

Twilight Mirage 62: The Feast of Patina

Transcribed by Caro; Meko

[[The Notion](#) begins playing]

AUSTIN (as Keen Forester Gloaming): An excerpt from the journal of Keen Forester Gloaming, Chief Intercessor of the Rapid Evening in the Quire System:

Is it fair to call myself a failure? I think so. Beaten to the punch again and again by everyday fixers, the system fractured but not yet shattered, one annihilation class object replaced with a fountain of them, my own family turned against me. Well over a year into the Mirage and the greatest success I've achieved is to re-establish a connection to Crystal Palace, after an asset we thought was in control turned out to have adversary-class technology.

Chief Intercessor? Me? More like Chief Fuckup.

But Crystal Palace never calls me a failure. It only tells me my failures are guaranteed events. There is a...security in that as much as there is an insult. No way out, but, no way to blame yourself when things go wrong. You didn't miss anything: history was just misaligned. New agents don't get that. They see Crystal Palace make a couple mistakes and doubt sets in. But a few years later you understand: any single hiccup at the boundaries of the perfect is just the result of a trillion accurate predictions. Even when it's wrong, it's right. Which is why even if I am a failure, I'm not worried.

Yeah, the Qui-Err Coalition are heroes in the eyes of the people, and yes, this allegiance between Seneschal's Brace and the Brighton suggests a move toward stability, but Schism was Schism. A wake-up call and not just for this system, but for us, too. Yeah, the assassination attempt on the Mirage's leaders has pushed these folks a little closer to outright war. But when something like Volition can make something like Schism right under our noses? There is only one solution for a thing like that.

And that is why I'm making the call. Crystal Palace cannot simply wait back on Kesh and leave it to us to zero out the inevitable gremlins of its forecast. It needs to make the periphery the center. A new home. Right here. In the Mirage.

AUSTIN: Welcome to Friends at the Table, an Actual Play Podcast focused on critical worldbuilding, smart characterization, and fun interaction between good friends. I am your host, Austin Walker, and joining me today, Arthur Martinez-Tebbel—

ART: Hey, how's it going, you can find me on twitter @atebbel, and you can hear a different podcast with some of us @onesongpod on Twitter, and then like—that's not actually where it *is*, you have to go listen to it somewhere else—

AUSTIN: [crosstalk] You have to, yeah, then *from* there... Andrew Lee Swan—

ANDREW: Hey, you can find me on twitter @swandre3000.

AUSTIN: —Alicia Acampora—

ALI: Hi, you can find me @ali_west on twitter, and you can find Friends at the Table over @friends_table.

AUSTIN: —Janine Hawkins—

JANINE: You can find me @bleatingheart on twitter.

AUSTIN: —Syliva¹ Clare—

SYLVIA: Hey, you can find me on twitter @captaintrash, you can find the other show I do @emojidrome, and I'm also on videogamechoochoo.com.

AUSTIN: —Keith Carberry—

KEITH: Hi, my name's Keith Carberry, you can find me on twitter @keithjcarberry, and you can find the Let's Plays that I do at youtube.com/runbutton. Also @runbutton on twitter.

AUSTIN: There you go. And Jack de Quidt—

JACK: Hi, you can find me on twitter @notquitereal, and you can buy any of the music featured on the show at notquitereal.bandcamp.com.

AUSTIN: And you can follow me on twitter @austin_walker, you can follow the show @friends_table, and you can support us by going to friendsatthetable.cash. We have all sorts of tiers of support, whether you can give us a buck or, you can give us, yknow, way more than a buck any given month; there are tiers for you, and there are rewards for every tier. As we are heading towards the end of this season, let me say there is increasingly interesting stuff for the \$5 tier and above, as I've been doing these Drawing Maps streams, which are streams in which I dig deep into like, prepping for various game sessions, so if you want to hear my prep for the last episodes that came out, which were the Fourteen and Grand ones, you can hear it and then laugh at how much of it didn't get used because we ended up doing a different thing. Or if you

¹ The name in the audio recording is no longer in use, hence the audio/transcript discrepancy.

want to hear me stress about what the finale looks like, you can do that, and so that is one of the many many things on top of extra campaigns, we just finished a game of World Wide Wrestling RPG, we're getting ready to record Masks, all sorts of fun stuff. So friendsatthetable.cash, all—

ART: [crosstalk] Is a thing that people want to hear you stress out about things? That's terrible.

AUSTIN: Do—you know what my career is, right? Yes.

ALI, ART: [laughter]

ART: God...

AUSTIN: I'm on the internet, I'm an internet personality, this is, that's what it is... Today we're continuing our game of Scum and Villainy, by Stras Acimovic and John Lebouf-Little, it's a hack of Blades in the Dark by John Harper. My goals are to convey the fictional world honestly, to bring the Twilight Mirage to life, to make everything touchable, and to play to find out what happens. We are really close here, and so I'm just gonna kind of jump into it, it is a downtime episode, that's why we're all here, obviously, but I want to kind of set things up before we dig into things like upkeep and payoff and all of that.

So: it has been, yknow, each of those last sessions took place a month after the previous downtime, there was other stuff happening in between, whether that was fighting pirates on Brighton, or exploring, collecting thread on Altar, or wandering curiously around a giant spaceship... and so it has probably been I'd say another week since then, and I think it kind of comes at you all maybe as a bit of a surprise, I suspect that for some of you it sneaks up on you and you get an alarm that goes off on your, yknow, whether it's Echo's eyepatch interface or something else, yknow, you're reminded that you are coming up on the feast of Patina, the three hundredth Divine.

It is tradition on that day to come together in a meal, the tradition is to invite someone you know, and then for them to invite someone *they* know, and it is good fortune, they say, to have as close to three hundred people eating together at once as you possibly can given your space. This make for cramped meals, yes, but again and again the events that come from that course become lifelong memories—sometimes for good, sometimes for ill, but always important, and they're always originating from the holy dynamics of collectiveness and difference.

And so, I think where we're gonna zoom in is very close to where we left off the end of the last session, with the World Without End docked at the Brink. In this scenario, disregard the layout of the system right now, because, yknow, the Brink is this huge ring of asteroids and debris and detritus in the outside of the system, and it doesn't move in—each piece of it doesn't necessarily move at the same speed, so in this moment the Brink is actually within long-range sight of Advent's Catapult complex, and so I think we start with this giant, weird, almost like the Golden

Gate Bridge or something, which is the Advent catapult that launches things out of the system from inside. And we can see in the distance, we kind of slowly zoom through the asteroids until we get to the Brink, and we can see that the World Without End is docked there, and I think inside, at first, are still only Even, Echo, and Gig; with Tender and Signet arriving soon after; and then, I imagine maybe Belgarde brings you to them. Signet, does that make sense? Do you think that y'all traveled via—okay.

And then I think the *Lord and Bramble* arrives, and the *Lord and Bramble* is Declan's Corrective's ship, and from that ship comes Fourteen Fifteen, and I think Declan's Corrective also probably docks. And you realize you've had—I'm curious who brings up the fact that you've all planned to have this meal together, but maybe planned it at a much earlier time in your lives. Who's the first one to say "Hey, don't we have... are we—who's cooking?"

KEITH: I'll say it, I — [as Gig] I didn't bring anything.

AUSTIN: Well it's early—here, I'm giving you a little bit of time, because of how this is gonna work: I don't think it's *today*, but it's like "oh shit". Like, you turn on the TV, and the Christmas trees are up, so to speak, do you know what I mean? it's like "aw fuck, okay, it's holiday season, uh-oh". So Gig, what do you say, how do you breach the topic? And who do you breach the topic with?

KEITH: Um, maybe I, maybe I assume...

AUSTIN: [crosstalk] Mmmmm, mhm,

KEITH: Maybe I assume that someone else is cooking, maybe I - okay, I'm gonna make a bad assumption, Gig made a big mistake and he says like, "Oh, Grand, what are you cooking this year?"

AUSTIN: Oh, sorry, Grand isn't there.

KEITH: Oh Grand's not there yet?

[crosstalk]

AUSTIN: No, Grand hasn't shown up yet.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: Grand, I want to be clear: you get that message though.

ART [as Grand]: Mm-hmm.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ALI: [laughing in the background]

ART: I got read receipts on.

[muffled laughter in the background as ART, AUSTIN, KEITH cross-talk]

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. Wait, Do you? Okay...

KEITH: Then maybe I still do the same thing, maybe I just text Grand or whatever-

AUSTIN: Good.

KEITH: Like [as Gig] "oh, everyone's showing up for the party, what are you cooking?"

ART: [as Grand] "Message read, 11:58 PM"

AUSTIN: [laughing] Oh, this is brutal. Alright. Good. How's everyone looking and feeling as they return to the ship, by the way?

JACK: Fourteen is a, ah, golden...

AUSTIN: Oh right, no one's seen Fourteen again. This is good. Fourteen, what do you look like?

JACK: Fourteen was a golden, like, burnished gold suit of medieval armor, studded with jewels. However, the Fourteen that disembarks from the *Lord and Bramble* is... God, I don't even know, because we established something weird about Fourteen's body at the end of the last episode-

AUSTIN: [crosstalk] We did.

JACK: -and I don't know how far to have gone back on that. Alright, so, I'm no longer totally gold, I'm bashed up real bad, there's bits of silver plating showing, gold plating showing through, there's bits of armor showing on the robot body underneath, the visor is cracked and underneath you can see a robot face with scorch marks around its mouth, um, one of its eyes is a gem and the other eye is missing. The entire back section of the robot has sort of, um, exploded?
[laughter]

[laughter from multiple people]

JACK: —has sort of exploded in the sense of an exploded diagram rather than an explosion, as though it would fold out and then could fold back in again, but it hasn't fully folded back in again, and there are gems missing all over, I'm essentially, I look like a—

KEITH: Is this like a broken pop-up book, where you like, close the book and it's still sticking out-

JACK [crosstalk] yeah, exactly, one hundred percent, one hundred percent—

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

JACK: I think that's pretty much, I think I've covered it. I'm limping.

AUSTIN: Do you have like a cane, or a crutch or something? Or is it not that, is it not what robot Fourteen does? What Carconet's Ironclad does?

JACK: I think what it is is that my gyroscope still functions?—

AUSTIN: [crosstalk] Okay.

JACK: —so while I'm limping, I'm just like, spectacularly upright somehow—

AUSTIN: [crosstalk] Okay. Good.

JACK: —at angles that don't quite make sense but are still really impressive looking.

AUSTIN: You don't need to be wearing it, but I need you to know that Declan's Corrective offered you a monogrammed *Lord and Bramble* bathrobe to wear, whenever you want one.

ALI: [softly] oh..

JACK: Oh thanks Declan, I'm not wearing one, but, you know,

AUSTIN: Okay, good.

ALI: [laughing in the background]

JANINE: Ali, is *Lord and Bramble* the company that keeps sending you those rich person emails?

[EVERYONE laughing in the background]

ALI: [Laughing] Yes.

AUSTIN: Yeah, that adds up, that adds up... how's everybody else doing, does anyone else want to describe how they are? People on the ship maybe, Echo, Even, and Gig?

KEITH: [crosstalk] Hi,

DRE: [crosstalk] Yeah—

AUSTIN: How's the vibe? How's the vibe when Tender, Signet and Fourteen show up?

KEITH: Sleeping.

SYLVIA: My usual room is full of blood so I'm also sleeping, but in a different place right now.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. Yeah, ohhh, who's the first person to go into the cargo bay for something?

[ALI laughing]

JACK: [crosstalk] Is that where Tender lives?

KEITH: [crosstalk] I cleaned! I cleaned the cargo bay.

JANINE: [crosstalk] These are all bad questions...

AUSTIN: Okay, good, you cleaned it, but Echo is this a situation where it's like, it's not gonna be clean.

SYLVIA: Yeah, no, I'm not gonna be able to sleep there anymore, I don't think.

KEITH: [crosstalk] Well,

SYLVIA: It's a little awkward after you see one of your friends gun down a bunch of people...

KEITH: I just mean, if someone goes and walks into the cargo hold, it's not like, *covered* in blood, it's mostly okay.

AUSTIN: Hey, what'd you do with the bodies?

[beat]

[various people sighing]

KEITH: I guess we threw them out the... the door???

DRE: Yeah, probably...

KEITH: Into space...

AUSTIN: Okay.

SYLVIA: Nice.

JACK: I swear, I give you one ship, a beautiful gift to me, from a dear friend—

[background noise: faint sirens]

AUSTIN: Ohhh boy,

JACK: —and you just murder on it constantly.

DRE: Constantly?

KEITH: I didn't murder anyone on it!

[background noise: sirens]

[beat]

DRE: [crosstalk] Oh god, the cops are here—

AUSTIN: [crosstalk] The police are coming—

[EVERYONE LAUGHING]

AUSTIN: Even and Echo, still some bad blood?

SYLVIA: Oh, I don't think we've talked.

AUSTIN: Okay. In a week? No talks?

SYLVIA: No...

AUSTIN: Okay.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: [sighs] Tender and Signet, how are y'all doing?

ALI: Fine.

AUSTIN: Y'all are good now, like, you come back now, are you chatty?

JANINE: Oh we were never not *good* exactly...

AUSTIN: Okay, mmmm...

[ALI laughing raucously in the background]

JANINE: I don't think Signet ever felt *anger*.

ALI: Yeah...

AUSTIN: I just happen to remember a tweet about bullying a catgirl, so...

[Multiple people laughing, DRE laughing uproariously]

JANINE: That's not anger.

ALI: I think she was talking about *me*, and not Tender.

AUSTIN: Oh. *Okay*.

ALI: [laughing] No, I think they're fine, I think, after Signet pulled a solid at the end there, and was like "I'll talk to everyone for you", they're probably like—

JANINE: Sure, *that's* what that was.

[Multiple people laughing]

JANINE: [over the laughter] that was a favor.

AUSTIN: See? This is what I'm saying! Uh, Tender is anything noticeably different about you? Or is it just like, is there just a vibe, did you get a new haircut, what is the—

ALI: I don't know...

JANINE: Was there yarn coming out of your shirt or something?

TIMESTAMP: 15:00

AUSTIN: Yeah...

ALI: I don't think so, I think it's better if I have to be like, "Oh yeah by the way", oh well we went there,

AUSTIN: Okay.

JANINE: Do you just start eating soup differently, and nothing else changes at all?

[Dre laughing in the background]

AUSTIN: I mean, I guess one of the things I DMed you about while I was doing a Drawing Maps episode and trying to prep for this was like, does word spread and who are you with, in a weird way, right?

ALI: Yeah.

[crosstalk]

AUSTIN: Has word spread? I mean it has to have, right?

ALI: I mean I feel... yes, right. Especially since all eyes were on the planet to see who would end up with it.

AUSTIN: Right. Exactly. I mean by the time you get to the end of it, it had been going on for a month, people had seen you all across the planet following this weird blue thread, and then three different factions were watching you as you went in—

[Ali laughing]

AUSTIN: —y'know, and come out, so I guess my question then is, do the people on the ship know. I guess it's conceivable, it's conceivable that none of them do, because three of them were fighting a war, and one of them was in a different body in a different culture's capital city.

ALI: There's maybe like, a magazine on one of the tables that says like—

KEITH: What is the headline of the magazine that gives it away?

ALI: “Anticipation Recovered... Not Given To— Taken By Former—” I dunno, [bursts into laughter]

AUSTIN: It probably has your name on it, right?

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Which is, do you remember what that name is, do you have it written down somewhere?

ALI: Oh yeah, okay yeah. “Announcing the new Excerpt”... where did my....

AUSTIN: It starts with “Our Voices”, if you search for “Our Voices” in the—

ALI: Oh yeah yeah yeah. “Our Voices Combined, Filled With Great ‘Tenderness’, As We Sang For Their Good Fortune”. But ‘Tenderness’, if that’s easy...

AUSTIN: ‘Tenderness’, is the, yeah

KEITH: It’s just a really small font for a headline.

[AUSTIN AND ALI LAUGH]

AUSTIN: I think it’s like the subhead, like, “Anticipation Retrieved! Takes an Excerpt in...” so-and-so, and then it’s like, a picture of, is it a drawing of Tender? Is it a photo? Is it a...

KEITH: Is it a selfie? That they got from like, Twitter?

ALI: Do you think it’s a weird paparazzi of like, Signet and Tender coming out of the temple?

AUSTIN: Oh maybe. Is this like a trashy, gossip mag?

[general ruckus and laughter]

DRE: God...

ALI: You know those religious — trashy gossip mags

KEITH: “The Galactic Enquirer”

AUSTIN: Oh yes absolutely. I bet you there’s Catholic tabloids. Maybe not. There should be.

KEITH: Catholic tabloids are just small town newspapers.

AUSTIN: Right, sorry, yes. you're right. You're actually totally right. Alright, good. so Tender is now Tenderness, and is an Excerpt, the Excerpt of Anticipation, which they recovered and chose not to give to any of the factions that wanted it. Um, which was probably the right call.

JACK: That's interesting, because the sort of—okay.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. Is this in character, actually can we, is this an in-character thought that Fourteen has?

JACK: Maybe we should save that for later. I feel we haven't had greetings yet, and like—

AUSTIN: I mean this is the moment for greetings. Feel free to greet with this or something else.

JACK: Okay. (as Fourteen) Hi. Hello. Welcome, ah, welcome, welcome back.

ALI: (as Tender) Are you okay?

KEITH: (as Gig) You're—wait, you're, welcome back to you!

JACK (as Fourteen): Well welcome, look, okay, I'm sorry, I'm not all here—

KEITH (as Gig): Clearly not. In fact, it's a totally *new* you here!

JACK (as Fourteen): It is. Things have changed. Ah, things have changed, pretty dramatically. Um, why didn't any of you come and get me?

[AUSTIN sighs]

JANINE (as Signet): Didn't we—

JACK (as Fourteen): No it's fine, I'm not mad, I'm not, I'm not mad or anything, I just thought I would see someone, y'know, different

KEITH (as Gig): I have—I have two different answers that need to happen at the same time

ALI (as Tender): W—

KEITH (as Gig): And the first one was that I didn't know,

JACK (as Fourteen): You didn't—

KEITH (as Gig): And also I was in a war,

JACK (as Fourteen): I sent—okay fine, right, so you're telling me that the only person on the ship... was Grand?

