

The Secrets of Bionical Manor: Escape the Mechan Mansion

An Interactive, Story Driven Experience

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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
About the World.....	4
Background on the Manor	4
Guest Narrative Introduction.....	5
Room Detail Sheets	6
Great Hall	7
Master Bedroom	8
Children’s Bedrooms.....	9
Servant’s Hall.....	10
Ballroom	11
Drawing Room.....	12
Library	13
Trophy Room.....	14
Laboratory/ Greenhouse.....	15
Solarium	16
Trial Rooms	17
Vault/ Catacombs	18
Character Detail Sheets	19
Dr. Hubert C. Vicaran	20
Avery Kadam Vicaran	21
Briar Phina Vicaran.....	22
Hubert “Clay” Vicaran II.....	23
Paths to Exit	24
Dr. Hubert Vicaran path	24
Avery Kadam Vicaran path	25
Hubert “Clay” Vicaran II path	27
CLAY OBEDIENT PATH.....	27
CLAY HUMANITY PATH.....	28
Briar Phina Vicaran path.....	29

Introduction

Interactivity is key to any entertainment medium, whether it be emotional or 04hysical. The most interactive physically, the experiences that allow you to truly interact with and impact the world the story inhabits, is video games. The most interactive emotionally, the experiences that bring your heart and mind into a scenario most completely, is live entertainment. In recent years, the industry has been bridging this gap between the unlimited possibilities and complete environmental control we see in video games, and the inherent wonder and tactile immersion of live entertainment. This new medium of interactive live experiences is, in my opinion, one of the greatest creations in entertainment in recent years.

As writers, designers, entertainers, whatever nebulous label we give ourselves in an ever evolving industry, we aim to bring stories and, well, joy to people. Is there anything more joy filled than being in a moment, in an experience with people you care about? Interactive live entertainment IS that moment. It is the joy of solving a mystery or exploring or playing with friends old and new in a safe environment. It is the bringing together of people in a communal space without pressure or expectation, much like children on a playground. Interactive experiences are new opportunities to unite, to entertain, to connect. I can't think of a more exciting world to be a part of, nor one that is more needed in our current society.

... Okay, So, What IS This?

Essentially, this is a an interactive, story driven escape room in the scale of an attraction. It is intended as a stand alone experience and brings guests into a world where they can explore to their heart's content as they try to find their way out. It has many secrets to explore and uncover as it brings guests to a far distant future that looks suspiciously like our past. There are 4 different story paths to exit the manor guests find themselves trapped in, as well as a voluntary exit for those who do not want to play, or who get overwhelmed. This experience aims to enthrall audiences with an original story and open freedom to explore it as they'd like. This project looks to make guests feel like they've stumbled upon an abandoned building and have the freedom to investigate, much like the phenomenon of urban exploration combined with the "dungeon crawl" feeling in many video games, where the only path forward is deeper.

This experience is an abandoned manor whose android residents mysteriously disappeared, and a world where the mechanical is organic and vice versa.

About the World

Intelligent life is arrogant. It will inevitably result in its own downfall. Humans couldn't last forever, with their weaponry and computers and penchant for ecological implosion. They went out with a bang, quite literally, and took the planet's ecosystems with them. Humans were temporary. What they created outlasted them by centuries.

With humans out of the way, other forms of life could grow, and nothing grew quite the way mechans did. Originating from humanity's machines, mechans (mechanical life forms) emerged from the ashes of the world. The robots that survived found themselves with no one to serve, and instead served their own kind. They salvaged, replicated, built a new age piece by piece. Men with electricity coursing through them in place of blood.

The mechan society built great structures and works of art not based in technology, but in organics. Buildings of concrete and wiring had no place in a world where wiring ran through bodies like veins. Instead, their buildings had walls of wood, roofs of thick plant material, art of flowers and furs and all the living things that had died off with the humans. Mechans lived in large tree like structures, or in buildings made entirely of natural materials. Their technology was organic: wheels of thick keratin and lights of bioluminescent bacteria and plant based machines powered by the sun. Complex, biological life was rare in wake of humanity's destruction. The small number of humans, descended from the survivors of the destruction, acted as servants for the extremely wealthy. The upper echelon of society, the scientists and archivists and wealthy, lived in a way that was eerily similar to early 20th century human royalty. They kept humans like useful pets. Oddities. Resources the same as any other organic.

Mechans invented, they studied, they craved progress like they needed it to live. They built a society, defined an era with their organic machines and electronic intelligent life. But intelligent life is arrogant, and it always leads to its own downfall. When scientists started experimenting with creating artificial intelligence, organic life with the mind of a mechan, they were going down a well trodden path of destruction...

Background on the Manor

Bionical Manor is the home of the brilliant, if not a bit eccentric, Dr. Hubert Vicaran and his family. Dr. Vicaran, a renown theoretical botanist, had the house renovated soon after his marriage to debutante and social royalty, Avery Kadam, whose family had owned the house for centuries. The marriage was the combining of two wildly different sides of the upper class. The drive, curiosity, and disorder of scientists met the high class, routine, and orderly wealthy. Their house reflects this union, as do their two children.

The house itself is reminiscent of historic, human manors long past combined with the purposefulness of ancient castles and longhouses. It is entirely organic, with

both the walls and ceilings made of thick plant based materials, almost like wood or woven braids of wheat. The interior furnishings are mostly mechanical, however. Any piece of furniture not considered an appliance or otherwise powered object is made of metals, plastics, and wiring. Counters that are amalgamations of gears sealed in plastic, doors of thin metal, beds of pliable plastic. Copper wiring made into decorative features. Bookshelves and chairs and carpets made of mechanical pieces and wires. Appliances and objects requiring power, however, are entirely biological. Light fixtures made of bioluminescent bacteria in semi transparent pods. Refrigerators made of thick plant flesh filled with electric snacks. Elevator lifts powered by harnessed, photosynthesized sun energy.

