

### **Content Warnings:**

Emotional abuse by a parent; mentioning/use of a fantasy/fictional Narcotic, peer pressure, misgendering, neglect, bullying, references to male genitals, cursing and sexual references by minors.

*[FIRST GOOD BOUNCE by Derrick B Perry and Ashley Abbott]*

*[DESTINY DAY, by Kevin MacLeod]*

PERSEPHONE: Welcome to Fast Times at D&D High, taking place in the world of Cisternia where magic meets the modern in towering skyscrapers, crystal-powered cars, and glittering cities of eternal night. But that's not where we're going first. No, our tale starts much smaller in the country of Aria, home of the legendary hero Isadiah Varnum, in the city of Cadence. We come in over rolling waves, drifting over the boardwalk, and spiraling through city streets. Where mom-and-pop shops sit sandwiched between ancient buildings, with more modern towers spreading through the center. We see elves, orcs, halflings, humans--beings from all walks of life, going about their day. A dwarf getting a bagel at Grand Java, the coffee shop, or a pixie flying in to start her day at Cake!!!, the bakery. Small cars zoom around, the glow of their crystal cores humming along down the road.

Now, we move to the northwest. Past the busy sights of downtown. Past the train line, and towards the west residential block; homes of the affluent behind iron wrought gates; houses made of brick and crawling with ivy. And we come to a tall, white house. Outside, a tall Firbolg trims manicured bushes in front of a trellis of vines that trails up to a window warm with golden daylight. Inside, we see a cyscomm, open to fan-love.net, a story called *Cold Iron Arrows* open with "A New Chapter <3" posted above it. And in front of that computer, hunched over and in a sweatshirt, we see a young girl. Nuance, please introduce and describe your character.

*[ANGEL SHARE, by Kevin MacLeod]*

NUANCE: Surississah Theszkaizi is a pureblood Yuan-Ti cleric, which means that she looks mostly human. She has a scattering of small scales: tiny gold ones on her cheeks that almost look like freckles; and slightly larger ones down the back of her neck, on the insides of her wrists, and the tops of her shoulders. She has light brown skin, light brown eyes that are slit-pupiled and sometimes look gold in the light, and she wears her dark hair in two long braids down to her waist. She dresses in big, baggy clothing, like she'd like nothing more than to disappear inside of it, and have everyone else look over her, even when they're talking to her.

PERSEPHONE: You have just posted the newest chapter of your fanfic, *Cold Iron Arrows*. You see in the corner of your computer a notification pops up and you see a message from Ch1nch1llax, your friend. Do you open it?

NUANCE: Absolutely.

PERSEPHONE: It says,

CH1NCH1LLAX: *I've already read it and finished it. I love this so much. Are you going to start a new fic soon?*

SURI: *I think so. I'm kind of mulling over a couple ideas*

PERSEPHONE: As that happens, you hear a knock at the door. Three [knock] calm, evenly-spaced [knock] knocks. [knock]

SURI: *Gotta go!*

NUANCE: And I immediately killed the message before standing up next to my chair.

SURI: Come in?

*[INTENDED FORCE, Kevin MacLeod]*

PERSEPHONE: The door opens and you see your father and mother. Your mother, Sophistra Theszkaži, is in front of your dad. Sophistra Theszkaži has a cobra hood with black scales that reflect blue in the light, a slender face, and slit pupils that reflect blue. Your father, on the other hand, is massive, broad shouldered and thick through the chest. Has a sandy skin tone with bronze scales, and black eyes with yellow pupils and brown hair. They look rather opposed. You see that your father's face looks like thunder and lightning. But your mother is relaxed, calm.

SOPHISTRA: Surississah, darling. May we enter your room?

SURI: O-of course, please come in.

NUANCE: And I immediately look around trying to make sure that it is clean and there is nothing that they're going to trip on, look at weird, or yell at me for.

...Oh no.

PERSEPHONE: Give me a luck check to see how clean your room is. Just a pure d20 roll.

NUANCE: [*die rolling*] ...9.

PERSEPHONE: Your room is a sty. There are paper books and catalogs everywhere. There's books that are sitting on their spines, open. There's paper all over the place. It's not neat and you see that your mother looks around, sniffs once, and then decides to sit on your bed, prim and proper and straight as a rod. Your father, on the other hand, chooses to stand, crossing his thick arms in front of you. He has not yet said a word.

SOPHISTRA: Darling would you close the door, please.

PERSEPHONE: You see Zalmirisz, your father, goes to the door and closes it.

SOPHISTRA: Now, Surissisah, I haven't checked in on you since your sophomore year started a week ago. How are things going at school?

SURI: Fine. Um. I h-have already started, um, doing, uh, some work which is why my room looks the way it is! I have been, uh, collecting things for a project?

SOPHISTRA: Quite right. So you're keeping up with your schoolwork, of course, in your wizardry class. Correct?

SURI: Yes, ma'am?

SOPHISTRA: Hmm. And how is that going, darling?

SURI: W-well, uh, we have been going over some theory. Uh, and I, uh, got a good grade on our theory quiz? That we took, um, Friday.

PERSEPHONE: She pauses, blinks once, and then says,

SOPHISTRA: Really? Your study of arcane magic goes well? Hmm. Then, tell me, why did your brothers' friends see you using divine magic in the bleachers of the gym? Care to explain that, darling? And I would be fine with it if it was something else. but they claim to have seen moonlight coming out of you. And moonlight is the domain of Ma'Mahu, that failing, awful deity.

PERSEPHONE: You see your father finally speaks up.

ZALMIRISZ: You will not practice clerical magic of that sort in my household. Am I clear? Darling daughter.

SURI: Yes, sir.

SOPHISTRA: I'm afraid that that's not all that can happen here, darling. You see, your brothers' friends did their proper duty and reported you to the school board. So now, we have a problem. Have I made myself clear, Surississah?

SURI: Yes, ma'am. I--

SOPHISTRA: I didn't say you could speak! You have dishonored this family that has gone to Havisham Institute for decades. You have dishonored our alumni tradition. You have soiled our bloodline with moonlight and sea BULLSHIT. How dare you?! Darling...darling, husband, I am losing myself to vulgarity again. Can you please, please take over? Please I, I just need a moment. I'm going to leave the room.

PERSEPHONE: And she leaves. Your father leans over you the most intimidating way possible, and says,

ZALMIRISZ: Surississah, this will not end well. Come along. We have to have a meeting with your teachers. They have assigned us the duty of trying to correct whatever problem you've created. Let's hope that we can convince them not to expel you!

SURI: I didn't mean to create a problem, sir.

ZALMIRISZ: I don't care for excuses right now. Or ever. You speak when you're told. Did I tell you to speak, darling? Come along.

NUANCE: Surississah scampers after them silent; nodding and shaking her head when appropriate.

*[BUMMIN ON TREMELO, Kevin MacLeod]*

PERSEPHONE: Leaving from the window and away from Suri's depression and shame, we travel not too far to the east, but in the same section of town, just to a much grander house. We see a mansion of well-maintained grass, a cadre of gardeners working around the property. Behind the house, at the back, a waterfall tumbles into a grotto and a beautiful elven woman with snow white hair and green eyes lounges in a pink bikini by the edge. A

photographer and full makeup team are in front of her; the photographer's snapping picture after picture saying,

KLAUS: Yes darling, yes mama. Work! Work! Pose! Pose!

PERSEPHONE: Typhesea Eilauver strikes a pose, but then notices someone coming across the patio.

TYPHESEA: Oh my darling! My darling boy. Come give mama a hug! Pause the photoshoot. Pause. This is happening.

PERSEPHONE: Elise, would you please describe your character.

ELISE: Hudson Eilauver stands at five foot nine and is quite muscular. You can tell he spends a lot of time doing some bodybuilding. He is pale with pink undertones, dark brown eyes, and clearly dyed platinum blonde hair. When he is not in uniform, he is always seen wearing his gray and blue varsity jacket with a big C for Cartwright on it, and fitted white v-neck t-shirts and very expensive fitted jeans and sneakers.

