent. He was in the tent. He was Dorian. He was playing violin. Okay. And then, he was the Tall Man. And then, it was very scary. I didn't have to see my friends for a long time. And then, there was all sorts of people from the city and they-- He had a silver sword, which was a real bummer. Oh, by the way--*

Quinn: [as Sarah] [crosstalk]

Kyle: [as Alvin] *Yeah. I don't know if I-- Actually, I presume I probably told Sarah about the silver problem pretty early in this.*

Quinn: *I think that's probably a safe assumption.*

[laughter]

Quinn: *Like, [as Alvin] Hey, all that silver jewelry you have, maybe just get rid of that.*

Kyle: [as Alvin] *Here's a hot tip. Don't wear it.*

Quinn: [laughs]

Kyle: [as Alvin] *Yeah, silver sword, we were pretty much on the ropes there, but we made this deal and-- Okay, so this is of where-- Good news. I'm here. Yay. Bad news is I do have to go away again for a little bit tomorrow.*

Quinn: [as Sarah] *Where are you going?*

Kyle: [as Alvin] *So, we made a deal. I know, I know. Another deal. But it was JR, this time. And so, we're going to help him move, I think. There's a magic realm that he wants to get to, and we apparently have the key. [chuckles] It's JR's key to get him there. So, we have a task to do there, and in return, we are not dead and he is going to leave us alone, which sounds pretty good if we can pull this off. Problem is, not exactly sure what we're going to pull off. But I've got 24 hours until then, and I've got a cool plan for us to do.*

Quinn: [as Sarah] *Alvin, that sounds really dangerous.*

Kyle: [as Alvin] *Listen, I know. And if I stop too long to really think about it, my blood pressure goes up and I start to panic a little bit. So, I figure, let's not think about it too much right now.*

Quinn: [as Sarah] *Do you have to go? I mean, it's JR's deal. Do you have to go? Why do you have to go?*

Kyle: [as Alvin] *We're in this together. The only reason that JR was there was because she helped me with the Tall Man, and we've been thrust into all this together. So, I can't just leave them. They're so susceptible to taking damage, Sarah.*

Quinn: [as Sarah] *What if I came with you? We're the same, right? I can help.*

Kyle: [as Alvin] *No. No, no, no. I can't-- I can't-- I can't add you to this. I'm sorry. It's too dangerous. I don't know if that would change any of the deal. There's a lot of unknowns here. The three of us have faced a lot of unknowns before, and we've come out more or less okay on the other end of it. But Sarah, I can't let you come with me.*

Quinn: [as Sarah] *Okay.*

Kyle: [as Alvin] *But I do have something you can help me with.*

Quinn: [as Sarah] *What's that?*

Kyle: [as Alvin] *This town has a mayor. Classic. A lot of towns do. But this particular mayor, Mayor Chamberlain has-- There's a lot of unknowns, like I said. And one of the big ones is we don't know why is all this happening here and nowhere else. We've had some clues in the past that I've told you about. There's something going on at the lab, there was a deal called the Consensus, and there's the mayor of this town who seems to like to use the word Consensus a lot in her speeches.*

I know that's not a lot to go on, but I've got extra information now, which is, we've come into possession of some photographs from Leon-- photograph some people of interest in what this mystery might be, all meeting together, and the mayor is one of them. So, my proposal is, go spy on the mayor a little bit. How does that sound?

Quinn: [as Sarah] *Yeah, it sounds interesting. Maybe if I do a good job, then I can go with you?*

Kyle: [as Alvin] *Sarah, it's not a test. I just need your help in this. We can talk about—You know there's a Daylight Society we can talk about. If you're interested in taking a more active role in the happenings here in town, then when I get back, we'll definitely talk about it.*

Quinn: [as Sarah] *I don't think I have a choice, Alvin.*

Kyle: [as Alvin] *That's true. No, I get that. Totally. I totally understand that.*

Quinn: [as Sarah] *Listen, if we do this, then you'll talk to Leon, I can go to the Daylight Society meetings?*

Kyle: [as Alvin] *Promise. But for the next 24 hours, why don't we not think about the big picture too much? Remember when we were kids and we'd sneak around in the barn and try to spy on dad as he's doing his chores?*

Quinn: [as Sarah] *Of course.*

Kyle: [as Alvin] *Why don't we do one last heist? Oh, that sounded bad. Not one last heist. Let's do another caper.*

Quinn: She elbows you in the rib. She's like, [as Sarah] *Better not be one last heist.*

Kyle: [as Alvin] [chuckles] *No, of course. We got many more to go.* I saved him, and Alvin walks over to the closet in his bedroom, he pulls out two old walkie talkies.