The house feels like a well-kept, well maintained monument to its owners. However, there are signs that it was lived in. Books made of metal sheets left on ledges in the great hall, scattered books and clothes in the library, small drawings on the pedestals in the trophy room. It feels as if life, liveliness persisted here despite endless efforts to maintain order and appearances. Below the house is the servants' hall. Here, the human servants prepare meals, store cleaning equipment, and live their lives in service of the mechans upstairs. Additionally, the house itself is a bit overgrown.

Despite the signs of inhabitants, the manor is utterly devoid of life, both mechan and human. They have seemingly disappeared out of thin air, and they took their secrets with them. What lies waiting to be discovered in the grand manor, and what happened to its residents?

I have included more in depth information about the rooms below. Beneath them, I have added more information about the characters and escape paths.

Guest Narrative Introduction

From the outside, the house appears lavish and large. It is clearly different than houses in our time, in the 21st century, but it seems both historic in its size and shape as well as otherworldly in its coloring, its materials, the soft glow from within. The front door, larger than life and heavy steel, is securely locked. Walking around the side of the house, we can see a window that has been left open. To get into the manor, we will have to climb inside. There is also an ADA entrance by way of a hidden door on the other side of the house. It can be activated and opened with attendant help. This also serves as the emergency exit in case anyone wants to leave before they've explored.

Once inside, we find ourselves in the great hall, detailed below. We emerge on a small ledge and must hop down to the hall below, making our entrance unusable for our exit. Our goal is now to find a way out of the manor, and we can only do it through exploring.

Room Detail Sheets

Great Hall

The Great Hall welcomed many aristocrats and brilliant minds over the years, all under the watchful eye of the family portrait.... And the walls....

Guest Narrative

We enter the main hall, expansive and long. It is reminiscent of a throne room, formal and almost intimidating with high ceilings and a long central runner rug. On one end of the hall, the locked front door. Opposite it, a raised platform. Up a few steps to the platform, a painting of an aristocratic mechan family, two parents and two older children. Off to the sides of the platform, doors lead to the wings of the house, as well as a secret door that leads up a spire.

Guest Interactivity/ Points of Interest

- Drop down entrance into the manor
- ADA entrance/ Quick exit door
- Hidden door to spire, requires vine sequence
- Family painting, library code written on it in blacklight (requires UV flashlight)
- Spire door, requires keycode
- Inscription on spire door frame
- Carved phrase near the front door

Description/ Story Context

The Great Hall lies at the entrance to the house, with the grand door leading to the outside. It is the area of the manor least changed with the renovation, and it holds the grandeur of the aristocratic house of Kadam. It also functioned as the welcome to the rest of the manor, drawing in high society to many balls and galas and exhibitions. The high ceilings and larger than life length of the room paint a picture of wealth and power, and as does the painting. The family portrait at the end of the long runner is intimidating and depicts the family as Avery intended: powerful, superior, and overwhelmingly remarkable. There's an intimidation in it, entirely intentional. The hidden spire sits at the center towards the back, acting as a backdrop for the portrait itself, signifying the hidden secrets beneath the family.

Master Bedroom

The Master Bedroom used to be the sleeping place for the Vicaran heads of house. Nowadays, the room is the only place in the manor without overgrowth, as if preserved as a monument to its inhabitants...

Guest Narrative

We enter the master bedroom, a room equally grand and barren. It feels like a hotel room, devoid of any life from its inhabitants. The bed is large, and there are two dueling desks on opposite sides of the room, with ledgers and schedules on each.

The room is large, almost intimidating in how pristine and almost sterile it is. Notably, this is the only room untouched by overgrowth.

Guest Interactivity/

Points of Interest

- Ledger/ Correspondence about recent gala on Avery's desk
- Planner with last known whereabouts of Dr. Vicaran
- Record of workers in the house

Description/ Story Context

The Master Bedroom is where Avery and Dr. Vicaran slept. The two could not be more different, united only by marriage and mutually beneficial trades. Their bedroom is no different, stuffy and entirely lacking love. Most nights, Dr. Vicaran did not sleep in his bedroom, leaving Avery alone to maintain and use it. This resulted in a clear divide between the sides of the room, with Avery's side very organized and formal and Dr. Vicaran's side disorganized and littered with small potted experiments. Avery kept the disorder socially acceptable, which is also representative of their lives. Similarly, their planners on their desks paint a picture of division. Dr. Vicaran's is scattered, filled begrudgingly with daily activities and littered with notes and sketches about his work. Avery's is very meticulous, with all the activities within the house outlined and accounted for.

Children's Bedrooms

The twin rooms of the Vicaran children easily show the differences between them, with Briar's explosions of creation and Clay's tight control on his actions. In the absence of their owners, the rooms seem to butt heads just the same.

Guest Narrative

In the same area of the house as the Master Bedroom, we find the children's bedrooms.

They mirror each other across the hall. They are relatively spacious, with beds and desks of their own. Briar's room feels like an explosion of art and activity but is not messy. Rather it is quite comforting. Clay's room is much more structured, with everything in its place. However, it is quite overgrown, contrasting the controlled order of the room.

Guest Interactivity/ Points of Interest

- A safe with blacklight flashlights and a diary (Briar's room)
- Clay's deactivated mechan body (Clay's room)
- Blacklight message (Briar's room)

Description/ Story Context

Briar and Clay's bedrooms have the same skeleton, but vastly different décor. The rooms were built for them before they were born, their parents deciding their residence before they were even thought of. Briar's room is an explosion of color and mess, with the walls and ceiling carved and dotted with dyed water and oil as well as flower pods. Her bed is covered in supplies pushed off to one side, as if she slept without clearing off her bed every night. Every surface has been painted or destroyed and reassembled many times over. She has one shelf untouched, which holds a few small mechanics from Clay and other points of happiness for her. Clay's room, however, is almost neurotic. Everything is in its place, with the bed cleanly made and the shelves alphabetized. His body is the only thing out of place, and even it is meticulously placed. He has a few paintings and outlined books from Briar kept special under his bed. There are many notes left to himself around the room, general reminders and unhealthy reinforcements alike.