PERSEPHONE: Your mother pulls you into a long hug.

TYPHESEA: Oh, I love you, honey so, so much. Do you want to join my photoshoot? You don't have anywhere important to go, do you?

HUDSON: Of course! Anything for you, Ma!

PERSEPHONE: Just to let you know, it is currently about 30 minutes before you need to be at school, so you do in fact need to go somewhere.

HUDSON: Wait, what day is it?

TYPHESEA: It's Monday, honey.

HUDSON: Whoa! Monday's a school day!

TYPHESEA: It just slipped my mind. I should have told you when you woke up. Oh, can you believe this, Klaus? I've mistreated my poor son so badly.

PERSEPHONE: You see Klaus, who is a fire Genasi with bright ruby colored hair and eyes, smiles.

KLAUS: I think he's perfect in every single way, darling. But we must get back to the photoshoot if he won't be joining it.

TYPHEASEA: Oh, you're right, darling. You're so right. Absolutely right. Now, run off, dear. Chad should be here to pick you up for school soon. You don't want to be late to the portal station....though I don't know why he's so insistent you ride in together. You have several cars.

HUDSON: All right, love you, Ma, have fun today.

TYPHESEA: I love you too, my darling son. Oh, you're so lovable.

PERSEPHONE: So you walk into the house, which is mostly done in cream and white and pink, owing itself to Typhesea's taste in style and fashion, and you get to the front door. And then you get a text on your crysphone. It's from Chad, and it says,

CHAD: *Yo, I'm outside.*

ELISE: Hudson takes his phone. And as he's walking, he very slowly types out *brb* and only finishes it right as he gets to the car and hits send before getting in.

PERSEPHONE: So Chad's car is a bright red Crys-Tang convertible. It has a crystal core that is basically put into a Mustang and that's what it looks like. You see Chad Morris, your best friend, a blonde, very white human with blue eyes, wearing the same varsity jacket as you, as you're both on the wrestling team.

HUDSON: Hey, bro! High five!

PERSEPHONE: He holds up a hand to high five you.

CHAD: Ahhh, I'm so glad you're here. We gotta, you know, have some fun. I've got a special surprise for us.

HUDSON: Whaaaaaaaaaaaaat?

CHAD: Yeah, yeah, I'll show you. Let me get started driving so we're not late.

PERSEPHONE: Okay, so you start driving, or rather Chad starts driving, and he's focused on the road but he points to the glove compartment of his convertible.

CHAD: Open it, see what's inside.

ELISE: Hudson reaches over to open it. He struggles a little bit with the push button and then yanks it open.

PERSEPHONE: So you managed to yank it open with a lot of force, which causes the contents to fall out. You see his registration and, like, car manual fall out.

CHAD: Hey, be careful with the goods!

HUDSON: Do you get me a car, bro? Is that what this is?

CHAD: Nah.

PERSEPHONE: You look closely and you see at the back of the glove compartment, still in there, is a clear pill bottle. Inside the pill bottle, you see a gold substance; little tiny pills that have little bits of what looks like gold wire rotating around it with threads of light coming through. And you recognize this as Elysium, one of the most psychedelic drugs and performance-enhancing drugs you can get your hands on. Highly, highly illegal.

HUDSON: Whoa! Bro, where did you get this?

CHAD: You wouldn't believe me if I told you, son! We're gonna get so fucking krunk right now! We're gonna get it. Like, we're gonna take some pills, we're gonna hit on some girls. Like, I don't even care if we get to class, but I need to see some babes.

HUDSON: What if Coach Sharamph finds us with the drugs?

CHAD: Oh, who cares? He's not gonna say anything. Wait, I always get confused with dwarves. He? She? They?

HUDSON: She! Pretty sure, yeah.

CHAD: She! She! Right. That could have been a problem. I've just sort of avoided it until now.

HUDSON: Smart, dude.

CHAD: Yo, yo, since I'm driving and you're not, you should take one now so kicks in faster.

HUDSON: I don't--I don't know, bro. Makes me nervous. I don't want Coach to be mad at me, you know?

CHAD: Come on. Don't be such a pansy.

HUDSON: Uhhhh...

CHAD: Bro! Bro! Bro! Bro! Bro!

HUDSON: All right, I guess.

ELISE: Hudson opens it, struggles with the child safety on the bottle, breaks it open, and then takes one.

PERSEPHONE: Hudson, can you give me a wisdom saving throw?

ELISE: [*die rolling*] That is a six.

PERSEPHONE: [*slightly distorted music*] You immediately feel the drug enter system and you start tripping balls.

[*Derp Nugget, Kevin MacLeod*]

The road looks pink and shimmery with little bits of purple floating around you. It looks like the world became like My Little Pony/Lisa Frank.

HUDSON: Oh man. Looks like my mom's house.

CHAD: Really? Isn't your mom's house, like, pink?

HUDSON: Everything is pink

CHAD: Dude, that's--that's intense. How do you feel?

HUDSON: I feel...I feel like my brain is full of balloons, and that my heart is full of glitter.

CHAD: Yo, that's tight, man. That's totally--

PERSEPHONE: And that's when you hear the sound of a police siren behind you. [*Police sirens*]

CHAD: Can't be for me. I've only been going 20 over the speed limit. It's fine.

PERSEPHONE: So Chad keeps driving and the cop car gets closer and closer and keeps following.

HUDSON: Chad, I think there's an ice cream truck behind us. We should stop for ice cream!

CHAD: Oh! Oh! I'll pull over.

PERSEPHONE: And he pulls over.

CHAD: Yo, should we get out to get ice cream? Or should we wait for the guy to come to us, like total--

HUDSON: Like, I think you have to go and order from the truck.

PERSEPHONE: And that's when you hear a knock on your window, Hudson. [*knocking*]

ELISE: Hudson puts his hands on the windows. Trying to pat the window down.

OFFICER: Roll down the window.

HUDSON: Bro, if I can't get to this ice cream man, I can't order the ice cream! How do you open the car?

CHAD: Yo yo, I'll get it. I'll get it. I'll get it.

PERSEPHONE: And Chad fully leans over you to open the window.

HUDSON: I will have five Choco Tacos, please.

PERSEPHONE: You see, very clearly, a police officer, who is a blonde elf with a hair in a bun, wearing aviator sunglasses, raises an eyebrow at you.

OFFICER: I need to see some ID.

HUDSON: I'm Hudson!

OFFICER: Hudson. Good. You know, what would be really helpful? If I could see that name on your ID. Give it to me. Now.

CHAD: Whoa, hold on, hold on. I got it. I got it somewhere. Um, in here. Hudson, can you reach into my pocket and grab it? It's like, it's like, under my butt. It's like, like right over here.

PERSEPHONE: And Chad leans forward.

ELISE: Hudson moves like he's, like, under molasses, and just very slowly starts patting Chad's pants down, trying to find his ID.

CHAD: It's not in my crotch, dude!

HUDSON: What?

CHAD: The other side.

HUDSON: Where is it?

CHAD: The other side!

ELISE: Then Hudson, like, reaches under him to try to get to the back pocket.

PERSEPHONE: You see the cop puts a hand to her forehead.

OFFICER: As amusing as this homoerotic tension is, if you don't give me your ID now? I'm going to arrest both of you.

HUDSON: Oh, hang on, hang on. Hang on. I'm sorry. I can't find his. Uh, what was I looking for?

OFFICER: Will you step out of the car? Now!

HUDSON: Oh, shoot, okay. Oh, she's so mad. Uhhh....

ELISE: Hudson tries to slap the door open. Trying to find the way out of the car,

OFFICER: Son? Are you on drugs?

HUDSON: What? No! I would never. I don't think I would? No, no. Coach would kill me if she found out I was on drugs. I'd be dead.

OFFICER: Is that Elysium? In your lap? Get out of the car. Step out of the car now.

HUDSON: Oh, shoot.

CHAD: Okay, don't don't don't have a hissy fit or anything. It'd ruin your pretty face.

HUDSON: It is very pretty.

PERSEPHONE: You see she walks up to the door, opens it, pulls you out, and walks over to the other side as Chad's getting out, and throws him against the car.