Quinn: [laughs] She runs over and grabs one.

Kyle: Like GI Joe walkie-talkies.

Quinn: She just starts flipping the switch on and off. She's like, [as Sarah] *It still works. Oh, my gosh.*

Kyle: [as Alvin] *Yeah. Batteries in these things last forever.*

Quinn: [as Sarah] *Okay, let's do it.*

Kyle: [as Alvin] *All right.*

Quinn: Alvin, tell me about how this heist is going to work. What is your plan here?

Kyle: Yeah. So, I think they're going to first get to City Hall. They're going in without a huge amount of intel on what's going on inside. But it being a small town, I presume there's not a lot of security around the local government, because nobody cares. [chuckles]

Quinn: Yeah.

Kyle: So, I think what the general plan, is that Sarah has historically been better at the sneaking and getting in through tight places and going through without being noticed. So, Alvin will do the distraction to let Sarah, either get into the mayor's office and look through some paperwork.

If the mayor is there, post up somewhere and try to just eavesdrop and see if any of the conversations go in an interesting direction. But to get into that position, I think they're going to go in and Alvin might try to-- [chuckles] I think the distraction is Alvin might demand to speak with the mayor as a way to [Quinn laughs] distract from Sarah getting into the mayor.

Quinn: Okay. So, the two of you make your way into City Hall. I think it's a relatively unassuming two-story building. It wasn't specifically constructed to be City Hall. It's just kind of an office building. It is near Riverside Park, but that's about the only nice factor. There's one security guard on the exterior, but they're not blocking people from entering. They're just of general security. So, you make your way inside.

You head to the second floor where the mayor's office is located. You approach the front desk and you start demanding to see the mayor. How does that go down? What diversion, what issue are you demanding to see the mayor about?

Kyle: I think Alvin approaches the desk and tries to draw himself up tall and says, [as Alvin] *As a concerned citizen of this town, I demand to speak to the mayor about a water easement problem I've been having on my land.*

[laughter]

Teo: Too real.

Quinn: It's a true municipal issue.

Hannah: [laughs]

Teo: Yes.

Quinn: Amazing. [as Front Desk Person] *Do you have an appointment?*

Kyle: [as Alvin] *I'm a citizen of this city. It's the duty of the mayor to address my concerns.*

Quinn: [as Front Desk Person] *No appointment. I see. Could I get your name?*

Kyle: [as Alvin] *I don't need an appointment to speak to the mayor. What's she doing these days anyways? Sitting around here counting up her big checks from all the fat cats here in town?*

Quinn: We could play this for a while. But I think I'm going to have you go ahead and give me-

[laughter]

Quinn: -a roll to manipulate someone.

Kyle: Oh, no.

Quinn: That is the best roll for this scenario-

Kyle: That's fair.

Quinn: -as Sarah is waiting in the wings, looking to slip through the door.

Kyle: Yeah. We're pros. [rolls dice]

Quinn: I will say, take a plus 1, because I like your municipal water easement issue. [chuckles]

Kyle: Sure. Yes. Well, thank you very much. That brings me to a grand total of 4.

Quinn: [laughs] Oh, okay.

Kyle: Since, we're on our way.

Quinn: [as Front Desk Person] *I'm so sorry, sir. But the mayor is not in right now. If you would like to write a note, or I'd be happy to take down your contact information and we can have someone reach out to you about your municipal water easement issue. I'm terribly sorry that we weren't able to accommodate you, but the mayor's schedule is quite busy.*

Kyle: [as Alvin] *If the mayor is not in, then I think the Director of Water must be. Please take me to their office.*

Teo: [laughs]

Hannah: I'm sorry. What was that? The Director of Water? Okay.

Kyle: Yes. The Director of Pipes. The Pipe Director. The Town Pipe Director.

Hannah: The pipe man.

Quinn: [as Front Desk Person] *You want to see the Public Works Director?*

Quinn: [as Alvin] *That's what they're going by now? Yes. Please, direct me to their office.*

Teo: [laughs]

Quinn: All right. Redemption. Give me one more manipulate someone. [chuckles]

Kyle: Oh. Do I get my plus 1 still because of my cool-- [chuckles]

Quinn: No, I don't think so.