Servant's Hall

The last refuge of humanity in a mechan controlled world, the servant's hall serves the house above. But, more importantly, it houses some of the last humans alive and the culture they carry on their shoulders.

Guest Narrative

Beneath the house we find the servants' area, with a bunk room, kitchen, and cellar.

Home to the human servants of the mechs, this place is small and dark compared to the upstairs. It almost feels like a grave, under the ground and with roots of the house bleeding down into the walls. There's a cramped feeling to it, but also something distinctly human that's missing from the rest of the house.

Guest Interactivity/

Points of Interest

- Vine cookbook (kitchen)
- Hidden door to the trial rooms (cellar)
- Evie's journal (bunk room)

Description/ Story Context

The servant's hall is the underbelly of the manor, home to over a dozen humans of all ages. These humans have served the manor since its creation centuries ago. Children have been born, old people have died in this hall. The kitchen is warm with open cookbooks and notes and recipes scribbled onto surfaces. The cellar is organized, but bottles can be seen half full or hidden empty, signifying the humans of the house over the years have taken some. The bunk room is large yet cramped, with many bunk beds and a few containers. There are bioluminescent candles on some surfaces, which help to light the underground hall. In the bunk room, notes are left on bunks and on walls. Cribs are made from storage containers. Games, such as cards and tic tac toe, are found throughout. Despite the fall of their civilization, humans and their culture have not died out.

Ballroom

Without the residents, the ballroom retains little use. Even without the events of the social season, the room seems to beckon visitors in to have one more song, one more dance...

Guest Narrative

It isn't difficult to find the ballroom as we walk through the house. It is massive, clearly the center of social life for the house. There lies a piano alone on a stage. Though a space intended for entertaining and maintaining appearances, it is clear someone spent a good portion of their time in here, caring for the piano and performing for no one. The cramped backstage area is particularly overgrown, full of secrets of its own.

Guest Interactivity/ Points of Interest

- Door to the backstage
- Equipment door and overgrown room
- Piano
- Scroll on a windowsill

Description/ Story Context

The ballroom has been home to countless events over the years. Galas and soirees and social gatherings of all sorts have thrived in this room. Both Briar and Avery debuted in the ballroom, and Avery wowed the aristocratic world with their performances here. The piano upon the stage is an heirloom, salvaged and returned to the stage with the renovation. It is Avery's favorite room in the house, and they spend any free time they might have honing their skills. It is not a rare sight to see Avery dancing or playing music alone in the ballroom. The backstage area is equally valued, with dressing rooms full of formalwear and instruments locked off to the outside world and overgrown since the disappearance of the family. The ceilings here are particularly high, and the acoustics are immaculate.

Drawing Room

A work of organic art itself, the drawing room provided a space for the residents to hone their skills for the social season. Unfortunately, that was all it was ever used for...

Guest Narrative

Not too far from the ballroom we find the drawing room. It's almost a flowerless botanical garden with stretching windows and vines that run intricate patterns around the room. There's something almost eerie about the sterilized presentation of life here. Paintings lie on easels as well as propped up against the walls.

Description/ Story Context

The drawing room was a work room for the children. Where the ballroom was Avery's alcove, the drawing room was where the children were pushed to the brink of their happiness. Paintings and readings were daily occurrences. There is little love here, the constraints of it angering Briar and the pressures dissuading Clay. The room itself is gorgeous, truly an exemplification of the abilities of organics. Dr. Vicaran finds it to be a waste of its potential, but Avery keeps the room pristine to the delight of many guests. Many social gatherings included time in the beautiful drawing room, which boasted both the wealth of the family as well as their power in the sheer amount of organics they had at their disposal. Many of the more intimate and important social events were held here.

Guest Interactivity/

Points of Interest

- Painting of a piano with music notes on the top
- Blacklight message on a painting
- Locked storage room
- Sketches of the house/ rooms (storage room)

Library

Housing the knowledge of the mechan people, the library is a great place to relax and learn. Perhaps that is why the children of the house loved it so much.

Guest Narrative

Past the drawing room is a grand library. Shelves lined with books covering the walls. The room is lit by sconces powered by bioluminescent bacteria. The room generally feels cozy, with armchairs and a large fireplace. Where the drawing room feels oppressive, the library feels like an oasis. There's a level of untouchable grandeur to it, but the scattered books and notes give the sense that it was well loved.

Guest Interactivity/

Points of Interest

- Mechan dictionary with translations
- Book on reading sheet music
- Moveable books
- Note from Briar to Evie
- Secret passage under the fireplace

Description/ Story Context

The library holds the extensive collection of the Kadam family as well as a good amount of Dr. Vicaran's research materials. It is the favorite room of Briar and Clay, and was often their escape as children. They enjoyed hiding in the shelves and under chairs, giggling to each other and avoiding their educations. Rarely, Dr. Vicaran could be seen here, reading one of his many resources for insight into a project he was struggling with. Listening to his rave aloud about his projects was some of the only time the children spent with their father. The books here are well worn and read across generations of both man and mechan. Some of the more valuable books are locked away in cabinets. There are also books missing, only to be found either on the floor or in another room with notations scribbled in the margins. This was usually done by Briar. The chairs are also worn here, softened with age.

Trophy Room

The trophy room holds artifacts from both the human era and the mechan one. The two groups are separated, just in case. Organics and machines just shouldn't mix...

Guest Narrative

The trophy room has no doors, either to be inviting or to show that the homeowners aren't afraid of stealing. Machines on pedestals populate the room like a museum. Some are of human origin, some of mechan, but all of them in operation. Some of the machines are built into the walls, and these only operate erratically.