CHAD: Whoa, whoa, whoa! It's a little soon for, like, the first time meeting.

OFFICER: I am arresting you for possession of drugs and drug use! Are you both under age?

ELISE: Hudson is just standing there, like, grabbing at lights that don't exist.

CHAD: I'm old enough for you, babe.

PERSEPHONE: You see she pulls out the cuffs. And finally Chad starts picking up on the uptake and tries to struggle out of her grip, but can't get out of it, and she cuffs him. You see that the cuffs that she uses light up with light, because they're magic. And then she throws him over the front of the car and goes up to you.

OFFICER: Are you going to make this difficult for me? Or are you just going to come along?

HUDSON: You should try out for the wrestling team! You're so good!

OFFICER: All right, buddy. Turn around.

ELISE: Hudson just starts turning and doesn't stop turning

PERSEPHONE: She grabs you and then cuffs you.

OFFICER: Come along. We're going to the station. Get in the car.

HUDSON: Wait, no, it's Monday! We have school!

OFFICER: Yeah, I think that's the least of your concerns right now. Both of you in the car.

PERSEPHONE: And she puts both of you in the back of the police car

HUDSON: Chad, is she gonna take us to school? I'm gonna be late for my class.

CHAD: I don't know if school is where we're going? I think we might be going to prison and, uh, we're way too pretty to go to prison.

HUDSON: Oh, we're so pretty! We're so pretty!

CHAD: We really are! We're so *pretty*!

PERSEPHONE: Chad starts crying.

HUDSON: Aw buddy!

CHAD: We're so *pretty*!

HUDSON: Buddy, don't cry.

ELISE: Hudson reaches out and starts patting the tears off of Chad's face.

PERSEPHONE: The female cop gets in the front, closes the door, starts her siren. And Hudson and Chad blaze off down the street.

*[EASY LEMON, Kevin MacLeod]*

PERSEPHONE: From the scene of the arrest, we leave just as Hudson's head of meticulously bleached hair disappears down the street. And we move back across downtown. Day changes to dusk and the sun starts to turn the sky orange. We come to the Bay Area, just shy of the docks, where we can see the outline of the Heaven Deluxe Apartments, a towering slum hovering over the water. But that's not where we're headed. First, we go lower, to a small house down by the train tracks. Worn down but clean-looking, the gray paint might be in need of a touch up, but the bushes growing on the sparse, more-dirt-than-grass lawn look well-maintained. We see on the front stoop of well-worn stones, a young person writing on a crysphone. The app says Insect Blog. Wren, please describe your character.

WREN: The glow of the crysphone screen reflects off of two large glasses that magnify dark green eyes. Cecil, a half-orc, is hunched over and feverishly tapping at the keys. They're wearing a brown utility cargo vest with many pockets and various patches. For example, there's "Geology rocks!" and "Space Voyage: Deep Star 7" pins and other accessories. They clink against each other as Cecil fidgets excitedly, looking occasionally at a small sketchbook that's opened up on their lap. Cecil is a little disheveled and befreckled, with their gray hair tied up in a lazy ponytail with sun-bleached ends.

PERSEPHONE: Cecil you're sitting on the stoop, typing away your phone, and you hear the door open behind you and you see your mother. Now, you are a half orc, which means that one of your parents is an orc and one was another race; in your case, an elf. And your mother is a tall, broad through the hips and chest, beautiful orcish woman with long black hair that she's currently shoving into a bun, holding pins in her mouth. She plucks them and puts them in. She is wearing her waitress uniform - white apron over a black dress - clearly getting ready to go to her second job after a double shift at the factory she *also* works in.

CECILIA: Cecil, I won't be back until later. Can you, uh, can you take care of the place while I'm gone?

CECIL: Y-yeah, what do you - what do you - what do you need? Do you want me to, uh, clean?

CECILIA: Hon. You doing okay? I know, I haven't been seeing you lately. I'm so out of it. I just want you to, y'know, relax. Hold down the fort for me while I'm gone, okay? I just... I guess I feel guilty for having to leave you alone so much. Since your father died, I just-- I love you. Did you have a good day at school today?

CECIL: Yeah... Yeah, yeah, yeah! It's...it's...it's great. It's...uh...it's...I'm learning. Learning a lot.

CECILIA: Well, I'm so proud of you for getting into that school and I'm so proud of you for falling in your daddy's footsteps. I don't know if you'll be a professor or anything, but you'll be better learned than I am.

PERSEPHONE: And she grabs you into a big hug. She's much taller than you.

CECILIA: Now I gotta go catch a train. Oh, I love you so much. And I'm so sorry that I haven't been around. It'll get better eventually. I think I'm up for a promotion at the factory and then I can leave the waitressing job.

CECIL: Do you want me to bring you some coffee? Wait, that's...that's stupid. You work at a cafe. Umm... Have fun?

CECILIA: I will, I guess. I gotta go.

PERSEPHONE: And she walks off in a rush towards the train station. And you're alone. The sun is still setting, there's warm orange light all around you. And you go back to plucking away at your phone when you see a text message from a number you don't recognize. You don't get texts from random numbers unless they're spam or, you know, linked to the insect log database.

CECIL: Where's that block number function?

WREN: I'll click on it.

PERSEPHONE: You click on it and the first message - there are three - says,

JENNY: Cecil. Hi. I know you don't have my number but I got it from someone at school. This is Jenny Hex. I know you don't know me, but I know you do stuff with bugs and things. So I was hoping that you could meet up with me at the park in town? I have something I want to show you.

WREN: Cecil sits there. Basically expecting that there is somebody hiding behind a tree...

PERSEPHONE: Roll a perception check.

WREN: Alright, my first roll! [*die rolling*] This roll was a 9.

PERSEPHONE: You don't see anyone around. And the only thing you hear is the sound of the train tracks going by. You get another text, it says,

JENNY: I hope this okay, I know we haven't really talked, but like...maybe this was stupid.

WREN: Cecil is making a face that can only be described as an awkward turtle. Cecil puts their phone away into one of the pockets of their utility vest and goes inside the house to find something to clean to help their mother out.

PERSEPHONE: You go to the kitchen and start picking up and you get another buzz on your phone. And then another one.

WREN: Cecil resists for a good five minutes, maybe sweeps the floor, and then finally looks at the phone.

PERSEPHONE: There are two texts. One is a photo of a beetle with gold skin in a small cage. The next one is says,

JENNY: I think I found a golden rakshasa beetle.

CECIL: Hoo boy.

PERSEPHONE: You know that it's a very rare bug in this area.

WREN: And Cecil is just talking to themselves at this point.

CECIL: Ahhh...that's...that's...that's...that's...indeed. That's, oof, all right. Um. Hmm. Uh. But there's no--no reason that she would text. Me. That's...that's...that's...that's just stupid. I, umm. Hmm. All right. Uh. Whaaat do I say?

PERSEPHONE: Roll an insight check.

WREN: [*die rolling*] 11.

PERSEPHONE: You start to wonder, can this really be real? It couldn't be real. And then you realize there's a very easy way to find out. You could call them.

WREN: And Cecil is going to just sort of like straighten their vest, slick the hair back just a smidge, tighten the ponytail, pick something out of their teeth. Breathe heavy.

CECIL: This is fine.

WREN: And click the call button on the number.

PERSEPHONE: It rings once, then twice. And then there's a pickup.

JENNY: Hi, Cecil.

CECIL: Yep, yep, yeah.

JENNY: Hi. What do you think of the beetle? I was hoping you could come and see it in person. Everyone at school knows that you know a lot about bugs. Would you mind coming by to the park? I could be there in, like, a half hour.

CECIL: Yeah, yeah yeah...I'm not...not doing...

JENNY: Great! That's awesome. Umm, I'll see you soon?

Wren: Cecil's eyes are just real wide.

JENNY: Umm, bye.

PERSEPHONE: And hangs up

CECIL: Ahhhhhh, I just need to spend a few minutes not myself, I think.

WREN: And Cecil is going to pop into the shape of a just like a very small lizard and just sit in spot of sunlight for a few minutes. Very still.