[beat]

ALI (as Tender): Yeah.

SYLVIA (as Echo): Yeah, actually.

DRE (as Even): Mmmhm.

JACK (as Fourteen): Great. Y'know, well, that actually makes me feel a little better, if I'm being honest.

ALI (as Tender): What happened?

JACK (as Fourteen): Well, mm, well, I, I, ah, Our Profit has this, like the Castlerose Apparatus, she's got a new one, and I kind of went there, and then Grand and Waltz showed up. Ah, and then a lot of stuff went down on the ship, that you should probably, I, we should probably wait until we're like, I dunno, Grand's not here, and I don't want to, It's really good to see most of you again

DRE: [laughs]

KEITH (as Gig): That's nice.

ALI (as Tender): Okay.

JACK (as Fourteen): I don't really want to burden our, Grand's gone.

ALI (as Tender): Yeah we can't—oh.

DRE (as Even): Like, Capital G Gone?

JACK (as Fourteen): No, no, no, the worse one, like lowercase,

KEITH (as Gig): Like "left"

JACK (as Fourteen): Yeah. yeah. He's gone to the Catapult.

ALI (as Tender): The what?

JACK (as Fourteen): Advent's catapult. He's, he took a deal with Advent, he took a deal with Advent, and I should be grateful, because he saved my life, in a really big way, but the way he saved my life, um, fuckin' sucks, and I hate him for it, and he's probably not coming back, and I'm mostly fine with that, but I just wish he hadn't—

ALI (as Tender): Do you want a drink?

JACK (as Fourteen): I don't think I can.

ALI (as Tender): Oh. Oh—[laughs]

JACK (as Fourteen): Like, like, I don't know. Yeah, alright.

KEITH (as Gig): In that body, or?

JANINE (as Signet): You could probably drink something oil-based.

AUSTIN: Yeah. What's Even eat?

JACK (as Fourteen): I don't think, I mean.

ALI (as Tender): Like, olive, or...

KEITH (as Gig): What's your favorite oil?

[beat]

JACK (as Fourteen): Mine, or Even's?

[laughter from Ali, Syliva, Jack]

KEITH (as Gig): Either, I guess.

DRE: Are you asking what Even eats?

ALI (as Tender): [under her breath] Yeah, what do I make for Even?

ART: I think they're asking what does Even consume to get fucked up, I think that's the question.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: Yeah.

DRE: I actually thought about this, I think Even still has to eat, but he doesn't taste anymore?

[collective wince/sigh from]

JACK: Oh, the worst one.

AUSTIN: Good. Good. Well I'm sure there's some sort of dietary supplement, type thing, that is just like, totally, if you're not tasting anyway, I bet it's really convenient to just shovel stuff in

ALI: Yeah.

DRE: Yup.

JANINE: Or you just get really into textures.

AUSTIN: Oooh.

JACK: This is just soylent, right? we're just describing soylent.

AUSTIN: Yes, yes, But like what Janine said, soylent with a bunch of different textures.

JANINE: That sounds like the worst thing in the fucking world [laughter]

AUSTIN: Smooth Soylent, Chunky Soylent,

KEITH: My favorite is gritty soylent.

DRE: Uh-huh.

ALI: Well sometimes you want a chip, sometimes you want a chip.

[Janine groaning in the background]

AUSTIN: Sometimes you want a chip!

KEITH: I think the grittier the better for me.

DRE: Yeah, and when I want a chip, I just eat a microchip, that's how this works.

AUSTIN: There you go.

JANINE: I was kind of thinking of that slime that the teens make where they cut up some foam and they put it in there,

DRE: [crosstalk] oh yeah,

JANINE ctd: so it's like, you've got like memory foam and then slime?

DRE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: [chuckling] Real quick, Fourteen, you were about to say something, are you still gonna, are you gonna tell them now?

JACK: I think the moment's passed.

[laughter from ALI]

AUSTIN: Okay.

KEITH: Well—

AUSTIN: Mhm?

JACK (as Fourteen): Look we can, it's something we can, I kind of don't—I don't know if I really want to say right now, because I'm very glad to see you again, but um. Yeah. I sort of wish it were Grand coming back instead of me, because that would mean that he hadn't done the dumb thing he did.

AUSTIN: Ho-ho!

DRE (as Even): Do we like, need to be on guard? Like,

KEITH (as Gig): Wait, do you need to tell us what happened?

JACK (as Fourteen): Hey, um. So, he had an opportunity to... so he had a — you know Kentucky's Corona, have any of you met Kentucky's Corona? He's a real..... asshole, he's from Moonlock, when I was—

AUSTIN: No—No one else has met Kentucky's Corona.

JACK (as Fourteen): When I was a lawyer he was like, roughing up—I think I told Tender about him.

ALI (as Tender): Yeah, you've mentioned him.

JACK (as Fourteen): Real piece of—he's a real piece of work. And he's working with Advent, he's like a real high-ranking Advent guy, and the fact that I've mentioned Advent now, you should all be—anyway. Grand, he could have saved me, by, by killing Kentucky's Corona, and more than that—

AUSTIN: And Kitcha Kanna.

JACK (as Fourteen): And killing Kitcha Kanna as well. You know Kitcha Kanna right, you all know Kitcha Kanna, right?

[crosstalk]

KEITH (as Gig): The bird.

DRE (as Even): The weird dinosaur-bird thing.

JACK (as Fourteen): The Bird Leader of Advent.

ALI (as Tender): Oh right, the bird.

JACK (as Fourteen): Right, and he could have killed both of them—

KEITH (as Gig): That's—Is that the official title, the Bird Leader of Advent?

[Everyone laughing]

JACK (as Fourteen): Maybe. That's really good. And you know Grand, he's a good shot, it would have been fine, they were like gloating, they were gloating.

KEITH (as Gig): Weeeeell, I know Grand to be like, an okay shot at best.

JACK (as Fourteen): Well I had faith in him, is what I'm saying.

KEITH (as Gig): Good point.

JACK (as Fourteen): And instead of that, he saved me, by, um, by giving them the plans to Independence.

[beat]

DRE (as Even): Oh, that's bad.

KEITH (as Gig): That's really bad.

ALI (as Tender): Oh.

JACK (as Fourteen): And they were really pleased with that, they were really happy about that. Kitcha Kanna was just like, "Done. [snaps fingers] Let's do it."

[Austin laughing in the background]

JACK (as Fourteen): And uh, and they just put Grand on this, like, fuckin' fancy shuttle, beautiful shuttle, took him out to the Catapult, and they're gonna send him out of the system, he's going to have a beautiful life out there, and fuckin' Advent are just manufacturing, like, the body of Independence over and over again, like hundreds of them. So, y'know, when you were like, "Should we be on guard?", I guess we should be on guard for two things, which is like, many bodies of Independence coming, and then also... probably keeping me away from Grand Magnificent.

[TIMESTAMP: 25:00]

KEITH (as Gig): Why would we keep you away from Grand Magnificent?

JACK (as Fourteen): 'cause I'm, 'cause I...

ALI (as Tender): Gig.

KEITH (as Gig): What?

ALI (as Tender): Just—They just got home.

[beat]

JACK: And then Fourteen just, goes to their cabin.

[laughter]

AUSTIN: Yep. Ah, briefly, let me intervene to take a beat and do payoff and heat.

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: It's appropriate, I promise.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Vault of Anticipation Team—

ALI: Hey.

AUSTIN: Y'all got ten credits.

[Ali gasps]

AUSTIN: Because you're—you're a D—you have a Divine. You have a Divine now.

JACK: Oh, cool.

AUSTIN: Which means that the red carpet is rolled out. And the resources, like, "Oh, okay, here, you, yes." This is like an abstraction of being able to like, get flights across the sector if you want them, or being able to get access to research labs. Think of that cred as being a little bit again abstracted, a little bit immaterial, right? It's not like you got ten bars of gold for this, necessarily. You definitely got some. Like, I bet you being an Excerpt has some sort of stipend associated [Ali laughs]. But more than anything, the two of you found and brought back a long thought dead Divine. And so that gives you a certain amount of credit.

ALI: So, ten each or ten total?

AUSTIN: No. Ten total.

ALI: Whatever.

AUSTIN: Well, I mean, that's how it always is. That's how this always is. As a reminder, ten is—ten plus is "a treasure trove, enough to buy a small ship of your own." So.

JACK: Oh my God.

AUSTIN: You also gained two heat. And that is from—one from the mission, which was smooth and quiet, and one from public use of artifacts. Any sort of using space-magic is gonna raise someone's eyebrow somewhere. So that's one. Brighton people, Siege of the Lineage Brighton people. Y'all have eight creds among you, but you also get three special creds for repairing Angler units with the repair downtime action. So split the eight how the three of you want, it's up to y'all to decide how that eight gets cut, but then there's this bonus three that's just in a pool for

when it comes time to repair those Angler units that—repair *with* those Angler units, you know?
So, who's taking what from that eight?

KEITH: I'm taking three.

DRE: I was—okay, I was gonna say we could do two-two-two and then put just two into the ship.

SYLVIA: I'll take two.

KEITH: Nah, I'm taking three.

DRE: Alright. Even though you objectively broke most of the things that broke.

SYLVIA: Yeah...

KEITH: Well, I also saved everybody!

AUSTIN: Mmm.

DRE: Did you?

KEITH: Yes. I did.

DRE: Hey, who was gonna die?

KEITH: / was gonna die.

DRE: Yes.

JANINE: Again? Jeez.

DRE: And who—

KEITH: Because I jumped into a light beam and *saved everyone*.

DRE: Uh-huh.

KEITH: I saved the big ocean! I saved the big fucking ocean!

AUSTIN: Is this an abstraction of—

DRE: Gig saved Latin.

[Austin laughs]

AUSTIN: Is this a fight? Is there debate over this in the ship?

KEITH: I didn't think there was gonna be.

DRE: I mean, I think generally, two-two-two-two is the best way to go about this.

KEITH: I think it's three, three, and then two.

DRE: Who gets the other three?

SYLVIA: I'm fine taking the two. I don't mind.

KEITH: Uh, Echo.

AUSTIN: Echo, buddy.

SYLVIA: I just want this over with.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

SYLVIA: This job.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

SYLVIA: Like, it's terrible.

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: Y'all got nine heat. Six for "wild and devastating exposure" [Keith starts laughing wildly], one for "high profile targets", and two for "massive property damage and/or killing."

[laughter from the table]

ALI: How's your turn?

DRE: I'm so proud of us.

[laughter continues]

KEITH: Okay, here's the thing. "And/or killing" can come out of Even's. So that's two. It's three-three two.

AUSTIN: I mean heat is just to the crew—

KEITH: I know—

AUSTIN: You don't get to break that, unfortunately.

DRE: Hold on. You're the one that eagerly said, "Let's dump their bodies in space," but now I'm getting chastised.

KEITH: They were already dead!

DRE: I mean, I—[sighs]

KEITH: What are we gonna do, hide them on the ship?

DRE: I don't know.

KEITH: It will smell.

AUSTIN: Gross.

ALI: You—

KEITH: It will start to smell.

DRE: I'm just gonna let people kill Gig, next time, I think is what it's coming down to.

ALI: You know Even saved *your* life, right? Do you remember that?

KEITH: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

ALI: [laughing] Okay.

AUSTIN: Restitution of All Things: low heat, three heat. Two from "contained, standard exposure," you did fight those robots in that hallway. One from "high profile targets," you did get into a fight with Kitcha Kanna, Bird Leader of Advent. And then cred: Fourteen Fifteen, take two cred, which I think is just like, your monthly salary.

JACK: Oh, okay, cool.

AUSTIN: Like, you just get a check from Our Profit, just shows up as like, "Oh yeah, you did your bodyguard duty this month." Which you *didn't*, to be clear. And Grand Magnificent? If

you—I actually already added it for you, if open up your sheet, you should see that I added, let's see—

ART: Oh, I undid that 'cause I thought I had done that by mistake.

AUSTIN: No, no, I did that. I'll readd it. You get forty credits.

[Dre and Jack laugh]

ALI: Oh!

ART: You guys are welcome to visit me at any time, except Fourteen Fifteen.

AUSTIN: No, they can't.

ART: Oh.

AUSTIN: They won't be able to, because you're leaving the Mirage and they can't.

ART: Well, I mean, I assume eventually.

AUSTIN: Okay, uh-huh. To be clear, forty is what you need to retire at the highest tier of retirement, which is what they promised you.

ART: Yeah.

JACK: God. Dre in the chat—

KEITH: They said, "We'll let you get to the highest tier!"

[laughter]

JACK: Dre in the chat asks, "Is nine heat more than the milk-selling group got in that arc? Did we get the biggest number?" What did we get in the milk arc?

AUSTIN: Oh, I'll find out, give me a second, I'll dig it up because it's not that far.

KEITH: I do love that the *war arc* [laughter from the table] and the *milk-selling arc* ended in a *comparable level of destruction*.

JACK: That is a great point.

AUSTIN: Uh, maybe not, I may not have written it down, let's see...

JACK: I think we did—I don't think we got "wild and devastating," 'cause I—those words are so funny that I think—

AUSTIN: No, that's—

DRE: Yeah.

KEITH: We did not—You guys did not get "wild and devastating"

DRE: You didn't blow up a capital ship.

KEITH: —to get wild and devastating.

JACK: Oh my God, you blew up a capital ship?

KEITH: Yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: Oh my—oh no—yeah.

ALI: Ohh.

AUSTIN: Oh, you don't know anything about this, Fourteen.

JACK: I—I'm not in this conversation.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I getcha.

JACK: Nobody join me. But I'm just—that was me, Jack.

KEITH: Basically what happened is we—the three of us single-handedly won a three-sided war.

JACK: Holy shit.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And we'll talk about that more, in just a little bit.

JACK: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: Real quick, I rolled entanglement, I already know what the entanglement is, it will show up later this episode.

KEITH: Wait, do I know what the entanglement is?

AUSTIN: No. You do not know what the entanglement is.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: No. You know some—you know a different thing.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: Alright, so pay off heat, entanglements. It is downtime activity time, and also it is “we need to decide on an upgrade for the ship time.” The ship upgraded twice. I think it sounds like we’ve all kind of agreed to get the cool move where you all get to eat a meal together.

KEITH: Yeah.

JACK: A hundred percent.

DRE: Yes.

AUSTIN: Is there a second thing that pops out for y’all? Or a stat or something?

DRE: Uh...

JACK: What’s—

AUSTIN: This is pretty much the last time we’re playing with this system, probably—*probably*, you know what, maybe not, but probably.

[Dre laughs]

AUSTIN: Depends on how all this shit goes and I’ll be pretty open about that, again, in a moment.

JACK: What’s that one we keep saying we’ll get but don’t get?

DRE: Uh...

JACK: It’s either Loaded For Bear or the other one.

AUSTIN and Dre, in unison: We’ve got Loaded For Bear.

ALI: Yeah.

KEITH: It's the other one.

AUSTIN: It could be Play Both Sides? Which is the one that lets you release people.

DRE: Yeah.

ALI: It's late for that.

AUSTIN: It is late for that.

JACK: [laughs] It is late for that.

AUSTIN: Um—

DRE: I think we talked about Deadly a little bit last time, but—

JACK: Oh yeah!

AUSTIN: Again, kind of late for it, right?

ALI: Oh yeah, what was that one again?

DRE: We just get an extra action rating. We get to add one to Command, Scrap, or Skulk.

ALI: Oh, yeah, I mean—

AUSTIN: Yeah, there's nothing wrong with that.

JACK: I mean, that might be good to—

ALI: Yeah.

JACK: I would have used that in the last mission.

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: Mm-hm.

DRE: Big same.

KEITH: Yeah.

ALI: I mean, numbers going up.

AUSTIN: Numbers goin' up.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Let's do it, let's do it. You know what—

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: I think it probably—it reflects the month—

JACK: Yeah.

DRE: Uh-huh.

AUSTIN: —that y'all had to some degree, right?

AUSTIN: So yeah, add one rating to Command, Scrap, or Skulk, up to a maximum of three.

DRE: Puttin' that in the old Scrap.

AUSTIN: Great! That was easy. Look at how easy that was. And no one has any other upgrades for themselves that we need to talk about, that we didn't already?

JACK: Oh, I have a—I can take a move, I think.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: But I don't have what it is, I should have had what it is.

ART: I took a move.

AUSTIN: What'd you take?

ART: I took Devil's Own Luck.

AUSTIN: Ohh, okay.

JACK: [flatly] Cool.

[Dre laughs]

ART: I may “Expend [my] special armor to resist the consequences of blaster fire or to push yourself when talking your way out of or running from trouble.”

KEITH: Is that ‘cause there wasn’t a move for resisting the consequences of your own actions?

DRE: Ooh.

ART: I don’t think that that exists in anything.

AUSTIN: [laughs] I mean it does.

JANINE: Uh—

AUSTIN: That’s just Resist in here. Anyway, Signet?

JANINE: I also took a move.

ART: I just mean, like, in life.

AUSTIN: Ehh. What’d you take?

JANINE: I took Book Learning. “You speak a multitude of languages and are broadly educated. Gain plus 1d when using Study on a downtime activity.”

AUSTIN: Awesome, cool. Anybody else?

DRE: I took a move.

AUSTIN: Sure.

DRE: Fixed: “You may expend your special armor to resist a consequence for machines breaking or being damaged or to push yourself when repairing or building a machine.”

AUSTIN: Okay. And we—you and I talked about that off-mic a little bit—

DRE: Mm-hm.

AUSTIN: —as like you think that that’s—that won’t step on Gig’s toes as a mechanic because it’s such a different thing for you as a weird machine-person.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Or cool machine-person.

DRE: The way I see that playing as ninety percent of the time while Even is piloting something.

AUSTIN: Right. Cool.

KEITH: I leveled up but just gave myself another Rig.

AUSTIN: Goood call.

DRE: Nice.

AUSTIN: Cap that out at three, right?

KEITH: Yeah.

JACK: I think I know what move I want.

AUSTIN: Sure.

JACK: I think I'm gonna take Purpose. "You may expend your special armor to push yourself when outclassed by your opposition or when under the effects of wounds."

AUSTIN: [laughing] Boy—

JACK: "When you Resist with Resolve, gain plus 1d."

AUSTIN: That's great.

