

## [Live at the Table 72: Locked Room Murder Mystery Pt. 2](#)

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### **Introduction**

**Keith:** Everybody else's clapping is normal. [**Jack:** Okay.] No one else has a problem clapping.

**Sylvi:** Bumper sticker that says, how's my clapping?

**Jack:** Everyone else's clapping is normal. Alright.

**Keith:** It's a sticker that says, how's my clapping? And then it says my real phone number on it.

**Sylvi:** Yeah, with your credit card details.

**Keith:** With my credit card information.

**Sylvi:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, you gotta.

**Keith:** Security code too?

**Sylvi:** Yeah.

**Keith:** [bleeped out credit card number]

**Jack:** And your SSN.

**Keith:** [more bleeps]

**Sylvi:** Shut the fuck up.

**Jack:** This isn't gonna air. This is not coming out. The bit with Keith's credit card is not coming out. Okay, we gotta come in. Ready? Okay. The Sleuth. I'll start reading The Sleuth and then, Sylvi, do you want to pick up from Moving the Sleuth?

**Sylvi:** Sure.

**Jack:** [reading] The Sleuth. At this stage of our game, we've got a considerable amount of suspects and clues arranged in a grid in our journal. [aside] Boy, have we. [reading] Each suspect may border four clues. Each clue may border four suspects. We refer to these borders as questions. At its simplest, each question is, how are these things related and how does that help solve the mystery? So if we look at the Miro, these things here, these gaps, are your questions. He describes it later in the—Adam describes it later in the doc as like streets between city blocks. And those are the questions.

**Sylvi:** Could we just like, go through what would the—Does it connect to the suspect? So it's a question related to the suspect. So for example, if it was this half empty bottle of 60 year Macaulay, this like—**Jack:** This question—] the sort of gutter here would be with Wayne John Hagg.

**Jack:** Yes, you're absolutely right. For example, this question would be how does the half empty bottle McCauley relate to Buford Knipps? Similarly, if we go over here, Pinky's information for Sophia down here is relating to Bill Tally Tab.

**Sylvi:** It's relating to the cousins is what I'm seeing.

**Jack:** Yeah, the cousins are very involved with Pinky's information for Sophia.

**Sylvi:** [crosstalk] Interesting.

**Keith:** [crosstalk] Wow.

**Jack:** [crosstalk] Each one of them. And who's the fulcrum cousin to that? The fulcrum cousin is..

**Keith:** The fulcrum cousin is in the fulcrum position. [with **Sylvi**] It's Newton Henry Hertz. Newton Henry Hertz.

**Jack:** It is Newton Henry Hertz. He—Yeah. Okay, I think we took a little break between the first half and second half. And I think in the first recording we referred to this cousin as the pivot cousin. But over time it seems to have settled on fulcrum cousin. Alright, [reading] enter the Sleuth: English French. If the killer represents the spectre of murder, the Sleuth represents the pursuit of truth. As such, the Sleuth doesn't respect on—doesn't respect—doesn't rest on suspects like the killer does. Instead, the sleuth lives in those gaps in the narrative. That is to say, the sleuth lives in the questions and works to answer those questions, to untangle the mystery. During the investigation, the sleuth will move before each chapter. [stops reading] This is some really nice, clean, metaphorical, mechanical design. Right? I feel like the sleuth living in gaps in the narrative is like, yeah, you could. That's what a detective in fiction does.

**Sylvi:** Yeah. That is, that is every episode of Columbo.

**Jack:** I've never seen one episode of Columbo.

**Sylvi:** That's fucked, Jack! You would love Columbo!

**Jack:** [crosstalk] I know

**Keith:** [crosstalk] I've only seen one episode of Columbo.

**Sylvi:** God.

**Jack:** We gotta watch this.

**Sylvi:** Media Club Plus Columbo is now, like, a thing. [crosstalk] I need to figure out if we can do, even if it would take us 100 years.

**Jack:** [crosstalk] That is beginning now. Here.

**Keith:** This one he finds- he solves a murder.

**Sylvi:** [crosstalk] He does solve a murder!

**Jack:** [crosstalk] He does that. And he says one more thing. Also. Doesn't he- Doesn't he love everybody's wife?

**Sylvi:** He loves his wife.

**Jack:** He loves *his* wife.

**Sylvi:** He loves his wife. He was always—He will always talk about his wife. Like, there's an episode where he has to—Where the murderer is the host of a cooking show. And he keeps—It's great because he goes into the audience and gets brought on as the, like, the like, audience volunteer. And he keeps going like, you know, my wife loves you. She's a huge fan. And it's great because it's just Peter Falk being charming. Even when he's phoning it in in the later seasons, it's still Peter Falk, so it's good.

**Jack:** I feel like Monsieur Hulot from Jacques Tati came up in the first half of this recording. But I also think that, Keith, Colombo and Monsieur Hulot are kind of a Dutch Welsh, English French combo. I feel like there's just a few degrees apart from each other.

**Keith:** Yeah, they got the coat.

**Jack:** They have the coat.

**Sylvi:** Oh, that's crucial.

**Jack:** The coat is essential.

**Keith:** They have the hat.

**Jack:** They do have the hats.

**Sylvi:** We need to make, like, a, like, alignment chart. And then also put, like, Philip Marlowe on there.

**Jack:** Yeah, for detectives. Yeah, Philip Marlowe. I'm trying to think. I mean, Hercule Poirot is my favorite detective, probably? Although, if I'm being honest, my favorite detective fiction tends to be ones in which everybody involved wants the detective to appear, and he never does. There is, you know, *And Then There Were None* by Agatha Christie is famous for not having Poirot in it. It's just this awful escalating crime on an island and you as the reader are just desperate for the detective to arrive and he never does.

**Keith:** I've read so few detective things and I don't watch a ton of detective things either.

**Jack:** I am profoundly and sincerely anti-police. And at the same time, I think detective fiction is fun.

**Sylvi:** Mysteries are very fun, is the thing.

**Keith:** Yeah, well, here's the—This is crucial. You can talk to essentially the hardest nose police defunder justice system disassembler in the world. No one will ever tell you, I don't think we should investigate murder. No one will tell you that.

**Sylvi:** That's a good point.

**Jack:** Yeah. It is pretty important that when someone dies, you go, well, we should figure out what the circumstances of that death were. Otherwise we would live in the “whoops, oh well” world.

**Keith:** With the caveat that you can find someone who will say anything. And you could of course, find some weird nihilist anarchist who will... tell you that—

**Jack:** Also, on the flip side, sometimes we do live in the whoops, oh well world vis a vis murder.

**Keith:** Oh, yeah. Actually, yeah. More often than not, we live there, I think.

**Jack:** Let's see. Sorry, we should, we should—Sorry, I'm just. Now I'm thinking about detective fiction.

**Sylvi:** It's gonna happen.

**Jack:** One of the values of Live at the Table is that as we go splashing around in genres, we do just keep ending up in—I saw someone in the coffee shop today wearing a fantastic trench coat. And I thought to myself, I should own a trench coat. But I don't know if it suits me. Although I suppose I can't know that if I don't try.

**Sylvi:** Yeah, I think you could pull off a trench coat.

**Jack:** [crosstalk] I wear a peacoat, usually.

**Keith:** [crosstalk] I watched It's A Wonderful Life the other day because of—It was Christmas.

**Jack:** Because of it's was Christmas.

**Keith:** Just. They aren't—They're not—I watch this movie every year. They're not kidding about that movie. It's so good. I watch with Isaac, who can barely pay attention to even some of the best movies of all time. And he was rapt and was like, I can't believe that that was so good. And I was like, I know it's so good. One of the things that people who really, really want to wear suits and hats and coats put—the problems with a lot of those people's personalities aside, it's that they live in a context where everybody's wearing those things. And so I think there's like a desire to, to be somewhere where wearing a trench coat makes sense. And it's hard to find that context.

**Jack:** Yeah, it is. And it's Jimmy Stewart, right?

**Keith:** Jimmy Stewart, yeah.

**Jack:** Now, what an actor. And he's a trench coat wearer. I've never seen It's a Wonderful Life. But I tell you what, Keith, I have seen the last 10 minutes and it made me cry.

**Keith:** You should watch *It's a Wonderful Life*. Here's my problem, is everybody focuses on those last 10, 20 minutes. There's so much movie that is a two hour and 20 minute movie. 1946. Long ass fucking movie for 1926.

**Jack:** 46.

**Keith:** 46. Did I say 26? [**Jack:** You did.] 46. A lot of it takes place.

**Jack:** An early talkie.

**Sylvi:** Everybody ran away when Jimmy Stewart started coming towards the screen when they first saw it.

**Keith:** There is so much happening in that movie that isn't the thing that everybody knows because it's been done in a thousand parodies and homages.

**Jack:** Yes, yes. Although I am on some level a sentimentalist and I do like it when you sing *Auld Lang Syne* with people you love, so.

**Keith:** Oh yeah. I mean, it works.

**Jack:** Simply a fact.

**Keith:** The movie is also sentimental. The movie is pro sentimental.

**Jack:** It's Frank Capra.

**Sylvi:** That man is made of sentimentality and love sentimentality.

**Jack:** Anyway, moving on.

**Keith:** Proto-Rob Reiner.

**Jack:** Yes, absolutely. I think that in the same way that we talk about how you don't have horror without Stephen—contemporary horror without Stephen King, you do not have modern, like realist melodrama without Frank Capra at all. Okay. [reading] During the investigation, the sleuth will move before each chapter we can see here. The sleuth

rests on the questions between the suspects and clues. The arrows represent a movement of three spaces for the sleuth. In the same way that the killer moves, like a bishop crossed with a detective menu, the sleuth moves, and whenever he passes an intersection, the person currently moving the sleuth chooses which way he goes. Sylvi, would you like to read this section which just explains what I explained for better?

**Sylvi:** Yes. Moving the Sleuth. Think of the questions like a grid of streets between the suspects and the clues in our journal. When moving the Sleuth, you will move through a number of intersections made by these streets going left, right or straight at each one. The player whose turn it is can move the sleuth up to a number of spaces equal to the rank of the drawn card.

**Jack:** So you can see that on a three we go 1, 2, 3. You want to just read out the rest of this page, Sylvi?

**Sylvi:** Sure, why not? [reading] Removing Peril. When the sleuth ends its movement, you may remove a peril token on the suspect the Sleuth is now adjacent to. You can save a life by investigating an imperiled subject [aside] or suspect. My bad. [reading] Updating clues. During the investigation phase, we will write chapters to update the clue the Sleuth sits next to. Once you find a connection between the suspect and the clue, update that clue with the new information. You can append these new details to what's there already, or erase and rewrite the clue based on how you now understand it. The important thing is that the clue itself changes in some way, reflecting the deeper understanding of the mystery now held by the detective.

**Jack:** And you can see that they have updated a speckle of blood at the scene to, the blood matches John Jr's blood type. And there was blood on John Senior's briefcase.

**Keith:** I like that we have level three of this clue already. A double sided quarter with a drop of dried blood on it. [Jack laughter]

**Sylvi:** We do.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvi:** I did kind of get ahead of us, huh?

**Jack:** Although I suppose—

**Keith:** [interrupting] No, I think that that's great because then we can go somewhere even more specific with it.

**Jack:** Yes. Friends at the Table, elaborate and maximalist? Nay.

**Sylvi:** [fake outraged] What?

**Jack:** Not on New Year's Eve 2026. I mean, day. 2026 is gonna be a new year of Friends at the Table, of cleanliness and minimalism!

**Keith:** Starting with New Year's Eve, the most reserved day of the year.

**Jack:** [laughter] Okay, Keith, do you want to read about peril and plots?

**Keith:** Sure. There we go. [reading] During the investigation, the killer does not rest. Each turn, it will land on a suspect and imperil them. When the killer moves during the investigation, add a peril to the suspect it lands on. If the suspect already has a Peril token on it, a plot on that suspect's life is enacted. When a plot on a suspect's life is enacted, the player whose turn it is chooses one of the following options. 1. Allow the plot to succeed. If you choose to allow the plot to succeed, announce that the suspect is dead. This means that you, as an author of the story, allow the plot to succeed and doesn't necessarily mean that somebody in the story knew about the plot ahead of time. That said, you could always work it in your story that somebody knew and didn't say anything. 2. Attempt to thwart the plot. If you want to give the imperiled suspect a chance at life, you can attempt to thwart the plot. Draw another card from the deck and add it to the tableau. If it matches the color of the card drawn for this turn, the plot is thwarted. Otherwise, the character is—The character dies. [aside] That's seeming like about a 25% chance to succeed there. [reading] Update a clue. Once you know how the plot resolves, choose one of the clues adjacent to the imperiled suspect and update it to reflect the role it played in a—To reflect the role it played, a central role in this plot.

[aside] Okay, it wasn't me. [reading] Include the plot and this clue in your upcoming chapter.

**Jack:** So. [reading] Peril when the killer lands on it. If there's two already, we enact plot. We can either kill straight away or try and save it. But as we said earlier, if the sleuth lands next to a suspect with the peril token, we can remove that peril. I do really like this, and you know, you see this all the time in detective fiction. The detective arriving on the scene isn't necessarily the end of criminal activity. In fact, it really often escalates at that point as people try and wriggle out of the detective's grasp. The Rot is how we refer to the lies and secrets that surround the murder case. It's shorthand for the social conditions that allow a murder to happen among this group of suspects in the first place. The Rot turned our gathering of people into a journal full of suspects, and thus is the reason that any one of the suspects in the journal could conceivably be the culprit. Uncovering the Rot is key to solving any locked room murder mystery. The card drawn when writing chapters in the investigation phase determines whether the chapter you write relates to the Rot or the murder itself. Red cards lead to chapters that relate to the Rot. These chapters reveal some secret that our suspects would much rather sweep under the rug and get us closer to knowing why this murder was committed and why it seems like every suspect has something to hide. When writing a chapter with a red card, explore the interpersonal relationships and reveal the dark secrets of the involved suspects without worrying if these secrets actually caused the murder. Black cards lead to chapters relating to the puzzle of the murder itself. These chapters lead us closer to understanding how the murder actually took place. When writing a chapter with a black card, focus on the hard evidence, the clues about the crime, and the specific ways suspects talk about the murder and the victim. Designer note: there will naturally be overlap between these two types of chapters. Some combinations of clue and suspect will heavily lean towards one or the other. It's totally fine if your chapter addresses both the how and the why. Just make sure to involve the side of the mystery indicated by the card suit in some part of your chapter, even if it ends up skewing the other way. Also, make sure you're considering what type of chapter you're writing when moving the sleuth. If you can't think of a way to work the Rot into the linkage between a suspect and clue to try moving the sleuth to a different question for that turn. [stops reading] Okay.

**Keith:** Okay. So the cards drawn for the Rot are the color card that determines how to thwart, not the suit. It said color, but I heard suit. So it's—

**Jack:** Oh, yes, it's—.

**Keith:** So it's 50/50. Assuming the card numbers are evil—equal.

**Jack:** Evil. Maybe they're evil.

**Sylvi:** Oh no! [laughter from everyone] Aw jeez.

**Keith:** I'm getting a distinctly evil vibe from the relationship between red and black cards.

**Jack: Keith,** it's the year of cleanliness and minimalism. It's 2026. You can't be introducing, "What if the numbers are evil?" on this, the first day of Friends at the Table's new style.