PERSEPHONE: You sun yourself on the stone for a while. It's been about 10 minutes, you know will take you 20 minutes to get to the park from where you live.

WREN: I then pop back out.

CECIL: Alright.

WREN: They pop themselves back out of lizard shape and they head to the park.

PERSEPHONE: You bounce off, cutting through the courtyard of the Heaven Deluxe Apartments with its dirty, trash-filled center. and cut through the downtown streets to get to Eris Bladesworn Park, commonly known as Bladesworn Park. You know that this was built in honor of one of the legendary heroes of Aria. Eris Bladesworn was one of the close companions of Isidiah Varnum, the greatest hero that Aria has ever known.

You walk through the gates; it's dusk but there's still people around. Couples sitting on benches, kids playing, running around with their parents. And you walk up to the fountain where you see Eris Bladesworn's statue. She is completely covered head to toe in what would be black, but - she is covered head to toe, except for her eyes - with a black mask and a hood, holding out twin daggers by her sides. From the daggers pours water into the fountain and sitting there in front of it, you see Jenny Hex.

You know Jenny Hex from school because everyone knows Jenny Hex. The school you go to, Lothmorin, is a school of magic and enchantment. And you know Jenny is a talented sorceress. She's also a member of the Hags. A sorority at Lothmorin that currently has three members, all of which are super-popular, super-beautiful, and known to be bitchy. Of the three, Penny Frost, Jenny Hex, and Mary Luckstone. They don't really care about anything, Mary's very blasé. You see Jenny - Jenny is a stone Genasi. And if she were a statue, she would have been carved by a master out of marble. She has white lines running throughout her gray skin, with freckles of whites across her cheeks. She has long wavy green hair and near teal eyes. And she is looking at her phone.

WREN: Cecil looks down in horror as they realize that they didn't change or look in a mirror as they walked out of their house. And that causes them to slump again just a smidge.

PERSEPHONE: You see that Jenny is wearing her school uniform still. It's a dress shirt and plaid skirt that falls to about just shy of her knees. You see her jacket is lying next to her. As you come closer, she looks up and smiles at you.

JENNY: Thanks so much for coming. I-I know it's out of the blue or whatnot, but.

PERSEPHONE: She reaches over to grab the cage - delicately! - and holds it up to you.

JENNY: It's really rare, right?

CECIL: Yeah! Yeah, that's pretty... Where'd you-where'd you find it?

JENNY: Oh, I found it in the woods by my house.

CECIL: Interesting. It's generally not a wood--

JENNY: I know, right? Isn't it strange to see it? I wonder if this has anything to do with climate change and its changing environment. Or all of us, y'know, humanoids sort of encroaching on its territory, so it came somewhere that it normally doesn't go.

CECIL: Exactly! I was thinking about that the entire way over!

JENNY: They're normally from the desert. I thought the nearest place that I could find this would be in Shiraco, and I've never been there.

WREN: Cecil, who had been very, very guarded going into this interaction, just takes all of this in and there's just a little bit of an awkward pause.

CECIL: You know, they're not from around here and so honestly, I thought that maybe you had either captured it, or that this was also sort of a joke, or maybe it was somebody's escaped familiar, or...really there are so many reasons why this this could be a thing and I you know, I...crys--

WREN: Actually, guys, helped me out here. Crystal Google. We need--we need a search engine.

PERSEPHONE: I had one. A while ago.

ELISE: Scry?

PERSEPHONE: Scry. Let's go Scry.

WREN: That's perfect.

CECIL: Cuz you know, I input it into Scry on the way over here. As I was, you know, putting your number into my phone. I thought that was--is that too forward? Cause I...

JENNY: No, that's fine. That's fine. Umm, I already checked it? Um, you know I'm a sorceress, so I checked to see if it was magical or if it had been someone transformed and it's not. It's actually real! Can you believe that?

WREN: Still really can't.

JENNY: I know, it's amazing! Look at its pincers, look at how big they are! It must clearly be a male. I mean, you know, they're big for a beetle, but like, the females are bigger, but, like, still compared to other beetles that I've seen, huge, right?

WREN: Cecil is kind of flabbergasted by Jenny even knowing what she's talking about, to be perfectly honest.

JENNY: Anyway, anyway, uh, you put my number in your phone, right?

WREN: Cecil is terrified right now. But trying really hard not to be?

CECIL: Well, you, you, you. ...Yes.

JENNY: I totally put yours in mine, too. This is great! We'll totally have tons to talk about! Can you just wait here for a second? I, um, I need to use the bathroom, but we can, like, go somewhere and talk about the beetle? And we should log it, too, so that we can release it.

CECIL: Yeah, yeah. I mean, can I take a picture of it? Is that fine?

JENNY: Absolutely! Um, I'm gonna leave it here with you. I'm just gonna run to the bathroom and I'll be right back.

CECIL: All right.

WREN: And Cecil gets their phone out and starts trying to get a picture.

PERSEPHONE: Jenny walks off, she leaves her jacket there so you know she's coming back. And it starts to get darker. It's no longer sunset, it's about night. And the street lamps in the pathway of the park come on, and you see that fireflies start to dance through the trees. Cecil, give me a perception check.

WREN: Got myself a four. I'm very invested in looking at this beetle right now. I've got a little notebook out and I'm like sketching it

[*AWKWARD MEETING, Kevin Macleod*]

PERSEPHONE: Cecil, you're so entranced sketching out this beetle that you photographed, that's super rare in this area, that you never thought you'd see in person until you had the ability to travel yourself, that you don't notice that all the people in the park are gone. A wind blows through the trees, solemn, feeling gray and then you hear footsteps. [*footsteps and a metallic rattling*]

CECIL: So did you notice the stria..ations...

PERSEPHONE: You look up and you see an elven man, tall and thin running towards you. He has a bandaged eye on the left side of his face and two vertical scars are running through his right eye down to his cheek. He's wearing a chainmail shirt over leather pants and boots and he is holding a paper bag, running at you full speed. You see behind him are two beings. You can't tell what they are. They are wrapped in dark clothing. You see that they are massive, hulking in size. Definitely bruisers and they are both carrying guns

WREN: Cecil has a bit of a panic response sometimes and immediately poofs down into the shape of a turtle.

PERSEPHONE: As you poof into a turtle, you see that the man running gets up to you, looks at you, grabs you, and starts sprinting away.

MYSTERIOUS STRANGER: Listen kid, I need you to listen close and when I say 'transform back', I need you to transform back. Do you hear me?

WREN: Cecil's little turtle face shakes up and down.

MYSTERIOUS STRANGER: Good! Listen good. I don't have time to explain. I'm going to throw you to the side and you're going to grab this paper bag with your mouth. Got it? The count of three. 3...2...

PERSEPHONE: And he throws you. And the bag.

WREN: Turtle!Cecil grabs onto this bag with all of their might?

PERSEPHONE: Roll a dexterity saving throw.

WREN: [*die rolling*] That's a 13.

PERSEPHONE: You managed to tuck and roll, just narrowly missing rolling onto your back. And you poof back to your half-orc normal form. And you have a paper bag in your mouth. It does not taste good.

WREN: Cecil was unclear of the directions and so it does not spit it out, but scrambles to their feet.

PERSEPHONE: As you get up, you see in front of you that the man has stopped running. He draws from his belt a longsword that glows in the night light. And you see the two people that are chasing him stop and aim their guns at him.

MYSTERIOUS STRANGER: Come at me, you bastards.

PERSEPHONE: You see that they look at him, shake their heads, and then turn their gaze to you. You're past the treeline and it's dark, most people wouldn't be able to see you. But you can tell they're looking directly at you. And one disappears and teleports right in front of your face.

WREN: Cecil's next defense mechanism, which happens very awkwardly as there is a bag in their mouth. But in the moment that this happens, the bag drops as Cecil utters the words that are required and gestures [*the sound of vines growing and twisting*] as they cast spike growth spouting out from a 20 foot radius around themselves.