Kyle: No. Okay. Okay. Yeah. [rolls dice] Okay. [chuckles] Same roll. So, it's a 3 now.

Quinn: [laughs] They look at you and they say, [as Front Desk Person] *Public works is actually in the municipal building down on Main Street. I can call over and try to set up an appointment for you, but you'll need to head that direction to see the Public Works Director.*

Kyle: [as Alvin] *I'll head straight over there.* And then, Alvin makes a big dramatic turn and makes sure that he trips over the desk, and falls on it and then off it with a bunch of stuff going everywhere.

Quinn: [chuckles] Okay, A different tact.

Kyle: [laughs]

Quinn: Go ahead and give me a role to act under pressure.

Kyle: Oh. I'm going through the highlights of the bottom part of my character sheet. [rolls dice] Okay. Okay. It's a 9 minus 1. 8.

Quinn: Okay. That is a mixed success, which means I will give you a worse outcome, a hard choice or a price to pay.

Kyle: On a cool role, that's a success in my book.

Quinn: I think I want to give you a couple options here. I think you can create enough of a scene that you will create a distraction, but security will come up. It will be a matter of record that you came and made a big scene trying to get into the mayor's office. Like you, Alvin Hughes.

Kyle: Mm-hmm.

Quinn: Sarah can get in, but the front desk person will notice her when she leaves. Not on her way in, but when she leaves. Or, you'll find some other information, but you won't get into the mayor's office. But neither of you will be on record being here.

Kyle: I feel like you would just go for the big distraction.

Quinn: Okay.

Kyle: I think in terms of Sarah getting in and then getting out later, if he's essentially kicked out by security, he may try to loop back around the building to the office window and maybe she can scramble out.

Quinn: Okay. So, you make a-- [crosstalk]

Kyle: I know you did say it was the second floor. But Alvin's pretty good at catching.

Quinn: Yeah. Well, you're both werewolves, so Sarah is. [laughs]

Kyle: I'm sure it wouldn't be the first time that Sarah has jumped from a large height in their upbringing.

Quinn: So, you make a big old scene. Security and the front desk person see you out of the mayor's office. Your information is recorded. They don't book you, but they take down all your info, like your name, your address, all that thing.

Kyle: I try to make a big scene about it being an outrage and that this is just another example of big business-

Quinn: Oh, yeah.

Kyle: -stomping on the little man. And that I want them to specifically write down that I'm fighting for the citizens of Firmament and our rights to our water pipes.

Quinn: Yeah.

Teo: [laughs]

Quinn: You get a few a few random people in city hall who are like, [as Random People] *Yeah, man, fight the power.*

Kyle: That's right. [crosstalk] see if I care.

Quinn: [crosstalk] mostly people just try to look the other way. But you do create enough of a distraction for Sarah to get into the mayor's office. The two of you rendezvous later. Her scaling the walls of city hall, escaping from the second floor down to the greenery below. I think how I'm going to have this work is I'm going to have you roll to investigate a mystery. But the least you can get is one question.

Kyle: Okay. Do I get any assistance from Sarah?

Quinn: Yeah, take a plus 1 for having Sarah help.

Kyle: Okay. [rolls dice] [gasps] That's a 9, plus 1 is a 10.

Quinn: Okay. So, you get to hold two. You get to ask two questions.

Kyle: I think number one's an easy choice, is what is being concealed here?

Quinn: I think Sarah's breathing heavily and she comes up to you and she's like, [as Sarah] *Okay, I got a little bit of information. The mayor left her personal laptop there. It's a Mac, so it's synced up to her iPhone and there's some of her text messages in there.*

Kyle: [as Alvin] *Oh, wow.*

Quinn: And she shows you a picture. It's not the whole text chain, but there is a series of messages between her and Jorgen Ecklund. The messages read in order. Chamberlain, [as Chamberlain] *I just got off the phone with the governor. The announcement is happening tomorrow. I'll be a senator by Monday.*

Ecklund. [as Jorgen] *Do you think it was his doing?*

Chamberlain. [as Chamberlain] *Of course. I'm aware of my own limitations, Jorgen. College town mayors don't get appointed to the United States Senate.*

Jorgen. [as Jorgen] *I don't understand.*

[as Chamberlain] *I don't understand either, Jorgen. But you saw what he did for the chief's wife. They gave her less than a week after that diagnosis. Now look at her.*

Kyle: [gasps]

Hannah: [gasps]

Teo: Oh, shit.