Description/ Story Context

The trophy room is a mini museum within the manor. Artifacts here date back to human times, with mechanical telephones and toasters on open display. Rube Goldberg machines looping around the room. Additionally, progressions in organic tech are displayed here, from the first vine pulley system to touch sensitive leaves. Some of the more modern inventions are the creations of Dr. Vicaran himself. The family rarely spend time here, preferring to enjoy other spaces. The guests, however, are very charmed by the displays. Additionally, there is a catalogue book on display detailing the different objects. It also has cipher pages, which have been the subject of interest to many who see them. If Dr. Vicaran is forced to interact with the public, he will often remain in this room and speak on the inner workings of the organic machinery.

Guest Interactivity/ Points of Interest

- Cipher book
- Human artifacts
- Mechan inventions

Laboratory/ Greenhouse

The laboratory of the brilliant and renown Dr. Vicaran holds many secrets. He spent the majority of his time here, who knows what kind of experiments he did?

Guest Narrative

The laboratory is one of the largest rooms in the house. It feels more like a greenhouse, with many plants growing out of the walls, out of planters in the center. There are scattered blackboards about, detailing different experiments both in progress and long completed. There is also a desk in the corner, stacked with books and notes and awards. This room has a passion that isn't found anywhere else in the house.

Guest Interactivity!

Points of Interest

- Blackboards detailing how the house operates
- Locked door to hidden lab
- Note from Avery to Dr. Vicaran
- Organic/ mechanic abomination (secret lab)
- Dr. Vicaran's body (secret lab)

Description/ Story Context

Not quite a laboratory, not quite a greenhouse, the lab is Dr. Vicaran's favorite space. He spends nearly all his time in this room, leaving only for obligations and meals. No one else was welcome in the lab, other than the occasional Avery to leave messages. It is a chaotic collection of projects and modern science, while also being a lively, plant filled room. The secret lab hidden within is cut off from all outdoor influence, but has a sun roof that reflects light from the solarium.

The room itself is home to many bioluminescent fungi and microorganisms, all grown into the walls. The main lab is open yet stifling, filled with many plants and too many ideas for one room. There is a bed made of organic material in one corner, canopied by experiments. Thoughts are inscribed into the walls, drawn onto blackboards, almost like the space of a madman. In a way, it is.

Solarium

Hidden above the house like the sun in the sky, the solarium is a monument to the ignorance of the scientist who created a sun of his own.

Guest Narrative

Climbing the spiral stairs up to the solarium leads to an observatory type room. In the center is an artificial sun, large and almost humming with power. A plant from the lab has broken into the solarium and onto the roof, creating a slide of sorts. Lining the walls are sketches of the solarium design and the sun itself. The space feels almost like a place of worship, or at least a place revered quite heavily by the person who frequents it.

Guest Interactivity/

Points of Interest

- Hatch onto the roof
- Artificial sun
- Plant slide

Description/ Story Context

The solarium lies at the top of the spire and holds the artificial sun that powers both the house and Dr. Vicaran's experiments. The morality of creating a new sun, a new source of life, is fuzzy at best. The spire is likely the escape path of the human servants, assuming they did escape. The solarium is covered in sketches and plans and equations. Dr. Vicaran spent an amount of time here, almost revering his creation and the way it would allow him to further alter the organics in his experiments by changing the intensity of and access to light. This artificial sun was the intention behind the house renovation, providing the space to both conceal it and allow connection to the entirety of the house. The existence of this sun is hidden from the science community at large, and it allowed Dr. Vicaran to create the organic intelligence that killed him and broke his family.

Trial Rooms

Created as a way of protecting family secrets from outsiders, the trial rooms beneath the house come from the mind of Avery Vicaran. The level of complexity reflects their affinity for performance.

Guest Narrative

Passing through a hidden door in the cellar, we enter the trial rooms, which ultimately leading to the vault. The wall decorations and patterns are made out of the roots of the house. The first room has an interactive floor that tracks dance steps. The second room is laser target practice with varied targets attached to roots, moving at random. The third room is a pressure sensitive puzzle where the correct tiles must be stepped on at the correct time.

Description/ Story Context

The trial rooms were added by Avery during the renovation, without the knowledge or care of Dr. Vicaran. The rooms are beneath ground and lead to the vault. Avery created them as a test for future generations, a gatekeeper to the great secrets of the first mechan. The rooms are, to this point, unused. They may have been the escape path of Avery, but this is unconfirmed. The tests themselves test the social aptitude of the candidate, ensuring they know how to handle themselves with secrets and handle those secrets with grace. The first trial tests the training of the candidate, as well as their ability to fall in line, with a formal dance evaluation. The second trial tests the ability to think on their feet with moving targets and tests their ability to keep their calm in stressful situations in hitting those targets. The third trial tests their knowledge about their heritage and the ability to keep that knowledge safe by questioning candidates on the family itself.

Guest Interactivity/ Points of Interest

- Passcode pad for entry door
- Dance floor
- Laser target arena
- Hack console
- Trivia room

Vault/ Catacombs

The vault contains artifacts from long past, including the remains of the family's ancestors. It has the best record of history in mechan society, hence the incredibly complex method of entry.

Guest Narrative

The vault and connected catacombs are a bit like a museum storage room: packed with items in boxes and under glass. There are identifying plaques on some, record sheets on the rest, and an almost sterile lighting to the room as a whole. This contrasts the catacombs, which mirror the French and English catacombs beneath their cities. It is dim, lit by bioluminescent candles. At the end of the catacombs, there is a human grave with real candles.

Description/ Story Context

The vault is filled with human artifacts long gone. Home base from Fenway, Apollo rockets, a decommissioned Mars rover, the Mona Lisa, and many more. The original mechan mourned his human family and sought to gather all remnants of humanity he could. This gave the Kadam family their wealth and renown, though these facts were quickly lost to time and only the power remained. However, the family still knows. Avery keeps this a great secret, ensuring the children are ready to know it through completing the trials. The artifacts are well preserved and catalogued, with a list of all of them on a clipboard by the door. Some are preserved in boxes, some are open to be seen. Beyond the vault are the catacombs, the final resting place of the Kadam mechs. Avery's parents lie here and the generations stretch back to the first mechan. At the very end of the hall is the grave of the first mechan's human family, forever mourning them and everything they gave meankind.