**Keith:** Oh, no, I'm sorry. What if the numbers are even? Good.

**Jack:** Even number good. Better. Movie therapist nodding and writing something down in her little book. Well done. Okay, [reading] the investigation. In this phase of the game, we'll take turns writing chapters as in, as in the lead up to narrate the detective's investigation of the murder. Place the investigation tableau at the top of the journal. We, as usual, are using the playingcards.io [**Sylvi:** Oh, yes.] Do you need the link?

**Sylvi:** It's still in our chat.

**Jack:** Oh, I can see a blue circle.

**Sylvi:** That's me, I'm the blue one! Keith, do you need this link again?

**Keith:** No, I got it.

**Sylvi:** Cool.

**Jack:** I see a purple circle. Oh, look at these beautiful flies buzzing around. Okay, [reading] shuffle the deck and place it on its spot. Place the sleuth on a question next to the suspect that found the victim. So, Dutch found the victim.

**Sylvi:** Okay.

**Jack:** And I don't know why the killer's token is on Dutch.

**Sylvi:** I don't know either.

**Jack:** Let's—Let's—Oh, the killer was there at the, at the end. It moved, I think.

**Keith:** Does that mean that Dutch is the first or does it not pick up until after this?

**Jack:** The killer is going to move. Wouldn't it be on Sophia?

**Sylvi:** I thought it would be on Sophia. This is why I'm confused.

**Keith:** Do you want us to look at the video really quick and see?

**Jack:** No, we should just make a decision. I'm gonna put it back on Sophia as if to reconfirm her death.

**Sylvi:** Yeah. Double tap!

**Jack:** Double tap. Sorry, Sophia. Okay, [reading] draw a card and add it to the tableau. If you now have a full house, move to the summation phase of the game. [stops reading] Which we won't. I don't remember who went last so we should probably just begin again. Alphabetical style, which is, I suppose, me. That's a bad way to say that. Convenient.

**Keith:** Very convenient.

**Jack:** Very convenient. Many years ago, my two parents [snickering] planned—Okay, I'm gonna draw a card.

## Chapter One

[00:18:49]

**Keith:** I'm calling the detective to figure this out.

**Jack:** And the card that I've drawn is a black five. Otherwise, follow the killer moving the same rules as before. So the killer is going to move in, starting in the direction of spades. They are going to move fi—Whoops. Oh, my God. They're gonna move five tiles. They're gonna go 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. [background gasping] Newton Henry Hertz receives one peril. This doesn't—**Keith:** The fulcrum!] The fulcrum. This doesn't—The perils don't do anything until there are two. But we can just sort of feel that the tension is starting to ratchet up. As, as English French pulls out his little notebook, what is Newton Henry Hertz doing? Is he still in a sort of, like, little cluster of denial with the other two cousins, or has he calmed a little, Keith?

[pause]

**Keith:** No, Newton Henry Hertz is not in a cluster of denial. He is planning, because Newton Henry Hertz is business rivals with Pinky Huckleberry and doesn't know that Pinky's secretly poor, and thus he's winning. [**Jack** laughter] And so I think that Newton is trying to figure out alibis for him and his cousins. And he's also trying to figure out how to use this to get a leg up on Pinky.

**Jack:** He's trying to get, like, Euan, Edmondson and Euan, his accounting firm, on the phone to immediately start talking about some plan, but the power is out, so there's no cell signal or whatever.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Okay. [reading] So having moved the killer, add peril and resolve any relevant plots. Remember, if you need to add a second peril to the suspect, a plot is enacted. Be sure to incorporate any plots into the chapter you write. Then move the sleuth to a new question in the journal. If the suspect the sleuth is now adjacent to has a peril token, you

may remove it. [stops reading] So we're gonna get to move English five times. Oh, my God. I'm gonna go 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. I am now in a question linking Bill Tally Tab, who is a media—pompous media mogul, and all eyes are drawn to the now obvious hidden door in the room. Oh, my God. Okay, [reading] Write a chapter where the detective investigates the link between the suspect and clue they're adjacent to, taking into account the color of the drawn card. Red cards lead us to a chapter about the Rot. While black cards, [aside] which I've drawn [reading] lead us to a chapter about the murder, Remember to include as least as many suspects in your chapter as the rank of the drawn card.

**Jack and Sylvi:** Wow, wow, wow.

**Jack:** Okay, let's think. What is—So this is about the murder. Oh, okay. What if—So Bill Tally Tab is like a—I'm trying to think about, like, what if English French sees him with footage descending into the hidden door on his—He's like, you know, he's editing something on his phone or he's like, you know, has he been down there already? Has he, has he taken a look at the space? I'm trying to think of something that would connect these two...

**Keith:** Security cameras?

**Jack:** Oh, oh, [crosstalk] English French is trying.

**Keith:** [crosstalk]-- trying to find footage of Bill Tallytab doing something there. Yes, there's security—This is the—These are the private corridors. There are security cameras.

**Jack:** That's true. I suppose I was thinking that Bill Tally Tab, being as he is in media, had footage himself, almost like first person footage of descending down into the—

**Sylvi:** He was filming a vlog?

**Jack:** He was, he was vlogging.

**Keith:** Yeah, 'cause he's new media now.

**Jack:** Let me think. Hang on. All eyes are drawn to the now obvious hidden door in the room.

[long pause]

**Keith:** All eyes.

[long pause]

**Sylvi:** Every single one.

**Jack:** I'm trying to think about—Oh, I mean, all eyes, like he has broadcasted something to—Or he's trying to send something out to the—to a wider audience.

**Keith:** He airdrops it to the whole—to the—to everyone.

**Sylvi:** Oh, my God. Wait, that's so funny. That's really funny!

**Jack:** He accidentally airdrops it to all the other suspects or whatever or are you saying—

**Sylvi:** Yes!

**Keith:** Yeah, it's sort of like the accidentally CCing everyone on an email.

**Jack:** Oh, my God. And there's, there's uproar, you know, in the room. Or I imagine some people have left the room to go to other side areas. I don't think we're at the point yet where French has gathered people together, but people are like ducking their heads into the room and trying to make eye contact with Bill Tally Tab to be like, did he do that? And I think English French kind of sweeps in and sort of gently takes Bill Tally Tab by the elbow and says,

[as **English**] Mr. Tab, Tally Tab. I can't tell—Is it a middle name or a last name?

**Keith** [as **Bill**]: Middle. Middle!

**Jack [as English]:** Oh, okay. Mr. Tab, if you could come with me for a second, I just, I just have a couple of questions.

**Keith [as Bill]:** Why? No.

**Jack [as English]:** This will all go much easier for you and for your cousins if you just accompany me to the—

**Keith [as Bill]:** Is this man threatening me?

**Jack:** I think—Oh, God. I think that someone just holds up their phone, playing the footage, the first person footage descending the stairs, as if to be like, did you know you sent this?

**Keith [as Bill]:** How did you get that? That's privileged information.

**Jack [as English]:** Mr. Tab, I fear that there may have been some mishap with your fingers. Some mishap sending the footage. It's very strange that this—

**Keith:** I look at my fingers.

**Jack [as English]:** Please come with me. It's much better to have this conversation away from prying eyes.

**Jack:** And he sort of gently but firmly leads Bill Tally Tab into a side room that is storing other art that would have been on display in the A frame. There's, like,

**Keith:** More fake art?

**Jack:** More fake art. It's like a man riding a horse. English French, just sort of like, sits gently down on, like, a pedestal that earlier had a, you know, a beautiful sculptural cube on it.

**[as English]** Now, Mr. Tab, there's no use in denying it. Your little accident has sent footage to everybody in this building that we can all clearly recognize. Is

this, this strange passage that was visible in the room where dear Sophia was found murdered. Why do you have this footage?

**Keith [as Bill]:** Well, I took it.

**Jack [as English]:** Well, I don't think anybody is denying that. What made you enter a room?

**Keith [as Bill]:** And I sent it on purpose.

**Jack [as English]:** You—Why did you send it on purpose?

**Keith [as Bill]:** To let everybody know about the room.

**Jack [as English]:** So you filmed it and sent it to everybody rather than coming to us in our moment of tension and anxiety?

**Keith [as Bill]:** I had to act fast.

**Jack [as English]:** Why did you have to act fast?

**Keith [as Bill]:** There's a killer afoot!

**Jack [as English]:** [laughing] Afoot?

**Keith [as Bill]:** Is that not what we say?

**Jack [as English]:** Oh, I suppose we could say afoot. I suppose we could say on the loose. Rather warm in here.

**Jack:** Takes off his puffy hat and kind of stuffs it in the jacket of his puffy coat.

**[as English]:** When you entered the room, it was immediately following Welsh's discovery of the body. When did you take this footage?

**Keith [as Bill]:** Yeah, about, about immediately after.

**Jack [as English]:** And how far down into the passage did you go?

[pause]

**Keith [as Bill]:** Until it got too dark.

**Jack [as English]:** Until it got too dark. You sure you weren't down there to clean something up, perhaps?

**Keith [as Bill]:** Hey, what is this?

**Jack [as English]:** I'm a detective, sir. My job is to uncover the mysteries. I live in the questions and the question—

**Keith [as Bill]:** [interrupting] Okay, so now all of a sudden, I'm trying to help out everybody, I don't believe, send them video so that they know what's going on, and all of a sudden I'm a suspect. Cute. No? That's cute.

[long pause]

**Jack [as English]:** Let's look at that video again together, shall we?

**Jack:** As English French pulls out his, his phone—Did he accidentally get it airdropped to English French as well? I think he must have done, right? [**Keith** agreement] I think there's something in the video that reveals that it was shot before the murder of Sophia. Maybe Sophia is audible in the background or something, that this wasn't, in fact, a post Sophia death. He'd actually been down there earlier in the evening. [pause] So I'm gonna say “All eyes are hidden, staircase previously explored by BTT.” And I don't think English French says that he has noticed this to Bill Tally Tab. I think once the video ends and they kind of watch it with the awkward silence of one person showing another person a video and not quite knowing, you know, how to react, he sort of says,

[**as English**] Well, thank you very much. I'm sure I might have some questions for you later.

**Keith [as Bill]:** I'm sure.

**Jack [as English]:** I'd like to apologize if you feel threatened. You must understand this is simply my job.

**Keith [as Bill]:** [fake laughter] Fine. It's fine.

**Sylvi:** I don't believe this guy.

**Jack:** Does he make eye contact with the other cousins as he leaves the room?

**Keith:** Oh, like overly makes eye contact. Makes too much eye contact.

**Jack:** Okay, let's—

[**Keith** laughter]

**Sylvi:** Wagging his eyebrows in some sort of way that is like semaphore for the cousins.

**Jack:** What's really funny—

**Keith [as Bill]:** Cousin code. We have cousin code. You don't have cousin code?

**Jack:** Two-three cousin code. Wait, three-two—

**Sylvi [as Bill]:** You never learned the eyebrow waggles of the cousins? No, it couldn't be me.

**Jack:** Oh, my God. What if, what if French makes eye contact with Welsh and also does a cousin—

**Sylvi:** Does the exact same code.

**Jack:** Neither notices that the other is doing it.

**Keith:** Here's. Here's what's so great to me, and maybe we could cut this, but we don't have to. What's so great to me about the totally organic Dutch Welsh is a three-two cousin with English French is that, I thought it would be funny to make a character with

the same naming convention as English French and put him in the thing. But that is also what's happening with the three-two cousins. All of their names are, like, different—They're all, like, the same category of thing. [**Jack:** Oh, it's—] Newton Henry Hertz are three measurement systems. Bill Tally Tab is three ways of saying Bill. And Cedar Basil Banyan are three trees.

**Sylvi:** Oh, my God. Good job, Keith.

**Jack:** Whereas. Whereas, there's clearly some sort of slightly different cousin relationship between Dutch Welsh and English French because they are all countries.

**Keith:** But we know there's a fulcrum cousin who's also two countries.

**Jack:** Yeah, a mysterious fulcrum cousin. Okay, write a chapter. We've done this. Once the clue is updated, the next player takes a turn. And thanks to savvy naming by his parents many years ago, following the letter J, we have Keith.

## Chapter Two

[00:31:21]

**Keith:** Yeah, that's true. They knew about this. They knew that this would happen. And they knew, of course, that I would pick a two of diamonds.

**Jack:** So the first thing we do is we move the killer two in the Diamonds-wards direction.

**Keith:** Wayne John.

**Jack:** No, Cueball.

**Keith:** I was—I was zoomed too far in and guessed wrong where the diamond was.

**Jack:** Cueball is nervous. She has poured herself a drink, [**Keith:** Mysterious.] and she is sort of just sitting in a chair next to Laura, whose face is still pale. And Cueball is, you know, like, arranging and rearranging her fingers around the outside of the glass in the way that someone nervous does. I think she recognized—

**Keith:** [interrupting] Do we get a shot on one of those drink stirrers? And so she's stirring with a stirrer, even though it's not a drink that needs to be stirred.

**Jack:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. She, she feels like she doesn't have the connection with other people that, that some of these people have. The cousins have each other. The Washkos used to have each other. There's clearly something going on between Wayne John, Buford, Aiden, Pinky. Cueball is feeling isolated, and in this time of anxiety, is starting to worry that things might turn against her. Now, we move the detective, he moves two. And you can choose how.

**Keith:** I'm going to move... [long pause] Remind me how removing perils works.

**Jack:** If you end up adjacent to someone with a peril, English French removes the peril automatically.

**Keith:** [pause] Okay, I'm gonna go up this way.

**Jack:** One...

**Keith:** And I'm gonna go up this way.

**Jack:** Two. Okay, so if the suspect the sleuth is now adjacent to has a peril token, you may remove it. The peril, the fulcrum cousin, is un-perilled. Now write a chapter where the detective investigates the link between the suspect and the clue they're adjacent to, taking into account the color of the drawn card. Red cards lead us to a chapter about the Rot. And as we understand it, the Rot is sort of the web of social dis-ease that produces a situation in which these people are suspects or killers.

**Keith:** Mm-hm.

**Jack:** And is going to link Newton Henry Hertz to hit with a sculpture. And this can be an abstract link, I think, you know, because doing a red card with something so close to the murder weapon, I think runs the risk of it becoming more like a black card. And as Adam said, that's not the end of the world. But, you know, I think we can. We can read this fairly loosely.

**Keith:** Okay. Let's see. Okay. Hmm. I could also—I could move us. That's a good point about the murder weapon. Oh, did my mouse just die? No, it just disappeared. I could move us to—Because I wanted to—I was happy to remove the peril, but I also wanted to move us closer to where the killer was going so that we could stay on top of perils if we wanted to. I assume that we want to do that as English French.

**Sylvi:** Makes sense.

**Keith:** But we could be on the other side here. Pinky has information for Sophia.

**Jack:** How did you get there?

**Keith:** I guess those are both very—

**Jack:** No, that also would have just been one move because we were here.

**Keith:** Oh, it's true. I guess it would be here. It would be double sided quarter with a drop of dried blood on it. Yeah, but that's again, that's—These are very black card clues.

**Jack:** But for example, you could do something about Newton Henry Hertz having a history where someone previously was bludgeoned or you know, or [laughter] something like that.

**Keith:** I was thinking—here's where my mind immediately went, and we can see if this feels like anything, is a further investigation of that video that we saw leads to a reflected clip, a reflection in the video where you can see that downstairs there is a room with more of the Croesus statues in it. [**Sylvi:** [interested] Oh.] And so there's something going on downstairs where there is copies of—multiple copies of artwork.

**Jack:** Oh, yes, yes. And it's Newton Henry Hertz' business. He used to sell replica statues of like, famous figures in antiquity.