Kyle: Oh, my God.

Hannah: Oh, no.

Quinn: Jorgen. [as Jorgen] Are you worried about the unintended consequences?

Chamberlain. [as Chamberlain] *Of course, I'm worried. But the chief's contractors in quotations seem to have it under control.*

Hannah: [gasps]

Kyle: Oh, my God.

Kyle: Alvin gives Sarah a big hug and is like, [as Alvin] *Oh, my God, this is amazing.*

Hannah: Fuck. Goes all the way to the top.

Kyle: [laughs] [as Alvin] *She must have made a deal.*

Quinn: I don't know if it will be as consequential, but you do have another question.

Kyle: Yes. I guess she wasn't there in the office. So, maybe I'll ask, where did it go?

Quinn: I think Sarah also got to look at the mayor's calendar. She has multiple meetings over the next several days with the governor's office to go over the terms of her appointment to the United States Senate.

Kyle: Mm-hmm.

Quinn: And let's give you an oops. Let's give you an oops too.

Kyle: Woo.

Quinn: It includes a briefing on the late senators committee profiles. And among them is the Department of Energy subcommittee on national laboratories.

Kyle: Oh, man, did she kill the senator? Oh, my God. Yeah, Alvin gives Sarah a big hug and is like, [as Alvin] *Oh, you are just the best sister.*

Quinn: [as Sarah] [chuckles] *Thanks, brother. Let's get out of here.*

Kyle: [as Alvin] *Yeah, let's cheese it.*

Quinn: And the two of you book it away from City Hall.

Kyle: High fiving over and over. [chuckles]

[Monster Hour theme]

Quinn: JR?

Hannah: Yes. You had a conversation that you wanted to have with Chief Stoney before you set off for your adventure.

Hannah: Adventure is a rather generous term for what we're going to do, but yes.

Quinn: Where do you meet the Chief this time?

Teo: So, Agent Pax is still out there, and at some point, is going to come looking for me again. So, I think somewhere more public like the gun range, which is where we've met before, is out. I think probably the lookout is a safe bet. That's still a quiet neighborhood. It's not going to raise any eyebrows to have an extremely well-dressed woman hanging out there.

Quinn: No, that tracks with Olympic Heights.

Hannah: Yeah. Yeah. Fit right in. Yeah, I think that that's probably public enough where I'm not concerned about my safety, but private enough where we can have a good conversation.

Quinn: The two of you meet up at the Tiger Lily switchback trail overlook. It's a nice view, a panorama of all of Firmament. Stoney is as usual there when you arrive. He's sitting on the bench. [as Stoney] *JR?*

Hannah: [as JR] *Stoney.*

Quinn: [as Stoney] *Quite a weekend we got here.*

Hannah: [as JR] *Yeah. Do you and your officers have a good time explaining a giant missing circus tent?*

Quinn: [as Stoney] *That one is mighty difficult to explain, JR, even among the police department who've seen some strange things.*

Hannah: [as JR] *Yeah. Imagine being inside that circus tent. It was even weirder in there.*

Quinn: [as Stoney] *Well, if you have any tips about how we might be able to explain it away, I'm all ears.*

Hannah: [as JR] *I mean, you could go for just believe there's a theory that everybody involved in the Salem witch trials had low grade mass hysteria induced by bread mold. Or, am I mixing that up with the French Revolution? Anyway, you could say everybody got drugged.*

Quinn: [as Stoney] *There is enough contact high at that festival.*

Hannah: [as JR] *Yeah. Drugs, man.*

Quinn: [as Stoney] *Little reefer madness. But I don't know, folks might buy it.*

Hannah: [as JR] *Drugs. Drugs, man.*

Quinn: [as Stoney] *Better than the alternative.*

Hannah: [as JR] *Well, I've got a couple things that I need to talk to you about.*

Quinn: [as Stoney] *All right.*

Hannah: [as JR] *One, is I'm going to be going away. I don't really know where I'm going, I don't know how long I'm going to be gone and I don't even know if I'm going to make it back.*