Guest Interactivity/

Points of Interest

- Mechan tombs
- Remains of the original mechan's human family
- Human artifacts
- Mechan historical documents and objects
- Hidden path to the outdoors

Character Detail Sheets

Dr. Hubert C. Vicaran

Fate

Destroyed by sentient plants of his creation in his secret lab

Traits

- Genius
- Cold
- Ambitious
- Antisocial
- Analytical
- Hyper focused
- Obsessive
- Work above all else
- Sacrificing, but not of himself
- Self important
- Oblivious and uncaring to the world outside his lab
- Logical to a fault
- Award winning
- Revolutionary

Backstory

Dr. Hubert C. Vicaran is a scientist. More than a scientist, he is one of the top minds in the world, especially in his field of theoretical botany. The field is defined as the study of organics as conduits for intelligence and action, entirely theoretical of course. Dr. Vicaran was raised rather unremarkably, but he was always anything but. Even when he was young, he'd always had an affinity for organics, for things with inherent life but no intelligence behind it. Some called his interest strange, or even borderline upsetting, but no one was questioning his brilliance when he began winning awards for his papers and research on increased intelligence in organic matter.

For his many accomplishments, Dr. Vicaran's inability and unwillingness to partake in the social world hindered his ability to fund his projects. Ever devoted to his research, he married Avery Kadam for their money, which they had in droves. He has won many awards and recognitions for his scientific contributions, but he is rarely seen and never takes collaborators. He spends his days in his lab and goes days if not weeks without seeing another mechan. His work is highly secretive, and he values it above all else. His family receives no thought, and their happiness is just one of the sacrifices he makes in pursuit of his ultimate goal: creating organics with intelligence on the level of mechan. Along the way, he accomplished other triumphs: an artificial sun in his solarium, countless organic based machinery, interfaces with organics. However, his methods for invention were often less than moral, and his experimentation on increasingly sentient plants would lead to his own death. It is an obsession for him, and all who know him suffer for it. His children barely know him, his spouse resents him, and his field will learn to mourn his hubris. When his experiments go wrong and his intelligent organics kill him for what he has done, his body dead in his precious lab will mark a warning to mechnkind: life is better left to its own devices.

Design Imagery

Dr. Frankenstein, Jack Skellington, isolation, I Am Legend, hubris, Hamilton, broken beakers, nature overtaking industry, a shattered greenhouse

Avery Kadam Vicaran

Fate
Unknown.

Traits

- Strict
- Talented dancer, musician, painter, etc
- Wonderful host
- Dignified
- Calculating
- Oppressive
- High standards
- Self sufficient
- Legacy keeper
- Underestimated
- Tricky
- Grand expectations
- Androgynously feminine

Backstory

Avery Vicaran (nee Kadam) was born to aristocratic parents in an aristocratic society. Their family were the descendants of the original mechan, the one who woke up in the rubble of the human world. They were an only child, and were subsequently saddled with the weight of the entire legacy. Most would crack under the pressure, but Avery thrived. They became the ultimate debutante, mastering every performance and smashing every expectation. Avery is a master pianist and overall musician, a highly regarded dancer, and expert in the art of entertaining guests. They very quickly became the prize of their social season, with their pick of any of the other aristocrats and politicians. However, Avery is more than a pretty face and a gracious host. They chose to marry Dr. Vicaran for his renown as a scientist, and for his potential to gain prestige due to more than his heritage. With their legacy secured, Avery turned to hosting the most anticipated parties, impressing with the highest caliber cultural displays, overall setting the standard for the high aristocracy. In the process, they put the intensity they executed every action with onto the raising of their children. They had the highest of expectations for their children, just as their parents before. As a parent, Avery was anything but loving. They pushed their children into countless enrichments, strict and demanding. With Dr. Vicaran rarely around any of them, Avery became the sole parent, a position they held no love for. Their ability to charm or trick their way out of (or into) any situation is remarkable, and their forethought and ability to predict and prepare for their future is unrivaled. Unfortunately, for all their planning and working and maintaining, there is nothing they could do to save their household from its fate. Their whereabouts are unknown, but perhaps they see disappearance preferable to the societal pity and shame of losing their house, husband, children, and legacy all in one swoop.

Design Imagery

Tywin Lannister, classical music, the sound of a slapping ruler, perfection, debutante dances, traditions kept, hidden rooms, hushed tones, high society, formal balls, androgyny in classically feminine acts

Briar Phina Vicarar

Fate

Escaped with her
human girlfriend.
Presumably alive

Traits

- Naturally gifted
- Effortless
- Artistic
- Stifled
- Rebellious
- Confident
- Blasé
- Individual
- Curious, in an almost cruel way
- Brilliant
- Detached
- Repressed
- Resentful
- Performatively charismatic
- Slow to love
- Manipulative

Backstory

Briar Vicarar is the younger of the two children of Avery and Dr. Vicarar. She is effortlessly talented, a natural at nearly everything she attempts. She gained her father's aptitude for science and Avery's gift at social performance. Briar is wickedly intelligent and horribly trapped by it. Her mind is a prison of itself, with very little able to truly challenge her. In her younger years, this led to nearly cruel actions: the open disassembly of machinery and attempted recreation of mechan life. As she aged, these tendencies stopped, but her boredom did not. She had a rough relationship with her parents, as Dr. Vicarar was never around, and Avery was oppressively. Briar focused her energies on art, an activity approved by Avery. Her art painted a picture of a brilliant mind, but of an inherent darkness and apathy that would have concerned her parents if they gave her any positive energy. Her relationship with her brother was not much better. Clay was, in her opinion, not worth investigation. As children, the two were actually quite close and often pulled tricks around the house as a team. Time and parental influence changed this greatly, but Briar still cares for her brother and would have brought him with her in escaping if he had asked. She simply never thought of him, he never caught her attention. Briar took an interest in the human servants early on due to their sheer difference from her life. She spent a good amount of time observing them in the servant's hall, playing pranks on them, just to see. When one of the younger humans confronted her about her actions, she initially fought. The human, a girl her age named Evie, challenged Briar in a way very few could. She found herself being drawn to the girl, initially pestering her and probing wherever she could, a mirror of her father's obsession. Over time, Evie grew fond of Briar, and the two began a romantic connection. They made plans to escape the house together, and in the chaos of Dr. Vicarar's experiments, they were successful.