**Keith:** Yes.

**Jack [as Newton]:** Um, Mr. French, Mr. French, if I could have a moment of your time.

[long pause]

**Sylvi:** Keith, do you want to be it?

**Keith:** I can be French.

**Jack:** You should probably be French.

**Sylvi:** On your card, I figure.

**Jack [as Newton]:** Mr. French, I see you were speaking to my cousin.

**Keith [as English]:** I was.

**Jack [as Newton]:** He's a jolly chap, isn't he? That cousin of mine?

**Keith [as English]:** Yes, he seems extremely friendly.

**Jack [as Newton]:** He works in media. That explains the video.

**Keith [as English]:** It perfectly explains the video. And I think it was a great idea to send it to everybody so that we could keep abreast of what's happening in the—

**Jack [as Newton]:** Is that what he said? I mean, yes. [**Sylvi** laughter] Those media types simply love video. Me?

**Keith [as English]:** Those media types simply love video.

**Jack [as Newton]:** Me, I'm more of a physical man.

**Keith [as English]:** I can see that.

**Keith:** I look him up and down.

**Jack [as Newton]:** You're probably thinking of my strong physique.

**Keith [as English]:** Oh, is that not what you meant?

**Jack [as Newton]:** Ha. Well, the mat pilates gives me that. But I'm actually talking more about my line of work. And here I must tell you something discreet.

**Keith:** I lean in conspiratorially.

**Jack [as Newton]:** No, no, in that room over there.

**Jack:** Points to the closet with all the art in again, back under the man on the horse. English French perching on the thing.

**Jack [as Newton]:** Now, this is a little embarrassing to admit, but I run a little business venture myself. I make and sell sculptures. I don't think of myself as an artist, more of a reseller. CBB is the, is the, the artistic one in our family. Anyway, it did so happen that a mere six months ago, I shipped an order of 600 of those statues like what were used to clobber the communist.

**Keith [as English]:** To?

**Jack [as Newton]:** Ha ha ha. Pinky. Now, he and I obviously have—You know, we go way back, and I'm saying this to you in the spirit of good faith. Do you understand what I mean?

**Keith [as English]:** Yes, I think that I do.

**Jack [as Newton]:** It's better to be clear with you rather than you think that there was anything untoward going on. Yes, the murder weapon came from my factory, along with 1500 other identical versions of the murder weapon. But that doesn't mean I held it in my hand.

**Keith [as English]:** Of course not. That's great. Thank you very much for being forthright.

**Jack [as Newton]:** And I'm happy to answer any questions you might have about the order. And if you, like me, are a physical man, I'm happy to make a deal for some sculptures for yourself. Do you collect art?

**Sylvi:** Is he cruising?

**Jack:** This is, this is a 1970s murder mystery.

**Sylvi:** So yes?

**Keith:** So, yes,

**Jack:** Maybe. What did—

**Sylvi:** There's one of those called Cruising.

**Jack:** There is one of those called Cruising.

**Keith:** That's really funny.

**Keith [as English]:** What did Pinky want with the art?

**Jack [as Newton]:** [laughing] Why should I know? I have to imagine that he wanted to collect it. He was always a strange one, Pinky. He like—

**Keith [as English]:** He wanted to collect 600 replicas of the same statue?

**Jack [as Newton]:** 1500, my dear French.

**Keith [as English]:** You're right, yes. That's silly of me.

**Jack [as Newton]:** And yet he only put one on display. Well, ours is not to wonder why, ours is but to do or die. Shakespeare said that.

**Keith [as English]:** That's—What a—A physical man and a literary man.

**Jack [as Newton]:** Well, Bill has the film and CBB has the painting, so the realms of the Bard fall to me. [**Keith** laughter]

**Jack:** Sorry, I'm just gonna write in the trait section of Newton Henry Hertz: a physical man.

[**Keith** and **Sylvi** laughter]

**Keith:** How did you decide when choosing either physical man or literary man which one to put there?

**Jack:** He seems more of a physical man than—I mean, I suppose the clue that he's related to is the manufacture of sculpture. I like to think that I think you're right, Sylvi. There is some of the cruising there. There's also some of the, like, weird health nut. But I also think that the word he might have been trying to aim for and not been able to find is artisan. And I think the idea of a guy who looks for the word artisan and comes out with a physical man is really good.

**Sylvi:** It's really good. It's really good. I'm a fan.

**Jack:** Okay, so how are we updating this, Keith?

**Keith:** Let's see. Hit with sculpture that was part of a large sale to Pinky of identical sculptures. That's getting a little long, so maybe I'm not—

**Jack:** [crosstalk] What about sculpture was part of NHH's bulk sale or something?

**Keith:** [crosstalk] —add the last clause there. Sorry, I'm using a browser that I don't normally use because that's just what opened. And every time I highlight something, it's like giving me definitions for it. I don't know how this happened. I don't need a definition for sale. I just need it to not block my view. Oh, my God. That's so irritating. It won't even—it won't go away either.

**Jack:** Okay, but you do know what sale means now?

**Keith:** I do know now what sale means.

**Jack:** Which is a relief to us all.

**Keith:** Sorry, Jack, I forgot what you even said.

**Jack:** I think I said something like, murder weapon, part of bulk sale of similar statues by NHH. Although that's also fucking long. I don't know. You know, it's something like that.

**Keith:** This is, this is fine. Murder weapon, part of a sale to Pinky of identical sculptures.

**Jack:** And we'll, we'll remember who it was that did the sale.

**Keith:** There we go.

## Chapter Three

[00:43:31]

**Jack:** Okay. Sylvi.

**Sylvi:** Alright. I've got so many tabs. There we go. Alright. What card did I get? Ooh, another five.

**Jack:** Oh. We're building towards a full house, [**Sylvi:** Five of hearts.] so the first thing we do is we move the killer Heartwards. Okay, so, Keith, you've made an egg?

**Sylvi:** 1, 2, 3...

**Keith:** I didn't mean. I didn't mean to. I didn't realize that by doing that, I was also changing that whole outline.

**Sylvi:** Here's my question. I've hit the end of Heartward and still have a move to go.

**Jack:** 1, 2, 3, 4, it would be up towards Sophia.

**Keith:** Up to Sophia, yeah.

**Sylvi:** Sophia. Interesting.

**Keith:** Triple tap!

**Jack:** Wow. Now, I didn't know—

**Sylvi:** [laughing] People just keep coming by and hitting her with another statue.

[laughter]

**Jack:** I've heard that—it's kind of murder on the Orient Express, I suppose. I've heard that some rules here would just move the killer again up towards Newton Henry Hertz. That might be funny, where he just gets another peril on him.

[Keith laughter]

**Sylvi:** I mean, I'm down.

**Jack:** The killer takes one, like, night tour of the board and rests on, rests on Newton Henry Hertz again.

**Sylvi:** The killer's heard that voice.

**Keith:** I guess it means that the killer's trying to kill Newton Henry Nertz.

**Jack:** Okay, now, Sylvi, you are going to move English French five spaces and we are going to be exploring the Rot. I think we did a good job with the Rot here where it was actually about this weird business relationship with Pinky.

**Sylvi:** Yeah, I like it.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Sylvi:** My—Just a refresher—Am I do—What—Does English French have to move the same way as the killer?

**Jack:** Like you absolutely get to choose any way.

**Sylvi:** Oh, okay. Let me think about this. And, and it would be like—

**Jack:** [crosstalk] You're counting per intersection.

**Sylvi:** [crosstalk] Just for example. This would be one move.

**Jack:** Yep.

**Sylvi:** Okay. Okay.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Sylvi:** Okay. I think I do 1, 2, 3, 4, [**Jack:** 4.] 5 to Dutch Welsh who is lying about why he is here. Because I'm curious.

**Jack:** Wait, no, hang on. But this is also. No, you're right. But it's also Aiden Huckleberry-Hudson.

[**Keith** laughter]

**Sylvi:** Wonderful. The dogtrepreneur. The man who will let us speak to our animals using AI. [**Keith** screaming in background] I'm sorry. I had to remind everybody of his greatest venture. Okay, does—Is—

**Keith:** You could, if you wanted, get to—I love putting Aiden Huckleberry-Hudson in this thing about Dutch.

**Sylvi:** I was gonna say that—

**Keith:** You could get to Dutch and Dutch in five if you wanted.

**Sylvi:** Yeah. But there's part of me that thinks it's more fun to have these two entangled than it is to just find out what Dutch is doing here right? Because we kind of get the same information here, but this way there's another character rope done.

**Keith:** Totally.

**Sylvi:** Does that sound right? Am I thinking of this game correctly?

**Jack:** I think you're right. I think, you know, you're probably English, Keith is probably Dutch, and I'm probably Aiden, seems to be the...

**Sylvi:** If, if y'all are down for that.

**Jack:** Yeah, yeah, yeah.

**Keith:** Who. Wait, who am I? I'm Dutch.

**Jack:** You're Dutch, I think. If we want to involve Dutch physically.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** This is a rot card, so.

**Keith:** And it's a five, so it's a lot.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Sylvi:** This is a rot card, and... You know, I have an idea for what this could be, but I don't want to—I don't—The in is is what's tripping me up here.

**Jack:** Yeah, tell us about the idea and we can find the in.

**Sylvi:** Maybe the reason, maybe Dutch and Aiden are quote, like business partners and are trying to—Are one of the—They're also selling counterfeits. Like they're trying to move these counterfeits and that's the actual reason they're here. [**Jack:** Oh.] Where like Aiden, Aiden's, Aiden's not getting—Aiden's not getting the money that he wants from his uncle anymore, you know, and so because of that, has, has hired an old buddy, an old college friend, Dutch Welsh, to, to help him sort of like, spirit away some of these, these forgeries and help move them on the black market to get a little bit of capital going for [crosstalk] brilliant ideas.

**Keith:** [crosstalk] Okay, so Dutch isn't like in the forgery business, but is in the nabbing and flipping business.

**Jack:** This is extremely funny as the inverse English French.

**Sylvi:** That's the thing. I've sort of internalized him as the Wario to English's Mario. And so I think that it would make sense for him to be sort of a criminal, not la murderer, but. But, you know—

**Keith:** It's not as clean. I would sort of call him Waluigi.

**Sylvi:** Waluigi also works. Yeah, but you know.

[pause]

**Jack:** Yeah, I mean, does this—Does if—If French knows this? Is this French confronting Dutch?

**Sylvi:** Yeah, maybe it's French confronting Dutch when he sees him, like, having, like, a whispered conversation with Aiden.

**Jack:** Yeah, yeah.

[as **Aiden**] Mr Welsh.

**Keith** [as **Dutch**]: Oh, yeah, go ahead, please.

**Jack** [as **Aiden**]: We're still good, right? This is good, right?

**Keith** [as **Dutch**]: Yeah, it's good. This is good.

**Jack** [as **Aiden**]: There's just a body.

**Keith** [as **Dutch**]: Yeah, there'll—

**Sylvi** [as **English**]: Just a body?

**Sylvi:** Dramatically enters.

[as **English**] Just a body, sir. A murder has been committed. A crime most foul. And I suppose that while that is the biggest mystery here, one of my smaller ones has been solved.

**Sylvi:** Shoots Dutch a little look.

**Jack** [as **Aiden**]: You two know each other?

**Keith [as Dutch]:** We're almost cousins.

**Sylvi [as English]:** Extended family.

**Jack [as Aiden]:** What do you mean almost cousins? Explain it to me in detail.

**Keith [as Dutch]:** We have a cousin in common. Where some might call us three-two cousins.

**Jack [as Aiden]:** Yeah, three-two cousins. I don't follow.

**Keith [as Dutch]:** It's when you have a cousin in common with someone that you're not a cousin with.

**Sylvi [as English]:** Our cousin, Spanish Arabic.

**Jack [as Aiden]:** He's here too!?

**Sylvi [as English]:** No, no, no, no, no. But that's the who's in common.

**Jack [as Aiden]:** I see. Oh, well, sorry. I mean—

**Keith [as Dutch]:** The king? The ancient king?

**Jack [as Aiden]:** No, that's Croesus. That's Croesus, Keith.

**Sylvi:** [laughter] Stupid!

**Jack [as Aiden]:** Um, well, sorry. Dutch and I were just—We're just talking this.

**Sylvi [as English]:** Mm. I'm sure you were.

**Sylvi:** Giving a big, a big—raising one eyebrow, leaning in close to Aiden Huckleberry-Hudson for a second before crossing his arms and turning back to Dutch.

**Keith [as Dutch]:** [crosstalk] What do you have to say about it?

**Sylvi [as English]:** [crosstalk] What's your angle this time? What's your angle this time, Dutch?

**Keith [as Dutch]:** Nothing! Straight.

**Sylvi [as English]:** [snicker, pause] There are many words I'd use to describe you, and that is not one of them.

**Keith [as Dutch]:** I mean, I'm not. It's fine. This is all fine. I'm not doing anything bad.

**Jack:** Look of confusion on Aiden Huckleberry-Hudson's face.

**Keith [as Dutch]:** This is—

**Keith:** I look at Aiden.

[as Dutch] This is a legitimate business venture.

**Jack [as Aiden]:** Yes, this is a legitimate business venture.

**Sylvi [as English]:** What is?

**Keith [as Dutch]:** Whatever you think that we're doing. That is—That's what it is.

**Sylvi [as English]:** I'm afraid, gentlemen, that I will need a better answer than that, given the circumstances.

**Keith [as Dutch]:** If you're afraid, you should sit down, have a glass of water.

**Sylvi [as English]:** Dutch, don't get cute with me. I'll call Grandma.

[pause]

**Keith [as Dutch]:** Don't call Grandma.

[laughter]

**Sylvi:** Maybe. Okay. I'm trying to figure out how Dutch gets the—How English gets the crew here—The clue here. Other than browbeating his two-three cousin.

**Keith:** I mean, I could give you a really bad way.

**Sylvi:** Keith, I would love that.

**Keith:** I'm holding one of the paintings.

**Sylvi:** Yeah, that'll do it. I was gonna say that, like, he had a piece of art that, like, fell out of a pocket, but that's even better.

**Keith:** I'm just holding a huge painting.

**Sylvi [as English]:** Are you just here to do some interior decorating, not-cousin?

**Keith [as Dutch]:** Interior de-corating? Yes.

**Sylvi [as English]:** Hmm. You mean D, as in the sort of the prefix to remove. You're removing the decorations here?

**Keith [as Dutch]:** That's exactly it. Yes. You figured it out. Congratulations, Detective.

**Sylvi [as English]:** That is part of a crime scene. Dearest not-cousin. And I would appreciate—

**Keith [as Dutch]:** Only coincidentally and circumstantially.

**Sylvi [as English]:** Coincidence and circumstance are quite important right now. Until we get into—Until we get—And he, like, hits his hand after each one of these. Until we get firm, hard evidence, we will not be able to, to rule out the circumstance and coincidence. And only when we do have the evidence will I allow you to get on with your—

**Sylvi:** Sort of, like, disdainful look.

[as **English**] gray market business.

**Keith** [as **Dutch**]: Gray market business.

**Sylvi** [as **English**]: All I ask is that you keep your—Keep everything where it is until we are at the bottom of this. [sneezes] I'm sure you have your reasons.

**Keith** [as **Dutch**]: Bless you.

**Sylvi** [as **English**]: Thank you. You're kicking up a lot of dust.

**Jack**: This—You know, it's snowy outside. I feel as this—Although there might be humidifiers in here for the art, it's not clear. This is not narratively important in the year of 2026.

**Sylvi**: We're just doing improv.

**Jack** [as **Aiden**]: Was that English French, famous detective who only works in the gap between New Year's Eve and New Year's Day?