DRE: Mm-hm.

AUSTIN: That's fantastic.

JACK: Yeah, feels very appropriate.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. Uh-huh. And then Tender, I know you took something, right?

ALI: Yeah, I have two new moves. I have Leaf in the Wind, which is, "When you push yourself, you may spend plus one stress to gain both plus one effect and plus one to the roll."

AUSTIN: Yeah, plus one to the roll.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Or, plus 1d. Plus 1d.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: I'm gonna actually write that one—

AUSTIN: I got it.

ALI: And then Kinetics, “You may push yourself to do one of the following: use the Way to throw a table-sized object with dangerous force or propel yourself briefly with superhuman speed.”

KEITH: Wow.

AUSTIN: And in this case, you're not like just using the Force, you're using Anticipation, right?

ALI: Yeah, I guess so.

AUSTIN: Is this like—are you Spiderman-ing around? [Ali laughs] Are you using blue thread? Are you—

ALI: I guess it's like a Spiderman thing, right? Where it's like—I don't know, I guess I can process things faster? Like thoughts? [laughs]

AUSTIN: Sure, sure.

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: No, I meant the Kinetics part not the Leaf on the Wind part.

ALI: Okay. Yeah, fair. I think I also meant that, but um.

AUSTIN: Oh, okay [Ali laughs]. No I'm saying, like, how are you throwing things—how are you throwing a table-sized object without touching it?

ALI: I guess with the threads, that's the coolest part, yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah. I think we actually pitched “Bayonetta but blue thread.”

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Right?

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: But I dunno, sleep on it. If you come up with—if in the moment you think it should work a different way, it works a different way.

ALI: [laughing] Okay.

AUSTIN: Um—[laughs]. Art in the chat says, “You ever get the feeling Tender isn’t in the same game as the rest of us?” Listen, Forty Credits—

ALI: You have forty dollars, shut up!

[Keith laughs]

ART: But it’s like, my moves are like “you know people,” and your moves are like, “you can make a roller party and also—”

[Ali and Keith laugh]

ALI: Well....

AUSTIN: I mean, so, you know, that’s true, for sure. I do want to know, Grand, how’re you doing? Are you feeling good?

ART: You know, I’ve probably felt worse.

AUSTIN: I will say, at stash forty, which is what you have, when you retire, here’s two things to note. One: “When you retire, you get a well-appointed home or apartment, claiming a few luxuries. You might operate a medium business. [laughs] In addition, each full row of stash indicates the quality of the characters lifestyle from zero, street life, to four, luxury.” So you are now living in luxury, and even when you stop, you know, you don’t have to rhyme, you can just kick back and chill somewhere. And so that’s where you’re at in terms of finances. What’s the vibe like on the catapult? I’ve kind of given you the picture of it a little bit, which is lots of people eating hors d’oeuvres, lots of rich people of various intergalactic species, lots of tuxedos, lots of bottle service. How is Grand taking to all that?

ART: Okay, so, this is gonna take me a little bit and sound like a complete non sequitur, but I promise I’m coming back around to it.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ART: So, Jessica and I really enjoy going to Las Vegas.

AUSTIN: Sure.

ART: And I understand Las Vegas is not for everyone. Because it sort of objectively sucks. It's hot, and, like, a lot of the people there are terrible for one reason or another. They're really like—they're either really trashy or, you know, really rich or like—I don't know, it feels like most people in Las Vegas are at a ten when they should be at like a six. Most of the time.

AUSTIN: Mm-hm.

ART: But we for a while were staying at the Encore. And there's a thing in the elevator of the Encore, which is the top button just says "Sky Casino."

[Austin laughs]

KEITH: "There's a thing in the elevator at the Encore" is a really good early R.L. Stine novel.

[laughter from the table]

ART: And you can't push the button for Sky Casino.

ALI: Ohh.

ART: If you push the button it doesn't light up. You can't go to the Sky Casino unless you're someone who can go to the Sky Casino. I've only ever spoken to one person who's ever been to the Sky Casino. [laughs] It was in the elevator, they were going up [Ali laughs]. Because you have to be a certain level of, you know, gambler, so the regular high roller area isn't good enough for you. You need the Sky Casino.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

ART: And so we've spent a lot just joking about what the Sky Casino must be like. What kind of inane luxury must be up there [Austin chuckles] that they won't let people like us, who are staying at a reasonably nice hotel, we can't even look at it [Ali laughs]. We can't even push the button to go to the Sky Casino. And I think that this is the Sky Casino [chuckles].

AUSTIN: Perfect, good. Is it everything Grand ever dreamed of?

ART: In a lot of ways. But there like the nagging feeling that this is exactly what Grand didn't want to do, when he left.

AUSTIN: Hm. In what way?

ART: The like, “Oh yeah, I’m back. It’s nice to be back. I’m at a better standing than I’ve ever been. You know, now I’m the kind of person who could be someone’s patron if I wanted to be.”

AUSTIN: True. Yep.

ART: But also, like, I don’t like hanging out with these people. They’re still terrible.

AUSTIN: They’re way worse than anyone you’ve ever hung out with on Memorious, also. Like waaay worse.

ART: Sure, yeah. They’re in the Sky Casino.

AUSTIN: They’re in the Sky Casino. For them, art is a thing you invest in, you know?

ART: Yeah.

KEITH: I also—I love the idea of picturing Grand Mag who sucks—

[laughter]

KEITH: —for a lot of reasons, being around a bunch of people who kind of suck for all the same reasons and being like, “These people are fucking fake.”

AUSTIN: Uh-huh [Keith laughs]. Love it. Alright, we should talk about this meal, really quick. So before we roll for it, because, okay, so we kind of stepped past the move that y’all took, which was Home Cooking: “Your whole crew gains home cooking as a vice. Right after a job, you may spend one cred and a downtime activity to cook for everyone, allowing the whole crew present to make a Vice roll. If anyone overindulges, a fight erupts and everyone gains one stress after the Vice roll. Requires a Galley module.” You have that Galley module; you took it, you might recall, instead of adding a prison to the ship.

KEITH: [wild laughter] That would have come in handy!

ALI: Mm-hm.

AUSTIN: It turns out it would have come in handy! The thing I want to know before we get to that though—I mean, I guess we also have upkeep, which is you have to spend x dollars to make sure the ship doesn’t continue fall apart. So let me actually just do that super quick, because I think it’s just the same price it alwaaays is?

JACK: Are we also doing downtime actions aside from these?

AUSTIN: Downtime actions will be after the feast.

JACK: Okay, cool.

AUSTIN: Yeah. The feast is what's important, because if we don't get to downtime actions it's okay, we can abstract a lot, because it might be the last time we're playing Scum and Villainy, but I want to focus on, "hey did you all pay—" So do you pay...what is it, systems plus crew divided by four....do you pay the...one, two, three, four—wait, one, two, three, four, five...do you pay the two credits to keep the ship up?

DRE: Yes.

ART: Hey, you know, I have two credits that aren't in my forty-credit stash, and you guys can have them.

JACK: Fuck off.

[laughter]

AUSTIN: I mean, do you—does Grand just leave two credits behind in his room that y'all use?

JANINE: Does he leave stuff that we just sell?

KEITH: Yeah.

JANINE: Is another question.

DRE: Oh yeah.

[Ali laughs]

ART: You can sell the two credits, but it's probably—you're gonna get two credits for it.

[Austin laughs]

JACK: Right.

AUSTIN: Okay, so yeah, you pay that, that's fine. Grand, erase those. But this is not Grand paying for the upgrades, or the upkeep, right? Grand is not actively doing that for them?

KEITH: We're stealing it.

AUSTIN: I'm giving Grand the opportunity.

JANINE: I kicked his mattress over and found two bucks in there.

[laughter]

ART: I mean, I was volunteering to pay it remotely. But we can do it however you guys want to do it.

AUSTIN: Are you volunteering to do it or—when I say volunteering, are you—was Grand volunteering or are you volunteering?

ART: I was volunteering to have done it.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ART: To like—

AUSTIN: Then I like that. I like the notion of then Grand has done that already. That's—

KEITH: There's a check in his bedroom.

AUSTIN: Or just the robots, or when everyone's coming in, the automated, you know, upkeep robots at the Brink are just doing their job already. And you check the log and Grand has paid for it, you know? And who knows, maybe Grand paid for it before the last mission, it's hard to say, but it has Grand's name there. Alright, so before we roll for this meal [chuckles] I need to know who you're inviting. Everybody gets to invite someone. Does anyone have a definite invite?

DRE: Cascabel.

AUSTIN: Alright. You invite Cascabel. I have a list of a lot of NPCs here, the first one on my list: Cascabel.

ALI: Who does Cascabel invite?

AUSTIN: I'll find out.

ALI: Isn't that the thing?

AUSTIN: Ah, yeah, and I'll tell you in a second.

ALI: Okay.

JANINE: I think I invite Blueberri.

AUSTIN: Okay, Blueberry Jin. Okay, go ahead. Who's next?

ALI: The Cadent and Declan are already here?

AUSTIN: Declan is already here. The Cadent, you believe, is back on Seneschal.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: The Cadent is scheduled to give a talk, is scheduled to give a big speech, because it's a holiday.

ALI: What happened to Waltz? I'm not inviting him.

AUSTIN: You're *not* inviting Waltz?

ART: Waltz is fine.

KEITH: Waltz is the skitz.

ALI: I was—nobody—[dissolves into laughter]

AUSTIN: Waltz, Waltz. Oh, Waltz. [Ali continues to laugh] Waltz got very mad at Fourteen and Grand in a very good moment.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: where they were both like—they rescue Fourteen, and then both Fourteen and Grand were like, alright, we have to go take care of something else individually, separately, and Waltz is like, "No?! [laughs] We gonna get back on my secret cool spaceship and leave!"

[Jack sighs]

AUSTIN: The name of Waltz's spaceship is the *Bolero Smooth*, by the way.

ALI: Oh man.

AUSTIN: It's an award-winning spaceship. Also—

KEITH: Separate awards from the awards that Waltz has won.

AUSTIN: Tender, you definitely you get an email at some point. That's inquiring for your services as an award-winning stenographer. And you don't know why.

[Jack laughs]

ALI: Oh?

JACK: Yeah, that is a thing that happens, Tender.

AUSTIN: Oh my God.

ALI: [laughing] Okay. Anyway—

AUSTIN: It'll make sense to the audience, who has heard those episodes.

ALI: I invite Open.

AUSTIN: Okay, one second. Who else has to go?

SYLVIA: I can't think of anybody.

ART: Who's on the invite list already?

AUSTIN: Cascabel. Blueberri Jin. Open Metal. I think that's it so far.

ART: Morning's Observation.

KEITH: Plus the handful of people that are already on the ship.

AUSTIN: Yes.

KEITH: Like, Declan's on the ship, Kent's on the ship, is there anyone else already on the ship?

AUSTIN: Yeah, Kent's already here. Kent is already here, that's true.

ALI: Ohh.

JACK: Do we know—

AUSTIN: Oh, you know what? I suspect actually Kent is not already here. Kent has—I. Out of ch—Kent has had to do some shit. You will have to invent Kent—invent...Kent—invite Kent Brighton.

KEITH: Kent probably doesn't get an invite.

AUSTIN: Woww. Are you for real? *Damn*.

KEITH: I know other people!

AUSTIN: Name three.

[Ali sighs]

KEITH: Uh, uhh, three huh? Uhh.

[laughter from the table]

JANINE: Grand Magnificent. Uh.

KEITH: Surge.

AUSTIN: Surge is on my list as somebody.

DRE: Mm-hm.

KEITH: The—I can't remember her name, from the Ark, the leader of it.

AUSTIN: Oh, Vanya de la Vega.

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: Also on my potentials list.

KEITH: And, um, the good robot Yam.

AUSTIN: Yam. Also on my list [laughs]. Of potentials.

KEITH: There's three.

AUSTIN: That's good! Nice work.

JACK: Do we know what kind of a situation Morning's Observation is in?

AUSTIN: Morning's Observation, you'll note, is—already has his name on the list.

JACK: Oh. Should we be able to see the list?

AUSTIN: No.

JACK: Oh, okay. His name is—

AUSTIN: His name—he—The list of who's bringing what, he has already decided he's showing up.

JACK: Okay.

AUSTIN: His argument has already—if anybody asks him, he's like, "Yeah, I did a mission for you, I'm a member of this crew, I can invite whoever the fuck I want."

JACK: I mean, he's kind of not wrong.

AUSTIN: He's not wrong.

JACK: Mm...so I'm in a bit of a bind here because Fourteen had an interesting narrative relationship with Sho in the early part of the season.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: But we haven't spoken in a long time.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: And on the one hand, that's a reason to invite Sho, you know—

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: —To bring these connections together. I wonder if narratively it would feel cheap. It would feel like saying, "Well, I'm just going to pull the trigger on this because I want to see what happens." You know, I wonder whether or not I'm closing a loop there for the sake of it, where that loop could be closed or discussed in other ways.

AUSTIN: Sure.

JACK: And I don't really know how I feel about that. I'm curious as to where you fall on that.

AUSTIN: I'm fine with it, if you can talk to me about why Fourteen does it.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Which is—

JACK: Yeah, that's what I was thinking as well.

AUSTIN: You know, I text friends who I haven't spoken to in six months sometimes.

JACK: Mm-hm.

AUSTIN: And sometimes, it's because I've had a bad day at work. And sometimes, it's because, like, I don't know, oh hey, how are they doing? Especially around holidays. Like, you were there, we went to my friend Scott's—you and Ali went to my friend Scott's July Fourth thing, right?

JACK: That was great.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I hadn't seen Scott in like, five months.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I think I've seen Scott once since then. It's just like, "Oh, it's a holiday, what's Scott doing?", you know?

JACK: Yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: Scott Hallam, go listen to Gunsling Birds, they do—he does great music.

ALI: Yeah.

JACK: Huuge inspiration for Counter/Weight musically—

AUSTIN: Yes, yes.

JACK: And also the person responsible for the clarinet in Marielda. Not in terms of playing it, but in terms of telling me how you record a clarinet.

[Ali giggles]

AUSTIN: Wait, really? Awesome! I didn't know that, that's awesome!

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Also did the A(s)century soundtrack, which is great.

JACK: My other candidates are—

AUSTIN: Wait, there's Candidates coming?

[Jack snorts]

JACK: Yeah, I'm bringing them back. We've got Vicuna coming [Ali laughs].

AUSTIN: Okay, it's gonna be cool.

JACK: From 30,000 years ago—

ALI: Funny thing about—

[Austin laughs]

JACK: Okay, so—screw it. I'm gonna invite Sho.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: Because for the reasons you mentioned and also for the other reason, right, which is that, like, it's really good to see someone who you don't know what they've been doing.

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: And go, "How are we the same and how are we different and what's been happening?"

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: Yeah, so I'm gonna invite Sho Salon.

AUSTIN: Okay. Who else has an invite?

KEITH: I have an invite. I'm gonna invite Vanya.

AUSTIN: Okay.

SYLVIA: I still have to invite somebody but I can't think of anything.

AUSTIN: Um—

SYLVIA: 'Cause Echo's a little family dinner-ed out, I think.

AUSTIN: Fair.

SYLVIA: So I think someone who I wasn't related to.

AUSTIN: Fair. Do you want me to go down a list of names I have still?

SYLVIA: Umm, maybe? I do, maybe—Actually, you know what? Maybe I'll just invite Surge, it's been a while.

AUSTIN: Okay.

SYLVIA: And that was a much simpler time.

AUSTIN: It was a much simpler time.

[Ali makes sympathetic noise]

DRE: Oh boy.

KEITH: To be fair, we met Surge at a war also.

AUSTIN: That was more of like a battle, right?

KEITH: Sure. Yeah, okay, that was more of a battle.

AUSTIN: [laughs] Alright, um—

ART: Hit me with that list.

KEITH: Wait, but Grand doesn't get to invite anybody.

AUSTIN: If Grand shows up—if Grand shows up, he does.

KEITH: Grand, are you showing up?

ART: We'll see [Ali laughs]. Also, I could've sent this invite a week ago.

KEITH: Ah, fair, totally fair. One hundred percent.

AUSTIN: True, fair, uh-huh. Alright.

KEITH: Yep.

AUSTIN: People still remaining on my list of people who've not been invited yet. This does this could people—some of these people could filter into invite's invites, you know? That I haven't finished yet. Like, you know, I haven't written down who Morning's Observation is gonna invite quite yet. But I have a good idea. Cascara. Acre Seven. Demani Dusk and Gray Gloaming. Waltz Tango Cache. Kent Brighton. Iota Pretense, the Annex of the Qui Err, the le—one of the leaders of the Qui Err. Tannoy Kajj, who is a cool space-smuggler-explorer dude. Lily Lysander, who was the scientist—one of the scientists—who has since become like a cool engineer. Wind's Poem, I also have written down here "Wind's Poem" and then four question marks and then I've written "Ali?????" with four excla—question marks and next to that I've wrote "mods?????" with four question marks [Ali laughs]. Gigas—

ALI: I have a plan, it's fine.

AUSTIN: —The former Advent who Even kind of convinced to leave. Saint Wynter, who is the backflip pilot. And then we already got Surge, right? There we go, those are some of mine who are still up in the air. Let me look around real quick and make sure I already didn't fill in somebody else. No, that's who I got.

ART: I don't want to invite someone who's gonna be mad at me.

AUSTIN: Oh, Chiron, also. Chiron.

[Keith laughs]

AUSTIN. Yeah, and also fair. You know? You know, Massalia, the rest of the—you could invite Massalia D'Argent, you could invite Blooming, the former—

JACK: You could probably invite Kitcha Kanna.

AUSTIN: You could invite Kitcha Kanna, it's true.

ART: I really don't think I want to have that kind of relationship—

AUSTIN: Maybe you want to invite your good friend Kitcha Kanna.

KEITH: The Bird Leader of Advent.

AUSTIN: The Bird—[laughs, Jack laughs]

ART: I think he prefers Avian Boss.

[Keith and Austin laugh]

AUSTIN: Yeah, he does. He's a Talonite, if you need to know the specific species.

ART: I'll invite Waltz Tango Cache.

AUSTIN: Okay.

KEITH: Nice.

AUSTIN: Good.

JACK: Nice.