Quinn: [as Stoney] *JR, if you're skipping town, that's fine.*

Hannah: [as JR] *No, no, that would be a lot easier. And believe me, I probably wouldn't even leave a note for you, if I was just going to bounce. I've never been the goodbye type, and I'm not considering this a goodbye. This is more like an FYI. There's something that's been behind everything that's been happening here in town, and it all stems back to one person or entity. He calls himself the Tall Man.*

Quinn: [as Stoney] *The Tall Man?*

Hannah: [as JR] *Yeah.*

Quinn: [as Stoney] *Why does he call himself that?*

Hannah: [as JR] *We call him that. I just assume that he also calls himself that, because frankly, it's a really good nickname.*

Quinn: [as Stoney] *Why do you call him that?*

Hannah: [as JR] *Because he's very tall. He's very tall. Yes. [Kyle chuckles] We workshopped a couple of them, and frankly, this is better than the first one that we came up with. It's a lot less comical, so we're sticking with it. Anyway, he grants wishes, which sounds like a good idea, but then you grant the wish of a small child who wants to turn everything he touches into candy. And frankly, I'm-*

Quinn: [as Stoney] *Wait, I'm sorry.*

Hannah: [as JR] *-still dealing with that. Yes, that's why there was the whole candy situation.*

Quinn: [as Stoney] *Is that the Ferris wheel?*

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

Quinn: [as Stoney] *Son of a bitch.*

Hannah: [as JR] *Yup.*

Kyle: [chuckles]

Hannah: [as JR] *And I may be partially responsible, inadvertently, for letting him loose. It was a while ago, and it was an accident and we're going to go put him back in his home. He was a little unclear about how we do that.*

Quinn: [as Stoney] *Where is his home?*

Hannah: [as JR] *He's not really from around here. He's from another dimension. He was in a painting, and I let him out of the painting. Anyway, this is a lot of details that maybe you don't need. Here's what you do need to know.*

Quinn: [as Stoney] *No, I appreciate the details.*

Hannah: [as JR] *I don't know if I'm coming back. We're going to try our best to get him there and get out in one piece. What I do need to know from you, what do you know about all of this? And at that instance, I pull out one of the photos, and I put it down on the bench and I slide it over to him.*

Quinn: Roll manipulate someone.

Hannah: All right. Ha, ha, haa. What? What will--

Kyle: It must be cool to be excited about manipulate some.

[laughter]

Hannah: What will convince him to do what I want?

Quinn: This picture.

Kyle: Nailed it.

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

Quinn: On a 7 to 9, they'll do it, but only if you do something for them right now to show them that you mean it.

Hannah: I pull out a second picture.

Quinn: If they ask too much, they'll tell you what, if anything, it would take for them to do it.

Hannah: Three pictures.

Kyle: [chuckles]

Quinn: [as Stoney] *How'd you get those, JR?*

Hannah: [as JR] *Does it really matter at this point?*

Quinn: [as Stoney] *I don't know. Did you take them or somebody else did?*

Hannah: [as JR] *Eh, I'm not much of a shutterbug. It wasn't me.*

Quinn: [as Stoney] *And?*

Hannah: [as JR] *You going to tell me what this is about or what?*

Quinn: Your 7 to 9 here, is that the Chief wants to know where the pictures came from and he'll tell you what's going on.

Hannah: [as JR] *Remember how you said that you thought you were being tailed?*

Quinn: [as Stoney] *And I asked you if I was being tailed?*

Hannah: [as JR] *You were being tailed.*

Teo: [laughs]

Hannah: [as JR] *Yes, that is correct.*

Kyle: [crosstalk] wonder.

Hannah: [laughs]

Quinn: [as Stoney] *You were tailing me, JR?*

Hannah: [as JR] *No. You kidding me? No.*

Quinn: [as Stoney] *Okay.*

Hannah: [as JR] *I got better shit to do.*

Teo: You had her boyfriend do it.

Hannah: Constance, he is not my boyfriend.

[laughter]

Hannah: He's my sidekick. He's also like 10 years younger than me, while technically legal. It's just-

Teo: Give it, girl.