**Sylvi**: [laughter] I forgot about that. How could I forget about that detail?

[as **English**] I'll have this solved by the time the ball drops.

**Keith**: It drops really slow. It sucks.

**Jack** [as **Aiden**]: Dutch, does this mean we—Do you only work on New Year's Eve, or are we good if we don't manage to complete this tonight, because I don't know that I can do this all tonight.

**Keith** [as **Dutch**]: No, I'm a normal guy.

[hysterical group laughter]

**Jack**: Okay, I'm gonna draw a card.

**Sylvi:** Yeah. So is the clue here... Am I changing this to Dutch Welsh is here to sell counterfeit art with Aiden?

**Keith:** Or to steal counterfeit art to sell?

**Jack:** Yeah. To steal counterfeit art to sell. It's so funny that despite his scheme being essentially the most transparent crime you can have, sort of robbery, he looked—He looked English French in the eye while holding a painting and claimed it was legitimate, which I, you know, that's. I have to assume it's a power play because English French is a skilled detective. This is not—

**Sylvi:** The con in conman stands for confidence!

**Keith:** I suppose it's true. And you know, Aiden is related to Pinky Huckleberry. You'd have to prove that Aiden did not have the right to take these paintings.

**Jack:** Although, as the first act demonstrated, Aiden Huckleberry-Hudson is not comfortable or knowledgeable about this house.

**Keith:** Or much.

**Jack:** Or much [laughter]

## Chapter Four

[00:56:06]

**Jack:** Okay, I'm going to draw a card. And the card that I have drawn is the four of diamonds.

**Keith:** Oh, my God. We're so. [with **Jack**] We're so rot.

**Jack:** We're so rot. Okay, I'm gonna move. 1, 2, 3, 4. Uh oh. Uh oh.

**Keith:** The eyes of the killer fall upon Aiden Huckleberry-Hudson.

**Jack:** And then I am going to move this. I'm gonna move English French four. And let's see. [long pause, thinking noises] Okay, let's do this. 1, 2, 3, 4. I think it's time to interrogate Pinky Huckleberry.

**Keith:** That's great.

[long pause]

**Jack:** Is he still in his, in his room?

**Sylvi:** I think...

**Keith:** Has Pinky made an appearance at all?

**Sylvi:** He has made an appearance. We had a scene with—Was it Sophia talking to him or?

**Jack:** Was it Sophia just before she was killed?

**Keith:** It was.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Sylvi:** So maybe this is him... The rest of the party has not seen him though, right?

**Jack:** No, no, they haven't.

**Keith:** Only the dead person has seen Pinky.

**Jack:** Yes.

**Sylvi:** Which, you know, does make him a little suspicious.

**Jack:** It definitely does.

**Keith:** What was Pinky like when we...?

**Jack:** He was distraught. He was like, really shook up about something. I think he'd been drinking. He had his head in his hands. As Sylvi said, he was wearing his very fancy kimono.

**Keith:** Right, the kimono.

**Jack:** And he said he had information for Sophia.

**Keith:** Right.

**Jack:** A double sided quarter with a drop of dried blood on it. [long pause] Hang on. Okay, so I'm just sort of—I'm kind of like stochastically trying to pull pieces of evidence together.

**Sylvi:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Sophia had to be in the locked room for a reason. What if she was looking for the quarter, little knowing that it was out in the, in the, in the room? What if, what if Pinky had given her some information and told her that she needed to go and find something, you know, and she was—she went to the place that she thought it was most likely to be.

**Keith:** So you said Pinky told her to find something, you said?

**Jack:** Told her to find this quarter or something like it, you know.

**Keith:** Right. So she went to the private quarters.

**Jack:** She went to the private quarters to [with **Keith**] find the quarter from the public quarters.

**Jack:** Not knowing that it was, you know, outside. It had found its way outside. But then, you know, I'm trying to think this is a Rot card as well, right? Where it's like... [long pause] The thing is, it's like with Pinky and the information for Sophia, the Rot is actually probably about, like, the—Laura, presidential hopeful, actual communist situation.

**Keith:** Um. Okay, that's—Okay. That is better than—That's more—That makes more sense than where I was going with it.

**Jack:** What were you thinking? We might be able to, like, combine them.

**Keith:** Okay. So there's, there's—I don't know how—I don't know what this is, like, how real it is, but I heard that there was someone who was, like, buying up every possible copy of a completely undesirable Pokemon card. And because of this getting around, it was massively, artificially inflating the price of that card. It was just seemingly a random person doing sort of weird speculation on a completely undesirable asset, which is this very common Pokemon card. It had driven the price up like, a thou—couple thousand percent.

**Jack:** Cool.

**Sylvi:** The world sucks.

[laughter]

**Keith:** And so I'm thinking, what is Pinkie Huckleberry doing with all these quarters? Why is this specific quarter important? And I was thinking that maybe it has something to do with a plan to unpour himself by wildly speculating on rare coins and having created a sort of accident—almost on—accidentally been too successful and now has coins that are so desirable, people are after them in a literal way.

**Jack:** Yeah, yeah. And the, the...

**Keith:** Which has nothing to do with the president.

**Jack:** No, but...

**Keith:** Asterisk, because we don't know that.

**Sylvi:** At this moment has nothing to do with the president.

**Jack:** Okay, Keith, alright.

**Keith:** Shape this. If this is anything, do whatever with it.

**Jack:** No, I think, I think, I think this is something. And I think what it is is that Pinky has been collecting quarters with... He has essentially got a full set of a certain serial number of quarters.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Jack:** Which is not a real thing, but it is in our world. You know, he's essentially gotten all the quarters from 000001 to 99999 in terms of their serial number or whatever. And he—The coin that completes the set is especially valuable for one reason or another. And he is, he is, he is like, going to—That's the coin with the drop of dried blood on it. And he sends Sophia to the room to get it or something?

**Keith:** Mm. Or at least tells her that that's why he's in trouble.

**Jack:** And he's in danger. Because not only does he have the collection, he also has the closing piece, the keystone coin, you know?

**Keith:** The keystone coin, the fabled keystone coin.

**Jack:** Yes, and—Oh. Oh, my God. That's why English French is here. He has—Him and Sophia have a scheme where he's going to hand that coin off to English French to—For safekeeping or whatever, so that it can get, like, you know, safely brought out of the mansion and that the people who are targeting him won't target him as much or whatever. I don't know. The coin is now in a safe place. That's why Sophia hires English French. Sophia goes to get the coin and is killed before she can deliver it or whatever. Does that make any sense? Is that anything?

**Sylvi:** It's not nothing.

**Jack:** [laughter] Trying to stochastically put together a mystery. Okay, here's what I'm gonna say. I mean, I feel like we don't really need a scene here. Although I do want to see Pinky Huckleberry. The double sided quarter is the rare keystone coin of Pinky's collection. Does that make sense?

**Keith:** Yeah. I did double check. It is a first edition Kabuto card, which—

**Jack:** So it is valuable, kind of in and of itself.

**Keith:** I believe that these were worth less than a dollar and are now in the 20s, 30s, 40s.

**Jack:** Let's do a scene, actually. I want to, like, recenter ourselves on narrative after having, like, splashed about, but I think the scene is pretty straightforward. Who wants to play Pinky?

**Sylvi:** I can play Pinky. I can play a, a, a eccentric rich man who's going through the worst day of his life.

**Jack [as English]:** Mr. Huckleberry, my name is English French. I work for the New Year's Eve New Year's Business Bureau.

**Sylvi [as Pinky]:** Yes, of course. I read that article about you in New Year's Annual. [hysterical Keith laughter] It's once a year.

**Keith:** Annual New Year's magazine, yeah.

**Jack:** Does it release a new year, or is it.-- Does it happen midway through the year? Because it has to—

**Sylvi:** No, it releases on—It releases on June 15th. Halfway through the year.

**Jack:** English French is clearly happy to hear this. His little, his little—His eyes twinkle

**Keith:** Because this is the sort of thing that he would be into because he's also very New Year's focused.

**Jack:** I mean, his whole life is sort of New Year's focused. If you're not familiar with the last episode of this that we played with Ali, it ended with English French hiring a woman to be a New Year's murderer. A murderer who only works on New Year's. [**Sylvi**

laughter] There was a sort of like Batman/the Joker orbiting around each other type situation.

**Sylvi:** Oh my god.

**Keith:** So he's—so wait, so English French is like Mr. Glass?

**Jack:** I suppose he is like Mr. Glass. Listen to Media Club Plus, MediaClub.Plus. Okay.

**Sylvi:** They call me Mr. French.

**Jack:** Is that something Mr. Glass says?

**Sylvi:** He says, they called me Mr. Glass.

**Jack:** Okay. I see.

**Keith:** At the very end, it's like his big dramatic moment.

**Jack:** Oh, I see.

[as **English**] I'd like to offer my condolences about the death of Sophia. I understand we both knew her well.

**Sylvi** [as **Pinky**]: Dreadful, truly dreadful, isn't it?

**Jack** [as **English**]: Yes. And I understand that there's a degree of stress falling upon yourself, being the—playing host to such a terrible occurrence.

**Sylvi** [as **Pinky**]: I feel sick to my stomach.

**Jack:** English French glances at the bottle of whiskey on his desk, kind of glances back to him.

[as **English**] Well, before we get to the circumstances of the murder, I'd like to talk a little about the room in which she was found. Your private quarters.

**Sylvi [as Pinky]:** Ah, yes, the, the crown jewel or—Well, crown change of my collection.

**Jack [as English]:** You collect coins?

**Sylvi [as Pinky]:** I have since I was a little boy.

**Jack [as English]:** I've taken a look at the room. It seems like you collect all the same coin. Now, correct me if I'm wrong, a quarter seems to be worth about 25 cents, something like that. Why collect one coin over and over again?

[pause]

**Sylvi [as Pinky]:** Well, if I have them all, then it's, it's not just—It's a specific, it's a specific type of coin. To be clear, first of all, this isn't—I'm not going to the bank and saying, give me all of your quarters. I'm going and I'm collecting it—it's historically significant. And no one else in the world has, has a collection as complete as mine. So—do you ask, do you ask, do you ask birdwatchers why they, why they look for, why they.

**Sylvi:** He takes a swig of his drink again.

[as Pinky] It's a silly question. It's a silly question you've asked me.

**Jack [as English]:** So these quarters, you have a complete collection of a series?

**Sylvi [as Pinky]:** Well, just—Just about.

**Jack [as English]:** Just about?

**Sylvi [as Pinky]:** Well, I actually completed it quite recently, but one of the things we were gathered here to celebrate, actually, was me being able to show off the, the completed collection. But evidently that's not happening anymore.

**Jack [as English]:** A complete collection like this must be very valuable, yes?

**Sylvi [as Pinky]:** Oh, yes. Oh, yes. Especially on the collector's market. You have no idea.

**Jack [as English]:** And the final coin, I have to imagine, would be especially valuable.

**Sylvi [as Pinky]:** I mean, yes, I imagine. I imagine finding the final dodo bird in the wild would also be quite valuable. It's akin to that.

**Jack [as English]:** Do you think about birdwatching a lot, Mr. Huckleberry?

**Sylvi [as Pinky]:** You do see where we are, right? There's not a lot. When they—I do it, I go every Sunday. Buford—That's why Buford's here. That's how we know each other.

**Jack:** Buford Knipps, a big game hunter. I like the idea that Pinky Huckleberry thinks bird watching is killing birds.

**Sylvi:** Yes, I do. I said it and I was like, yeah, hold on.

**Jack:** Complete with the last dodo bird in the wild.

**Sylvi:** Because he's thinking of selling it to a restaurant.

**Jack [as English]:** Oh, yes, yes. I think that's all the questions I have for you now. But before I go, just one more thing.

**Sylvi:** [gasp] He said the line.

**Jack [as English]:** This final coin is—You know where it is, don't you?

**Sylvi [as Pinky]:** I mean, they should all be in my private quarters, are they not?

**Jack [as English]:** Well, that'll be all.

**Jack:** Snaps his little notebook shut, pulls the little elastic.

**Sylvi** [as **Pinky**]: Are they not? Oh, good Lord.

**Sylvi**: Drinks more.

[as **Pinky**] I can't believe this. This day keeps getting worse.

**Keith**: I like that the clues look like quarters.

**Jack**: Whoa.

**Sylvi**: We have really—You know what? We've really coined something special here today, guys.

**Jack**: Really coined something special. English French's notebook has a firework on the front of it. It is also branded with the year that is about to begin.

**Keith**: Firework, the object or the end result?

**Jack**: The end result. [firework noise] And it's like, this is my 2028 notebook. He works one day a year. I guess he's sort of like Santa in that way.

**Sylvi**: He is kind of Santa in a way.

## Chapter Five

[01:11:45]

**Jack**: Okay, Keith, you're up.

**Keith**: Yes. Got it. [pause] Ace. Ace of spades.

**Jack**: Finally about the murder.

**Keith**: Killer moves on to Buford Knipps.

**Jack**: Oh, Buford. Oh, Buford. [**Sylvi**: Oh, the birdwatcher.] Peril. The birdwatcher.

**Keith**: Uh, okay.

**Jack:** There's going to be two hits. The number of hits on my rare bird spotting website. And then the bird hitting the ground.

[laughter]

**Sylvi:** There's gonna be two hits. Auld lang syne. And Shake That.

**Keith:** Oh, where do I want to move? I could take a Peril off of Cueball. I could take a Peril off of Newton Henry Hertz.

**Jack:** So something that's worth thinking about here as well, Keith, is that this is going to be a black card. So this is gonna be about the circumstances of the murder.

**Keith:** Yes, which is why I'm here. I'm looking at both “dark figure inside Pinky's house” and “the double sided quarter is the rare keystone coin” to get, like, get real clues about those. We get a real clue about murder weapon with—I could move without affecting Perils to Pinky Huckleberry. One sort of limits what the scene can be where it seems like maybe we're not including as many people in the scenes as the rules say.

**Sylvi:** Yeah, I kind of forgot about that. I'm sorry.

**Jack:** I think we should. It's tricky, isn't it, when there's three of us.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Sylvi:** But we can do it. I believe in us.

**Keith:** It hasn't been terrible. It's been. We got a five, a five and a four, and we did three, three and two.

**Jack:** Adam, please don't demerit us. You know, of course, when you play a tabletop game, you're trying to get an A from the designer.

**Sylvi:** Oh, yeah, always.

**Keith:** I'm, I'm always trying to get an A from whoever I'm doing anything with every day of my life.

**Jack:** Except in the case of Realis, where when we play Realis, Austin is trying to get an A from us. [laughter] I think my vote is I want to explore this dark figure, I think. But, you know, you have final say.

**Keith:** I would love to get Cueball in something. Oh, but it's just a one person scene.

**Jack:** Well, two with English French.

**Keith:** Oh, because English French is in the—Is added to the number?

**Jack:** I mean, he's the detective.

**Sylvi:** Yeah. He kind of always has to be there.

**Keith:** That's fair. That makes sense.

**Jack:** Yeah, once Poirot tends to show up, they do tend to keep Poirot in the middle of the screen.

**Keith:** It's true. I'm just seeing Ace and being like, that's the one person scene. But maybe it's a one person scene with the detective about Cueball. Or maybe it's the two of them. We're making up for lost people. I'm gonna take this Peril off.

**Jack:** Nice.

**Keith:** The dark figure inside Pinky's house. Could we have—I wanna have someone really see the dark figure. And I guess it could be Cueball or English French.