ART: Because Gray Gloaming is gonna be mad at me and I don't want people mad at me here, I think I have that covered.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

JACK: You sure don't want people mad at you, do you? That might be the—

KEITH: Waltz is on my list of people that I didn't invite that I still want to get invited.

AUSTIN: Well, Waltz is here now. Or Waltz will be here now.

KEITH: Great, I'm glad.

AUSTIN: So here's what I have from y'all so far: Echo invited Surge. Even invited Cascabel. Fourteen invited Sho. Grand invited Waltz. Gig invited Vanya. Signet invited Blueberri. And Tender invited Open Metal. Correct? Okay. So, give me a second here to finish this off, 'cause I'm gonna invite more people. Alright, so. God, how does this even kick off? One, two, three...so it's—

KEITH: With his foot.

[pause]

ALI: Hm. Fuck.

[loud laughter from Austin, Keith, Dre; laughter from others at the table]

AUSTIN: Oh!

DRE: [exaggerated sigh]

AUSTIN: God damn!

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Alright, so. I guess, I guess—[sighs]. Who—I think—okay, I'm gonna go through the list. I'm gonna go through the list as people arrive. So inside the ship to begin with: Echo, Even, Fourteen, Gig, Signet, Tender, Declan's Corrective. I think Morning's Observation just shows up with his closest approximation to those breakfast sandwiches he always talks about, along with his two moms, Gray Gloaming and Demani Dusk. Those are his invites, who invited each other. Also, following up from that I think we get—Sho shows up, Fourteen, along with Chiron, who she brings with, fondly remembering the days when the three of them—Sho, Chiron, and Morning's Observation—were the Beloved Lost. Surge shows up for you, Echo, and gives you a big ol' otter-bear hug, and behind his giant frame is Janey Errania, his partner, and the two of them immediately begin to look at the ship and wonder how you've beaten it up so bad from just a few months ago. Tender, Open Metal shows up with someone who you don't recognize at all, but Fourteen, you do. It is the fisherman who gave you this ship and once saved her from Rapid Evening agents.

JACK: Oh damn.

AUSTIN: Signet, Blueberri Jin shows up, and along with them is Korrin Kim, who served along with them inside of Contrition's Figure and who has popped up here or there, and also joined you when all of y'all confronted Independence on Volition. Gig, Vanya shows up with her immaculate glowing hair, her cool iridescent hair, and she brings someone very surprising. She was very moved by your invite, and so she invited Kent Brighton to come.

KEITH: Yeah, that's nice.

AUSTIN: Waltz Tango Cache arrives bearing an invite from Grand Magnificent, but Grand isn't here yet. And Waltz comes with one of his favorite rivals, Tannoy Kajj. I imagine the two of them have gotten up to some hijinks, I extremely want the side series where Waltz Tango Cache and Tannoy Kajj hang out. I also think that as people arrive, if they have their own ships, their own ships actually connect to this ship and dock and it becomes a kind of big rolling party in a sense. And so Tannoy Kajj's incredible—the *Other Hand* is the name of Tannoy's ship—that I described as "What if the *Millenium Falcon* was a deep-V?—

[Janine snorts]

AUSTIN: —is now docked to the *World Without End*. And inside I described the interior as a really chintzy Pizza Hut, so, you know, just great. Um, and Even, Cascabel—

ART: As opposed to, like, a classy Pizza Hut, what are you—

AUSTIN: [laughs] Actually, I guess I described it as more classy than chintzy, in retrospect, you're right. Classy, a classy Pizza Hut. Cascabel shows up along with Annex Iota Pretense, the leader of the—one of the leaders of the—Qui Err Coalition, and one of his many clients, because for Cascabel, his list of friends is pretty small.

ALI: Aw.

AUSTIN: Declan's Corrective keeps checking his watch, but while he does, Cascara arrives. And Cascara is—and I guess I'll note, has glowing green eyes now. She's still in her wheelchair but her eyes are super-glowy, and that is because she has kind of merged with Quire. People who have not listened to the podcast in a little while, that was revealed during the Ache arc on Skein, that in the events of the down—or, uh, in the holiday special—when she disappeared, Quire saved her and also merged with her and turned her into an agent of the system. So I think that that's it at this point. And I think that people—there's probably lots of activity. Everybody brings stuff, you know? I imagine that before food is even served, Waltz is sneaking snacks into his weird hand-tube.

[Keith laughs]

JACK: Waltz loves to eat.

AUSTIN: Surge and Janey didn't just bring food, they brought, like, new updated kitchen equipment for you that they made.

ALI: Aw.

AUSTIN: They made, like, a new type of oven that is a hyper-quick—it's like a slow-cooker but fast, that's how they pitch it to you.

JANINE: It's an instant pot?

ALI: Oh, a pressure-cooker, right?

AUSTIN: No, faster.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: It's like microwave-fast, but it's a slow-cooker.

ALI: Oh!

AUSTIN: It's gonna revolutionize everything, honestly.

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: Gray Gloaming and Demani Dusk brought stuff for all of the synthetic people on board, because the Brink does that as a speciality. They are also providing—they are also footing some of the bill for just, like, the kind of ingredients that you need in general from the Brink, where you're docked. I think Blueberri Jin and Korrin Kim both bring very, very good booze. Open Metal and the fisherman bring very, very bad booze.

[Janine and Dre laugh]

AUSTIN: Just like a case of Natty-Ice each.

DRE: Hell yeah.

ALI: God.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Cascabel and Iota Pretense both bring—it's like, you know when you show up to a place and you're the best-dressed person and you feel terrible? They show up ready to *cook*. Like, they show up with aprons [Ali and Jack laugh] and cuisine. They're here to make cuisine, not to make food, you know? And Declan's Corrective has like—you know those like, Fun Pack chips—

KEITH: I do.

AUSTIN: Where it's like eight little bags of chips and crackers and pretzels?

KEITH: Mm-hm.

AUSTIN: He has, like, ten of those.

KEITH: Someone takes the last red Doritos without asking—

ALI: What?

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

KEITH: —and it's like, “The red Doritos are my favorite ones!”

AUSTIN: He has a bunch of those. Cascara brings a very nice salad. A number of very nice salads.

KEITH: Do you guys ever get those same things but with cereal?

AUSTIN: Yes.

KEITH: Those are good.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: A hundred—He also has one of those in there [Ali laughs].

KEITH: That is like super vacation food.

AUSTIN: Oh yeah.

KEITH: “Well, I guess every morning I’m having a different cereal.”

AUSTIN: Mm-hm

KEITH: The lap of luxury.

AUSTIN: Vanya brings desserts from the Ark-en-Ciel. And Kent brings...presumably some sort of seafood, right?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Right, like—

JACK: Like, *incredible* seafood.

AUSTIN: The best seafood possible? Right?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And so that’s good.

KEITH: It’s like a lobster, but it takes like three people to hunt it.

AUSTIN: Right. And Sho Salon and Chiron make spaghetti together, which was the meal that they—one of the meals that group bonded over a year ago, at this point. I think that that’s everybody.

JACK: Can we get a list of all the guests, so we can—

AUSTIN: Yes. Right now: Declan’s Corrective. Cascara. Echo. Surge. Janey. Even. Cascabel. Iota Pretense. Fourteen. Sho Salon. Chiron. Waltz Tango Cache. Tannoy Kaji. Gig. Vanya de la

Vega. Kent Brighton. Morning's Observation. Gray Gloaming. Demani Dusk. Signet. Blueberri Jin. Korrin Kim. Tender. Open Metal. And the fisherman. Grand, I think you're the last of this group to arrive. What's your arrive look like?

ART: Okay.

DRE: Mm-hm?

AUSTIN: We already did WWWRPG, we already did Worldwide Wrestling, this isn't—

ART: Well first, Rocky Romero shows up.

[Ali giggles]

ART: No, you guys know the video game Titanfall, right?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Us?

JACK: Oh my God.

KEITH: Oh, you're Divine dropping?

ART: Yeah, what if a really small Titan fell?

AUSTIN: Oh my God.

JACK: Wait, through the ship?

ART: No, like, just—I thought we were docked.

AUSTIN: You're docked.

JACK: Oh, we're all—oh, I see.

KEITH: We're on the dock.

AUSTIN: But you're like space-docked. So through into the dock, sideways.

ART: Uh-huh.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ART: And it's like, this weird, robotic representation—I mean, it's perfect but it's abstract, you know?

AUSTIN: Like, is it Cubist Grand Magnificent?

ART: Kinda, yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ART: That is what I'm sort of thinking. Maybe halfway between Cubist and Van Gogh?

AUSTIN: Okay, sure. Love it. Is this *you* or is this a limited self projector? Is this like a copy of you.

ART: I think it's a self-piloting mech.

AUSTIN: Okay. So you are still in the Catapult.

ART: Yeah, I'm not going anywhere where someone might kill me.

AUSTIN: Okay. Great. But you are piloting it, is my question. You have presence here. This is not just a thing—

ART: Yeah, yeah, I'm sitting in my living room with a Xbox controller, or whatever, watching this on my TV.

AUSTIN: [laughs] Nope, I was gonna say like a VR thing, jacked-into-your-brain; no, it's an Xbox controller. You have exactly the functionality that you can imagine with an Xbox controller. A D-pad, a couple of analog sticks, some triggers and bumpers, and four face buttons.

ART: [cross] I've played Armored Core, that's plenty! More than enough!

KEITH: [cross] Oh, and a headset.

[Ali and Austin laugh]

AUSTIN: Perfect. What is the response to Grand arriving? What is the response to all of these people arriving in general? But then especially Grand. How is everyone feeling? [laughs]

KEITH: Well, I think it's two different reactions.

AUSTIN: Yeah. [Ali laughs] Yeah, agreed.

KEITH: Um...I think that the b—I think for me—I think it's really—The Grand thing is very distressing, I think.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: And so, all these people showing up was like a really great way to forget about Grand.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

KEITH: And then Grand showing up was a really bad way to forget about Grand [laughs].

AUSTIN: Mm-hm.

[Dre and Ali laugh]

AUSTIN: Yeah. Fair.

ALI: I think I have a bar set up, obviously, 'cause it's my party.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: And I'm, like, doing that, but when I see Grand come in, I like...I see whoever's closest to me that I trust the most out of the five people or whoever it could be, and just be like, "Can you find Fourteen? [laughs] Give them a heads up, or just distract them for like, fifteen minutes."

AUSTIN: I think Morning's Observation says yes to that—

ALI: Yess, thank you.

AUSTIN: —and goes to find Fourteen and pitch them on some new ridiculous idea.

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): What if cars brought things to you instead of bringing you to things?"

JACK (as Fourteen): What—

KEITH (as Gig): Like, if you brought your friend's house? Like you—

AUSTIN (as Morning's): Yeah, exactly.

KEITH (as Gig): Like a car brought me my friend's house.

AUSTIN (as Morning's): Yeah, what if your friend's house was on a car—

JANINE (as Signet): That's literally what we're doing right now.

AUSTIN (as Morning's): and it drove to you?

JANINE (as Signet): That's—

AUSTIN (as Morning's): That way you could play Xbox whenever.

KEITH (as Gig): What if two people needed the same thing brought to them at the same time?

AUSTIN (as Morning's): You know, they have to work that out. That's—t's all about difference and collaboration.

JACK (as Fourteen): Look, I love you two but I've got such a—I didn't think I could have a headache, but I've got a headache. And it sounds to me like what you're describing is just a delivery service.

KEITH (as Gig): But for your friend's house

AUSTIN (as Morning's): For your friend's house and also their Xbox.

JACK (as Fourteen): I mean, this is just a barge. This is just a space-barge.

AUSTIN (as Morning's): Can I be straight with both of you? Can I just be real honest, I really just want to play Fusion Frenzy. So if either—

KEITH (as Gig): Oh, Fusion Frenzy's really good.

AUSTIN (as Morning's): It is.

KEITH (as Gig): It's on Xbox Live.

AUSTIN (as Morning's): It lets you play with all your friends.

KEITH (as Gig): [laughs] No, I mean it's on the new Xbox!

AUSTIN (as Morning's): There's a new Xbox?!

KEITH (as Gig): There's a new Xbox, it's on the new one. [Austin laughs]

AUSTIN (as Morning's): Aw, shit.

JACK (as Fourteen): Why are you still in my room? [Austin laughs]

KEITH (as Gig): It's backwards-compatible—

JACK (as Fourteen): This is a conversation you can have outside of my room.

KEITH (as Gig): It's backwards-compatible like two million years.

AUSTIN: [laughs] I think we fade from that. Everybody else, how is feelings? How is feelings?
[laughs]

JACK: [chuckles] That's the question we've all been trying to answer, Austin.

[Dre sighs loudly]

AUSTIN: Sure is! Even, that was a sigh from you?

DRE: Yeah, I think Even is very, very happy to see Surge and Janey. And I honestly don't—I can't think of a more honest response to Grand than, like, Even wanting to just fucking punch him in the face.

AUSTIN: Fair. Doesn't do it though?

DRE: I don't know yet.

AUSTIN: Okay. Yeah, we'll see how this roll goes, right? Um—

KEITH: He's a big metal man too, so it'd hurt.

AUSTIN: Two metal men, you know?

KEITH: Even, are your hands metal too? Do you have metal hands?

DRE: No, I'm not metal anything.

AUSTIN: I guess you're like—

DRE: I'm like a carapace more than metal.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I guess that's true.

KEITH: Well, okay, do you have fleshy hands or do you carapace hands?

DRE: It's probably carapace-y on the backside.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: Okay, so you could—

ART: Hey, can we not say “fleshy hands” anymore?

[Austin and Keith laugh]

AUSTIN: [snidely] I'm sorry, Mr. Robot.

DRE: Yeah.

KEITH: Oh, *Grand* has a problem with the way someone is describing something.

[Austin laughs]

AUSTIN: Signet, how are you in seeing Blueberri and Korrin?

JANINE: Um, I think Signet is probably happy. Like, that sounds very simple—

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: —but Signet's not generally happy right now.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: So I think—and I mean—Honestly, think she's even happy when Morning's Observation shows up, because she's fond of him but never sees him.

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah.

JANINE: But I think, you know, she's fond of Blueberri, she has a respect for Korrin. I don't know that she, like, adores Korrin or anything—

AUSTIN: Sure, sure.

JANINE: But there's a respect there. Like, so I think it's just—I don't think it's anything even particularly special, I don't think she has anything to say to them in that moment, I think it's just like a very sincere, kind of like smiley, happy, nice, you know—

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: —Almost family-ish greeting.

AUSTIN: Yeah. So, um, people settle down for the meal, and there is a, you know—instead of having someone here lead the prayer or whatever—I mean, maybe that also happens—but there is sort of a global prayer that is led by the Cadent-Under-Mirage.

AUSTIN (as the Cadent): Long after the life [[Slowly Building](#) starts playing in the background] of Kamala Cadence but long before the Divine Fleet fell into its eventual decline, its citizens lived and worked and studied and worshipped with two-hundred ninety-nine Divines. A three-hundredth was, of course, considered. More than considered really, it was a topic of conversation and debate for many, many generations. Because even then, in the reign of our long paradise, there was something familiar and powerful about large, round numbers. Some thought the three-hundredth Divine should be made by human hands, to reaffirm the promise Kamala Cadence made in the founding of the Resonant Orbit. Others felt its Divine should be left to the synthetic minds of the Fleet, to those mortals who walked between organic and Divine life, and whose rights were so recently upheld. And of course, some believed that the three-hundredth Divine must be developed by the two-hundred and ninety-nine who joined as before, as to reflect their soul, the central spiritual life of the Fleet.

And as is the way of these things, our minds were made up for us well before we were ready. The three-hundredth Divine had been there all along with us, slowly building since the day of the very first Divines. Slowly building from the algorithmic detritus and scrap parts of machines long made obsolete. Slowly building their body from old signage once slapped by the hands of human children leaping for good luck. Slowly building their engine in the abandoned prototypes discarded by the most ambitious robotic craftworkers. Slowly building their mind from the endless stream of Divine revisions of our Assemblage. They were Patina, and they were with us always, an amalgamation of everything that made the Fleet the Fleet, and they were our three-hundredth.

Today, on their Feast, let us celebrate our connections to each other, whether chosen, destined, or coincidental, whether we are from the Divine Free States, the New Earth Hegemony, the Qui Err, or any other resident of this system. Though the Divine Fleet has come to ground, though the Resonant Orbit faces challenges civil and spiritual, though the times are hard, let Patina's story remind us that though we may build ourselves individuals, we never do so alone.

AUSTIN: And she bows her head in prayer and says:

AUSTIN (as the Cadent): Blessings to all of you, on today's feast.

[Music ends]

AUSTIN: So, do we want to do the roll first, or do we want to have some table conversation?

JANINE: Signet is drinking.

[Austin bursts out laughing, Jack chuckles]

JANINE: She drank through that whole speech.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

ART (as Grand): It's rude to drink during the toast.

JANINE (as Signet): It's rude to do a lot of things, Grand.

AUSTIN: Woo-hoo! [claps hands and laughs] Love it!

DRE (as Even): I wish I could drink through this.

JACK: So, the answer's table conversation, right?

AUSTIN: It seems to be.

SYLVIA (as Echo): Weren't we all supposed to just send one invite? I thought we did that, who got Grand one?

[Ali laughs]

SYLVIA (as Echo): No? Okay. I just thought I'd ask.

AUSTIN (as one of the NPC's): I think he invited himself.

SYLVIA: Echo's drinking too, for the first time.

AUSTIN: Oh nooo, Echo!

JANINE: This is a good time to s—

SYLVIA: Actually no, Echo's just—you know what Echo's doing? Echo made their stew that their dad makes—

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

SYLVIA: —and they're just eating a lot of that.

AUSTIN: Ohh.

SYLVIA: That's way better, I like that way more.

AUSTIN: That is way better. Me too, me too. We want to avoid an "Aubrey gets drunk" scene.

[Dre laughs]

SYLVIA: Yeah. Also it's Signet's thing. They've got this—

AUSTIN: It is.

SYLVIA: They've got it locked down.

KEITH: Well, hold on.

AUSTIN: Yeah?

KEITH: Hasn't—hadn't—I mean, I know—I know.

AUSTIN: / know. *You* know.

KEITH: *Gig* knows [breaks into laughter]. What're you doing? What was that?