Hannah: [crosstalk] weird dynamic. [Quinn laughs] Like, he exists in a world where he never had to listen to the dial up noise when he was a kid. And so, I'm going to make jokes about like how much the internet sucked when I was a kid, and he's going to be like, [as JR sidekick] *I don't understand what that means.*

And I'm going to say something like, [as JR] *Oh, hey. You remember when you had to take film to the Walgreens and wait for it to get developed and then you got your pictures? And he's going to be like, [as JR sidekick] Also, do not understand what that means. That's just way too big of a generational divide for love to conquer. I'm sorry, Constance.*

[laughter]

Hannah: [as JR sidekick] *It's not going to happen.*

Teo: Never say never. Anyway.

Kyle: I don't understand, JR. The internet is in the air.

Hannah: [laughs] Okay. Quinn, would Stoney go after whoever this person is if I tell them?

Quinn: I don't think. You know, he looks scared.

Hannah: [as JR] *All right. Stoney, I'll tell you who it is if you don't go after them.*

Quinn: [as Stoney] *Listen, JR, I'm not going to hurt this person, but I need to know if someone's following me.*

Hannah: [as JR] *It was Leon.*

Quinn: [as Stoney] *Of course, it was.* [Kyle chuckles] *Should have guessed.*

Kyle: That little shit.

Hannah: [as JR] *I don't think he was working alone, but he's the one I know, for sure, was tailing you.*

Quinn: [as Stoney] *Yeah. All right. Listen up, JR. Here's the deal. I don't know anything about a Tall Man or people granting wishes or deals. Although I assume that is all of the nonsense that was happening at Hullabaloo before that tent went up and vanished.*

Hannah: [as JR] *Yup.*

Quinn: [as Stoney] *Look, you know this town's strange. Something isn't right here. And we're trying to figure out why and we're trying to fix it. Some of those folks in the lab, they're onto something. They're working on it. But just like the monsters in this town, if everybody knows what's going on. It's a powder keg, JR. And it's going to explode. Yeah, me and Mayor Jorgen, some PR support and those two lab coats, we're trying to figure it out. Honestly, it's probably better if you don't know more than that.*

Hannah: [as JR] *I need as much information as I can if I'm going to put this guy back where he's supposed to go. Any information I don't know, that makes my job so much more difficult.*

Quinn: [as Stoney] *I don't know anything about where he's supposed to go.*

Hannah: [as JR] *What's in the lab? You told me never to go back in the lab. Part of it's because yeah I was... [01:16:34]*

Quinn: [as Stoney] *Stand by it.*

Hannah: [as JR] *FBI. I can't protect you from federal law enforcement. I get it. But what's in the fucking lab?*

Quinn: [as Stoney] *Swear they're doing the experiments, JR, trying to fix what's wrong.*

Hannah: [as JR] *What experiments?*

Quinn: [as Stoney] *Honestly, couldn't even explain him if I tried.*

Hannah: [as JR] *Quinn, is he bullshitting me? Is he being--*

Quinn: [as Stoney] *You don't know that. And there's no way you can, unless you have the flake move-*

Hannah: [as JR] *No, I don't.*

Quinn: [chuckles] [as Stoney] *-where you always know if someone's lying to you.*

Hannah: [as JR] *Damn it.*

Quinn: [as Stoney] *But there is no sense motive in Monster of the Week.*

Hannah: [as JR] *Argh. Fine. All right. Well, I have to report back to The Moonscape in 12 hours. I haven't even picked out what suit I'm going to wear, which is very important. If you think of anything else, you call me. Any information that you're withholding from me is going to make it that much more difficult for me to get this man back to where he goes and hopefully stop all of this.*

Quinn: [as Stoney] *Good luck, JR.*

Hannah: [as JR] *See you round, Stoney.*

[music]

Quinn: JR, you had one last thing you wanted to do.

Hannah: Yeah. We got the disc back in-- It was after the-

Kyle: After second arc.

Hannah: -Consensus. Yeah. It was after this-- So, we got that thing. Alvin really likes poking it. We have done shit all with it since then. So, I would like to perhaps investigate it and see if there's anything else useful that I can glean from it.

Quinn: So, you return to the studio.

Hannah: Yes.

Quinn: You head to the storage unit, where the three of you opted to hold the broken shard of disc.

Hannah: Right.

Quinn: You unlock the door and swing it open. And there it is. Its jagged black edges gleam as you flip on the lights. You notice immediately that distortion around it, the ripples, like heat waves on the horizon, are reaching much further than before.

Hannah: Oh, shit.

Quinn: About half of the room is now bending and swirling in chaotic mercurial patterns all centered around this object.