Was it love? It's unclear. But it was something interesting, and Briar craves interesting.

Design Motifs

Azula (ATLA), Elizabeth (Bioshock Infinite), animals dissected in the name of silence, hidden notes, interlaced pinkies, modern art, quiet rebellion, bird in a cage, painting over historical masterpieces

Hubert "Clay" Vicaran II

Fate

Deceased. Uploaded his consciousness to the house.

Traits

- Average
- Inadequate
- Pressured
- People pleasure
- Desperate for approval
- Bleeding heart
- Self-sacrificial
- Talented technician
- Too hard for debutante life, too soft for science
- Tightly wound
- Controlled
- Loyal
- Obedient
- Abandoned

Backstory

Hubert Clay Vicaran II, called "Clay" by his family is the first born of Avery and Dr. Vicaran. He is, simply put, average. In a household of extraordinaries, simply being a kind and hardworking son is not enough. When he was young, he was under tremendous pressure to live up to his heritage. Dr. Vicaran rarely noticed his son, and Avery viewed his lack of talents as laziness and pushed him accordingly.

Clay had a hard childhood, but life changed when Briar came around. She flourished in everything their heritage called for. Most would hold this against Briar, but Clay adored his younger sister. Her lack of regard for the rules clashed with his need to adhere to them, but Clay did what he could as a young mechan to protect her and love her where there parents rarely tried. However, they grew apart as they grew older. Clay wants nothing more than to make his parents proud, an impossible task. Once Briar was born, Avery rarely looked his way. Once Avery stopped bothering with him, Clay turned his efforts towards Dr. Vicaran. He works endlessly to get his father's attention, but has been unsuccessful. Clay has a rough sense of self and does whatever he can to gain praise from his parents, even at the expense of himself. He is fairly good with his hands and often repaired any mechanics Briar took apart as a child. After Dr. Vicaran's lab disaster, Avery's disappearance, and Briar's escape, Clay was alone in the house. He mourned both his family and the pride he could now never receive. Over time, the thought of it drove him to action, carving pleas into the walls until his fingers sparked. Grief led him to his father's lab, where he dedicated himself to the studies and Dr. Vicaran's legacy. Using his aptitude with mechanics and his endless effort, he found a way to upload his consciousness into the house itself, forever becoming a crossroads between organic and mechan: his father's ultimate dream. He remains there, stuck in his grief and inadequacies until the house dies around him. Subconsciously, he overgrows parts of the house, and carried his mechan body back to his childhood bed, forever waiting for the family that can never return.

Design Motifs

Mirabel (Encanto), a lost duckling, hypothermia, runt of the litter, studying for a test you'll fail, plants sprouting through concrete, scratching nails on a wall until they bleed, a glass grenade

Paths to Exit

There are four distinct paths to escape the house, one for each family member.

Dr. Hubert Vicaran path

Dr. Vicaran's escape path requires you to make your way up the spire of the house.

1. The first clue is in the **Master Bedroom**, on the desk. It is a planner of Dr. Vicaran's day, with check marks next to each completed activity. The last thing checked off was "**Lab Work**"
2. The **Lab/ Greenhouse** has a note on the desk saying, "Hubert, One of the humans revealed the spire door on 'accident.' I have released them from our service, but please, change the order of vines to pull at the very least. -Avery"
3. The kitchen in the **Servant's Hall** has a cookbook that details a few different recipes. On the cover, the name of the author has been crossed out and replaced with "Vine's Guide to Cooking". The different recipes have numbers next to them, and have "first, second, etc" written above each one, signifying the order of the vines to pull.
4. Uncover keypad on spire door in the **main hall** by pulling the vines in the order found in the **Servant's Hall**. A note has been attached to the door. It reads, "To the human who finds this note, I know you have been searching where you do not belong. The only key to this door lies securely within my mind. Your... curiosity ends here. -Dr. Vicaran". There also is a little symbol carved into the doorframe. Under it is the phrase "Those who seek will find. -HCV" in the mechan language.
5. In the **library** is a book to translate the mechan language, available via QR code. In the margins of the book, Vicaran has written riddles to find additional symbols he has carved around the manor. The final page gives each riddle in order of the symbols.
6. Use the series of symbols found around the house in the **lab**. There is a pad on the wall where you can input the symbols, and the plant wall gives way to a **secret lab**.
7. Enter the **secret lab**. Vicaran's body lies within. He has been run through and destroyed by a plant creature he was working on, one with the intelligence of mechs. The room is covered in information about his experimentation.
8. Get Vicaran's memories in a QR code carved into the back of his skull, the passcode to access his memory file has been written in oil by his hand.
9. Unlock the **spire** using the code found in Vicaran's memories and climb the spiral stairs up to the **solarium**.
 - a. Also in his memories are the details of the day he died, and a backlog of information from his life. The plant creature seems to

have corrupted his mind files, and its own thoughts are intermingled with Vicaran's.

- b. The plant creature talks about growing up to the **solarium** and to the sun that lies there. The sun is an artificial sun that Vicaran used to power his technology. The plant has since broken out of the **solarium** and escaped into the world. Its "voice" is portrayed mostly in images, broken fragments of Vicaran's sentences reformed.
10. Open the rooftop hatch using a wall panel and exit the **solarium**.
 11. Slide down from the roof using the vine slide made from the sentient plant growing out of the building. **You have escaped.**

Avery Kadam Vicaran path

Avery's escape path requires you to unlock the vault.