AUSTIN: You—Home Movies.

KEITH: Okay.

[Dre laughs]

AUSTIN: What's *Gig* know?

KEITH: I know that jelly juice isn't alcoholic. Or—but—

AUSTIN: Or is it?

KEITH: Or is it. But I know that it definitely isn't, and I think that Echo knows that—

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

KEITH: —from also having had some and not felt anything.

SYLVIA: Keith, I like the way you think. Let's go get some jelly juice.

KEITH: Yeah. Anyway, what I brought—I tried to make my own jelly juice, that's what—

AUSTIN: Oh no.

ALI: Aw.

KEITH: I have home-brewed jelly juice, a whole vat of it.

AUSTIN: That's perfect and good. Kent is extremely excited to share the jelly juice with you. Jelly juice is—

KEITH: I got it from the ground.

SYLVIA: Where?

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: What?

KEITH: That's where the jelly comes from.

JANINE: It's a protein supplement for pregnant dogs.

DRE: Yeah, space-ground.

AUSTIN: Well—And that's why Kent is excited about it. Kent lives on a ocean-world, and in general, the Rogue Wave is all from ocean places, and so even in pre-split Quire—

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: —jelly juice was a luxury good for the Rogue Wave, because it had to be traded for.

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: From Skein, or the Mandati, or the glass ones. The Crown of Glass. [amused] The glass ones.

KEITH: Everybody that I ladle some out into—

AUSTIN: Wait.

KEITH: Yeah?

AUSTIN: You—hm.

KEITH: For.

AUSTIN: For.

KEITH: For. Or into!

AUSTIN: Open up!

KEITH: If someone goes like, “ahhh,” I’ll ladle it into a mouth.

AUSTIN: Oh, Waltz. Waltz absolutely—

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: —just puts his hand out [Keith laughs] and the little chute on his hand opens up.

DRE: Fuckin’ jelly bombs over here.

[Austin and Keith laugh]

KEITH: Everyone I give some to I’m like, “I dug this out of the ground. This came from the ground.”

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

JACK: I want to go over to Wind’s Poem.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. Wind’s Poem’s not here. No one invited Wind’s Poem.

JACK: Oh—Didn’t Wind’s Poem show up? I thought Wind’s Poem—

AUSTIN: No. Wind’s Poem was on my long list of potential invites.

JACK: Oh, with “Ali question mark, question mark, question mark”.

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Was not invited.

JACK: Oh, I thought the “question mark, question mark, question mark” was because she was invited.

AUSTIN: No.

JACK: Well, guess I don’t.

AUSTIN: You don’t.

ALI: Apologies.

AUSTIN: Fourteen—

JACK: I’m gonna see Waltz.

AUSTIN: Okay, go see Waltz. Go hang with Waltz.

ALI: We’re still doing downtime, right?

AUSTIN: This is downtime.

ALI: Like, okay, but, like, the two actions?

AUSTIN: Yep.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: This—I mean, yes and no.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: Right, like, there’s things you shouldn’t have to roll for. This is the final downtime.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: The one that I care about is the one that we need to do, that is this meal, which is a downtime action.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: But we should be very abstract. I want to spend time with people here, and see what the vibe is, and see what—and share some information about the world [chuckles], as things

have changed over the last month. Fourteen, what—are you having a conversation with Waltz?
Or—

JACK: Yeah, I'm gonna go over to him and say, like:

JACK (as Fourteen): Hey. So like—[sighs]. I mean, how—I don't want to ask "Are we good?" 'cause I kinda know the answer to that, but how "are we good" are we?

[Keith laughs]

AUSTIN (as Waltz): You and me?

JACK (as Fourteen): You know what I mean?

AUSTIN (as Waltz): You and me are alright.

JACK (as Fourteen): Yeah.

AUSTIN (as Waltz): Me and Grand? Less so.

JACK (as Fourteen): Yeah, that's pretty much how it is on my end as well. You heard about what happened?

AUSTIN (as Waltz): Yeah. Word travels.

JACK (as Fourteen): Like the whole thing with the—with Kitcha Kanna and—

AUSTIN (as Waltz): Wait. I mean, I knew you got beat up, I knew—Corrective told me about—Kitcha Kanna? The Advent—the Bird Leader of Advent?

[Keith laughs]

ART (as Grand): Avian Boss.

JACK: They're like looking—

[Keith laughs louder]

AUSTIN: They shoot you a glance—he shoots you a glance, Grand.

JACK: And I, like, turn in my chair so I'm not making eye—I can't—

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: Grand can't make eye contact with me.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: And I'm sort of getting Waltz to turn as well, so he can't make eye contact with him.

AUSTIN: Yeah. The Renaissance painting of this is great, you're just both looking away.

JACK: [laughs] Yeah.

JACK (as Fourteen): He fucking sold us out, Waltz.

ART (as Grand): I saved your life, you ungrateful piece of crap!

KEITH: Everyone's quiet.

AUSTIN: Morning's—I think Morning's Observation walks over to Grand and, like, squeezes his shoulder, and like sits down next to him and does the same thing of pulling and turning him away. And he leans in and he's like:

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): [whispering] I didn't save your life to have you fucking yell at people on a feast day. I don't even know what this—

ART (as Grand): [whispering angrily] They're being—No one cares that I saved them!

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): [whispering angrily] No one cares about a lot of things, Grand. I've had to learn that lesson *deep*, alright? But you don't yell at people on a holiday.

ART (as Grand): [whispering angrily] I think holidays are when a lot of people yell at a lot of people! They're very stressful.

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): [whispering] You didn't need to come then.

ART (as Grand): Tradition is important.

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): Oho, it's important [laughs]. [mockingly] The tradition—Tradition is important. Where are you right now? How many bowties can you see from where you are? 'Cause I bet it's like eight.

[Keith laughs, Ali wheezes]

ART (as Grand): Well, that's not fair, I just bought a lot of new bowties.

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): Fuck you. You know what, you know what? Ugh.

AUSTIN: He, like, shoves you and steps away. "I tried!" he says, as he walks back over and sits backwards on a chair and starts talking to Sho.

ALI: I place a drink as soon as he sits down.

[Austin laughs]

ALI (as Tender): Here you go, good job [laughs].

KEITH: And then I also do one.

KEITH (as Gig): Here you go.

[Ali laughs, Austin sighs]

KEITH (as Gig): I got this from the ground.

ALI (as Tender): Gig, are you behind the bar with me?

KEITH (as Gig): Oh yeah, sure.

ALI (as Tender): There's like a—[laughs]

AUSTIN: Perfect.

KEITH (as Gig): You know, I have a how-to for this up on my site.

ALI (as Tender): Oh yeah.

AUSTIN: I think here's another conversation that's happening. Okay [chuckles], I just realized there's a big piece of information that half this table probably—seven people—one, two, uh—six people—five people on this call don't know about, maybe, exactly, which is one of the topics of conversation that's happening is about the attack from Schism, which was a giant Axiom. I think I wrote about it in that note, but, like, I described that Axiom as being "What if Texas stood up?" in size from Moonlock. It—I won't go into the specifics of the gross body-horror description I gave it, but it effectively would touch things and turn them into strange ceramic, broken-ceramic, versions of themselves, and then they would crash into other things which would then turn into broken-ceramic versions of themselves, and—

KEITH: Oh, that sounds really bad.

AUSTIN: It was *really* bad. And Iota Pretense and the Qui Err Coalition helped saved the day. Two things saved the day. One, the Profit's Star, which is the name of that beam that Our Profit had on the Rapid Evening, she pointed it at the Kajj Umbra, which is that big black spot on Moonlock, and it was revealed that that big black spot on Moonlock was not just shadow from Volition but was actually—

JACK: Oh, this is the worst, by the way.

AUSTIN: —a bunch of entangled Iconoclasts.

DRE: [slightly horrified] Mm.

AUSTIN: Just hundreds, thousands, hundreds of thousands of Iconoclasts interwoven with each other in a weird way. Which *really* brings some questions about Tannoy Kajj passing through the Kajj Umbra successfully.

JACK: Yeah, I was gonna say.

AUSTIN: Presumably, there was some degree of just, it's dark in there, but also, they just scattered, they just scattered into the crevices of Moonlock once the light hit them. And then Iota Pretense and Solemn Scale ordered—Solemn Scale is the other leader of the Qui Err Coalition—ordered the bodies of Curiosity, the drone bodies of Curiosity that were deep inside of the *Sky Reflected of Mirrors*, that fled in there and got lost, they were recovered and there're just endless amounts of these little drones and they just shot them at this Axiom forever until it died. Just hundreds of thousands of these little drones, just crashing into the sides of this thing as makeshift missiles, basically. And soon after, they actually managed to launch the *Sky Reflected in Mirrors*, and so now the capital of the Qui Err Coalition is this flagship that is in space and not down on the ground where all of the crevassed Iconoclasts are, so that's...good.

So that's one of the things that's being talked about, and in general, I think one of the things that I wanted to communicate—I'm not gonna make y'all roll for this, but, like, the Wak—sorry, not the Waking, well [laughs], there's Waking Cadent news that can come up also—but the Cadent-under-Mirage and Declan's Corrective have been slowly trying to build together a coalition of a lot of things, of more people. And so, I think maybe Kent at some point stands up to make an announcement, and, like, you know, stands up and takes a second and dings a glass, and is like:

AUSTIN (as Kent Brighton): I have an announcement to make to everyone. Last month—two announcements actually, one big one and one little one, you'll decide which is which. Thanks to the efforts of my good friends Gig Kephart, Even Gardener, Echo Reverie—all heroes, all comrades, siblings-in-arms with me and each other—we have officially come to a ceasefire with the Herringbone Flotilla, and more than that, through

our courageous actions across the battlefields of Brighton, they have agreed to cede control of the Rogue Wave to us in the Brighton Lineage. We have made amends and the incredible fleets that the Herringbone Flotilla brought to bear alongside us now fly alongside us. And alongside you because as part of this, and as part of ongoing conversations with Mr. Corrective and Ms. [haltingly] Cadent-Under-Mirage we have decided to make it official that we not only recognize Seneschal's Brace as a sovereign state unto itself, but plead—that's not the right word.

DRE (as Even): Pledge?

AUSTIN (as Kent): Pledge. Pledge, thank you Even, pledge our loyalty and cooperation in the establishment of a new order of some sort here. We too believe that this system should be unified, at least vaguely. The Rogue Wave is a pirate republic after all. We've all gone our own way, but we all know we share the same seas. Isn't that right?

AUSTIN: He's like looking for something here.

ALI (as Tender): Hear, hear!

AUSTIN (as Kent): Hear, hear!

AUSTIN: And claps. From him, he claps [laughs].

[Ali and Keith laugh]

DRE: Please clap.

AUSTIN: Please clap [laughs]. And so briefly, really quick, I've updated the faction sheet. There is now a third color on the faction sheet. And on top of the yellow and blue, which was once the Divine Free States and the New Earth Hegemony, there is now green for Seneschal's Brace, and that includes the Lineage Brighton, Seneschal's Brace, Quarantine Task Force—who are the people y'all flew to, Fourteen and Grand.

JACK: Oh yeah, those very tired people.

AUSTIN: Those very tired people, the only people who've been monitoring Volition in the last year.

KEITH: Jeez.

AUSTIN: The Herringbone Flotilla, the Reverie School, and there's also a bunch of groups that lean Seneschal's Brace. The Wound, Cascabel Arms, Errania Motor and Hull, Sui Juris, and the

Qui Err Coalition, and you might note [laughs], hey, all of those people are here tonight! Um, so—

JACK: Whoa, that is—that's the draft sheet for the new faction? For the new coalition?

AUSTIN: That would be it, if you can make those deals happen.

JACK: What are they called?

AUSTIN: What's that? What, the—

JACK: Do they have a name? Does this group, are we calling this group anything?

AUSTIN: I don't know. Right now, it's just S—Right now, Seneschal's Brace is trying to—they're the green faction, they're the Green Party.

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: They are not the Green Party. In fact, someone pointed out during Drawing Maps while I was building this, they were like, "Hey, you said when you first made this document on stream that you didn't want to use green because green meant good," and I was like, "Yeah, but I've already used yellow, blue, and red."

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: You'll also note something else, and I think Sho is the one who whispers this, maybe to you, Signet and Tender. And is like:

AUSTIN (as Sho): Have you—have you heard about—did you hear about the Waking Cadent?

ALI (as Tender): No.

AUSTIN (as Sho): Oh [sighs]. The Method—do you remember the Method of Apotheosis was working on Barricade?

ALI (as Tender): Yeah?

AUSTIN (as Sho): Turning it from an Axiom into a Divine?

JANINE (as Signet): Mm-hm?

AUSTIN (as Sho): Well, they finally succeeded. Unfortunately by the time they did, Lumen Lux, who was supposed to be Barricade's Excerpt, they rejoined Advent and in one of the battles at Brighton I guess, they were killed. Um, so, word is Barricade left and joined up with the Waking Cadent. Um, and Massalia, Massalia is their Excerpt, I don't know their name yet. And there's worse news, maybe? I—The Waking Cadent—Barricade—Polyphony went with Barricade. So the Waking Cadent has Polyphony too. And word is that Bounty is also joining them, and she is finally building her fleet to leave. And I don't know, maybe Polyphony will take some of the edge off, if we're lucky.

ALI (as Tender): Well, I'm sure Barricade will serve her needs well, and that's good for her [Austin laughs]. Thanks for letting us know.

AUSTIN (as Sho): ...Of course. How are you two doing?

ALI: [laughs] Look at Signet.

JANINE: Signet drinks.

[Austin laughs]

ALI: Opens mouth to talk and sighs.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

ALI (as Tender): You know, Sho, it's a party, so. It's a really good night, and I'm glad you're here.

AUSTIN (as Sho): I'm glad I'm here too. Let me know if you need anything.

ALI (as Tender): Yeah, same. Anytime.

AUSTIN (as Sho): Is everyone mad at Grand for a good reason?

KEITH: Oh boy!

[Dre and Austin laugh]

ALI (as Tender): Yes. Just assume yes.

AUSTIN (as Sho): Okay.

ALI (as Tender): Don't not talk to him, but, I mean—

JANINE (as Signet): No, don't talk to him.

KEITH (as Gig): Yeah, don't talk to him.

JANINE: *Do not* talk to him.

ALI (as Tender): Okay.

AUSTIN (as Sho): Okay, um. Okay.

AUSTIN: And I think she walks over maybe to talk to Fourteen or somebody else. And other conversations that want to happen before this all either turns really good or really bad.

ART: I mean, I have some housekeeping I'd like to do.

AUSTIN: Oh, I bet you do.

KEITH: I've also got talking.

DRE: Yeah, same.

ART: But like, I don't have talking because no one seems to want to talk to me.

DRE: I do.

[Ali chuckles]

ART: Oh okay. Well then we can do that.

AUSTIN: Okay, if it's gonna—If it's a thing that could potentially explode, we should do the dice roll first to color it.

ART: What if the dice roll doesn't go badly?

AUSTIN: Then we should color it that way. Then it shouldn't explode, right?

ART: I don't want things to explode.

KEITH: [skeptically] Hmm.

DRE: I don't think Even does either.

ART: I mean, it's not like we have control over this dice roll.

AUSTIN: Yeah, you actually have pretty good control over this dice roll for a couple of reasons. One, you don't have to do it. It's a move—"Home Cooking, your whole crew gains home cooking as a Vice. Right after a job, you may spend one credit and a downtime activity to cook for everyone, allowing the whole crew present to make a Vice roll. If anyone overindulges, a fight erupts and everyone gains one stress after the Vice roll. Requires a Galley module." Which means if you're low on stress, you don't have to do it. There's also the matter of—and I need to know what this looks like, Even—Even has an incredible move called Hedonist. "When you indulge your vice, you may adjust the dice outcome by plus or minus up to two." So plus or minus two. "An ally who joins you may do the same." Which means everybody can tinker with their roll.

KEITH: That's so cool.

AUSTIN: And I want to know why that is, Even, so maybe we should actually have this conversation. Like, what does this look like—

DRE: [exhales] God.

AUSTIN: —where Even, you are able to kind of—

DRE: That's a good question. Because, like, if it was anyone besides Even where he's at right now, I would say it's like—you've been to parties where there's a really good host that knows how to steer conversations or steer people towards the right people.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

DRE: To, like, not make conflict break out.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

DRE: And that's not where Even is, probably at any point in his life, but definitely not right now.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

DRE: Ahhh.

AUSTIN: Is it just about the ship and something you're doing with the ship?

DRE: Maybe.

AUSTIN: Something you're doing with your robot and Tannoy Kaji's robot? Are Herpderp and your robot, whose name I always forget the name of, like, serving drinks? Are—I think it has to be about you. It has to be a thing you do to get the benefit.

DRE: God, what if [sighs]—maybe it is like very subtle manipulation of anything that's plugged into the ship. So like, if somebody who's cooking something is in a conversation that's about to get weird [Austin laughs], Even sends a power surge to whatever conduit they were using, like “Oh God, I think my roast is burning!” or something. Or, like, turns the AC up really high, so people are like “Ugh, it got cold. Let's—I dunno, I'm gonna go get a drink.” Just, like, some really weird stuff.

AUSTIN: You're just puppet-mastering—

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: —all of the conversations in this entire—in all of the connected ships? Great.

DRE: Yeah. 'Cause I do think Even—Even's also at a place where he is very exhausted.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

DRE: By what happened last time. And so I think there is a part of him that wants to just like—is almost at the same level as Grand where it's like, “holidays are fucking stressful right now and I don't want to deal with this.”

AUSTIN: Right, right. Yeah. Home cooking though.

KEITH: Um, before—'cause it sounds like we're talking more about the roll.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: Before that, before the roll, I want to talk to my guest. I want to talk to Vanya.

AUSTIN: Okay.

KEITH: That's one of my—I don't know if anybody still has a thing, but.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Vanya is there. Vanya, you'll note, has a—is wearing the same style of knockoff Aria Joie wear [chuckles], except now on the back there is a dope—instead of just having the Sailors of the Ark SOA that she had before, now there is like a hand-drawn fan sketch of her, of some of the other members of the Ark, and of Yam and some of the other Torch units. It's just like a very bright, colorful—like, what if Steven Universe did the Sailors of the Ark? What if that team did it? It's very good.