Hannah: This is the same distortion that we saw when we conquered the er-spider, when we also saw the vision of Benedict Cumberbatch's special holes.

Quinn: This is slightly different. You saw this distortion around the disc before. The thing that you perceived after the death of the er-spider was a spark of light that expanded out into a ring. It formed a window. This is more of a distortion of space.

Hannah: Okay. What happens if I walk into the distortion?

Quinn: As you step forward to the edge of this distortion field, you feel the key in your pocket start to pull slightly.

Hannah: Okay.

Quinn: As it does, you'll recall on the disc, there were the etched sigils around the outer ring and that larger symbol of an eye with a spiral inside. Both of those begin to glow faintly as the key tugs.

Hannah: I'm going to keep the side with the key as far away from the disc as I can, because I don't really want it to rip out of my pocket. And I can't remember-- Listeners, please message me right now and tell me if you recall which [Quinn chuckles] episode we discussed whether the patterns on the disc look like the patterns on the key. Quinn, do they look like the patterns on the key? I forgot.

Quinn: Yes. The smaller sigils look like those that are etched into your key.

Hannah: Okay.

Quinn: It's not a one for one match, but they certainly look kind of a similar script.

Hannah: Okay.

Kyle: They're also burned into your palm, if I remember-- [crosstalk]

Hannah: That's true.

Quinn: Yes.

Hannah: Let's see. I also recall that when I tried to do a magic on it, it went very badly. So, I'm not going to touch the key to it.

Quinn: You never touched the key to it.

Hannah: Right. But I tried to do a magic on it. I tried to--

Quinn: You did try to do magic on it, and that went wild.

Hannah: Yeah. Okay. So, I'm going to not do a magic on it. But I would like to go forward and maybe poke it with one finger. I know Alvin really liked it, but does it do anything if I poke it?

Quinn: You step forward and you place your finger on it and you feel this-- I think the only word to describe it is potency.

Hannah: Mm-hmm.

Quinn: You feel as though your locus of control is expanded, as though you can almost see multiple pathways forward and multiple probabilities, multiple options for how things could shake out, and how you and your actions could alter them. You feel powerful.

Hannah: Can I use it to heal my wounds?

Quinn: Do you want to use magic?

Hannah: I'm at three right now, and we have 12 hours left before we have to show up. I would like to try and heal my wounds.

Quinn: Go ahead and give me a roll to use magic. Take a plus one bonus.

Hannah: Okay. [rolls dice] Well, that's going to be a 12.

Quinn: Your effect here is heal one harm, correct?

Hannah: Yes.

Quinn: JR, you heal three harm.

Hannah: Ooh, shit.

Quinn: Your hand is immediately transformed back to normal.

Hannah: Yes. No more cotton candy hand.

Kyle: Damn.

Hannah: All right.

Teo: Whoo.

Kyle: Aww.

Teo: [chuckles]

Quinn: A few flecks of hardened cotton candy fall off of your hand, and in an instant, you just know it's fine.

Hannah: Wow.

Quinn: And it feels good, JR.

Kyle: See? Good-- [crosstalk]

Hannah: The disc is a little bit-- I also have a feeling that if I use this too much, there could be a-- Perhaps a not good quality to it. Dang it. I'm wondering if there's any way to do any kind of magic that would help. I don't know, give us something useful to use. Okay, I'm going

to try one more magic. I would like to observe the Tall Man's world using the power of the disc.

Quinn: Roll to use magic, and take a plus one.

Hannah: All right. [rolls dice] That's going to be a 9.

Quinn: There's a glitch.

Hannah: Effect is of a short duration. Any glance is better than none at all.

Quinn: JR, what do you say?

Hannah: I think I'd just say, show me. And frankly, when I use my magic, there's a certain amount of intent behind the words. I don't have to spell out like, [as JR] *Okay, magic disc. Show me where the Gumby Man lives.* If I say, show me, there's a certain amount of intent of what I'm looking at that will communicate what it is I want to see.

Quinn: Yeah. I think you feel a strange sense of understanding from somewhere other than yourself. And in front of you appears a small spark. Just as in *The Hollow Circus*, it begins to crackle and grow and expand, and soon you are looking through one of these windows that you are all too familiar with.

