“SET IN STONE”
WHAT ARE WE WORKING ON TODAY, MISS TRAORE?

OOF, THAT'S A HEFTY CHUNK OF ROCK. WHAT ARE WE MAKING, AND WHERE'S IT GOING?

THAT'S GOING TO THE FRONT GATE. AND YOU'RE DOING THE WORK. YOU PICK WHAT IT'LL BE.

OH.  HMM...
WHAT DO YOU SUGGEST, MISS TRAORE?

ER, OK... LOCKE, ANY IDEAS?

HMMM. MAYBE... SOMETHING... BIG?

REAL HELPFUL, LOCKE.

HEY, I'M JUST THE PAINTER. YOU'RE THE SCULPTOR.

I DON'T KNOW, THIS ROCK ISN'T REALLY SPEAKING TO ME, YOU KNOW?

WHAT, YOU NEVER HAD ART BLOCK BEFORE?

DON'T JINX ME.
You know, people say magic is like art.

They are wrong.

There's nothing artistic about lobbing a fireball in someone's face.

Enchantments though, pure art. Which is obviously why I hired you artists as apprentices.

So if you are getting art block, I will beat it out of you.

Thanks Val, but I don't think that's helpful...
Well, I guess we'd want something big and tough for the front gate.

I used to have this great kirin out there but it got smashed by gardenians.

Horses are good. The symbolic animal of the god of travel and death are good luck at entrances. Maybe something bigger than a kirin, more horns...

We don't need to make it look like a real creature, right?

You can make anything, make 'em as crazy as you want. But the less real it is, the harder it is to animate. So something in the middle ground tends to work pretty well.
I think I've got something.

What do you think of a dual-horned horse-thing? Reasonably simple, we'll make it a big one.

Yeah, that sounds doable.

Wait did you want me to help sculpt it? Uhh, I dunno how to do any of that.

That's the point, Dingus. You learn to sculpt, he learns to paint, and you both learn how to enchant these things. C'mon.

Making statues is hard work, Val. Not sure how a little feathery like yourself did it all alone.

I'm very good.
Well my old trick was to start with small statues, then get those statues to help putting together the bigger ones.

But I lost 'em all when I lost my voice and haven't built up my little helpers again yet.

How did you lose your voice, if you don't mind me asking? That's quite the scar on your neck.

...are you deciding whether to tell us?

I'm deciding how best to say that I hate heroes. They are absolutely the worst.
I used to have this real nice place, lovely location, very well defended.

Some hero took my defences as an affront, and tried to do "justice" to me.

Um...

Ouch.
I was very lucky. I had a customer at the time who helped me out.

Cursed that hero too. Hah. While I’m mute, so is he.

You better believe I gave that customer a ton of freebies after everything was settled. Haha. Damn heroes.

So... wait. Then why are you working here at a hero school?
QUIT CHATTING AND GET BACK TO WORK! I’LL BE COMING BACK LATER TO CHECK ON YOUR PROGRESS.

WELL, THAT’S AN ANSWER, I GUESS.

WANNA GIVE ME A HAND WITH THIS? IT’S GONNA BE A LOT OF WORK.

UM, SURE... I’VE NEVER DONE THIS BEFORE.

WELL, THERE’S A FIRST TIME FOR EVERYTHING!
TSST! YOU TWO AREN'T DONE YET?

WHAT? UH... IT'S ONLY BEEN A DAY...

SO WHAT?

GIVE US A BREAK. THAT STONE'S HUGE, IT'S A LOT OF WORK.

YEAH!

AND LOCKE HERE'S ONLY JUST STARTED LEARNING HOW TO CARVE.

YEAH!

AND HE'S GOT NOODLY LITTLE ARMS.

YEA-HEY!

I DONNO HOW LONG YOU RECKON IT TAKES TO MAKE STUFF LIKE THIS, BUT IT TAKES A WHILE, VAL. MAYBE YOU WORK FASTER, BUT MOST DON'T.

=SIGH=

YOU HAVE UNTIL THE END OF THE WEEK.

END OF NEXT MONTH, VAL.

...FINE!
IF I CAN’T HAVE A UNICORN, MAYBE I CAN HAVE...

A DOUBLE-UNICORN!

YES, THE TWICE-AS-LEGENDARY PUSHL-PULLYUNICORN!

NO.