KEITH: Sounds good.

AUSTIN: And it's available from their gift shop, if you visit.

KEITH (as Gig): Gift shop?!

AUSTIN (as Vanya): We have a gift shop now.

KEITH (as Gig): Well, I guess you had a gift shop already.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): We do.

KEITH (as Gig): But now you're using it as a gift shop—

AUSTIN (as Vanya): That's right.

KEITH (as Gig): —Instead of, like, as, I don't know, battery storage or whatever.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): It is where we stored our batteries, it's true.

KEITH (as Gig): Yeah.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): Yeah, it's going alright. How are you doing? I see you're still putting out shows.

KEITH (as Gig): Oh I am, and ev—it's complicated.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): Why—why is it complicated?

KEITH (as Gig): Umm, do you remember Grand?

AUSTIN (as Vanya): Nnn—yeah [Ali laughs]. He was, uh, he's the one—did he want to help us or did he not want to help us? It's been so long.

KEITH (as Gig): I believe that Grand was number two in wanting to help.

ALI (as Tender): No.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): He—

AUSTIN: [laughs] Tender, no.

KEITH (as Gig): No? Was Grand number three in wanting to help? Out of four?

ALI (as Tender): He was like four. It was me and Fourteen who really—

AUSTIN (as Vanya): Wanted to help.

ALI (as Tender): Yeah.

KEITH (as Gig): No, I thought it was me that wanted to help the most.

JACK (as Fourteen): I don't think that's—

AUSTIN (as Vanya): You all still sound like cops.

ALI (as Tender): I remember you being like, "I would—"

AUSTIN (as Vanya): You're all still just a bunch of cops.

[laughter from the table]

KEITH (as Gig): I remember now. It was me and then Grand and then Fourteen and then Tender, in order of wanting to help.

ALI (as Tender): I, I—

AUSTIN (as Vanya): That's—I'm sure that's not right.

JACK (as Fourteen): This is bullshit.

ALI (as Tender): I think that you said, "I'd rather not help than help," like five times.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): Four—You're Fourteen. You look like a big robot now. That's a good look.

JACK (as Fourteen): It—Thanks. It looked better. I mean, you should have seen it, it was pretty great.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): No, this is like—you have, like—

AUSTIN: And she does a hand motion. She does like her hands are out as like—just all the way, fingers up, thumbs to the side, and she opens them like a frame.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): Character.

JACK (as Fourteen): Yeah, I guess you could—

AUSTIN (as Vanya): It's character.

JACK (as Fourteen): Yeah, I guess you could say—yeah, but you know what people mean when they say character-building stuff, right?

AUSTIN (as Vanya): No, what do they mean?

JACK (as Fourteen): It's all a bunch of bullshit that's gonna get you hurt.

KEITH (as Gig): Well, character-building is different than character-being.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): I think that that's still character.

JACK (as Fourteen): Yeah, okay. I'll take it.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): Yeah.

JACK (as Fourteen): How're you doing? You've got a gift shop, I heard you got a gift shop.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): We've got a gift shop. Things have been going well. We—

KEITH (as Gig): Who's visiting? Is it going good? And also, who's visiting to buy in the gift shop?

AUSTIN (as Vanya): More people than I thought [laughs]. We opened up one part of the theme park as a theme park.

JACK (as Fourteen): Oh, damn.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): Which is bullshit, obviously, right? It's corny as shit but, like, people like it.

KEITH (as Gig): Oh, well, rides are fun.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): [disgruntled noise]

KEITH (as Gig): It's fun to go on rides.

JACK (as Fourteen): You have to go make money.

KEITH (as Gig): Yes, make money.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): The rides are fun. The rides are fun.

KEITH: Rides are fun.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): But it's mostly—

KEITH (as Gig): Which are the rides?

AUSTIN (as Vanya): Hmm?

KEITH (as Gig): Which rides?

AUSTIN (as Vanya): There is—well there's Speed Town. It's the one we opened up, and so it's just like a big Go-Kart town. It's like everything you do is in a Go-Kart or a hover Go-Kart, or an inverted Go-Kart.

KEITH (as Gig): In—

AUSTIN (as Vanya): And so you can do, like—we have a rollercoaster but that's just like a go—it's a Go-coaster.

KEITH (as Gig): Gollercoaster.

[Ali chuckles]

AUSTIN (as Vanya): Gollercoaster. That's—we should have called it a Gollercoaster. We called it the Go-Kaloaster and that's not it.

KEITH (as Gig): It's okay, I have a sign-repurposing tutorial.

[Ali chuckles in background]

AUSTIN (as Vanya): Do you?

KEITH (as Gig): Yeah, I do. I have two up, actually.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): Okay, send that to me, send that to me later.

KEITH (as Gig): Okay.

JACK (as Fourteen): Are you like—I was—What's your sort of—Are you good when people get hurt? 'Cause I know that some of you were like, "We're not gonna get hurt!"

AUSTIN (as Vanya): No, it fuckin' sucks when people get hurt, but we have supplies, you know?

JACK (as Fourteen): Okay. Yeah.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): And we have people—It's—

KEITH (as Gig): Yeah. Well, it fucking sucks when anybody gets hurt anywhere.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): Exactly. Thank you all so much, it—And thanks to Cascara and to the Cadent. I didn't think—I didn't think y'all would have our backs, I thought y'all were a bunch of cops, honestly.

JACK (as Fourteen): I mean, we're kind of, you know—

AUSTIN (as Vanya): Cops.

JACK (as Fourteen): I think you're partly right. You're partly right.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): Yeah, uh-huh.

KEITH (as Gig): I think that's we're—at this point, we're much more criminals than cops.

JACK (as Fourteen): Look, don't listen to him. He's a bad influence, his tutorials—they're, you know—

[Austin laughs]

KEITH (as Gig): They're top-class tutorials and the Ark exists because I'm so good, thanks.

JACK (as Fourteen): Have a good party.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): I'm gonna go thank Grand.

JACK (as Fourteen): Oh.

AUSTIN: And she moves over to go talk to Grand.

[Ali chuckles]

ART: I'm the least cop person here.

AUSTIN: Yeah, okay.

KEITH: That's true.

AUSTIN: Mm.

DRE: [negatively] Nm-mn.

AUSTIN: There's different types of cops. She's like:

AUSTIN (as Vanya): Hey, Grand Magnificent. I don't know what—I saw you over here. You also have robot body now, huh? That's cool. It's got like a whole you-but-not thing happening, I'm into it.

ART (as Grand): Thank you.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): I just want to say thanks. Things are going well. Uh, how are things with you?

ART (as Grand): Oh, bad.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): Besides the robot body. Oh. What's up?

ART (as Grand): Um, you know. I thought I was doing the right thing and my friends universally hate me now.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): I've been there.

ART (as Grand): But I mean, they kind of were never my friends, so, shrug.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): What's that mean?

[Keith laughs loudly]

AUSTIN (as Vanya): What do you mean, they were never your friends?

KEITH: Wait, hold on, I'm sorry. Did Grand say shrug because there's not a button on the controller for shrugging?

[Austin, Ali, and Dre laugh]

ART: Absolutely. I thought about saying “slash-shrug” but I thought it was too far.

[Ali, Austin, and Keith laugh]

JACK: It’s a fourteen-button controller, it’s tricky.

AUSTIN: [recovering from laughing] Oh, God.

ALI: [recovering] Oh.

KEITH: The crouch button doesn’t do the same thing.

AUSTIN: [laughing] No.

ART: There’s the option to use an Atari Jaguar controller, but, like, would you really?

AUSTIN: Yeah, it’s too many buttons, honestly, yeah

KEITH: There’s also the Steel Battalion controller.

AUSTIN: Yup.

KEITH: Also not a shrug button on that one.

AUSTIN: Let’s just go back to this really quick.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): What do you mean they’re not your friends?

ART (as Grand): I mean, I sort of went through a horrible trauma ‘bout like a year ago, and then I cut out all the people I knew, dropped all my hobbies, and no one reached out to talk to me until I was useful enough to do jobs for them.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): Yeah that’s like—that happens though. Everybody went through a weird trauma a year ago. All of our lives got completely weird, and sometimes you gotta be the one to reach out. You think that someone reached out to me and was like, “Hey, can you take over a cool amusement park on giant treads and create a colony of, you know, hurt youth?” No, I—

ART (as Grand): I had a new thing. And they—

AUSTIN (as Vanya): So why didn’t you stay with it?

ART (as Grand): Because they asked me to come back.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): Well then, you made that choice, right? Like, why not just go back to doing the thing you were doing before, then? If—I mean, that seems like a choice. We had—

ART (as Grand): That's what I'm trying to do now.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): Okay, so then you're back with your old clique. It sounds like you're doing good. It seems like you don't know what friends are.

[Keith, Jack, and Ali laugh]

AUSTIN (as Vanya): 'Cause like, friends aren't the people you work with. Like that—I work with a lot of people at the Ark but I'm not, like, tight with everybody. I care about everybody, I want to make sure that everyone has a good time and everyone is treated well, with respect. But there are people who I would trust with my life. There are people who would have my back no matter what. There are people who I would take a bullet for. There are people who I have taken a bullet for. And some of them are family—

ART (as Grand): I mean, Morning's Observation is the only person who's ever come close to taking a bullet for me.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): Yeah, but there people who I didn't take a bullet for and they're still friends with me! Because it just hasn't come up.

ART (as Grand): I feel like you're moving the goalposts in this conversation.

AUSTIN (as Vanya) The goal—you can have friends you didn't take a bullet for! There aren't even that many bullets left!

[Ali laughs]

ART (as Grand): I've got a lot of bullets.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): [sighs]

ART: Who's typing as the ship?

DRE: Me. Whoops.

[Ali, Keith, and Austin laugh]

AUSTIN: The ship says—the *World Without End* in chat says, “Um, I took a giant robot of your making in my face for you.” Thank you, the *World Without End*.

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: She says—

ART: Well, we haven’t even talked—I don’t feel like I haven’t talked to Even in—we just have never been in the same game.

DRE: It’s true.

AUSTIN: That is true.

ART: That’s a harder thing to explain to someone.

AUSTIN: Right.

ART: “Well, due to scheduling [Austin and Dre laugh], I haven’t gotten to hang out with the people I was actually close with.” If I’d had, like, two games with Echo and Even—

AUSTIN: Then maybe, yeah.

ART: —who did kind of care—

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: That might be different than spending all this time with Tender and Fourteen who don’t give a shit about anyone except Tender and Fourteen and Signet.

[Ali and others laugh]

AUSTIN: Damn!

ALI: Speaking of, I totally want to talk to Fourteen after this.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh, yeah.

JACK: We have some real bastards on this ship, haven’t we?

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): Listen, Grand. I get the feeling you are about to never talk to anybody here again. And—

ART (as Grand): Yeah. I sort of thought it wouldn't go that way, but it definitely is.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): Why did you think it wouldn't go that way?

ART (as Grand): I thought they might—I thought they might get it if I came. And I was wrong.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): Get what? What—catch me up, two sentences.

ART (as Grand): I took a morally questionable job because I thought it would help me quit this job, which is ruining my life. And it got really sticky and I saved Fourteen Fifteen by making what is, in retrospect, a really bad choice, but in the moment felt like the only choice I had. And I still want to quit, I still want to move on with my life, but I don't want to just leave, you know? I want to say goodbye.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): Do you—what y'all did for me and my people made it seem like you agreed as a group that there was a responsibility to do something. You don't feel that anymore?

ART (as Grand): No.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): But you expect them to still feel it?

ART (as Grand): I'm not telling anyone what they should or should not feel.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): Okay. But it sounds like—

ART (as Grand): I don't feel—

AUSTIN (as Vanya): —the things you did went directly against that feeling. Like, you took a morally questionable—you know, there's different types of morally questionable. Helping us was morally questionable.

KEITH (as Gig): Yeah, Grand, how bad was the thing you did?

ART (as Grand): Well, I mean, I delivered a package to a bad person.

KEITH (as Gig): [laughs] It's so bad he can't even say it!

ART (as Grand): That's it, I delivered a package to a bad person for money. And then when those same people were going to kill Fourteen Fifteen, I gave them something very valuable to not do it.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): It sounds like you're doing a lot of—and this is the last thing I'll say to you. It sounds like you're doing a lot of—there's a thing that happens sometimes. Some of the kids, the younger ones, they say, "You know, my uncle was mean, but he wasn't that bad." And then, what I do is I say, "Well, how was he mean? Did he call you names? Did he insult you? Did he hurt you? Did he make you sign up for a sport you didn't want to do?" Because there's a range of what mean means. And when you start saying, "Oh, I did—I delivered a package to some bad people," I feel like—again, we've been bad people. Did you deliver a package to me? Or did you deliver a package to, like, Volition? Because if you delivered a package to Volition, I think maybe they have a good point. You get what I'm saying, right? It isn't—we have to deal with specifics, at some point. Anyway, thank you. You did the right thing with us, and I know that was a hard choice, so.

ART (as Grand): I'm genuinely thrilled that it's working out for y'all.

AUSTIN: And she nods, and like stands up and says:

AUSTIN (as Vanya): Yam says "hi" to everybody, by the way. I'm gonna go play some pool, if anybody wants to lose money, you know where to find me.

[Ali and Jack chuckle]

KEITH (as Gig): I want to lose money!

AUSTIN (as Vanya): You know where to find me.

[Keith laughs]

AUSTIN: Uh, who comes—

KEITH (as Gig): That's my bedroom!

AUSTIN (as Vanya): Weird.

KEITH (as Gig): [laughing] Yeah, it's super weird!

AUSTIN (as Vanya): I walked past crew quarters, there were like twenty beds in there!

KEITH (as Gig): Yeah, I sleep under the pool table!

AUSTIN (as Vanya): Okay.

AUSTIN: Uh, conversations. Tender-Fourteen, it sounded like?

ALI: Um, yeah, I just wanted to put hand on Fourteen's arm as Vanya walks away.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

ALI: To, like, immediately distract them, and just be like:

ALI (as Tender): Hey, you know, you didn't get time to settle in before there was a party in our ship. Are you alright?

JACK (as Fourteen): Um, well I mean there's different sorts of alright. Like, we have to, you know, get the specifics, I guess [Ali chuckles]. It's good to see you. It's good to see all of our friends.

ALI (as Tender): Yeah.

JACK (as Fourteen): It's good to see most of our friends. I don't know what the fuck has happened to our ship. Why is—there's holes everywhere.

ALI (as Tender): I didn't get a full story, but I think things went bad. They were in a war, like a real one.

JACK (as Fourteen): Oh God, like, okay, right. Right, it's not a warship, is it?

ALI (as Tender): They were in a war.

[Austin chuckles]

JACK (as Fourteen): Okay, cool, cool. I guess I'm really—it was good to see Vanya, you know? That's what I want to be doing. I guess I don't think I should be here, is what I'm saying.

ALI (as Tender): [laughs nervously] Fourteen, I mean this is basically your ship. If you don't think you should be here then we should all probably leave, but—

JACK (as Fourteen): Right, I mean like in the—if he hadn't given them that package—that's the core right? That's the core. Either, you don't give them the package and leave, that's fine, that means that Kitcha Kanna doesn't get Independence.

ALI (as Tender): Fourteen, the decision that he made has nothing to do with you.

JACK (as Fourteen): It has everything to do with me! He was trying to—he was trying to save me!

ALI (as Tender): There are a lot of ways to save a person.

JACK (as Fourteen): That's what I'm saying! He could have—he could have killed them. He just stood there in the doorway and say, "Oh, maybe I'll give them the body of a Divine," which seems to be like a pattern for this guy!

[Ali, Keith, and Austin laugh]

ALI (as Tender): That's why I've never liked him.

AUSTIN: [shocked] Oh my God! Oh!

JACK (as Fourteen): I don't know, I just feel like we spend—I just feel like we spend so long talking about what to do. You and I, and Grand, and Gig, and we talk about what we want to do, and we think it over, you know, and sometimes we make good decisions and sometimes we make bad decisions. But if, in the moment, when he's standing in the doorway, and Kitcha Kanna is, like, you know, like talons and stuff...if in the moment what he decides to do is just, you know, what was all that talking for?

ART: That's a gross misrepresentation of the events that happened on that ship [Ali laughs]. That's not an in-character commentary but that is—

[Ali and Jack laugh]

KEITH: I—oh, that's not in character.

ART: No.

KEITH: It's hard to tell.

AUSTIN: Maybe it's like—maybe the phrasing there is more like, "Why did he take so long to decide?" 'Cause the talking was out-of-character us working through shit, which maybe in-character is represented by a long pause.

JACK: Oh no, but we didn't—we weren't—yeah, we weren't talking there, I'm talking about when we talked to the Ark kids, and what we talked about—

AUSTIN: Oh, oh, oh.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Gotcha, gotcha, gotcha.

JACK: Like, we have spent time as a group discussing stuff like this.

AUSTIN: Yes, yes, yes.

ALI (as Tender): [sighs] Fourteen, everyone's capable of making a mistake. And, I don't know, you've worked with me...[sighs]. Instinct is reliable, but that's all it is. And then you fix it the next day. I—

JACK (as Fourteen): Right, but there's like—oh no, sorry, go on.

ALI (as Tender): No, no, I—you're upset. And you should be upset, but. Do you want me to ask him to leave, or do you want to just—[sighs].

JACK (as Fourteen): I don't want this fucking party to be about him! He shows up in this fucking Cubist mech—

ALI (as Tender): You're making it about him.

JACK (as Fourteen): Yeah, because I'm pissed! I just, I don't know what—alright, sorry, we've been talking about me. I'm a robot now, that's pretty good. You're an, an Excerpt, right?

ALI (as Tender): [laughs] As a matter of speaking, yes.

JACK (as Fourteen): So, okay, here's the question. Is that good?

[Austin laughs]

ALI (as Tender): [laughs] Fourteen, it's funny that you're as mad at Grand as you are.

JACK (as Fourteen): Yeah?

ALI (as Tender): I think sometimes people make decisions. And I think I made a good decision here.

JACK (as Fourteen): Is there something you're not telling me?

AUSTIN (as Anticipation): You definitely made a good decision, Tenderness.

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: Remind you that you have the Obsessed status.

ALI: Uh-huh.