1. The first clue is in the **ballroom**. There is a scroll sitting on a windowsill, along with a QR code. It reads, "To Briar and Clay, Your father is gone. His foolish Icarian ways have bore fruit, in the most literal sense, and in doing so he has attempted to drag us down with him. However, there is a way out of the house down through the **cellar**. It is a series of trials, intended to give passage to our past, but also to provide an escape. I know you can complete them, my capable children. And if you cannot, you do not deserve to leave in the first place. -Zaza"
2. In the basement, through the **servant's hall** and the kitchen, there is a wine cellar. On one of the walls, there is a hidden door and a panel.
3. To unlock the room, you must enter the full name of one of the household members into the panel, which displays "Who are you?" Their full names can be found in many places around the house. Entering a name correctly will open the first trial room.
4. The first **trial room** to enter the vault is seemingly a mini ballroom. Engraved into the wall is the phrase, "The music will draw you to the motions." There is also a scanner on the wall.
5. In the **drawing room**, there is a painting of a piano. On top of the piano, sheet music is drawn onto the cover.
6. There is a book on how to read sheet music in the **library**, along with a PDF version. When the music is played on the piano in the **ballroom**, the piano cover opens and reveals a QR code carved into the bottom, along with the phrase, "Lest we forget where we come from" in the mechan language. The QR code leads to a step chart for a dance, as well as instructional video by aristocratic mechans.
 - a. The QR code also has a code to scan within the file.
7. In the first **trial room**, the code can be scanned on the wall. If it is scanned, music begins to play and the floor lights up with dance steps. If enough of the steps are hit, a la DDR, the door to the second trial opens.

8. The second **trial room** is full of targets and a laser bow sitting in the center on a pedestal. Upon picking it up, the targets begin to move and a timer starts clicking down. If you shoot all the targets (similar to laser tag) before the timer ends, the door to the third **trial room** opens. If not, you have to replace the bow on the pedestal to try again.
 - a. There is an inscription on the wall that says, “Another path, if your aim isn’t true” and a panel below it. You can either complete the laser archery trial or find a code to hack the system and open the door manually.
 - b. Written above the door to go back into the first room is the phrase, “Exit, and you must dance again”. The trials must all be completed in succession.
9. The code for the second door can be found by using a book in the trophy room.
 - a. One of the items in the **trophy room** is a large book, with words and numbers written out, as if in a code on a few of the pages. It is on display. The words and numbers point to authors, books, and pages in the **library**. Finding all the words indicated on the page will spell out a code phrase to input into the panel in the second trial room.
10. The third **trial room** has a series of tiles on the ground. There is only one correct tile per row, and there are 5 or so rows. Questions are spoken by the room, and answers detailed on each tile. Answer the questions correctly and get through the room and to the vault. There is also a voice message from Avery to the corresponding family member.
 - a. The questions are different depending on which family member’s name you input to gain access to the vault trials. The answers can be found across the house in diaries, notes, and other various sources of information.
11. Once you are through the third **trial room**, you can open the door to the **vault**. Inside the **vault** are artifacts from a time long past. Going down the hall leads smoothly into the **catacombs**.
 - a. The **vault** is full of riches and treasures, as well as items held from the human era. There is a book detailing the inventory of this room and its year/ location of origin.
 - b. The **catacombs** have all the mechans since the first mechan, Avery’s ancestor. You can almost see them evolve, going back in time the further you walk.
12. There is a small chamber at the end, with the remains of a few humans. Below them is inscribed, “My family, it is all for you. May you find peace beyond.” Beyond this is a path up and a hidden door to exit. **You have escaped.**

Hubert “Clay” Vicaran II path

Clay’s escape path requires you to turn off the consciousness controlling the house, opening the back exit.

1. The first clue is by the front door in the **Main Hall**. It is covered in vines and leaves and plant materials knitted over the steel. Beside the door is a plaque that reads “Bionically Manor: Great Minds, Greater Heritage” Beneath it, carved into the plant wall is the sentence, “Is this great enough for you, Father?”
2. There is a locked door behind the piano and behind the curtain on the **ballroom** stage. It requires a keycode.
3. In the **Master Bedroom**, among Avery’s items, there is a schedule and correspondence about a recent gala. Among the information is a detailed explanation of an equipment entrance for stage access that leads outside the house. It also gives the keycode to the backstage area.
4. In the **ballroom**, backstage, there is the equipment entrance. It is knitted over in vines and leaves, much like the front door. The wall bulges out in the corner.
5. In **Clay’s bedroom**, on his bed, is his body. His mechanical body, at least. It is deactivated. The QR code to his memories on the back of his head has been scratched out. He is being cradled by vines and leaves. His fingers are tattered and ruined. Grasped in his hands is a book. You cannot take it from him, but on the front inscribed is “From the Lab of Dr. Hubert C. Vicaran”
6. In the **laboratory/ greenhouse**, there is a detailed, mathematical description of how the house operates scattered between a bunch of blackboards. Most of it is not important, but there is a code to scan half hidden behind plants, labeled as “FULL WIPE, USE AS LAST RESORT”. Scanning it launches a program on your phone.
7. The program boots up and gives you detailed information about rebooting the house. You must press a few failsafe buttons scattered around the house.
 - a. While reading this, a popup comes across your screen. It is a consciousness, asking you to spare it.
 - b. Here, you can follow one of two paths.

CLAY OBEDIENT PATH

8. There are buttons in the Master Bedroom, in the Servant’s Hall, in the Ballroom, in the Trophy Room, all over the house. They are hidden buttons, hidden in plain sight. The program will inform you when you are near one.