PERSEPHONE: The man in front of you, bends down, his knees touch the spiked growth. You see bright bursts of blood appear on his knees, and he leans in and whispers,

STRANGER-DANGER: That ain't gonna stop me kid. You working with Mefrit? That's a bad plan.

PERSEPHONE: On the lower half of his face are swirling tattoos around his mouth. He has very light skin, almost too pale to exist. And he looks like he has been--not crying? But his eyes are definitely bruised.

STRANGER-DANGER: I'll be taking that bag.

MEFRIT: Hey, I said Look at me.

PERSEPHONE: You see the other one rushes towards this man, Mefrit, and clobbers him the sword goes flying. The man in front of you turns his head.

STRANGER-DANGER: Can you say "night night" kiddo?

CECIL: Night night? [*A heavy blow*]

PERSEPHONE: And he bashes you across the face, knocking you out cold. And the world disappears.

PERSEPHONE: I probably should have made you roll for that, but I think it works.

WREN: No it's fine.

NUANCE: In the chat, Elise and I have been like, "I hope it's thugs. I hope it's thugs. Please be a real friend. Please be a real friend!" And we're like "THUGS! \o/"

[*ANDREAS THEME, Kevin MacLeod*]

PERSEPHONE: Time passes. Night goes into day. Sun crawls against the sky. The moon rises. One after another after another. And we stop, two weeks later. It's early morning on September 21. And we go from the park to the western commercial district. There, past a strip mall and underneath the edge of the train tracks, we see a trailer. The metal has rusted at the bottom and a crooked antenna hangs off the roof. Through the door, we enter and inside we see a woman on an open futon, dead asleep. Her greasy black hair might be wavy if it hadn't been pulled straight by oil and her eyes are red-rimmed even in sleep. An open bottle of pills sits tipped over on the coffee table, and the wood is stained by cigarette burns and littered with butts. A door with a band poster saying *Locke and Key* opens and the slender young man steps out. Caro, please describe your character.

CARO: Ollie is a skinny, pale, freckled, somewhat gawky-looking kid, with gray-blue eyes and a navy blue mohawk. He's about average height, a little on the small side, very wiry. He's dressed in black, ripped skinny jeans, black sleeveless t-shirt, and wears a faded black denim vest that's covered in patches and pins and buttons and spikes that look like he's put them on himself. He has doodles and Sharpie all over his hands and forearms and even his fingernails, and notably, his hands have big x's on the backs of them. His ears are full of piercings and he

looks a little unkempt, a little bit dirty. He's quick with a gap tooth smile and perpetually seems to be wearing a grin plastered across his face. Along with him comes a very, very small...it's hard to tell exactly what it is at first to some kind of rodent. But it becomes more obvious that it is a little stoat weasel. The weasel runs around at Ollie's feet, skitters up his leg, and rests on his shoulder.

PERSEPHONE: *[tiny animal noises]*

OLLIE: Hi, Ricky. What are you doing, bud?

PERSEPHONE: *[tiny animal noises continue]*

OLLIE: Oh, I love you too. Yes, yes I do! You're my best friend.

PERSEPHONE: You hear a loud yawn and a stretch and the sound of many bones popping, cracking, and a loud,

DYNAH: Ughhh...

OLLIE: Morning Mum.

DYNAH: You up, kid?

PERSEPHONE: You see Dynah, your mother, is sitting up on the futon. She looks over at you; her eyes are completely bloodshot. She reaches over the table, grabs a beer that was probably there last night and already opened and warm, and starts to drink it.

DYNAH: Hey. Where ya off to, kid?

OLLIE: Oh, yeah. Well, I'm supposed to go to school, so probably gonna do that.

PERSEPHONE: She takes a swig.

DYNAH: A lotta good school is gonna do ya kid, you know? You should just get a job or somethin'.

OLLIE: Yeah, uh, remember how I got arrested and now I have to go to this school? Yeah, that's why we're here. So anyway, lovely see you, Mum. Uh, I'll be outside.

DYNAH: It's just ya first arrest, that's not a big deal.

PERSEPHONE: She reaches down as you're passing and grabs a bottle of pills. You see that it's similar to the bottle that Hudson had earlier with golden pills with swirling black wire around them and pops two in her mouth.

DYNAH: Ugh. Did anyone ever tell ya you don't need to talk back to your mother, kid? Oh wait I did.

OLLIE: I would never dream of it, Mum.

DYNAH: You'd never dream of it? You never would. That's why you're talking now.

OLLIE: Nope. That's not--

DYNAH: Huh? Huh?

OLLIE: That's what--

DYNAH: Listen, kid, get your ass to school. At least then you won't be in my hair.

PERSEPHONE: She leans back into the futon and reaches for the remote which has gone underneath the bed, climbs over to the far side and grabs it.

DYNAH: I'm gonna watch my soaps or maybe Springer's on. Whatever. Get out.

OLLIE: Brilliant idea, Mum. Alright, see you later.

DYNAH: Whatever. Bye.

CARO: Oh, I just I walk in front of the TV, kind of pushing around, looking like I'm looking for pencils and I tried to lift some of the pills off the table.

PERSEPHONE: Roll a sleight of hand check, please.

CARO: I have a 15 for my sleight of hand check.

PERSEPHONE: You reach for the pills and a hand stops on top of yours.

OLLIE: Ah shite.

DYNAH: Kid, I ain't stupid. I'm a druggie, I ain't dumb. Get out.

CARO: He leaves.

[*FEELIN' GOOD, Kevin MacLeod*]

PERSEPHONE: And you leave and head off to school. Now, unlike the rest of the people here, you attend Varnum Correctional Institute. It is the only school that's actually within Cadence proper, with the other schools - Lothmorin, Carthwright Training Academy where Hudson goes, Havisham Institute of the Infernal Arts where Surississah goes, the Hearthbound Seminary for Multi-Dimensional Faith, and the Callum Conservatory of Music and Design - are all in different areas, connected to Cadence and other areas of Aria by portal. You know that here, students at those schools go to Getcha There Portal Station. But since Varnum is just in the city proper, you can just walk there. Or take the bus.

You walk up to the northwest side, and you see Varnum Correctional Institute. Once upon a time, it was known as Varnum Academy of Heroic Arts and was founded by Isadiah Varnum, the greatest hero that Aria has ever known. However, 200 years after it was established fully, it was shut down, suddenly, out of the blue. No one's quite sure why, and it didn't open up for another hundred years. And when it did, it was used as a correctional academy for students that were..troubled, let's say.

CARO: Challenged! I like to say challenged.

PERSEPHONE: Challenged or a challenge?

CARO: Either one really!

PERSEPHONE: It should be no surprise to anyone that you go there. You end up at the front walkway of Varnum. The cobblestone-lined path is worn and grass grows in between the cracks. And it leads up to an iron gate or - what used to be one, but is worn away with rust and there are large holes in the steel fence, some covered in graffiti. As you walk up to the path, you see the front doors of the main building of Varnum. A tall brick building, the school's name is emblazoned above you with the school crest, a silver dragon, beneath it. A remnant from a time before it was a correctional facility.

Students gather around, you have all kinds. You see tieflings playing with lighters by the side. Gnomes doing illusion magic over on the pathway. Elves, genasi, people from all over, but many of them look rough. You can tell the new students from the old by the look of grim inevitability on their faces, whereas older students bear wicked grins (some casting fire cantrips on the grass while a teacher yells at them) or a blasé attitude of indifference.

Past the edges of the front building, there are three others. A gymnasium, and two other buildings housing classrooms. In the back, you know that there are several taller buildings with high-rising towers, all made from the same brick, but that no one goes there. And as you're walking, please make a perception check.

CARO: [*die rolling*] That's a 15.

PERSEPHONE: You are walking up and you hear a car coming behind you and you turn around to see who it is. [*sounds of a car engine*] You see a very, very stylish black car, black sports car. And you see in the side is a girl with glittering bronze scales and long, brown braids in her hair. You see that a man gets out, a thick-through-the-shoulders Abomination Yuan-Ti with a serpentine face and green eyes, with a cobra's hood and green scales, who opens the door on the other side? And you see Surississa, who you know from the library.