**Jack:** Oh, my God. Do you think the dark figure is someone on this board? Or do you think it's a new suspect?

**Sylvi:** The real, the real Yeti?

[**Jack** laughter]

**Keith:** I'm thinking of Scooby Doo.

**Jack:** Oh, and of course. Of course.

**Keith:** Of course I am. If anybody listens to Realis, they know that I'm thinking about Scooby Doo often. Have you ever seen an episode of Scooby Doo?

**Jack:** Yes.

**Keith:** Where—And I'm sure that this is in more sophisticated media than Scooby Doo, but where someone sees who a mysterious figure is, but we don't see who it is. We just see them see.

**Jack:** Yes.

**Keith:** Cueball sees the dark figure inside Pinky's house and recognizes them.

**Jack:** Oh, my God. Please frame the scene. I want to know where she is. I want to see where the figure is before it turns and Cueball sees its face.

**Keith:** She was at the bar drinking nervously. She gets up to get some fresh air. She wanders around the house and down a hall, kind of just poking around. And when she turns around, the figure is coming out of an adjacent room and stops and looks right at Cueball. And then we see Cueball [**Jack:** like, the dawning—] over the shoulder of the figure going,

[as **Cueball**] It's you.

**Jack:** Yeah. Does she actually say, it's you? She probably should, right?

**Keith:** She spiritually says, it's you. I would like her to literally say it as well.

**Jack:** Yes. Cool. Great. And so the update here is Cueball recognizes the figure.

**Sylvi:** Yeah.

[pause]

**Jack:** Now, something that's interesting is that we don't know whether or not—we haven't said whether this event was pre or post murder, because everything you've described. Nervous Cueball drinking, etcetera, could also have happened. And there's, there's the potential here with the, the way that mystery films are shot, right? Where it's like, we don't quite know when in the chronology this scene falls.

**Keith:** Sure.

**Jack:** And we can make a decision about that now, or we could leave it open and, you know, slot it in later. One way or another.

**Keith:** I can say this without affecting the truth, but in my mind, it was happening chronologically [with **Jack**] with the rest of the events. Yeah, but that doesn't have to be true.

**Jack:** Yeah, let's leave it open.

**Keith:** Okay.

## Chapter Six

[01:18:21]

**Jack:** Okay. Sylvi.

**Sylvi:** Oh my gosh. Yeah. Is it back to me? Did you go...?

**Jack:** Keith falls after Jack.

**Sylvi:** Keith follows me. Yeah, I'm, I'm, I'm super smart. I'm super smart today. Wait, where did I—[**Keith:** I also am super smart today] I think I accidentally closed the tab.

**Jack:** Whoa, how'd you do that?

**Sylvi:** With the cards.

**Keith:** We're done, right?

**Sylvi:** Is what I realized. Oh, I tabbed it back to the—I think when I was tabbing back to the Miro board, I just straight up closed the thing.

**Keith:** Real quick. Do we have anything—just to get it done now. Do we have anything to add into our suspect cards that we've learned but not [**Sylvi:** That's a good question.] Added that we want to keep track of before we forget?

**Jack:** Yeah. Aiden Huckleberry-Hudson—Dutch Welsh is an old—A criminal. And in terms of relationships...

**Keith:** Indetermined. Indetermined. Totally indetermined.

**Jack:** What's indetermined? [crosstalk] Oh, you mean that we don't know he's a criminal.

**Keith:** [crosstalk] You said he's a criminal.

**Jack:** We do know that he's a criminal.

**Keith:** He was definitely doing something which looked like a crime, but may or may not have been.

**Jack:** Whoops. Whoa, I made that big. Okay. And you are hired. Newton Henry Hertz is—Yes, is selling art. Sophia and Pinky had some kind of involvement. Oh, let's say Pinky has information re: Keystone coin.

**Keith:** Yep. Cueball knows who the figure is.

**Jack:** Yeah, Cueball knows who the figure is. But we don't know who Cueball is.

**Keith:** We don't know who Cueball is. Bill Tally Tab media mogul, comma—

**Jack:** Airdropped footage from before the murder.

**Keith:** Yeah, footage.

**Jack:** That may be it. We might now be up to date.

**Keith:** Great.

**Sylvi:** Okay, so I pulled a two of spades, which means this has to do with the murder.

**Jack:** Ooh, we're getting close to a full house.

**Sylvi:** We are.

**Jack:** Yeah. So the first thing you're gonna do is move the killer.

**Sylvi:** Killer, right. So that would be to Wayne. And then which way am I going?

**Jack:** Down towards Pinky. He bounces like a DVD menu.

**Sylvi:** Yeah, I feel like I remembered that. And then I can move to—

**Jack:** [interrupting] Oh, and he gets a Peril.

**Sylvi:** He does get a Peril. Pinky Peril.

**Jack:** Pinky Peril. It's the opposite of a pinky promise.

**Sylvi:** His new nickname.

**Keith:** Yeah, it's when you touch someone's pinky and swear to do them harm.

**Jack:** It's what Gon Freecss does at the beginning of Hunter x Hunter. He just doesn't know it.

**Sylvi:** Oh yeah. [pause] I'm torn here.

**Keith:** It's a two, right?

**Sylvi:** Yeah, I have a two. And I'm looking at either over by Cedar Basil Banyan and the double sided quarter or Wayne John Hagg and the half empty bottle of 60 year old McCauley. I might go to the half drunk bottle. I think that might be my move here.

**Keith:** Okay, we're endangering people. People are gonna start dying soon.

**Sylvi:** You're right. Actually, maybe I should—I can move down to here—to murder weapon. Part of a sale. And then would that be able to help with the peril on it?

**Keith:** Totally would.

**Jack:** It would. Although we've developed that clue before, which isn't necessarily a reason not to develop that clue.

**Sylvi:** We have developed that clue before, but

**Keith:** But it was a rot clue, not a murder clue.

**Jack:** It was.

**Sylvi:** That is true. You know what that is? I do think it'd be worth investigating the murder weapon.

**Keith:** And you might see what I wrote in our chat here that it's interesting that he collects the same coin and the same statue.

**Jack:** Oh, that is really interesting.

**Sylvi:** That is interesting.

**Jack:** That's bizarre. This is why, this is why improviser storytelling is really good. Which is—And I can't speak for you, Keith or Sylvi. I didn't intend that.

**Sylvi:** No, me neither. But I love it.

**Keith:** I only noticed it during the scene.

**Jack:** He has a house full of exclusively counterfeit art. And also thousands of copies of a coin and thousands of copies of a statue. What the fuck is this guy doing?

**Keith:** What is this guy doing? Gonna remove that peril.

**Sylvi:** Bit of a freak and a weirdo.

**Jack:** Bit of a freak and a weirdo. Luckily—

**Sylvi:** I don't know if you guys have heard this about rich people.

**Jack:** He's not rich. He's not rich.

**Keith:** Well, he's rich. He's just also poor.

**Sylvi:** Yeah, he's, he's considered rich for our purposes.

**Jack:** Yes, yes. And so—

**Keith:** [interrupting] And you can act and live pretty rich. Yeah. While also being net negative. As long as you at one point had a billion dollars, you can be more than broke and still kind of live like you have a billion dollars.

**Sylvi:** I've been playing the Seance of Blake Manor and for the suspects in that it keeps track of their class but not necessarily their wealth. So for Pinky it would say upper class, even though he is broke as fuck, you know?

**Jack:** Yeah. Oh yeah, that makes sense.

**Sylvi:** My inclination here is that I'm trying to think of the two people who would be in here. I think Newton, by being one of the people being the physical man who is selling these factory made art replicas could be in this as being like, I need someone to talk to about the—I was gonna say him, but maybe the painter could be helpful here too.

**Keith:** We haven't had Cedar in, in a scene in a while.

**Sylvi:** Yeah. And I'd love—I think, I think English would want to talk to somebody who knows art a little better than him about this. And especially like who, the—who and how are these being made? And like I know the why is, is something we got to figure out still. But like, huh?

**Keith:** Mm.

**Jack:** Yeah, this is the “Huh?” section of the game.

**Keith:** I just—I really, I, I really hope we can pull something out of the guy who has all of these quarters also has all those statues of the coin guy.

**Sylvi:** We will. We have to. I believe in us.

**Jack:** Yeah. I believe in us in the sense that, you know, it's that thing that David Lynch talks about about ideas floating all around you at all times. You know, we're gonna, we're gonna spot the idea and pluck it out of the air.

**Sylvi:** Exactly.

**Jack:** So what's this scene, Sylvi?

**Sylvi:** I think that this scene is... have we found... maybe—I like the idea of English having the murder weapon itself in one hand and then one of these other statues in the other and trying to figure out, like, are there any differences between these? Is, is one of these the genuine article? Is one of the—Are they all [**Keith:** For the statues?] Are they all fraudulent? For the statues, yeah.

**Keith:** So English is downstairs.

**Jack:** Yeah, down in the, down in the...

**Keith:** The dark corridor of the....

**Jack:** The dark corridor. English French has a torch because he's prepared.

**Keith:** Right. And by torch you mean flame? A flame [**Sylvi:** of course] A lit flame.

**Sylvi:** What else—What else would Jack mean? That's—Is—Okay, here's my question. Is Cedar down there already?

**Jack:** Oh, damn.

**Keith:** Oh, that's great. I would love that.

**Jack:** You want to be Cedar, Keith?

**Keith:** Sure.

**Sylvi:** And do we want anyone else in here? Because I did pull a two.

**Jack:** It should probably be Newton eventually, right?

**Sylvi:** Yeah, that would work, yeah. Okay. I think the way this, like, starts is... Was the murder weapon downstairs the whole time?

**Keith:** No, it was on top of the space where the trap floor was.

**Sylvi:** I think we've got English French sorta coming down with—he's got like gloves on now, 'cause he's a professional. He doesn't want to get his prints on the murder weapon.

**Keith:** I also have gloves on. But you cannot ascertain why. Maybe my hands are cold. Maybe I'm worried about prints. Maybe I'm also a professional. Maybe I just wear gloves.

**Sylvi [as English]:** You know, you're a very complicated man. Your cousin, he's a physical man. You're a complicated man.

**Keith:** Complicated man. Yeah. And a pompous man.

**Sylvi:** Of course, of course, of course. I think the way—it's sort of like a little bit of like, mock surprise, when he sees Cedar down there, he's like:

[as **English**] Oh, Mr. Banyan, I was expect—I wasn't expecting company down here.

**Keith [as Cedar]:** Oh, the detective, of course.

**Sylvi [as English]:** Come down for what? A little bit of peace and quiet? Or here to check something out yourself?

**Keith [as Cedar]:** I came down for the 1500, give or take, statues that are here.

**Sylvi [as English]:** Yeah, quite curious that, isn't it?

**Keith [as Cedar]:** Mm.

**Sylvi [as English]:** I—You know, this might be fortuitous, actually. You're something of an expert in the art world. Am I not—Am I, am I incorrect? I know painting is your primary—

**Keith [as Cedar]:** Oh, you know painting.

**Sylvi [as English]:** I know painting. A little bit of painting. How you—I've got a lot—I've got 364 days to fill. I've picked up a few hobbies.

**Keith [as Cedar]:** That's great.

**Sylvi [as English]:** You ever watch that? Bob Ross, Lovely fella.

**Keith [as Cedar]:** Sweetheart.

**Sylvi [as English]:** Please don't call me that. I know we're in private, but. [group laughter] No. Would you be able to help me take a look at this? I've been trying to—There's something that's just bothering me about our—The improvised club in my hand versus the rest of these statues, and I—I'd love to take—I'd love to have an expert's opinion while I'm, while I'm doing my own comparisons.

**Keith [as Cedar]:** That's fine. I could help.

**Sylvi [as English]:** I'm not interrupting anything, am I?

**Keith [as Cedar]:** I'm just counting.

**Sylvi [as English]:** You're just counting. Taking inventory?

**Keith [as Cedar]:** Appraising.

**Sylvi [as English]:** Appraising. Ah, well, perfect. I won't be, I won't be asking you to do something too far afield of what you're already up to.

**Keith** [as **Cedar**]: What do you want to know?

**Sylvi**: I—Okay, this is out of character now because Sylvi needs to have her friends help brainstorm.

**Keith**: Sylvi needs to know what English French wants to know.

**Sylvi**: 100%. No, I had a couple angles on—This is why I wanted to pull back for a second and talk to you guys about it. My first was, like, is this where we find out that Cedar is the forger? Is that sort of like, something we want to—

**Jack**: Oh, the forger of the whole collection?

**Sylvi**: Of the paintings, of the collection, of everything.

**Jack**: Yeah, it's a possibility.

**Keith**: That's a possibility. These statues, I think that we said that these were, like, made in a factory, is what I thought.

**Sylvi**: In a factory. Okay.

**Keith**: But these are different than the collection of all the different artists.

**Sylvi**: That's true. I was wondering if maybe we had it so the murder weapon was like the genuine article?

**Jack**: Yes. I was also wondering about this. So I don't know. Oh, sorry. Go on, Keith.

**Keith**: Sorry. I just had a very similar thing, which was that not only could the murder weapon have been the genuine article, but there are actually many genuine articles hidden among the forgeries.

**Jack**: Whoa.

**Sylvi**: Oh, I—Okay, wait. Then here's maybe, maybe the thing we find out is there is something of a forger's signature.

**Keith:** Like a Nen tag.

**Sylvi:** Not even like, you know what? If anyone. If anyone knows Nen, it's English, French, the New Year's Eve detective.

**Jack:** He's a hunter. He's a New Year's Eve hunter.

**Sylvi:** He's the New Year's Eve hunter. And he hibernates the rest of the year.

**Keith:** One star.

**Jack:** Because—But only because he works one day. Yeah, if he was working more—

**Keith:** Right. If he worked more. Yeah. He's like Qui Gon of the Jedi Council and Ging Freecss. And his star hunter rating, English French—

**Jack:** Ging is a 1 star hunter? That's very funny. I forgot about that.

**Keith:** No, Ging is a two Star Hunter. But he could be a three Star Hunter.

**Jack:** But he doesn't want to do it.

**Sylvi:** Yeah, fair enough, man. You know how much paperwork I have to do with name change stuff still? I get it.

**Keith:** In the same way English French could be two stars, but doesn't want to give up on working one day a year.

**Jack:** And really, who can blame him? So you're saying that there's like a forger's signature.

**Sylvi:** I think maybe even an unintentional thing. Like either something that happens, that happened in the recreation. [**Keith:** A tell.] Yeah, a tell. Something that happens in the recreation. Something to do with, like, the materials being used are anachronistic to, like, when the originals would have been made. And you can figure that out by looking either, like, at—For paintings, it could be like, pigmentation or brushstroke or something like that.

**Keith:** Yeah, that's actually, brushstroke is really good. Just to be 100% clear, are we talking about the statues or the artworks?

**Sylvi:** Can it not be both? I was talking about both, I'll be real.

**Keith:** Okay. Well, I was thinking, if there is—Are there genuine ancient statues hidden among the replicas, then my answer would be that the machine that carves them, it only moves in one direction. And so you can tell from how the chips are chipped off the statues that they've, you know, it's like a machine that only—But on the real ones, you can see that they're at different angles, are chipping off the bits.

**Jack:** Yes, I think that, I think that works. And I think, and I think that we can connect, I think we can connect all these things together, right? The statue in the room that was used to kill Sophia Washko is the genuine article. The 1500—15,000 collection contains some genuine articles as well, but is primarily forgeries that are identifiable because of the machining. And the forgery work was advised by Cedar Basil Banyan, who is also the painter—the forger. Because Cedar Basil Banyan has a relationship with Newton Henry Hertz.