KEITH: What are you obsessed with?

DRE: Aw, twinsies.

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: Well—

ALI: So you know how like people can only use twenty percent of their brain?

[laughter from the table]

KEITH: I absolutely do know about that.

DRE: She took a fucking limitless pill, what?

KEITH: Yeah, Bradley Cooper over here trying to sell me something.

ALI: So like let's say, okay, beginning of the season Tender was at sixty percent, and then you've known her at eighty-five percent and then now she's back to like—she's like forty. There's just like a Divine in her brain trying to figure stuff out, and, you know, she's gonna drink some Gatorade [laughs].

KEITH: Is that what you're obsessed with?

AUSTIN: Well, we can talk a little bit about—[laughs] drink some Gatorade, yeah, get those electrolytes, you know?

ALI: [laughing] Yeah, just, you know?

AUSTIN: Maybe the Divine in your brain needs to figure out if the enslavement of Divines is truly an inevitability—

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Like Kamala Cadence eventually suggested. And/or that Kamala Cadence herself could have been the reason that maybe things have not gone as good as they have, you know?

ALI: You know. Um [laughs].

ALI (as Tender): Fourteen, there's probably a lot I should tell about the trip me and Signet took. But, um, I'm fine, and I'm glad I did what I did, and that's it.

AUSTIN: Do you know how sometimes, scientifically, you do a thing before you recognize you do it?

KEITH: Mm-hm.

AUSTIN: That your body does a thing in reaction before, for instance, your brain has recognized the images it's seeing, because brains are fast in certain ways and slow in other ways. All of those last words you said are—you hear Anticipation saying them but like a split second after, and so you don't know if Anticipation was like, "Say these words," or if you're just in sync, or if Anticipation is repeating them to you, who could say. But you're fine!

ALI: It's good we're getting along.

KEITH: Oh boy.

AUSTIN: Everything's good, uh-huh.

[Ali laughs]

KEITH: I mean, I guess it isn't.

ART: Who wouldn't want to keep hanging out here?

AUSTIN: I think at this point the fisherman comes over, and is like:

AUSTIN (as the Fisherman): [exhales] Took me a second to recognize you, Fourteen, but...you sure did a number to my ship.

JACK (as Fourteen): That wasn't—I'm not gonna pass the buck on this one, I gave it to these people.

[Keith laughs loudly]

AUSTIN (as the Fisherman): I appreciate it.

JACK (as Fourteen): I gave it to these people. I didn't know they were going to, um, Tender says they fought a war.

AUSTIN (as the Fisherman): Ah. Yeah, it wasn't built for that.

JACK (as Fourteen): No, it was not.

AUSTIN (as the Fisherman): It's a fishing, it's a fishing boat.

JACK (as Fourteen): Yeah. It nearly killed me.

AUSTIN (as the Fisherman): It did, it did. All boats have their graveyards. Um—

ALI (as Tender): What?

JACK (as Fourteen): I don't know—it's—he—

ALI (as Tender): Is that a thing about boats?

AUSTIN (as the Fisherman): Yeah, all boats have their graveyards.

JACK (as Fourteen): Have you two met? Tender Sky, this is the Fisherman.

ALI (as Tender): Hi.

AUSTIN: He reaches out and shakes your hand.

JACK (as Fourteen): This is Tender Sky, she's an Excerpt now.

AUSTIN (as the Fisherman): Yeah, I can sense that—I can see—I read about it.

KEITH: Wait, which one? Sorry, I'm not here.

AUSTIN: You're not here [Ali laughs]. You're playing pool against Vanya.

KEITH: And losing.

AUSTIN: Who's either hustling you, yeah, or is way worse at pool than she said, it's hard to say at this point.

ALI (as Tender): How do you know Open?

AUSTIN (as the Fisherman): Oh, we ran into some trouble and got ourselves out. You know, the whole Sui Juris thing seemed like a group of people trying to do the right thing and I've always been—besides being a fisherman, obviously—attracted to that sort of thing, so.

ALI (as Tender): Well, I'm glad you were there.

AUSTIN (as the Fisherman): Yeah. You both seem real stressed [laughs]. Or, stressed is the wrong word...preoccupied.

JACK (as Fourteen): Yeah, I think that's fair.

ALI (as Tender): Yeah. Holidays, you know?

AUSTIN (as the Fisherman): Holidays.

ALI (as Tender): Every year.

AUSTIN (as the Fisherman): [exhales] Yeah. Just—

AUSTIN: And he's, like, looking for the words for advice. He's looking to see, like, how do you—He looks at Fourteen and he says:

AUSTIN (as the Fisherman): You're still taking notes, right?

JACK (as Fourteen): Every day.

AUSTIN (as the Fisherman): Good.

AUSTIN: Then he turns to look at you, and he says:

AUSTIN (as the Fisherman): You're not the first Excerpt I met. Y'all do good work and I'm a faithful man, just like a lot of other folks. Anticipation was....gone for a while and now it's back. And I'm thankful for that. And also I know that bringing things back has a cost, and so I'll keep you in my prayers and I hope that cost isn't—I hope things go well for you.

ALI (as Tender): I appreciate that.

AUSTIN: Anticipation does not like this man.

[Ali and Keith laugh]

AUSTIN: At fucking all.

[Jack laughs]

ALI: Alright.

AUSTIN: And he just, like, shakes your hand and goes over to pour himself another cup of punch [laughs].

KEITH: Whose punch? My punch or Tender's punch?

AUSTIN: Oh, both. He mixes them.

ALI: Oh, we have a cocktail list, right?

AUSTIN: Oh, yeah.

ALI: Like, you were like, "I have all this juice," and I was like, "Hell yeah."

AUSTIN: Yeah, true. True, true, true. There is some sort of fancy cocktail.

[Ali laughs]

KEITH: Is it that they all come in—you can get it with regular liquor or you can get it with the jelly juice and you just call it "thick" or "unthick"?

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: Gross.

ALI: Well it's that but it's also—

AUSTIN: I don't wanna—Gross.

DRE: Agreed.

KEITH: [laughing] "Can I get a martini thick?"

AUSTIN: Gross.

[Keith laughs loudly]

ALI: I was just gonna say, you know when you go to a concert and, like, it's a normal bar but they have the three drinks that are named after songs?

AUSTIN: Mm-hm. Uh-huh.

DRE: Oh, yeah.

ALI: It's that but it's just three different jelly juice mixers for the occasion.

AUSTIN: Mm-hm. For the Feast of Patina.

ALI: Yup.

AUSTIN: It's—what are three types of patina? Leather patina, it's a leather martini. A—[laughs] brass martini and—

JANINE: These are all gonna be brown.

KEITH: Clay.

AUSTIN: A clay martini.

JANINE: They're all just brown drinks.

ALI: No, a brass martini would be—

JANINE: Dirty.

AUSTIN: Dirty.

ALI: No, like nice.

JANINE: Nmmm.

[Ali laughs]

AUSTIN: Alright. Signet?

KEITH: Honestly, I'm going with the martini thick. I like that one.

AUSTIN: Gross.

DRE: With 2 "c"s.

AUSTIN: Ughhh. Signet, how's your dinner going? Lots of drinking, it sounds like.

JANINE: Yeah. It's like a liquid dinner.

AUSTIN: [laughs] It's like that, huh?

JANINE: Well, you know. It's a special occasion.

AUSTIN: I think Blueberri is in work mode, in a way. So, we haven't gotten around to it because this season has been very weird in terms of pacing, but Blueberri is part of the First Exponent, which is your group of councilors and fixers and community leaders, right?

JANINE: Yeah. It's sort of—they're supposed to be like priests or religious figures but completely without the religious part.

AUSTIN: Right. Like a secular group. Which is—

JANINE: It is like a sort of ideal of what a priest's role in a community should be, minus the preachy part.

AUSTIN: Right, well—

KEITH: They're guidance counselors.

AUSTIN: Right, well that's the thing is like—there's a spectrum of what that means. 'Cause on one hand, that is guidance counselor; on the other hand, that's mafioso, right?

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Where it's like, "Yeah, I'll take care of that for you." Like, "Yeah, tell me the truth, you can tell *me* the truth," and then you're the person who's walking around with all of the knowledge in the world of what's really happening in a space. I think that Blueberri, they are like, they are very—catching you up with things that have been happening. I'm guessing—have they been on Thyrsus?

JANINE: Uh, I mean, you tell—I don't know.

AUSTIN: I mean, shared authorship on this character who is your contact, right?

JANINE: Yeah. Um, I suspect that would make the most sense.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: I didn't know if Blueberri had other allegiances that would put them somewhere in general.

AUSTIN: No, because—

JANINE: I think the point of this in general has been to approach people within their places where they operate.

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: Where they are members of the community, where they are already figures of some—where they have roots, as much as one can have roots in a situation.

AUSTIN: Yeah. So I think actually then—right. They wound up in the Loving Gaze, which is a group of spies, basically. And so, what is it like to be the priest to the spies? Right? I mean, obviously, a local community also, right? They live in one of the weird ice-pods of Thyrsus and, you know, serve that role there too, but are also like a surveillance analyst and a sort of political analyst, and are constantly working on models to talk about what the—you know, where the rivals of the Divine Free States are weak, and where they are strong, and who is paying off who, and in what ways are the NEH corrupt and trying to influence different, you know, blah blah blah. But they're not talking about that part of the work. They're talking more about the, like—I think that they say to you straight up, like:

AUSTIN (as Blueberri Jin): I'm getting worried because so many people are [sighs]. There's a breaking point. Half of the people in my group want to pack up and leave with the Waking Cadent, the other half are saying that they're not going to do that but that the Cadent-Under-Mirage should be—

AUSTIN: And they lean close to you so that the Cadent-Under-Mirage [laughs] doesn't hear them say it. They're like:

AUSTIN (as Blueberri): —should just be a figurehead. And that—[pauses]. I'm helping people as best I can to find their paths, I don't think I'm the person to decide for them. You told me that's not what this is. But I can tell everyone is so conflicted. And everyone, more than that—no one wants to make a decision. No one wants to be the person who decides things. And maybe that's okay. But it makes *me* be the person who decides things. I'm very tired, Signet.

JANINE (as Signet): What do you do for yourself, Blueberri?

AUSTIN (as Blueberri): Horses still, riding horses on the weekends.

JANINE (as Signet): How's that going?

AUSTIN (as Blueberri): They're great, um. They're good.

JANINE (as Signet): Do you have a favorite?

AUSTIN (as Blueberri): Salamander. Sal.

KEITH: Duck shows up.

AUSTIN: Oh fuck, Duck has not been in this show for way too long.

KEITH: Duck heard "horse" and just walked over.

AUSTIN: [laughs] Just walks into the fucking galley?

AUSTIN (as Blueberri): Oh...that's a...strange horse.

KEITH (as Duck): Horse?

[Dre and Austin laugh]

JANINE (as Signet): Yeah, we still don't really know the story with that thing.

[Keith laughs]

JANINE (as Signet): I never bothered to ask, it's really on me.

[Austin chuckles]

AUSTIN (as Blueberri): It's not doing anything for me Signet, it's not—how are you doing, how do you get by?

JANINE (as Signet): Uh, you know, I'm used to it.

AUSTIN: They put a hand on your arm.

AUSTIN (as Blueberri): I'm worried I'm going to get used to it too. I don't want to be a martyr, I don't want to be—I don't want to give up my life to help people if I'm not even really helping people, but I don't even know what a happy life looks like now.

JANINE (as Signet): Yeah, that's a good point. The thing that's important to hold to is—[pauses]

JANINE: [laughs] I think this is a canon pause.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

JANINE (as Signet): The thing that's important to hold onto is that you make a difference with the people you care about and maybe that's not gonna be world-changing. You probably can't change, you know—the nature of this in the format that it is now is there aren't x number of us for y number of others. It's always going to be small measures that maybe you can never even properly follow up on. Maybe you never get to know. But what's the alternative? Does the alternative make you happier?

AUSTIN (as Blueberri): Maybe? When I was in Contrition's Figure, things were not good for a lot of it. But things were stable and I knew that I was working on myself and I knew that the world outside was going to be there when I came back. And now, I'm working on others and I take pride in that, I'm helping people, but I don't know that any of it will matter. Schism showed up and took the lives of so many people. Volition could do something worse tomorrow. The NEH and the DFS and the Waking Cadent and Seneschal's Brace and the Rapid Evening...[sighs]. If I help someone make up with their partner, or I convince someone not to beat themselves up because they messed up a project at work, or—I'm not saying it's meaningless but I—there's a hole in my heart. There's a feeling that I'm mending a bridge but that the ocean is gonna be taller than its highest post in just a week anyway, and I should be building a boat instead.

JANINE (as Signet): How many people can cross that bridge in a week? None of things you do go away.

AUSTIN (as Blueberri): But the other side of the bridge might be—the other side of the bridge is also gonna flood! This whole place is a powder keg.

JANINE (as Signet): And that doesn't change if people have nowhere to go.

AUSTIN (as Blueberri): But where are they going? I'm not building them a home, I'm—[sighs]. It feels like I'm not treating anything but symptoms. And there's value, I'm not saying there isn't. I just wish I was doing more.

JANINE (as Signet): If I knew what more there was to do, I would have trained you in that.

AUSTIN (as Blueberri): I'm not blaming you.

JANINE (as Signet): I know.

AUSTIN (as Blueberri): Thank you so much.

AUSTIN: Um, gotta look at my sheet of who else is here, I guess someone will probably interfere, unless another player wants to come say “hi”. I don’t think anybody else here met—Tender may have briefly met Blueberri, Tender and Fourteen, maybe, but—

JANINE: I think Tender because—

AUSTIN: Yes.

ALI: Yeah.

JANINE: There was that whole sequence with the running and the stuff.

AUSTIN: With the running and the cars and the—

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Right, yeah.

JANINE: Like passing acquaintance.

AUSTIN: Yeah. I think Korrin is actually who comes over and who, like, breaks the conversation and turns it into something else, of like—I think Korrin is just immediately like, “Hey, fuck Volition, I thought we dealt with that last year.” And is just immediately trying to refocus that conversation in a different place. Anything else here or should we move on, Signet?

JANINE: I don’t think so. I mean, I think Signet’s primary interest is—like, right now, she just wants to hear people talk.

AUSTIN: Yeah, fair.

JANINE: I think she wants to listen and not be listened to, in general.

AUSTIN: Mm-hm. Okay, cool.

JANINE: So she’s pretty happy to let Korrin just go for it.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Um, Echo?

SYLVIA: Yes, hello.

AUSTIN: Iota Pretense finds the space to come over to you. She is in her full regalia, she is in her full, dope—I've described her outfit before—I've described her in general before as looking a lot like a Qui Err equivalent of Commander...I think her name is Varal? From Valkyria Chronicles.

SYLVIA: Varrot?

AUSTIN: Varrot, yes. I'm gonna link because her outfit's dope. Listen, Valkyria Chronicles is a touchstone. Wait, is it Varrot? How do you spell it?

SYLVIA: V-A-R-R-O-T.

AUSTIN: Two "r"s.

SYLVIA: It's like "carrot" with a "v".

AUSTIN: It's like "carrot," varrot [laughs].

SYLVIA: It's as if you messed up typing "carrot".

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

SYLVIA: Like it's a typo.

ART: Wow, those keys are right next to each other.

SYLVIA: Exactly! That's what I'm saying.

AUSTIN: You think that's what happened with this character.

SYLVIA: I hope so.

AUSTIN: There we go. Just like a cool mini-cape and, like, a bunch of folds, and buttons, and a weird armor side-thing, and a cool hat and glasses. In retrospect, she kind of looks—she probably looks like what Fourteen looked like as the Body Politic, except that unlike the Body Politic, Iota Pretense has a crown of spurs, of bone, of like—Instead of just having the horns, they are actually completely into spur mode, or into crown—they're like a crown around her head and her hair goes through it, it's great. Anyway, I think she spots you from across the way, Echo. And the last time you saw her was when she stole your ship.

SYLVIA: Yep.

AUSTIN: And she comes over and sits down and says:

AUSTIN (as Iota Pretense): Echo Reverie. Still trying to be a good person?

DRE: Jesus.

SYLVIA (as Echo): You know, you have a real talent for finding the worst things to say to me. First time, it was, "Oh, I'm gonna need to take your ship away"; this time—

AUSTIN (as Iota): It's been working great, by the way.

SYLVIA (as Echo): I figured. I took good care of it.

AUSTIN (as Iota): You did. Better care than this. Why are there so many holes in this ship?

[Keith laughs]

SYLVIA (as Echo): Uhh, so we kind of got in a giant space-fight.

AUSTIN (as Iota): Mm-hm.

SYLVIA (as Echo): A lot of people got shot in my b—in the room where I sleep.

AUSTIN (as Iota): You shot people? In your bedroom?

SYLVIA (as Echo): No, I didn't.

AUSTIN (as Iota): Who shot—

KEITH (as Gig): That was Even.

AUSTIN (as Iota): That's the...hair-tendrils?

KEITH (as Gig): Yeah.

SYLVIA (as Echo): Yeah. The pilot.

AUSTIN (as Iota): Okay. Why did Even shoot people in your bedroom?

SYLVIA (as Echo): Oh, he has a special gun that lets him—you know how guns used to work, right? It works like that.

AUSTIN (as Iota): Like a Cascabel situation?

SYLVIA (as Echo): Yeah.

AUSTIN (as Iota): Yeah, Cascabel's given us some stuff too.

SYLVIA (as Echo): Yeah, that was—

AUSTIN (as Iota): What?

SYLVIA (as Echo): "Unsettling" might be the word for it, I think is how I best described that experience. But you know, it's fine, we're all alive for now, right?

AUSTIN (as Iota): You are less confident. What happened?

SYLVIA (as Echo): Oh, where to begin? My brother is a pretty major part, it seems, in Advent's military forces.

AUSTIN (as Iota): Okay, but you're not your brother. Why are you less confident than you were?

SYLVIA (as Echo): Well, so here's the thing. When you have to fight your family, things get really weird, [voice rising] and you kind of have to reevaluate if you're okay with killing people, and I guess I figured out maybe I'm not.

AUSTIN (as Iota): Echo? Echo?

SYLVIA (as Echo): What?

AUSTIN (as Iota): Do I need to remind you that I devoted my life to fighting in a genocidal civil war against my people because Independence drove us to fight each other to the last of our species?