Inside is a beautiful glade, a pristine meadow surrounded by a copse of trees. There is a pedestal. And on it, sits an enormous tome made of supple leather. There's a breeze that runs through. As it does, the branches of all these trees move. But one of them doesn't move the same. One of them doesn't move like ordinary tree boughs. It seems almost human. As the window closes, you have the distinct impression that that tree is looking out at you. And then, it's gone.

Hannah: Great. Like, sentient trees.

Quinn: You turn your gaze from this window, and you realize that the key is less than an inch away from this broken fragment of disc.

Hannah: Oh, boy.

Quinn: Your hand has moved on its own.

Hannah: Oh, boy. I remember what happened last time. That's not good.

Quinn: JR, I need you to roll to act under pressure at minus one.

Hannah: I believe that's going to be negated by not my fault, which gives me plus one to act under pressure when dealing with the consequences of my own spell casting.

Quinn: That would apply here.

Hannah: Yup. [rolls dice] Come on. It's going to be an 8.

Quinn: Okay. A worse outcome or hard choice or a price to pay. I think you have two choices here. You can pull back, but it's going to cost you, or you can let them collide.

Hannah: I'm going to pull the key back. That is the natural reaction.

Kyle: Yeah.

Hannah: Okay. What happens?

Quinn: JR, you start to wrench the key away, and the field around the disc swirls and churns angrily. And then, it starts to push outward. And around you, the walls of the storage unit begin to bend and buckle. There's noise as the structure is slowly torn to pieces around you, it's as though the drywall and blaster have simply been reimagined in shapes that no longer fit together. They fall in a mangled heap around you, as this force continues outward, a roiling hurricane of rapidly changing reality, in the eye of which stand you and the disc.

The maelstrom subsides when you are at last able to wrench the key away. What settles in its place is an utterly baffling and chaotic scene. Across the alley, the sides of several houses have been rearranged, the walls warped into jutting spears and open mouths, pipes bursting forth like teeth. The back of the studio appears to have suffered a similar fate, although not quite so pronounced. The grass and gravel at your feet have been turned to a glassy orange and coral, and they smell faintly of cardamom. It reminds you of The Moonscape. And in your hand, the key hums excitedly.

Hannah: Oops.

Quinn: [laughs]

Hannah: [as JR] *Hey, Constance. I have good news and I have bad news.*

Quinn: [laughs] We leave this scene of unexpected chaos and travel across town. We see Kristen reclining on the sofa in her loft apartment just off main street. She's wearing a cozy plush bathrobe and has a sleek, stylish device affixed to the front of her face. A VR headset with the words, Imagine Labs, etched in the polymer.

She seems relaxed, almost peaceful. But suddenly, the device begins to click and whirr like an angry insect. She rips it from her face with a startled shriek, tossing it across the room. And on the floor of her loft, it begins to smoke and crackle before exploding like a firework. As the smoke clears. We see Kristen staring at a scorched bit of hardwood, baffled and bewildered.

We see Dorian, the Tall Man, perched atop a precarious looking karst in The Moonscape. He's scribbling idly in a journal in an indecipherable script that is nonetheless oddly familiar. As he notches notes in the page, his hand begins to seize, convulsing and writhing. He clutches it sharply to his chest, sucking down a deep and ragged breath. We can see the skin around his wrist and fingers is horribly gaunt and withered.

As he cradles his hand, Dorian suddenly snaps to attention. He stares intently out at the horizon, like an animal alerted to a strange and far away noise. His gaze lingers there intently. We see a small clearing cordoned off with caution tape. Agent Pax walks the ground deliberately, meticulously examining the area where a bright red circus tent had abruptly and inexplicably vanished earlier that morning. In their hand is a burnished brass sextant, an intricate and fantastical looking object that looks like it belongs in a museum exhibit. There's a low resinous thrum as the levers and lenses of the device begin to slide and rotate of their own volition. When the movements cease, Pax raises the device to their face and looks through.

Hanging over the scene is a gaseous cloud of silvery particulates. Tendrils spool outwards, with the most prominent extending towards The Moonscape. Pax starts to head that way, but something catches their eye through the lens. Back towards Firmament's industrial district,

there is an unfathomably large halo of phosphorescent light looming over the horizon. Within it are smaller rings of energy whipping furiously in gyroscopic orbits. Like a nova, it expands outward, encompassing more and more of Firmament within its locus, and then abruptly, it collapses in on itself and disappears.

[Monster Hour theme]

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