**Sylvi:** Famously so

**Jack:** Famously. And Newton Henry Hertz is rivals with Pinky Huckleberry. So I wonder if there's this weird sort of like cousins game of pawning off fakes on him.

**Keith:** And I wonder if there's a thing of feeling duped by Pinky, where for some reason Pinky wants these replicas. It's unclear why, but by having Pinky come to Newton Henry Hertz to ask for the forgeries, it felt like an admission of defeat or it felt like a point for them in their little game. And so they're like, oh, yes, of course we'll, you know, Pinky sunk so low to buy these off of us. But now they're in a position where that has proven to be maybe really dangerous to have done.

**Jack:** Yes, yes. And much like us, there's something rankling at the back of their heads, which is like, we thought we had one over on this guy by essentially forging his entire

collection, you know, pawning forged art off on him, but it seems like some bit of him really did want a lot of forged art. Specific of—one specific thing. Okay.

**Sylvi:** So weird. [**Jack:** It's really weird.] Such a weird thing.

**Jack:** It's really odd. Do we want a scene here or have we gotten what we've gotten?

**Sylvi:** I'm satisfied to just keep moving if you guys are, but [crosstalk] I don't mind if we want a scene

**Keith:** I think that the scene we did was good.

**Sylvi:** I also do. Yeah.

**Jack:** Now. Now we should be specific about what we update here, because that's a lot of information that I think we all can kind of hold in our heads, but might be worth putting on the page.

**Keith:** Okay.

**Sylvi:** Should I put like, murder weapon genuine, and then identical sculptures fraudulent?

**Jack:** Yes. And we should update Cedar Basil Banyan to say..

**Sylvi:** Fakes fits better.

**Jack:** Forger of 99% of the collection. Yes. And I think that, again, Adam, probably won't demerit us for saying that what we have down here, the entire gallery is revealed to be made of forgeries. It's actually more interesting if 99% of the gallery is forgeries, but some pieces are real.

**Keith:** Yeah. I added one word. Murder weapon. You put parentheses, genuine. And then I put not, question mark, part of the sale to Pinky of identical sculptures.

**Jack:** Yeah, yeah, definitely. There's this odd relationship between the coins and the statues. I mean, obviously it's of Croesus, but.

**Sylvi:** Yeah.

**Keith:** And the genuine articles in the forgeries.

**Jack:** Yeah...

**Keith:** The question is, and everyone on the podcast is trying to figure out the answer to this. Why would somebody do this?

[group laughter]

**Sylvi:** That's the real mystery. Fuck the murder. It's—

**Keith:** Well, that's always true! The real mystery of a murder mystery is always what the fuck is going on here? You know, as—very elegantly included in this game as the Rot. It's always the Rot. It's never—Well, it's not never the murder, but in the stuff that I have experience with, it's rarely the murder.

**Jack:** Yeah. I'm so thrilled and delighted that, like, at the end of Act 1, the actual locked room murder itself, you know, Sophia found dead in this locked room full of coins with a hidden staircase down below is, as far as locked room mysteries go, fairly prosaic. And I was like, that's fine. We can continue to develop this. And almost immediately in Act 2, we have developed a truly Byzantine, like, yeah, these are the hallmarks of a locked room mystery, this, like, weird bullshit.

**Keith:** Yeah.

## Chapter Seven

[01:38:18]

**Jack:** Okay, I think it's my turn now, right?

**Sylvi:** I think you are correct.

**Jack:** Okay, now, this could give us trouble. And it does!

**Sylvi:** Oh, did you pull—

**Jack:** [crosstalk] Oh, boy. I did.

**Sylvi:** [crosstalk] Oh boy.

**Jack:** Okay.

**Sylvi:** Oh, that's a full house.

**Jack:** So. Let's see if you now have a full house. Move to the summation phase of the game.

**Keith:** Wow. How many cards left? 13 cards left. We got it very quickly.

**Sylvi:** I feel like this has happened throughout the game is that we've gotten these very quickly. And I don't mind that. It's just interesting.

**Jack:** Now then.

**Sylvi:** Okay.

**Jack:** [reading] The summation. The journal is officially complete. The detective has everything they need to reveal the truth to the world and put an end to our story.

**Keith:** We didn't.

**Sylvi:** Yeah, we do, I believe in us.

**Jack:** The suspect that the killer rests on is the culprit. Now, let me check, because this is important. No, we don't move the killer yet. It's otherwise move the killer. If you now have a full house, move to the summation phase. Otherwise, move the killer. Which means that our killer is Pinky Huckleberry.

**Sylvi:** Let's go.

[muffled hysterical **Keith** laughter]

**Jack:** Oh, this now, this now—This is very, very good.

**Sylvi:** I love tabletop gaming.

**Jack:** Because we don't know what the fuck is going on.

**Keith:** This is—Every possible thing that could have been an answer to what the hell has been completely turned on its head.

**Jack:** [laughter] Okay. Even someone like Cueball, I could have more elegantly—You know, Cueball's kind of a mystery, which gives us a lot of—The problem is that Pinky has a lot.

**Sylvi:** We don't know what her deal is. Still.

**Jack:** We don't know what her deal is. And we—Oh, we may not. I don't know. Let's see. Hang on.

**Sylvi:** So make something up.

**Jack:** [reading] The suspect that the killer rests on is the culprit. They committed the grisly crime that our story revolves around. And their attempts to hide the truth have been for naught. The time for vague narrative beats is over. Decide together how the detective breaks the truth. Do they trick the killer into revealing themselves? Do they summon all involved to a parlor room to reveal all secrets? Do they swoop in right as the wrong person is to be accused by the police? Or do they stage an experiment to recreate every step of the murder, thus proving once and for all the truth? Recreating the scene. First, remove from the journal any suspects that fell victim to a plot. Explain what they knew about the culprit that was worth killing them over and how the detective figured it out anyway. Place them on the summation tableau. [stops reading] That doesn't help us. No one fell victim to a plot. Although let's look at who was imperiled. Aiden.

**Keith:** Currently Buford and Aiden.

**Jack and Keith:** And Pinky.

**Jack:** Okay, well, so there could be multiple sort of plots happening at the same time, right? Like the, the killer moving in. This last thing wasn't necessarily Pinky so much as the spirit of plotting.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** [reading] Then go through the card ranks in the investigation tableau and count the numbers of that rank. Resolve the corresponding prompt that many times. So if there are three twos, do the two prompt three times. Work with the other players to resolve the narrative implications of each step. For each ace, remove from the journal a number of clues that are revealed to be red herrings. Explain what other mystery they pointed to. Take these out of play completely. You no longer need them. [stops reading] So we have one ace. What is our red herring? [long pause] Can I make a proposal?

**Sylvi:** Please, please.

**Jack:** What if it's the freshly painted portrait of the victim? What if, like, what if, like, Sophia Washko sat for a portrait as part of a collection that Pinky was staging of, like, famous politician siblings? You know, in this—In the way that they have, like, presidential portraits. I think it would be fun if there was, like, a portrait of the communist sister of the presidential hopeful.

**Keith:** It sounds like a Jeopardy category.

**Sylvi:** Also sounds like a Neutral Milk Hotel song.

**Jack:** What does?

**Sylvi:** The communist sister of the presidential candidate.

**Jack:** Okay, I'm gonna move this out. This is a red herring. Alright.

**Keith:** Famous sisters for 400.

**Jack:** Is it—Do I know any famous sisters?

**Keith:** I do.

**Jack:** Joan Cusack.

**Keith:** Joan Cusack. The Williams sisters.

**Jack:** The Bronte sisters.

**Sylvi:** The Olsen twins.

**Jack:** The ladies from Little Women.

**Keith:** And the Olsen sister.

**Jack:** And the Olsen—Is there three Olsens?

**Keith:** Yeah, there's the one who's famous right now, and then her sisters who are twins.

**Jack:** There's a three-two Olsens?

**Sylvi:** Sort of, except they're siblings. They're all siblings. What's her name? From—

**Keith:** Elizabeth Olsen, maybe?

**Jack:** Oh, yeah, sure. Okay. [reading] For each two remove from the journal a number of clues that are critical to the case. Explain why the mystery cannot be solved without these. [stops reading] Now we have three twos. This is very useful to us because it lets us zero in on—

**Sylvi:** We have three twos. Hold on. We have three twos.

**Keith:** Wow. The three—The three two cards.

**Jack:** Three-two mysteries.

**Sylvi:** That's beautiful. I love it when a plan comes together.

**Jack:** Love it when a plan comes together. Okay, so I think that our essentials are—And we—I'm pitching, I'm happy to hear disagreements. The rare double sided quarter.

**Keith:** Mm.

**Jack:** The keystone. The part of a sale of identical sculptures.

**Keith:** Agreed.

**Jack:** And then one more.

**Keith:** I guess there's two—There's one to me, big one. And then one that is maybe more of a curveball. Hidden staircase.

**Jack:** Yeah, that may be essential. Yeah. What's the other one?

**Keith:** Cueball recognizes dark figure inside Pinky's house.

**Jack:** Oh, now, this is interesting, because this cue—this cue—This clue is not dark figure. It's that Cueball recognizes the dark figure.

**Keith:** Correct. Yeah.

**Jack:** Well, let's see. What else are we gonna pull? We're gonna do suspects. So this really is our last clues maneuver. [long pause] I think we should do hidden—

**Keith:** [interrupting] Oh, it could also be Dutch Welsh is here to steal counterfeit art to sell. That's a—That actually might be it. Because what do we know about Aiden is that he's a dupe.

**Jack:** Yes. He's a dupe being scammed by Wayne John.

**Keith:** And maybe also a dupe being scammed by Dutch Welsh and Pinky Huckleberry.

**Jack:** Okay. Okay. [pause] Well, yeah.

**Keith:** It's just very convenient that we have this whole plot involving some real and some fake art.

**Jack:** And then we have someone trying to steal counterfeit art.

**Keith:** Correct. Counterfeit art.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Sylvi:** Is that the twist, that it's real art?

**Jack:** Okay, hang on.

**Sylvi:** Something about the way you said counterfeit there just made me feel like there were quotations around it.

**Keith:** Well, it has suddenly become an open question whether it's real or not, which is important.

**Jack:** Yeah. I'm gonna put these up here as, like, our key things. [reading] Next, for each three remove from the journal a number of suspects whose secrets are irrelevant to the case. While they're certainly guilty of something, they did not commit murder in our story. Take these out of play. You no longer need them. [stops reading] We don't have any threes, which means all these fuckers are theoretically involved. Okay. [reading] For each four remove from the journal a number of suspects who played a part in the murderer's plot, whether they knew it or not.

**Sylvi:** Oh, and we only have one of these.

**Jack:** Yeah. Who has played a part in Pinky's plot?

**Keith:** I think there's a lot of people who could be involved.

**Jack:** Let's talk through the options.

**Keith:** I think it's Cedar Basil Banyan and Newton Henry Hertz [**Jack:** Oh yeah, definitely.] for buying forged art. It could be Aiden Huckleberry-Hudson for being tricked

into scamming Pinky Huckleberry in either a plot to steal—To actually steal real art to move and sell via Dutch Welsh, or as a plot to remove evidence from the mansion. And then Dutch Welsh for being the other leg of that. Is there anybody else? Laura Washko. For...

**Jack:** Yeah...

**Keith:** Because it's her sister that died and she's a communist, which is a liability.

**Jack:** Yeah. Although the circumstances of her death seem to imply that it's not communist related. Although we can never know when communists die.

**Keith:** We can never know. I'm just. I just added that at the last—

**Sylvi:** Communism was a red herring.

**Keith:** That was a—That was a tack at the end.

**Jack:** Um, let's see. What are they specifically asking us for again? Played a part in the murderer's plot, whether they knew it or not. I mean, I think it's Cedar Basil Banyan. Right? No. Or Newton Henry Hertz. It's, it's, it's. It's one of these two, right?

**Keith:** Yeah. I think that for the dupe it would be Newton Henry Hertz is more likely because he was in it for a clear business win. [crosstalk] And actually implicated in the crime I think it's definitely new.

**Jack:** [crosstalk] I think it's definitely Newton Henry Hertz. Yeah. In that case. So can I just grab—Yeah. Oh, my God, hang on. Hold on. I just want these. Yeah, that'll do. Nice. Oh, and I got English French as well. Go back down there. Okay.

**Keith [as English]:** Wait, why?

**Jack:** All right. [reading] Now, finally, for each five remove from the journal, a number of suspects who could have been key witnesses had they only shared everything they saw, heard, knew or thought. Set these on the summation table. [stops reading] So this, I think is Dutch and Aiden. How many fives do we have? We have two fives.

**Keith:** It could be a Cueball also could be up there.

**Jack:** Yeah, or Cedar.

**Keith:** Or Cedar.

**Sylvi:** Could be... hmm.

**Keith:** Or Wayne.

**Sylvi:** Yeah. I was thinking Wayne or Cueball.

**Keith:** Wayne may be underrated as a willing part—**Jack:** participant] of the murder team. Right?

**Jack:** Right.

**Keith:** Versus Newton as the—I think it may be more interesting to identify Newton as the dupe whose work let this happen versus the fixer who was just kind of employed to help. If that's even true.

**Jack:** It's more interesting to choose Newton.

**Keith:** Newton, yeah.

**Jack:** Well, but Newton is the one who was—What was it? Played a part whether he knew it or not. Right?

**Keith:** Right.

**Jack:** Yeah.

**Keith:** Newton would be not, and Wayne would be played. Theoretically, hypothetically.

**Jack:** But now we're looking for key witnesses had they only shared everything they knew, saw, heard, knew again, saw again. Heard, knew, saw or thought.

**Keith:** Or saw or thought or knew or knew. If they knew—If you saw what they thought they knew.

**Jack:** And we want two of these. I think it's Aiden.

**Keith:** Aiden.

**Jack:** Oh my god, oh my god. This is so—

**Keith:** I think it's Aiden for sure. And then it's either Dutch or Cedar.

**Jack:** Oh, I think it might be Cedar because Cedar knows about art, and so there's a possibility that he might know stuff about the real art.

**Keith:** Yeah, I was down there trying to imply that Cedar was looking for—At slash for the real—The genuine articles. Saw that there was genuine articles. And so was downstairs, you know, he said he was taking inventory. That's, that's what I meant by that.

**Jack:** Yes. Yeah. Okay. [reading] Move the remaining suspects and clues in the journal to the side of the table. [stops reading] We will not be doing that because it will be very annoying. It's time to—

**Keith:** [interrupting] Instead, we moved the important ones away from the table.

## **Conclusion**

[01:52:09]

**Jack:** Yes. [reading] It's time to recreate the murder in a scene told by the detective, explaining the whole crime. Take a look at all of the suspects and clues on the summation board. [stops reading] That is these ones up here. [reading] You must use all of these when you set the scene. The ones that are set aside can be used, but don't need to be. Role play the scene. Play as the different characters and walk through the events that led to the fatal crime. Don't hold anything back here. This is the truth as it

happened. You know who did it, which clues were important, which characters heard or saw something, and which characters were involved in some way. Lay out the suspects and clues on the table as you go to form a representation of the crime scene. I'd recommend a spatial map of where everyone is, but you could also create a timeline. Once the murder happens and the culprit gets away, cut back to the present with the detective wrapping up their tale. Finish off by playing out the reactions to the secret being spilled. [stops reading] Okay. [pause] I think that, I think that English French has summoned everybody to the A frame, but because he's gotten used to sitting and thinking and doing detective work in the small side room with the horse—man riding the horse and the plinth that he sits on, surrounded by the unused, possibly forged art, everyone is, like, crammed around the door of that room listening to him as he sits inside the room, like, holding forth because that is where he has grown comfortable. And he says,

[as **English**] At first it seemed very obvious to me, and then the more I looked into it, it seemed phenomenally, unnaturally complicated to me. This web of forgery and murder. Real things that look fake, fake things that look real. A collect—valuable collection of coins comprising one coin over and over again. Our murdered suspect. Sorry, our murdered victim. The identical twin of another person. And here again, the strange prevalence of cousins upon cousins upon cousins. It became very complicated to me, and I began to wonder whether or not I could untangle it all and solve it before midnight. But I have great news for you. It is, in fact, extremely simple.