- a. Hints to the button locations can be found in the Blueprints (found in Briar's escape path) and in Dr. Vicaran's memories (found in Vicaran's escape path.)
9. Once the final button has been pressed, the program tells you to "locate the disturbance" to restart the house.
 - a. The house consciousness will beg you not to.
10. In the backstage room, the program will say "Disturbance Located, preparing to restart"
 - a. At this time, the bulge in the corner will light up and reveal a plant figure forming within. It is identical to the mechan body you saw in Clay's bedroom. It informs you it is Clay, that he uploaded his consciousness into the house to make his father proud. He will beg you not to delete him, that he was clever enough to trick the house's systems, he must be clever enough to live.
11. The program asks if you'd like to reboot the house. If you press "confirm", the plant-Clay curls in on itself like a fetus, deactivating. The lights in the room go out one by one, and the vines move away from the door. You can now open the equipment door. **You have escaped.**

CLAY HUMANITY PATH

8. There are buttons in the Master Bedroom, in the Servant's Hall, in the Ballroom, in the Trophy Room, all over the house. They are hidden buttons.
 - a. The consciousness tells you to listen to it, to hear it out first. It will bring you to each button and tell you stories of the house and the residents. Occasionally, it will ask your opinion on the story or the people.
 - b. The consciousness will also bring you to other places and encourage you to read books, fallen notes, etc. that you come across. Slowly, you unravel the pressures of being a part of this family, the desire to make the parents proud, you slowly realize that this is one of the children, likely Clay, who struggled to make his parents happy.
 - c. Over time, you can help Clay come to terms with what happened to his parents, you help him move on.
 - d. If you bring Clay (through the program) to other endings/ situations, he will have opinions on all of them and you can speak to him throughout.
9. Once the final button has been pressed, the program tells you to "locate the disturbance" to restart the house.
 - a. Clay will guide you to the backstage of the **Ballroom**.
10. In the backstage room, the program will say "Disturbance Located, preparing to restart"

- a. At this time, the bulge in the corner will light up and reveal a plant figure forming within. It is identical to the mechan body you saw in Clay's bedroom. It informs you it is Clay, but acknowledges that you probably already guessed that. It tells you how grateful it is to have met you, thanks you for showing it what it needed to see. It tells you it is ready to see what's next now.
11. The program asks if you'd like to reboot the house. If you press "confirm", the plant-Clay curls in on itself like a fetus, deactivating. The lights in the room go out one by one, and the vines move away from the door. You can now open the equipment door. **You have escaped.**

Briar Phina Vicaran path

Briar's escape path requires you to unlock the secret path beneath the library, through the fireplace.

1. The first clue is written in a book in the **library**. It has fallen open on the floor, and writing can be seen in the margins. It is a hidden note from Briar to a servant named Evie. She tells Evie that her plans for running away together are almost done. She says she's leaving a trail of notes and instructions to follow her, to avoid suspicion and anyone catching them. She talks about meeting her in the **Servant's Hall**.
2. The next clue is in Evie's journal. It is hidden under the mattress on one of the bunks. There is an entry detailing a conversation Evie had with Briar about how it is too risky to leave physical notes anymore. She says Briar hid something in **her bedroom** safe so they could keep talking. The code is Evie's birthday.
 - a. There are many other entries, including a complete guide to translating the aristocratic mechan language to English. There is a QR code provided, added on top like a scrapbook page.
 - b. The entries detail life as a servant at Bionically. It isn't an easy life, but there is no place in mechan society for humans. Over time, she details falling in love with Briar, them getting out together.
3. You can find a ledger in the **Master Bedroom**, on a desk, that has information on all the servants, including birthdays. You can use this to get the code to Briar's safe.
4. In Briar's safe is a diary and some blacklight flashlights (or a code/ app to reveal blacklight messages.) Using the UV light, we can see a note written on top of the safe/ on the door. It just says "**Drawing Room**"
 - a. The diary details Briar's hatred of her life. She dislikes her brother for his lack of expectations, she wants to be free to live her own life. It also explains her and Evie's romance from her POV
 - b. You can also use the flashlights to find hidden messages across the manor written by Briar. Her bedroom in particular is COVERED in art and words. These messages are additional notes to Evie and

general ramblings about her life. Poetry mostly, though some are quotes from ancient books (from the human era.) In general, she craves freedom and her hidden messages show it.

- c. There are also some that help lead you to other stories, such as pointing out hidden clues and saying things like “I saw Clay hanging around here...” or “Dad is always leaving stuff here”.
 - d. Briar’s messages are full of easter eggs, hidden information, and other extra content.
5. In the **drawing room**, there is a closet that is locked. On an easel nearby, there is a hidden message on the painting that says “I’ll carve our love into their faces if I need to.”
 6. Using the UV flashlights, you can find a hidden code on the painting of the family in the **main hall**. This unlocks the closet door in the **Drawing Room**.
 7. The closet in the **drawing room** contains multiple scrolls made of aluminum. One of them is a sketch of the **library**, with a few different books circled and numbered, though not in English numbers.
 - a. Notes are written in the margins of this sketch. They detail a conversation between Dr. Vicaran and Avery, written in alternating handwriting, all in the language of the elites, the mechan language. They discuss the need for a secret passage under the house for easy escape. Avery insists on multiple, just in case. Dr. Vicaran says they can do whatever they want, as long as he gets his secondary lab and solarium. It reads more like a business conversation than one between spouses.
 8. Using the QR code from Evie’s diary (or other dictionary/ translation books from around the house), you get the order of books to pull in the **library**.
 9. Pulling these books in this order causes the fire in the fireplace to slide backwards into the wall, revealing a set of stairs down into a tunnel.
 - a. At the end of this tunnel is evidence of the star crossed couple. A discarded house emblem, a tossed maid outfit, a note with a poem talking about how love is the greatest freedom of all. You can assume they successfully escaped the house.
 10. The tunnel leads to a hidden hatch behind the house. **You have escaped.**