OLLIE: Ah, Library Girl! Ah yeah!

PERSEPHONE: Surississah, your brother Seth leans over the open doorway and looks down at you.

SETH: So this is a compromise that our family reached?

SURI: I-I guess so.

SETH: Surississah.

SURI: I didn't mean to cause trouble?

PERSEPHONE: He holds out a hand.

SETH: I'm not Mother and Father. I'm disappointed in you, but I'm not going to berate you. What's done is done.

SETH: I had to come back from college for this. Just. Try to cause less embarrassment to the family. Get out of my car.

SURI: I know, I'm sorry!

NUANCE: Suri fumbles for the door. Mostly just because she is flustered and scattered and...

PERSEPHONE: Seth closes it for you.

SETH: Now, I'm not going to be back to pick you up. You're going to have to walk home or...ugh, *take the bus. I can't*. I cannot anymore. I'm going back to school and hopefully the next time I visit, it will be for a better reason than mum and dad not being able to look at you.

SURI: Sorry again.

PERSEPHONE: He gets in his car and blazes off with a skid of rubber against the stones.

NUANCE: Suri flinches at the noise. She looks like she flinches at a lot of loud noises, to be honest.

PERSEPHONE: Surississah and Ollie, please make perception checks again.

CARO: [*die rolling*] I got 17

NUANCE: [*die rolling*] I've got a 12.

PERSEPHONE: Cool. Both of you notice that closer to the door, there is a teacher. A young teacher with blond hair, about 5'8, 5'9, very handsome, little bit of scruff, wearing a vest and an open dress shirt. And you see that there is a girl that is getting a little too close to him, sort of like leaning on one side, leaning into him as he looks uncomfortable. Ollie, you know that's Locksley Graves, one of the popular teachers at school, both for his looks and his very laid back attitude. And you know that he teaches history and music. And the girl across from him is Monette. And Monette is a very, very popular girl here. And you do not get along.

OLLIE: Hey, Monette. Hitting on teach again, I see.

MONETTE: Listen, I'm sorry, Ollie--

OLLIE: [*mocking her voice*] I'm sorry, too. Oh, yeah, it's all right.

MONETTE: I'm trying to talk to Locksley.

OLLIE: [*still mocking*] Oh my god, that's so inappropriate.

PERSEPHONE: Locksley looks very uncomfortable.

LOCKSLEY: Uh, Monette, maybe, uh, like, you should worry about getting the class? Like, Ember's your homeroom teacher, right? Like, you think that she's gonna be very happy if you're late because you're, uh, accosting me?

MONETTE: I'm not accosting you. I just had some questions to ask about the classes that you teach, you know.

OLLIE: [*still mocking*] ...the classes that you teach...

MONETTE: No one asked you, Olle. Don't you have something to go, like, sell or, like, drugs to do, or something?

OLLIE: That's a good idea, actually.

LOCKSLEY: Whoa, wait wait! Ollie. Ollie.

OLLIE: Yeah. What's up, teach?

LOCKSLEY: You know, I can't allow you to do that on school property.

OLLIE: I'm not doing anything!

LOCKSLEY: Really, you just said you were gonna go sell drugs?

OLLIE: No, I said that it was a good idea. I didn't say I was gonna do it. Technically.

LOCKSLEY: Like, right in front of me.

OLLIE: Look, all right. Listen, I...I listened to what you said last week. And you said I can't write swears on my fingers. So this time it says 'Cuck Funt.' It's not swears, you know. Cuck Funt.

LOCKSLEY: Ollie, uh, like, we really need to find some other way for you to, like, funnel your creativity. That... All right, I don't know what to do with that. I got a class to teach. And, uhh, Monette, if you don't have any questions about class, can they wait till after you have mine in third period?

MONETTE: I mean, I guess but I'd rather have some one on one attention from--

LOCKSLEY: Right. That's, uh, that's good enough. Umm.

EMBER: You know, Monette, that if you're late for class, I will give you detention.

PERSEPHONE: And Ollie and Surississah, you see walking up Ollie, Locksley, and Monette is a stunning woman. She has long, green wavy hair with dark roots, crystal clear lake blue-green eyes and is wearing a red blouse with a black pencil skirt. And you, Ollie, recognize this as Ember Dew, a counselor that also does homeroom.

OLLIE: Hello Miss Dew.. So nice to see you. Ricky says hi, too, by the way.

PERSEPHONE: [*small animal noises*]

EMBER: Hello Ricky. How are you this morning?

OLLIE: Oh, Ricky is completely in love with you. So embarrassing.

EMBER: Oh, don't worry about it. I do love weasels, they're so cute! But speaking of adorable things, Monette! You adorable, precious little girl. Why don't you run along to class instead of hitting on my colleague?

MONETTE: I wasn't doing anything, Miss Dew.

OLLIE: She was.

MONETTE: I was just talking.

OLLIE: She was. Yup.

EMBER: Ollie. You of all people should know that no one likes a tattletale.

OLLIE: I guess I haven't learned that lesson yet!

PERSEPHONE: She wags a finger at you.

EMBER: Come along, Monette. I'm sure that whatever questions you have for Locksley, you can ask me.

MONETTE: Ugh, *fine*.

PERSEPHONE: And Monette walks away.

LOCKSLEY: Like, I'm never gonna get used to that? Ollie, we have homeroom in, like, 10? Make sure, like, you're there.

OLLIE: This time I'm definitely going to be! Absolutely. Yep.

LOCKSLEY: Ollie. For at least, like, this week? Let's not have a repeat of last week? Like when you set those frogs loose in my classroom, it totally ruined my vibe. Just so you know.

OLLIE: To be fair, they were illusory frogs, so you know. No harm, no foul.

LOCKSLEY: They're still like illusory slimy, brah.

OLLIE: Yeah, all right, all right. Fair enough.

LOCKSLEY: Thank you. Like if you're gonna do that, do it in like, I don't know, the vice principal's office. You didn't hear that from me.

OLLIE: I'll tell you what--

LOCKSLEY: You didn't hear that from me!

OLLIE: Alright!

LOCKSLEY: I'm gonna go to class. You better be there.

PERSEPHONE: And Locksley walks away.

NUANCE: Suri hasn't moved from her spot on the sidewalk. She was deposited from her brother's car, and just kind of seems like she's doing her very best to just crawl into her clothing and then maybe nobody will see her.

CARO: Ollie turns around and looks directly at her.

OLLIE: Hey!

SURI: Oh!

OLLIE: Library Girl! Yeah, we met at the library. Don't tell anyone I go there.

SURI: Yeah...

OLLIE: That is completely not aboveboard. That's just not something that we should talk about. Hey, have you met Ricky?

SURI: Uh? No? Who's...?

PERSEPHONE: [*small animal noises*]

CARO: Ricky kinda crawls and peeks out.

OLLIE: This is Ricky, he's my weasel. You - you wanna pet him?

SURI: Can I?

OLLIE: Yeah, totally.

CARO: I, like, take Ricky out and kind of let him crawl onto Suri.

NUANCE: Suri reaches out a hand. She clearly still looks nervous, although it has nothing to do with Ricky. Like Ricky is fine; Ricky's probably the best thing about her day thus far.

OLLIE: You can pet him. He's very calming.

SURI: Oh, he's very soft.

PERSEPHONE: [*small animal noises*]

SURI: Hello. Hi little friend.

OLLIE: Who was that dropped you off?

SURI: Oh, that's...that's my brother Seth

OLLIE: Is he always mean?

NUANCE: She has no idea what you're talking about.

SURI: That was...kind of okay.

OLLIE: *What?* Really? Shite, I thought my mom was bad. Oh! Ricky!

PERSEPHONE: You look down and you see that Ricky has crawled down to Surississah's arm and has started freaking out. And you see this blue-green bracelet that she's wearing? Rises its head up and you see a tiny little snake poke out its tongue.

OLLIE: Oh no, he's gonna kill that!

PERSEPHONE: [*angry small animal noises*]

SURI: W-Wha? No! No!

CARO: I just grab him.