[**Sylvi** laughter]

**Jack** [as **English**]: I have an understanding of this that draws it all together, every piece glittering like a jewel in the crown of the ancient emperor Croesus. And I will explain it to you now.

**Jack**: He licks the tip of his pen. And now we have to figure it out. So.

**Keith**: Great.

**Jack:** Pinky kills Sophia by bludgeoning her on the head with a sculpture that is the real historical version of a sculpture that he has recently ordered [crosstalk] 1500 of. **[Keith:** [crosstalk] Hundreds of copies of.] Why has he ordered the copies? Here is a possible pitch. In the same way that the exceptionally valuable coin in his coin collection is the one that completes the collection, the keystone coin, he has sort of hidden it among a collection of essentially identical looking other coins. Is he trying to mask the real statue by hiding it among a lot of fake statues? If so, why would he then kill someone with it? This suggests it was a crime of passion, right? Rather than she had to be killed with that statue, it was instead the thing that was—came to hand.

**Keith:** There's a second option, which is that it was not meant to be the real statue, but someone or two someones were here moving things around as part of a separate but connected plot to raise **[Sylvi:** Oh, that's fun.] funds for which Pinky Huckleberry is severely lacking.

**Sylvi:** Yeah, I kind of rock with that.

**Jack:** Okay, sorry. Can you spell that out with what's happening specifically? You're saying that Dutch and Aiden...

**Keith:** Dutch and Aiden. Were—Have—Were, as part of a separate plot to raise funds for something for Pinky Huckleberry, or with Pinky Huckleberry, put the wrong statue in the wrong place. It was meant to be one of the replicas and instead was the genuine article.

**Jack:** Yes. This means that Dutch has the real statue.

**Keith:** This is a question of, is this a premeditated murder or a crime of passion, which I think, Jack, you identified that your version would have to be a crime of passion, because why would you kill someone with the very valuable statue unless you were trying to get rid of that statue for some reason, but not make any money off of it.

**Jack:** What if he kills Sophia because Sophia—He tells Sophia about the danger of the coin? The, the, the danger that the coin represents, right? That the coin is

phenomenally valuable and is potentially bringing trouble to his door and he sends Sophia to get it, but the coin isn't there. We know that the—We saw the coin on the floor outside in the A frame, right? What if he thinks Sophia has taken the coin. What if Sophia says it's not there? He believes she is robbing him, and you know, there's a, there's an altercation. Is there anything here?

**Keith:** It does make sense, but would he—She hasn't left yet. Would he stoop to murder that quickly?

**Jack:** That's a good question

**Sylvi:** Yeah.

**Keith:** We don't know. Or, no, we do know.

**Jack:** Well, English French knows. We're just in the loose, magical space between the end of English French's last sentence and the beginning of his next one, you know?

**Keith:** Yeah, I guess, is there a compelling enough case for why he would be—what he wants to do with the money. [pause] To connect the Dutch plot with the murder?

**Sylvi:** Could this have something to do with the sister's like, election bid, maybe?

**Keith:** I agree.

**Sylvi:** Like, they're, like, using, I don't know how—

**Keith:** [interrupting] At the very—Oh, sorry. Go ahead, Sylvi.

**Sylvi:** I was like. I was gonna say money laundering, and I was like, that doesn't. I don't think that would work. I don't think you could money launder through a political campaign, but maybe I'm wrong. Maybe I don't know enough about money.

**Keith:** You can actually money launder through a political campaign. I think it's actually one of the main things people do.

**Sylvi:** Okay, cool.

**Keith:** At least in America, with—In political campaigns. Jack, you, you opened this door at the very beginning. Is there an identity swap happening?

**Jack:** Oh, of like...

**Keith:** A twin-denity swap.

**Jack:** Far be it from me to ask this. Why?

[muffled **Sylvi** laughter]

**Keith:** For Sophia to become president instead of Laura.

[pause]

**Jack:** So, so, so. No, hang on. Like, I don't understand how that works with the murder. Is it that there was like a—It was like, triple forgery happening where, like, he thought he was killing her with a fake statue, but he was actually killing her with the real one. He thought he was killing Sophia, but he was actually killing Laura.

**Keith:** Yes.

**Jack:** What's the connection between the statues and the coins?

**Keith:** And what—And why are there twins and cousins everywhere?

**Sylvi:** Yeah, that's—It's like, really—We've kind of, like, played a prank on ourselves in a lot of ways.

**Jack:** We can do it.

**Keith:** If it was written, it would have all been intentional. But because it wasn't written, it feels like we built up to some amazing reveal, but we'd have to figure out what that is.

**Jack:** No, no, no. We can do this, Keith. We can do this.

**Keith:** I agree, I agree. Okay. We can forget about mistaken identity or an intentional swap [**Jack:** of sisters.] Of sisters.

**Jack:** Because I think we were right that, like, he believed he was killing her with a fake because he, Pinky, is very aware of like, the importance of the fake statue versus the real statue. Right?

**Keith:** Right.

**Jack:** Right.

**Keith:** Yeah. It still means that he could have been killing—

**Jack:** No, we have to stop thinking about the sisters. Otherwise we're gonna get completely stuck.

**Keith:** But why would he need to kill some random communist sister of a presidential hopeful?

**Jack:** Because—So he has.

**Keith:** Unless he's trying to get a communist elected to be president.

**Sylvi:** It also could have been like a, like a, like he killed her for—Because of a misunderstanding, too.

**Jack:** Yes, definitely.

**Sylvi:** It doesn't necessarily have to be that she—He mixed up the twins, but, like, he could think that she was doing something that she wasn't doing and then was like, I need to cover my tracks.

**Keith:** This is the stolen coin.

**Sylvi:** Maybe it had—I was gonna say maybe it had something to do with the—We've established, unfortunately, that the painting is a red herring, so.

**Jack:** Oh, the painting is a red herring.

**Keith:** The painting is a red herring.

**Jack:** Yeah. Okay. So Pinky says to Sophia, there is a coin in my collection that is really the reason I have the collection. This coin is so powerful and so valuable that my life is in danger or people are gonna come and steal from me. And he's correct about that because at this very moment, Dutch and Aiden. Aiden? Aiden.

**Sylvi:** Aiden.

**Jack:** Are actually robbing, you know. He asks Sophia to do something in the room where he kills her. Right? Because she has to end up there.

**Sylvi:** Yeah.

**Jack:** And the thing he asks her to do... I mean, is this?

[pause]

**Keith:** I do like the idea that Dutch was working with Pinky to double dupe Aiden and that Dutch was not stealing the artwork, but was actually working with Pinky to move the artwork.

**Sylvi:** Yes. Kind of covered tracks.

**Jack:** Yes. Um.

**Keith:** Which is also why Dutch can stand there with a painting that he's clearly stealing and look English French in the eye and say, this is legitimate business.

**Jack:** Yes. Sorry, I just need to... Okay. He says to her—why has he invited all these fucking people here as cover? Right? To make getting the coin out—Any one of these people could have the coin. This is like dummy cars, right? You know?

**Keith:** Yeah. Which means that this has to be—I think this has to be premeditated murder.

**Jack:** Explain.

**Keith:** Well, if—Why would you invite all of these people here? And if the answer is as cover...

**Jack:** Oh, no, I thought it was as cover as to, like, at the end of today, the coin is going to be smuggled out of the building with Sophia Washko, but you bring everybody so that any one of these people could be holding the coin. Does that make sense?

**Keith:** But why would the coin go with, with Sophia if we already have Dutch doing this art moving?

**Jack:** Oh, Dutch found the body. This is like an insane game of hot potato where when you're holding the potato, the spotlight falls on you to try and make this make sense.

**Keith:** Yes. Yeah. Dutch did find the body. Dutch is here to move art. Would Sophia, the communist sister, also be here to move art?

**Jack:** Probably not.

**Sylvi:** Communist sister.

**Keith:** Communist sister is very funny.

**Sylvi:** I'm really just enjoying communist sister being said so much.

**Jack:** What about—

**Keith:** Is that an episode title? The Communist Sister. That's how mysteries are named

**Sylvi:** English French and the Communist Sister. You know...?

**Jack:** I'm trying to, like, summon it. I'm trying to summon it in my brain. I'm trying to summon it in my brain.

**Sylvi:** Best of luck.

**Keith:** I have. Let's go. Let's have some questions that we can get a yes or a no.

**Jack:** That's a really good idea, Keith.

**Keith:** Okay, I'm posing a question so that we can just cross this on or off the list.

**Jack:** You know chat right now is trying to figure it out themselves. Once again, chat, this is live to tape. We are not here.

**Keith:** You can't help us. We've already solved it.

**Sylvi:** You are Walter White screaming in the car. We can't hear you. [**Jack** laughter]

**Keith:** Okay, yes or no, would Pinky Huckleberry want Sophia Washko to be president?

[long pause]

**Jack:** Oh, I thought you were gonna ask an easier one.

**Keith:** No.

**Jack:** Pinky Huckleberry. Would he want actual communist Sophia Washko to be president? No.

**Sylvi:** No. But would he want the sister to be the president?

**Jack:** I think he's ambivalent. I don't think he wants a communist to be the president like most Americans.

**Sylvi:** Yeah, that makes sense.

**Keith:** But Pinky Huckleberry is not most Americans. He is an eccentric former millionaire, now broke owner of stuff.

**Jack:** Okay.

**Sylvi:** You make a great point.

**Jack:** Okay, [long pause] What if Sophia becomes president...

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** He gets some sort of access to the mint.

**Sylvi:** Oh, my fucking God. To make more of his coins!

**Jack:** To make more quarters. But then the value of gold—

**Sylvi:** He's trying to get us back to the quarter standard. You know, you hear a lot of these weird guys talk about the gold standard. This guy wants to make sure that 25 cents is 25 cents.

**Jack:** But now I've had like a new bizarre thought that opens us up to a new thing where I'm thinking of like this statue of Croesus and this rare double sided quarter. Like, what if they became part of like, American government insignia or something, you know? Like, what if—

**Keith:** Sorry, they became part of American government what?

**Jack:** Like insignia. Like, like, like the royal Seal—The Royal Seal—The Great Seal or something, you know? Yeah, but that's like saying, I'm gonna make my mystery more easy for us to solve by making it more like National Treasure, which is not possible.

**Keith:** Okay. I—I think I've been beating around the bush. I don't think that I have a great solution to this, but I keep seeing problems with other solutions that I don't see with mine. And I would like to just fully state it.

**Jack:** I think that's a great idea.

**Keith:** So that we can get a “No, that's too stupid.” Pinky Huckleberry is poor. The only thing that he has left is a very confusing collection of [laughter] some real and some fake art that is also. Sorry, I can't. [laughs harder] It's also an endlessly repeating—An endlessly repeating series of the same piece. [uproar of laughter] He has lost his fortune, and this strange legacy is all that he has left. He also has a Rolodex of strange

friends and acquaintances, one of whom is Laura Washko, a presidential hopeful. She's up in the polls. The other is Sophia Washko, an actual communist. What if as a plot to not lose capitalism—Not lose to capitalism, Piggy Huckleberry has abandoned his business ideals. Embraced murder.

**Sylvi:** Okay. Well—

**Keith:** Killed Laura Washko, disguised her as Sophia Washko in a bid to have Sophia assume Laura's role as president, use the sale of his bizarre and enigmatic collection to fund the campaign. And that's essentially where my train of thought ends.

**Jack:** Okay.

**Keith:** I think it accounts for everything and doesn't have any holes, but it's not, like, great.

**Jack:** What—

**Keith:** Cut that. Cut me saying it's not great.

**Jack:** I can't cut—

**Sylvi:** Bass boost Keith saying it's not great.

**Jack:** What does it—What does this scheme look like in practice? Have we ever seen the true Sophia and Laura this evening?

**Sylvi:** Whoa. Triplets.

[**Keith** bursts into laughter]

**Jack:** No. No.

**Keith:** Three-two siblings! [laughing uproariously]

**Jack:** No, no, no, no, no.

**Sylvi:** I'm very sorry. I'm very sorry.

**Jack:** No. Everybody—

**Keith:** Yes. Yes. I think that at the beginning. I think at the beginning that we did.

**Jack:** So when does the switch happen? Pinky goes to see—Sorry. Sophia goes to see Pinky.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** The true Sophia. And Pinkie is distraught because he's about to kill someone.

**Keith:** Right.

**Jack:** He's never done this before.

**Keith:** We had the clue. Oh, did we delete that clue? Oh. Pinky has information about the keystone coin for Sophia. I think it comes after that and before the murder.

**Jack:** So he says—

**Keith:** That's where he tells Sophia—

**Jack:** That this is gonna happen. Tonight's the night.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Sophia is essentially an accomplice. This has happened. They've, they've had “we should kill your sister” conversations before this point.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** And she wants to kill her sister.

**Keith:** Because she is an actual communist.

**Jack:** Who wants to be the President.

**Keith:** Who doesn't, who doesn't want—what America is to be.

**Jack:** So then what happens, Keith?

**Keith:** She makes the ultimate sacrifice.

**Jack:** No, no, no. Please be specific.

**Sylvi:** [laughing] She makes the ultimate sacrifice.

**Jack:** Pinky has just said to Sophia, tonight's the night. It is absolutely vitally important.

**Keith:** Lures Laura Washko to the private quarters, which is easy to do because no one else is in there. They kill her, swap the clothes or maybe reverse order.

**Jack:** Okay, this works.

**Keith:** This works.

**Jack:** Sophia, now dressed as Laura, plays the role of horrified sister.

**Keith:** Uh huh.

**Jack:** This is also gonna be a very weird experience for Sophia because she now has to go back on the campaign trail as someone who is a communist but can't go so off piece that she doesn't win the election.

**Keith:** Right. Well, there's a famous American president, you may have heard of him... Taylor, who essentially abandoned his party. I think it was Zachary Taylor. Am I crazy or—Who was—

**Sylvi:** [crosstalk] I don't know, man. I was making a Twilight joke.

**Keith:** William Henry Harrison—Oh, right. There's no American here. Who's William Henry Harrison's vice president? It was John Tyler. Sorry, not Zachary Taylor. John Tyler. John Tyler was kicked out of his presidential party after becoming president, after William Henry Harrison died. Because of how John Tyler completely abandoned the

ideals of his party. I don't know that I'm getting this down. He was president a long time ago and I don't know a lot about what was going on in 1841.

**Sylvi:** Fair enough, man.

**Keith:** But. But I'm saying, pretending to have certain political values and then actually not having them is already what American presidential candidates do.

**Jack:** Right.

**Keith:** It's just that they do it in the other way.

**Jack:** Right. At the same time, everybody is lured here to shift focus. Any one of these people could be the suspect. So the circumstances of the murder are gonna be obfuscated. Right?

**Keith:** Right. Yeah.

**Jack:** Okay. We have a motive, we have a method, we have essentially two actors. Now tell me about all the fucking forged art.

[pause]

**Keith:** Okay, so I want to get back to—.

**Sylvi:** I've been trying to figure out the angle on this for a minute now.

**Keith:** I want to get back to our roots. I want to get back to our roots on the forged art, which is this Pokemon scam about Kabuto.

**Sylvi:** Oh yeah, of course.

**Jack:** Right.

**Keith:** So the quarters exist because it's not just that—Collecting them is because they're rare. Collecting them makes them rare. This is a weird sort of eccentric speculation on a certain set of rare coin serials. Again, not a real thing. It's fine. Right.

And that is why collecting the exact same thing over and over again. Makes them valuable in the same way that it would do with anything. Any scarce item that you hoard artificially inflates the value of that thing if there's a market for it. And coin collectors, notoriously, will buy any stupid thing.

**Jack:** Okay...

**Keith:** Sorry coin collectors. now [**Jack:** Sorry, coin collector listeners.] The statues. It's so confusing because it looks like the same scam, but it's actually the opposite, where he's hiding genuine articles among forgeries. So it's not about driving up the value. It's about obfuscating what he actually owns.

**Jack:** Why?

**Keith:** And so these are just two different ways to keep value in art when he has no liquidity as a formerly rich, secretly poor businessman.

**Jack:** Okay, I have a couple of questions.

**Keith:** I would love that.

**Jack:** Why does Pinky tell Sophia about the keystone coin? And why has the keystone coin got a speckle of blood on it outside and, and is outside the—Oh, I've got it!

**Keith:** Oh, great. Thank God. Thank God because I didn't.

**Jack:** What if they swear a blood oath on the keystone coin? [**Sylvi and Keith:** Ohhhhh.] A blood oath to keep this secret. A blood oath to—

**Keith:** Make the ultimate sacrifice.

**Jack:** Make the ultimate sacrifice. Transform America in the right image. Continue this thing. This has happened, they made the blood oath, they made the blood oath a while ago.

**Keith:** Mm.

**Jack:** And that's the first piece of information that Pinky says when I hand over this coin to you, that we made this oath on. Tonight's the night, you know, so when Sophia sees him for the first time, and if we've got our chronology wrong, chat, and we saw the bloodstained coin before Sophia went into the room, no, we didn't.

**Sylvi:** Don't worry about it.

**Keith:** No, that's wrong. We absolutely saw the bloodstained coin first.

**Jack:** No, Keith, we need to see the bloodstained coin after Sophia goes in, because that's when he gives her the bloodstained coin to say, tonight's the night. This is the keystone of our plan, et cetera.

**Keith:** Oh, okay. Well, it's fine, we've already preset up that because of the way mysteries are shot, that could happen—Could have happened at any time.

**Jack:** Yes, you're right.

**Keith:** That was a pre-existing thing that you said today earlier. So even though it did happen earlier, it actually happened later.

**Jack:** Yes, except she dropped it or something. She, like—

**Keith:** Idiot.

**Jack:** That's why the coin is in the anteroom. And it's—That's the coin that Cueball saw, right? The—I don't know how she dropped it. There was like some, something going on. The alarm went off—

**Keith:** [interrupting] They're not her clothes.

**Jack:** They're not her clothes. She moved it from the pocket. She, you know—Because it would originally have been in the pocket of the clothes that were put on Laura. But when she takes Laura's clothes, she puts it in Laura's pocket and Laura has a hole in her pocket or something. Or it's one of those false pockets that lets you get to a pocket underneath or whatever.

**Keith:** I really am feeling good about they're not her clothes.

**Jack:** Yeah, they're not her clothes is really good. This is also who Cueballll recognizes. Cueball sees Sophia mid-switch to Laura. Right?

**Keith:** Yes.

**Jack:** Sees her with like, her hair up in a hair net before a wig or something, you know?

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** Or sees her changing glasses. Oh, Keith, remember, they both have horn rimmed glasses. That's because—

**Keith:** They both have horn rimmed glasses.

**Jack:** That's because she's still wearing her own glasses. Because they have different prescriptions and it doesn't matter because they are, because they are—They—She, you know, she kept—Sophia kept her glasses on her face the whole time. And they were identical as like, sisters going out to get glasses together. You know, a thing that happens.

**Keith:** Yeah.

**Jack:** I go out with my communist sisters to get glasses together.

**Keith:** Even communists and capitalists need glasses.

**Jack:** That's true.

**Sylvi:** Something we can all agree on.

**Jack:** It's true. It's true. Oh, my God. I think it's kind of fucking coming together. Buford has a large hunting rifle. Not important. Wayne John Hag, involved with the Dutch Welsh-Pinky Huckleberry forgery, reverse forgery scheme. Cueball recognizes dark figure inside Pinky's house, sees Sophia Washko changing. I don't fucking know why

Cueball is here. Perhaps she was intended to be the patsy. What are we laughing about?

**Sylvi:** I have an idea for Cueball.

**Keith:** I was laughing at because we really don't know. We never got to Cueball.

**Sylvi:** Yeah, I had like, an idea where she was gonna be like, Pinky's estranged illegitimate daughter or something, but like [**Keith:** Strange illegitimate cousin.] Yeah, we could do. Yeah, true. Cousin would fit better with what we've got going on.

**Jack:** Okay. Buford Knipps. Doesn't matter. Involved in this scam. Half empty bottle of 60 year Macaulay. Pinky drank half of it earlier to, you know, get dutch courage before murder.

**Keith:** It also gestures that this is a party—a shitty party full of drunk people.

**Jack:** Yes, it is.

**Keith:** Which makes it kind of easy to pull off something crazy.

**Jack:** And also easy for Dutch—for English French to figure it out. Pinky did the murder, along with Sophia Washko. Pinky has information re: the keystone coin. The keystone coin is: this is the night. We swore this oath. We're gonna do this. The entire gallery is revealed to be major forgeries. They are either weird speculation or they are methods for hiding real art. Sophia Washko dead is not actually Sophia Washko. It's Laura Washko who has been switched with Sophia as part of a campaign to make a communist president.

**Sylvi:** Yes.

**Jack:** Hidden staircase previously explored by BTT. This is very straightforward. There is a hidden series of tunnels under the house. That's how the locked room murder was kind of like fulfilled. Bill Tally Tab was under there for some fucking reason. I don't know why he was down there.

**Keith:** Bill Tally Tab is a go getter.

**Jack:** What is he go getting?

**Keith:** He's go getting—He's go getting a fresh scoop about a weird tunnel. That makes a good TikTok video.

**Jack:** I see, I see.

**Keith:** There's also a connection, I mean it's hard to say exactly what Banyan and Tab and Hertz knew. They knew about the art. They're confused about why they're here. They're all kind of working together. They are the three-two cousins. They have a wrap up meeting every night to talk about their day. **[Sylvi: Aw.]** And so it wouldn't shock me if there's something about like, we need to figure out what does he want all that art for? Maybe something's not right about this. There might be a sense that something is off.

**Jack:** Right. Right. Laura Washko is dead. Or rather yes, Laura Washko is dead.

**Keith:** Yes. And replaced by Sophia Washko.

**Jack:** Killed by her sister and Pinky. The security system of the lodge went haywire around the time that was to trap everybody in the house so that no one could flee before all the circumstances were in place to like, make one of them the patsy. But unfortunately English French showed up. **[reading]** Once the murder happens and the culprit gets away. Cut back to the present with the detective wrapping up their tail. Finish off by playing out the reactions to the secret being spilled. **[stops reading]** I think the midnight clock—The clock starts striking midnight for New Year's and between the first strike and the last strike, English French lays out the, the crime. That's when he spells out exactly what happened. You know, he's like you wanted a communist to be president so you switched and you killed your sister. And you swore a blood oath, but it fell out of your pocket because it wasn't her clothes. But they could see because they were wearing their own glasses et cetera.

**Keith:** And this is the speed at which he delivers his monologue. **[laughter]**

**Sylvi:** The second it hits midnight, he's off the clock.

**Keith:** [laughter] Yes. He's only got a few minutes left. So he's rushing through the notes. He's like, I have no time for drama. I have to get this out.

**Jack:** And he goes outside. It ends. The door—the security system has unlocked. He just walks straight out of the front door, where there are police cars with blue flashing lights outside or whatever. And down in the valley below, reflected in the face of the shocked party guests, the especially shocked Pinky Huckleberry and the woman who looks like Laura Washko, the fireworks go off in the neighboring town, you know, lighting everybody's faces up in bright colors. [**Sylvi** starts singing Auld Lang Syne in the background] They all cross their hands.

**Keith:** And just like that, we've created a classic in the subgenre of murder mysteries where you wish the murderer had gotten away with it.

**Jack:** This is an essential part of the genre. Thank you, Sylvi. This is playing in the background as well.

**Sylvi:** [finishes singing] Yeah, of course.

**Jack:** The audience is all kind of weeping because they're like—They're great. This is the—This is the fireworks going off at the Bellagio. English French's car is just already leaving, just going down the mountain pass. The snowplowers have come through as the police move into the thing. God, the, um—

**Keith** [as **Police**]: Mr. French. Mr. French, will we see you again?

**Sylvi** [as **English**]: Maybe next year, if you've been very good.

**Keith:** There we go. There we go. That's what I was looking for.

**Sylvi:** Putting on a hat while he says that and disappearing into the night.

**Jack:** He opens his glove box, and in the glove box, there's, like, two tickets to Honolulu. Where he's gonna—Two tickets. Who's his—Maybe Dutch French gets—Dutch Welsh gets to come, too. I don't know.

**Keith:** Or the Fulcrum cousin.

**Sylvi:** I was gonna say that he and the painter really hit it off. Him and Cedar are kind of like, oh, let's hit up Honolulu together.

**Jack:** Let's go to Honolulu, baby. Okay, let's see...

**Keith:** I do love the idea of English French with a straw hat covering his eyes, laying on a beach, sipping from a frilly drink with an umbrella...

**Jack:** Thinking to himself, hang on, wait a second. What was the connection between the coins and the statue?

**Sylvi:** What was Cueball's deal?

**Keith:** Oh, wait, we're not actually asking.

**Jack:** No, no. This is English French wondering, wondering to himself

**Keith:** Am I sure about that? That seems still weird.

**Jack:** He's like, I'm off the clock. I can't worry about this stuff. I'm gonna get a massage later.

**Keith:** This is why I can only work one day a year. It wrecks me.

[Sylvi laughter]

**Jack:** English French—Cut to English French doing four beautifully executed different dives into the swimming pool, one after another.

**Keith:** This is why now, this year, what we have to do is four English French spinoffs of what he does in each season that isn't working.

**Sylvi:** We should just have him cameo in things.

**Jack:** Oh, my God. But the thing is, we have never really described what he looks like. He's a small man and that's it. He doesn't have, like, Poirot's mustache. The thing about English Friend, his real defining characteristic is he's the detective who works on New Year's Eve. So a guy will just show up.

**Sylvi:** He changes actor every time.

**Jack:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. And he switches—

**Sylvi:** This one is Fozzie Bear.

[**Jack** laughter]

**Keith:** He never has the same facial hair. He never wears the same hat.

**Jack:** Someone's gonna show up and we're just gonna say, oh, and by the way, that was English French.

**Sylvi:** Do it—You can do it with your favorite episodes of any sort of Bluff City related Friends at the Table. If there's a character that's unnamed and [**Jack:** He appears briefly.] Appears briefly, just tell us that—It's—Just say it's English French.

**Jack:** Now, of course, if he's a detective, that doesn't count because English French, as we know, is only a detective on New Year.

**Keith:** At which point, unless it's highly likely that it was New Year's and we didn't say.

**Jack:** Yes, that's true. Yeah, they don't often tell you. It's usually sort of like you tend to be told when it's New Year's. It's very rare that a story happens that was on New Year's, but they don't tell you.

**Keith:** Does he work on anyone else's New Year? Does he do Chinese New Year?

**Jack:** I think he works on 31st December, 1st January. I think, I think that's only when he works, because he's a clever man, but he's also indolent. And I don't think he wants a second New Year to have to deal with.

**Sylvi:** No, Cantonese Mandarin works on Chinese New Year.

**Keith:** Okay, this is fake. This is fake, this is fake. What if a crime happens and he's like, I can't get involved. And then someone shows him that it's someone else's New Year and he feels that obligated.

**Jack:** He'd have to think, he'd really have to think about it. The beauty of English French is that whenever he appears, the bizarre circumstances of his whole deal make one desperate for English French lore. Except the games are mostly about a completely different plot, right?

**Keith:** Yes. It wasn't about English French at all. [**Jack:** He just showed up.] We learned one thing about English French in this. Actually no, we learned that he has two cousins at least.

**Jack:** Yeah, he has two cousins. Okay. [reading] Feel free to muse about the fates of the suspects after the stories, giving them epilogues if you wish. [stops reading] I think we've mostly covered them. Unless there's anybody you're really—Yeah. Thank you for playing.

**Keith:** Well, I guess we only talked about English French, really.

**Jack:** But that's where he gets his—The English French epilogues on no other characters but him. Thank you so much for watching. Thank you so much for giving us some of your New Year's Day. Thank you so much for watching us tangle our way through this mystery. And I actually think we did end up getting somewhere good. Although there was like 35 minutes there where we were just drowning. But I had a great time. Thank you for playing, Sylvi and Keith. As we said at the beginning, we're gonna try and play some more Live at the Tables over the course of 2026. And if that is what you are interested in, there are two places or three places that you can really keep

up to date. You can follow us here on Twitch. This would be helpful if Twitch's notification system was good. It's not, but do that nevertheless. You can find us on Patreon at FriendsAtTheTable.Cash, where you can find **[Keith: F-F-F-FriendsAtTheTable.Cash.]** Exactly. You can even subscribe. I mean, obviously we would prefer if you subscribed with money, but you can also subscribe just for information where you will get Janine's excellent weekly newsletters, things like that. If you are a backer at the \$5 tier or higher, I believe this episode will be appearing in your podcast feed for you to listen to properly. Properly. I don't know what the fuck I'm saying. The third way you can follow us is on—

**Keith:** Podcast feeds are the way to properly listen to something.

**Sylvi:** Yeah, no, you're cooking, actually.

**Jack:** You can find us at friends-table on Bluesky where we will be posting about what we are doing. I think that's all I have to plug. Is there anything else folks would like to plug?

**Sylvi:** We mentioned Media Club Plus earlier. Check out Media Club Plus, MediaClub.Plus.

**Keith:** Oh yeah, check out MediaClub.Plus.

**Sylvi:** I think we'll be—I don't think there'll be too many more episodes since that we've in between recording this and—.

**Keith:** No, we took an episode off. So there's gonna be a month in between episodes and that means that the next episode released will be on the 13th.

**Jack:** Okay, excellent. And Realis is back for \$5 or higher backers on Patreon. Realis is doing some wild stuff as we are recording. It is a good time, if you like a bad time.

**Sylvi:** It's great. Find out about the spoon, everybody.

**Jack:** Hey, everybody.

**Keith:** Find out about the spoon.

**Jack:** Simply find out about the spoon.

**Keith:** I actually, I need to find out about the spoon. I'm behind on...

**Jack:** You do not know what the spoon does, Keith.

**Keith:** I don't know about the spoon. I'm excited to learn about the spoon.

**Jack:** It's, it's a doozy. All right. We will see you—

**Keith:** A Doozy brand spoon? The greatest spoon brand on earth?

**Jack:** Yes, correct.

**Sylvi:** Shaking my damn head.

**Jack:** We will see you anon. Have a good rest of your New year's day, everybody. Bye  
bye bye.

[**Sylvi** starts humming Auld Lang Syne, **Keith** and **Jack** join in]

**Sylvi:** God bless us, everyone.