SURI: Please don't hurt him!

OLLIE: No no no, Ricky, no no!

PERSEPHONE: Ricky, he's like scrambling, trying to get back. [*angry small animal noises continue*]

OLLIE: No, no, no he's not-- that's a magic snake for *not* eating. Sorry. Sorry about that. Didn't know you had a snake.

SURI: This is Ophidian. He's my friend?

PERSEPHONE: Ophidian looks at Ollie and looks at the ferret and you hear a little sniff as if the snake is saying *As if you could*.

SURI: Shh. It's okay.

PERSEPHONE: [*disgruntled small animal noises*]

OLLIE: Sorry, uh, Ricky would...he's a, a beast. He would just destroy your snake, so I'll just be very careful.

PERSEPHONE: Muffled sounds of a ferret angry underneath your shirt.

OLLIE: Very careful about that in the future. All right. Calm down, calm down. So, ah, you don't go here, right? You go somewhere else.

SURI: I go here today? Starting from today.

OLLIE: Ohhhh! What did you do?

SURI: Cleric magic?

OLLIE: What?

SURI: Cleric magic.

OLLIE: Like you didn't do... you didn't get arrested or have a...y'know, have a record, or something that-- something you *did*.

SURI: I mean, no, I-I-I've mostly swapped to mp3s.

OLLIE: Oh, yeah, right! Nooo, you didn't dooo anything! Yeah, no me, either! Yup! Cool. Well, ah, I'll show you around if you want. I've been here for like, you know, entire like, couple weeks so pretty much got it under wraps.

SURI: What didn't I do?

OLLIE: Anything illegal?

SURI: No! Oh, gods, no. Oh, no, no, if I--oh I would be--

OLLIE: No! We wouldn't, nah! Neither one of us would do anything like that.

SURI: No! Oh my-- my skin would be attached to my mom's wall in her study!

OLLIE: *What?*

SURI: ...no. I mean, what no, like, that's not...Not *really* real. I mean...

OLLIE: What's going on with your family? Are they all terribly mean?

SURI: Ah... Well...

OLLIE: Sounds like yes. But listen, uhhh, let's just ignore that and not talk about our family. So we'll talk about something else. Okay?

SURI: Okay! Yeahno, I'd like that!

OLLIE: Great! What's your favorite book?

SURI: Oh, well, first, you clearly have to pick a genre because, I mean, you can't just narrow it down to one single favorite book across all genres.

OLLIE: So, uh, sci fi, obviously.

SURI: Oh, sci fi. Um, okay, so I guess... so for standalones, then I would have to say that, uhh, my favorite book is *By The Eastern Dawn*. Umm, have you read that one? It's got--

OLLIE: Oh, yeah! Yeah!

SURI: With the crysrobots, right?

OLLIE: Yeah! I love that one!

SURI: Yeah! That was so good!

OLLIE: Absolutely! But my favorite is Asakoff.

SURI: Oh, well see, so I'd like Asakoff a lot, but I feel like some of his, um.. He wrote a very different time. So things can be a little...

OLLIE: Oh yeah, it's like totally problematic but also at the same time I appreciate how dark he gets with things, you know? He's just not afraid.

SURI: Oh yeah, he doesn't hold back not at all.

OLLIE: I like that a lot.

SURI: Yeah.

OLLIE: Yeah.

PERSEPHONE: Okay so you two start chatting as you go through the front doors, which are open. And you come to the entry hallway. Lines of lockers, silver in color, line the walls. You see a bunch of students that are going through lockers or chatting with friends. You see a tall blond student wearing a red and white jacket, a varsity jacket. Ollie, you recognize this as Kenneth, who's the captain of the jousting team. A junior, very popular. You see that he's standing next to his friend Elmer Belcrag who is a very ornately dressed dwarf with no beard, has semi-long hair down to his shoulders that's golden blonde in color and is wearing a bright purple silk shirt and leather pants.

You also see coming down the hallway looking harried and worried, is a skinny person. And Cecil, this is your first day at Varnum. After the incident in the park, you woke up in the hospital, with your mother sitting beside your bed crying her eyes out. You know from the cop that came to question you while you were bedridden in the hospital, that the man who had given you that bag was a wanted criminal, a thief who had robbed the Museum of Gemma, the capital. Owing to that, your reputation as someone who was found with the bag next to the collapsed body of the criminal, was not the best. You were never formally accused of a crime. However, your reputation - which was already on thin ice at Lothmorin - was enough to get you ousted and sent to Varnum Correctional.

Today is your first day and you are desperately looking for your homeroom class. You're supposed to be at someone named Locksley Graves' class, but your schedule has a number cut off and you have no idea where you're going.

WREN: What is the uniform for Varnum?

PERSEPHONE: Varnum doesn't have a uniform.

WREN: Oh. Did Lothmorin take mine?

PERSEPHONE: No.

WREN: I'm wearing my Lothmorin uniform

PERSEPHONE: You're wearing blue plaid pants, a silver vest, and a white dress shirt. With a blazer.

WREN: It's the nicest stuff I had.

PERSEPHONE: Ollie and Surississah, you see this person wearing what you know to be a Lothmorin uniform. At Varnum. Looking furiously around and super nervous

OLLIE: You lost, kid? You're in the wrong school. This is not--this is, this is *Varnum*. You're in the wrong place.

WREN: Cecil points at themselves awkwardly.

Ollie: Yeah yeah yeah. You. Yes.

WREN: Cecil looks behind them.

OLLIE: No, I'm talking to you.

SURI: Are, are, are you new, too?

CECIL: Do, do, do either of you know who Locksley...Gravver?

OLLIE: Oh yeah, you're looking for the Locksley Graves, that teach--teaches homeroom and

PERSEPHONE: As you say that, you feel a sharp bump into your shoulder, Cecil, that nearly knocks you over. You see a tall half-elf with a leather jacket, wearing ripped jeans and a muscle tee. Looks at you, he has one earring, a hoop in the right ear.

GRANGE: Watch where you're going. You're in my way.

PERSEPHONE: Ollie, you recognize Grange.

OLLIE: Aww shit.

GRANGE: Hey Ollie.

OLLIE: Sorry Grange! Sorry about that! He was, ah, err

GRANGE: This a friend of yours? You little shit. You know, you're usually pretty smart. Make sure that you get a friend that knows their place. And where not to be at what time. Got it?

CECIL: I'm sorry, I--

CARO: Oh, I'm gonna fuck with this kid. I'm gonna use--I'm gonna cast minor illusion and make it look like he has a huge boner.

PERSEPHONE: Okay, hold on. Let me...unlike a lot of people, Grange has stats, so.

WREN: So that / look like I have a huge boner?

CARO: No, no, no. So that, uh, so that Grange looks like he has one. I'm defending you. Yeah.

WREN: Okay, okay, okay.

PERSEPHONE: Okay, so you cast a spell. [*magical strings*]

OLLIE: Oh, Grange. You might want to go take care of that, friend.

GRANGE: What do you mean?

OLLIE: HEY EVERYONE! LOOK AT GRANGE!

WREN: Cecil sees this and just backs up really fast.

NUANCE: Suri is already pressing herself against the locker.

PERSEPHONE: You see Grange looks down, then looks up at you, and looks down again.

GRANGE: Hey everybody, you wanna see my dick?

CECIL: No no no no no no no

SURI: No thank you! No thank you! I do not.

PERSEPHONE: He looks down the hallway.

GRANGE: Look at my massive fucking dick.

SURI: I would prefer not to, thank you.

NUANCE: Suri's hands are over her eyes.

GRANGE: Ollie.

OLLIE: Yeah?

GRANGE: Next time you want to embarrass someone, don't give them something they want.

OLLIE: Good advice. All right.

GRANGE: Also, you made it too small. Do better kid.

OLLIE: Whoa. That's very...

PERSEPHONE: Grange walks away towards a girl that has light brown hair that has roots grown out too far. And a tall Goliath-looking bruiser with a jean jacket.

GRANGE: Come on guys, I guess we'd better go to homeroom. At least one day we'll be on time.

PERSEPHONE: And walks away. And at this point, you watch them walk away. And you see them pass a boy at a locker.

[*DOOPLY DOO, Kevin MacLeod*]

PERSEPHONE: He has platinum blonde hair and is wearing a varsity jacket from the wrong school. Looking very confused. Hudson, after the little incident with the drugs in the car, you were in a bit of trouble. Chad, on the other hand, has a very well-standing family and managed to get things put under wraps but your mother for all her money and talent is not well liked by the community. And as such, she was only able to avoid you getting jail by sending you to Varnum. Today is your first day of school. And you're at your locker fiddling with the combination that you just can't get right.

HUDSON: Okay. Six? Uhh. And then you turn it six times. Back to...what is after six? Five? No. Two? I'm just gonna...

ELISE: And he just like, breaks it open.

HUDSON: There we go!

PERSEPHONE: Ollie, you recognize Hudson.

Ollie: Oh, yeah. Umm. Hey! Hey! Ah, uh, what's your name again? Ah--Hanson? Harper?

CECIL: Hudson.

WREN: And Cecil is just looking in Hudson's direction, just perplexed.

ELISE: Hudson turns around when he hears his actual name. Hudson makes eye contact with Cecil and just sort of peers very intently at them. Like you can tell his brain is thinking really hard.

HUDSON: CECIL!

ELISE: He throws his arms up and comes charging at you

WREN: Suddenly turtle.

HUDSON: Oh my god Cecil!

Elise: And then big hug, misses you as you turtle, and then looks around like,

HUDSON: Oh.

PERSEPHONE: At that point when you turn into a turtle, you hear [*ostentatious coughing*] and you turn around and see a dwarf with light brown hair threaded with gray, a long beard, staring at you. He has a tag on his right side saying "Vice Principal" and Ollie, you recognize Craggsley, the Vice Principal. Behind him you see his creature, a long red serpentine creature with bright fur that looks somehow (in another realm) like a Furby, but longer.

Craggsley: There is to be no usage of abilities and magic in the halls. Only in certified areas.

WREN: Turtle! Cecil looks rather scared.

HUDSON: I didn't use magic.

OLLIE: I didn't either.

Craggsley: I wasn't talking to you. I was talking to the turtle you're holding. Transform back!

PERSEPHONE: The fluffy little Furby looking thing reaches up its long serpentine neck to stare you in the face and addresses you.

Jaxter: Yeah, transform back!

WREN: The eyes of the turtle just get real wide. And if a turtle could concentrate, it looks as if the turtle is concentrating with really wide eyes! And then the eyes shut real tight and nothing happens

PERSEPHONE: He reaches into his pocket, pulls out a slip, rips it off of the pad, and sticks it to your shell.

Craggsley: Detention! Get to class!

PERSEPHONE: And walks away. His familiar, Jaxter, crawling behind him, moving side to side in a sinuous fashion.

CARO: Lean into Suri.

OLLIE: That's Jaxter. And that's the vice principal.

SURI: Why is that...

HUDSON: He just sent a *turtle* to *detention*.

ELISE: As soon as the vice principal is out of eyeshot, Hudson pat the turtle shell.

HUDSON: It's okay, little buddy.

WREN: Turtle, turtle, Turtle, turtle turtle and then pops back into half-orc.

CECIL: I tried to--I tried to turn back!

SURI: I wouldn't have been able to do that, to to to turn back either. Not with that thing looking at me. What is that thing?

PERSEPHONE: You are still in Hudson's arms.

HUDSON: Whoa! Cecil! Cecil, are you a turtle?

CECIL: Only sometimes.

HUDSON: Whoa.

ELISE: Hudson looks like his mind has just been completely blown.

CECIL: You're really strong now. Can you put me down?

HUDSON: Oh, yeah, sorry about that.

SURI: You two know each other?

CECIL: Not really.

ELISE: Hudson turns to see Suri. And then he makes that thinking really hard face.

HUDSON: Do I know you?

OLLIE: All right. Introductions all around then, yeah? I'm Ollie. Nice to meet you everyone.

HUDSON: Ollie! I know you!

OLLIE: Yeah man. It's nice to see you again.

HUDSON: How you been, buddy?

OLLIE: I'm not your buddy.

HUDSON: Oh. Okay, buddy

WREN: Cecil reaches back and pulls the slip of their back.

CECIL: Detention?

OLLIE: What's your name, Detention?

CECIL: Huh?

OLLIE: What- what's your name?

CECIL: Oh. I'm Cecil.

OLLIE: All right. And you, Library?

SURI: Surississah. Uh. Surississah Theszka. It's a pleasure to meet you? Make everyone's acquaintance. Hello.

HUDSON. Hi. I'm Hudson!

SURI: O-okay?

HUDSON: Nice to meet you.

ELISE: He holds his hand out

PERSEPHONE: As he holds his hand out, the bell goes off. [*school bell rings*]

OLLIE: Oh shit.

SURI: Are we late?

OLLIE: Oh, yeah. We're late.

HUDSON: Man, not again!

CECIL: Well, that's fine. I mean, in my old school, if I was late, I would just kind of come in and- and they would just take down your name. I mean, honestly, sometimes I just didn't even show up for homework at all. I mean, sometimes you just get really...

NUANCE: Suri's face has the expression of someone who's utterly flabbergasted and who has never been tardy to homeroom before in her life. It may be possibly the utmost tragedy in her hierarchy of concerns for the day.

OLLIE: We're just getting later every second that passes.

CECIL: I don't know where to go.

OLLIE: Oh, there's two different homerooms that I know about.

PERSEPHONE: There's more than two.

OLLIE: There's a lot of different homerooms that I know about. You should have something to tell you about that. I don't know.

CECIL: Uhh, Locksley.

OLLIE: Alright, Grave's classroom down that way.

CARO: I point down towards where the classroom is.

CARO: Are we all going to the same homeroom or are we going--?

NUANCE: Good question, are we all going to Locksley's homeroom?

PERSEPHONE: You all are. You all have schedules, most of you that are printed properly, unlike Cecil's, and you're all in the same homeroom.

OLLIE: Oh, it looks like we're all in the same homeroom. So follow me.

SURI: Umm..okay?

HUDSON: Aww great!

CARO: I lead the way down to the homeroom.

NUANCE: And like a trail of sad ducklings, we follow. Okay, Hudson may be an exuberant duckling.

ELISE: As far you can tell, this is the best day of Hudson's life!

PERSEPHONE:: And that's where we'll end our session

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PERSEPHONE: This has been Fast Times at D&D High. I'm Persephone and you can find me at @Persephiroth everywhere online.

CARO: I'm Caro and you can find me on all the things at @car0mur, spelled with a zero.

NUANCE: I'm Nuance and you can follow me @shadowravyn on Twitter and booksomewench on Twitch; check out Dun-gyms and Dratinis, my Pokemon homebrew.

WREN: I'm Wren and I live on Twitter at @AtomicFirebird! I am also at @Make\_Believe\_ on twitch where I run indie system one-shots and do a weekly interview show.

ELISE: I am Elise, several sentient otters. I'm not on the internet, don't @ me.

PERSEPHONE: You can also find all of us on Twitter at @FastTimesDnD! That's Fast Times D the letter N D. If you want to support us, please visit us at [Patreon.com/FastTimesDnD](https://Patreon.com/FastTimesDnD) Again, Fast Times D the letter N D

CARO: If you want to know more about the world, the players, or the characters, check us out at [FastTimesDnD.com](http://FastTimesDnD.com)!

NUANCE: Transcripts of our episode audio are provided by Zee Bowditch @FandomjunkieZee - that's Z-E-E on Twitter

WREN: Fast Times at D&D high is an ArcanaCast production, copyright 2020 all rights reserved. Our editor is Derrick B Perry. Our theme song was produced by Derrick B Perry and Ashley Abbott. Our background music is courtesy of Kevin MacLeod. Licensed under Creative Commons, find individual track listings in our show notes.

ELISE: We ran out of things... still don't @ me.

SEPHIE: Tune in next week to hear the story unfold!