SYLVIA (as Echo): Why is everything a competition at the holidays?

[Ali laughs, Keith laughs loudly]

AUSTIN: She grins.

SYLVIA (as Echo): I know.

AUSTIN (as Iota): Why do you think the name of the ship is the Holiday Gambit? You always keep something in your back pocket.

SYLVIA (as Echo): You know, I hate to admit it, but I think I kind of missed having talks like this.

AUSTIN (as Iota): [laughs]

SYLVIA (as Echo): I mean, we've had one before—

AUSTIN (as Iota): We had one talk.

SYLVIA (as Echo): —but, believe me, it's been a lot more fun than the past three months have been.

AUSTIN (as Iota): Echo. There are fights worth having, you know. I wasn't going to talk Independence down from Quire. And if we didn't fight that beast, think about what the world would have become.

SYLVIA (as Echo): I understand. I have had to—I've had to hurt people to protect—I had to do that. I've killed people because I knew I had to, because that was a fight I needed to have. I did it to protect *him*—

SYLVIA: And vague gesture over to Grand's robot body.

[Austin laughs]

SYLVIA (as Echo): And after the shock cleared, I felt okay, because I saved my friend, right? And ever since then, I've—every time I've had to pick up my sword or put on my Angler or anything, I just haven't felt like I'm doing the right thing again. It just feels like I'm—I haven't found why I'm here, you know? I got taught how to fight so I started fighting, and I'm good at it, sure, but it's just kind of a thing where people pluck you out of the fucking hole they find you in, and point you in a direction and tell you where to go and it gets really fucking tiring when you just can't stop going in whatever fucking direction you're pointed in. So I guess maybe that's why I've lost a bit more confidence, 'cause I don't know what direction I'm going in anymore.

AUSTIN (as Iota): Let me ask you something. Be honest.

SYLVIA (as Echo): Yeah?

AUSTIN (as Iota): Do you want to be plucked and directed and guided, by someone who could convince you of the use? Or do you just want to wander for a while? Because I know that I could make the case. I've been talking with your Cadent and I bet she could. I bet she could come right here right now, and give you a moving speech about the value

of togetherness or whatever bullshit she spews. And I know that I could make a material case for why my people would be better off if they had someone like you by their side. Would that ease things for you, or do you just want to be back in the fucking woods? 'Cause that's okay.

SYLVIA (as Echo): Remember when we met, what I was doing? I was on a little outpost and it wasn't really much but I knew what I was doing. I was helping people out.

AUSTIN (as Iota): Yeah.

SYLVIA (as Echo): I decided to do that, I went there. And that was nice for a while but I guess I am not, ironically, as independent as I thought, because the second I get someone saying, "Hey, we need you," I jump up and I have to run, and I'm tired of that.

AUSTIN (as Iota): I read your files, you're a runner. You've always been a runner.

SYLVIA (as Echo): Yeah. I guess I just wanna pick where the destination is, you know?

AUSTIN (as Iota): Then pick it. Where's the destination? I have maps.

AUSTIN: And she pulls out a crystal and puts it on the ground and then, like, snaps her fingers, and it projects a map of the sector.

AUSTIN (as Iota): Where are you going? What're you doing?

SYLVIA (as Echo): If I knew, if I knew the answer to that question, I wouldn't be having such a miserable time.

AUSTIN (as Iota): Take some time. Take the crystal, find a place. It's cool, you can, like, zoom—

AUSTIN: She reaches out and does a pinch to zoom, and the 3D holo, it zooms in a lot.

SYLVIA (as Echo): Oh! Neat, that's really intuitive. How do you—oh, like this? Nice, thank you!

AUSTIN (as Iota): Yeah, just do that. You figure out where you want to go, you let me know, I'll send you some supplies. A tent or whatever you need.

SYLVIA (as Echo): [laughs] You know, weirdly enough, never been much for camping. Never really been a fan. Everybody kind of just assumes since we went down on that planet and then 'cause I went into the Wound and all that stuff: really big fan. No.

AUSTIN (as Iota): You've done a lot of camping things, why—

SYLVIA (as Echo): It's—it's fine.

AUSTIN (as Iota): The snake says hi, by the way.

SYLVIA (as Echo): Oh, good! Are they good?

[Keith laughs]

AUSTIN (as Iota): They're great. They're good. They love the ship, so.

SYLVIA (as Echo): I love that little fellow.

AUSTIN (as Iota): Yeah.

SYLVIA (as Echo): Anyway—

KEITH: [distantly] Oh, the snake! I remember the snake!

ALI: Aw.

AUSTIN: I think she puts a hand on your shoulder and pats you on the side of the shoulder, actually gives you a little punch on the side of the shoulder, and stands up and is like:

AUSTIN (as Iota): The thing you have to fight for is the thing that you know that if you don't fight for, you won't sleep at night. That's it. And if you're done caring about other people, if you're done sticking your neck out for people who can't promise you anything, if you feel like you're wasting your time, take a break. And don't, whatever you do, give your strength to a cause you don't believe in. They'll use you. They'll chew you up. Looks like they already did.

SYLVIA (as Echo): Thank you. And take care of yourself, okay?

SYLVIA: I feel like I'm saying that to everyone I meet—

AUSTIN: Yeah.

SYLVIA: Because, you know, but still, I mean it.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Alright, we have had an Echo conversation, a Signet conversation, a Fourteen conversation, a Tender conversation, a Grand—Even, is it just you?

DRE: I guess so.

AUSTIN: Gig and Vanya talked.

KEITH: I have Gig and Vanya. The only person I want to talk to is Kent, but he—I can do that after the roll.

AUSTIN: Yeah, Kent's—your Kent relationship is probably not up to stakes with that roll.

ALI: [laughs] I briefly want to talk to Grand.

AUSTIN: Sure.

ALI: It'll be very brief. It can happen after.

AUSTIN: Please. Okay.

JACK: I would like to talk to Sho, but I can do that after the roll, especially to sort of see how that would go after that conversation.

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Alright, who wants to make this dinner roll then?

DRE: I'll roll

AUSTIN: Someone has to spend an action—someone has to spend a downtime action and someone has to spend a credit.

KEITH: Um—

AUSTIN: I believe that's how that works, let me see. Yep. One cred.

KEITH: Does the—do our stats have any effect on the roll here?

AUSTIN: Nah, it's—

KEITH: No? It's just a roll?

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Sorry. My bad. Someone has to spend the activity and then someone has to spend the credit, and then everyone is making an indulgence roll.

KEITH: Or everyone that wants to?

ALI: Every—yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: Yeah.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: But the thing is, I think there's still a fight no matter what. A fight erupts no matter what, so—

KEITH: Oh, wait, but I thought that—

ALI: Does it?

DRE: If somebody overindulges.

AUSTIN: If someone overindulges, yeah, yeah, yeah.

KEITH: Right.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: And overindulging means taking more stress than you have.

DRE: Yep.

KEITH: Right.

DRE: You can reduce stress by two with my—

KEITH: Which means that if you have no stress or low stress and you choose not to, that's—

AUSTIN: That is probably the right call, if you have no stress.

KEITH: Right.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: But because of Even's thing, as long as you have—

KEITH: Unless you want to force a fight.

AUSTIN: Right, unless you want to force a fight. But if you have at least four stress, you will not overindulge.

KEITH: Okay.

JANINE: Guess who has three?

AUSTIN: Yeah, Signet's the only one here who could overindulge.

DRE: Oh.

JANINE: I considered sitting out but decided not to.

AUSTIN: Okay.

KEITH: Okay!

AUSTIN: Tender, what were you saying?

ALI: Can I do the roll for the thing?

AUSTIN: There's no—the roll was actually just an individual—everybody has to individually roll for their overindulgence, or for their indulgence.

ALI: Okay.

KEITH: Is it a stat or is it a category?

AUSTIN: There's a button that says "Indulge".

KEITH: Oh, "Indulge Vice", yeah, there it is.

AUSTIN: Yeah, indulge vice.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: The way indulgence works is that it is a—I think it uses your lowest stat, your lowest attribute score. But if you just hit that button it should work. And remember that you can add or subtract up to two from your roll.

ALI: But we can also—

ART: Up to two or exactly two?

AUSTIN: You know, the writing on this move is not exactly clear.

DRE: Yeah.

KEITH: Is there an updated language in a newer version?

AUSTIN: No, I'm looking at the newest version now, it's—

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: "You may adjust the dice outcome by plus slash minus two."

ART: That sounds like it's exactly two.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

DRE: Yeah.

KEITH: So it's either give two or get two?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: Lose two or get two.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

DRE: Or don't.

AUSTIN: Or don't. Or don't.

ALI: Oh, we're not doing this right now?

AUSTIN: We are doing this right now.

ALI: Oh.

KEITH: Alright, I'm gonna submit.

AUSTIN: Alright, so you indulge and you clear stress equal to the highest die result. So you'll clear four. Or six.

KEITH: I want to do six, yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay. Even, you do four—sorry, let me go through these slowly. Gig, you do four? Or did you do six?

KEITH: Six.

AUSTIN: Okay, six. Even, you rolled a six. Do you do six—do you do four, six, or eight?

DRE: I do eight, that clears me.

AUSTIN: Nice [Dre makes relieved sound]. Syliva, do you do one, or do you do three?

SYLVIA: I'll go with three.

ALI: Aw.

AUSTIN: Okay. Grand, do you do six—do you do four, six, or eight? Lot of fucking sixes on these rolls, huh?

KEITH: Yeah, right.

ART: Wait, so if I do six, I trigger the overindulge?

AUSTIN: You don't need to. You could, you could choose that.

JANINE: You don't need to [laughs].

AUSTIN: That's a choice you would be making.

ART: So I have to take the minus, I can't get the f—Okay.

AUSTIN: Yeah, you cannot. Right.

ART: I'll take—yeah, okay.

AUSTIN: You have to take the minus two, which brings you down to one stress. Signet, you rolled a two and a five, so it's five plus or minus two. So you literally rolled—

JANINE: The plus or minus doesn't really—I mean, I could take the minus but I'm not going to.

AUSTIN: Wait, I thought you were at—oh, you were at five. You were at five, right?

JANINE: I was at three stress.

AUSTIN: Okay, so you're not going to take the minus two?

JANINE: No.

ART: You have exactly three, you want a fight?

AUSTIN: So you're going to overindulge, you want a fight?

JANINE: Yes.

AUSTIN: Cold Signet, motherfucker.

JANINE: Signet has been drinking this whole time, of course [laughs]

[Art, Dre, Austin, and Jack laugh]

AUSTIN: Oh my—so what do you—

JANINE: What do you think I was setting up?

AUSTIN: Oh nooooo, what does Signet do?

JANINE: I think—Have we done all the rolls? I want to know how this—

AUSTIN: We've done all the roll—it seems like—

JACK: I haven't rolled.

AUSTIN: Fourteen, go ahead and roll.

DRE: Oh boy.

ALI: Didn't Even need a conversation first?

DRE: I wanted to talk to Grand.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I think that was going to be part of—I thought that would be part of this, and then Signet—

JANINE: Is it an across-the-table conversation?

AUSTIN: We'll see! Signet—

JACK: So I add three?

AUSTIN: You can add two.

JACK: Two, okay.

AUSTIN: So you get four, you clear four. So, um—so, we'll get there. But, you know what, everyone, add one stress right away, because one of you overindulged.

ALI: Okay.

KEITH: Alright.

SYLVIA: I'm back up to the low number of seven.

[Ali and Janine laugh]

AUSTIN: Oh my God. Buddy. Um, let's have an Even and Grand conversation. Who kicks it off.

DRE: I mean, I think Even goes over and sits next to Grand.

ART: But doesn't start talking. Oh, were you—did I cut you off?

DRE: I think he's trying to figure out what to say and it's very obvious he doesn't know how to open this.

DRE (as Even): So, I heard some stuff happened?

ART (as Grand): Yeah, we had a bad time.

DRE (as Even): Yeah, I can—yeah.

DRE: And I think Even gestures at the holes in the wall.

[Austin chuckles]

ART (as Grand): Yeah, it's been rough, hasn't it? It was supposed to be an easy job, it didn't turn out to be an easy job.

DRE (as Even): So—Okay, so, what's your long game here?

ART (as Grand): I'm out, I want to be out.

DRE (as Even): I mean, sure, but what comes before getting out?

ART (as Grand): I don't understand. I'm out now [Austin laughs]. This is goodbye. I came out of nostalgia, I wanted to see everyone one last time. I can't do this, this isn't for me. I'm not a—I'm not whatever this is. I'm not one of those.

DRE (as Even): So, there's not like a—

ART (as Grand): I care about the team, but I don't want to be on it anymore.

DRE (as Even): Grand, you already—you pulled the trigger last time, man, and now there's just gonna be more of them out here.

ART (as Grand): Yeah, uh-huh. But, I mean, we really handily defeated it last time, I don't think it's really that bad.

DRE (as Even): No, I got pretty fucked up last time.

ART (as Grand): But we shot it like twice and it died! It's I think the only thing I've successfully hit with my fancy gun.

DRE (as Even): I don't think Advent's just gonna redo the same thing, man, that's—

ART (as Grand): I don't think they're that smart. I think you guys got it.

DRE (as Even): Oh Christ.

AUSTIN: Cut to Grand on the fucking Advent Catapult, as one of the only factions that can move stuff in or out of this whole star system, and there's just probably thirty screens showing the various destinations, beautiful, you know, expensive destinations from Advent that shows their huge amount of wealth and power.

ART: That's not smart!

AUSTIN: No, but it's powerful.

DRE (as Even): Grand, all these holes got in this ship because—partially because I blew up a very big Advent ship.

ART (as Grand): I don't think they're a match for you.

DRE (as Even): That's kind of you, but what I'm saying is if you're on one of those ships, I'm not gonna not do what I have to.

ART (as Grand): I don't really envision staying long.

DRE (as Even): Alright, but tell me you put a failsafe in there or something. Like—

ART (as Grand): I mean, the failsafe is it didn't work the first time! The failsafe is that Independence is one of—is a failed design. I gave them what I had with me: a sentimental but flawed design. I didn't think—I mean—

AUSTIN: [laughs] Yeah, you didn't.

ART (as Grand): All I was thinking about was saving Fourteen, and that was all I had to trade. I'm sorry.

DRE (as Even): No, it's—Listen. If you asked me to make that choice, I cannot say that I—I don't know, man.

AUSTIN: Flashback to Even making that choice—

DRE: Yep.

AUSTIN: And gunning three people down instead.

[Dre laughs]

DRE: Hey, I told them to leave first.

ART: But Even's a soldier.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

DRE (as Even): I'm sorry.

ART (as Grand): You don't owe me anything.

AUSTIN: Was that it?

DRE: I think so.

AUSTIN: So you all get up and go your various ways?

JANINE: Uhhh—

AUSTIN: Uh-huh?

[Ali laughs]

JANINE: Does that happen?

AUSTIN: I dunno, I'm asking the table.

JANINE: Uh—

KEITH: Is that enough of a fight? Does that count as a fight?

JANINE: [laughs] That's not a—

AUSTIN: Signet has to start the fight.

KEITH: Okay.

JANINE: I'm the one that overindulged.

AUSTIN: Yes. So I need to know what that looks like.

ART: I didn't consider that a fight?

AUSTIN: Is that frame enough for you? 'Cause I can come up with other frames for Signet to—What does—how does Signet want to start a fight? What's she want to fight about.

JANINE: I know what she wants to fight about. I think that, like, framing for this is she got to the table a bit too late and there weren't a lot of seats to choose from.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

JANINE: And a lot of those open seats were probably near Grand-bot.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Uh-huh.

JANINE: So I don't think she's right there, but I think she's closer than she'd maybe like.

AUSTIN: Yeah..

JANINE: So I think that conversation is spent quietly stewing.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

JANINE: And sipping.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

JANINE: And I think sort of when that natural lull comes I think she turns to Even and says something like:

JANINE (as Signet): I don't think it's that hard to understand. Grand wanted to be a hero and he couldn't be a hero through any ways that we might find palatable so he chose to forge a path outside of that. And now he gets to live like a hero, and I'm sure he's very happy with it.

AUSTIN: [awed] Yo.

ART: And we have to have a fight about this?

JANINE: I can keep going.

AUSTIN: I mean, y'all two don't need to but, you know, there has to be a fight here. I can see many ways this could develop via—there's a long guest list of people who could turn this into a fight. Do you have a response? 'Cause I have a response from somebody else.

ART: Oh, you can go, yeah. I—yeah.

AUSTIN: Open Metal says:

AUSTIN (as Open Metal): Wait a second, your Highness. Didn't you create the Advent Group yourself? We wouldn't be in any of this mess without your dealmaking.

JANINE (as Signet): And I've stuck around to deal with the aftermath. I didn't run away.

AUSTIN (as Open): Yeah, you've dealt with the aftermath. [scoffs] There are people in this room who just spent a month fighting Advent while you were digging through the sand.

KEITH (as Gig): [cheerfully] They almost killed me!

AUSTIN (as Open): They almost killed him.

KEITH (as Gig): They almost killed me. But that's fine.

AUSTIN (as Open): You're not out here waging a war. [scoffs] I've killed a lot of Advent, so have lots of people in this room. You don't get to pretend to be a hero any more than Grand is because you stayed in this ship a bunch and you helped some kids. Like that's great, awesome, but you made a mess and then you stepped away from it.

ART (as Grand): And I never said I wanted to be a hero! I was an artist and then a mapmaker!

AUSTIN (as Open): Shut up.

AUSTIN: —says Open Metal.

[Ali laughs]

KEITH (as Gig): And I don't want to defend Grand, but Grand also helped some kids.

JANINE (as Signet): I suppose the thing that really bothers me is I don't understand how Grand has the right to feel anything but indifference. I don't understand—In all the time I've known him, I don't understand what he believes in. I don't understand if he cares or when he has ever cared. All I see is a little boy scooping up marbles.

AUSTIN: Well, he still has those. They're still in the room.

ART (as Grand): I mean, it's that weird you're even saying that at all. I don't think that we've literally ever had a conversation before now. You don't understand what I'm about? You don't care about me. You didn't care about me, you care about your shit. And that's fine. Go on caring about your shit. I have stuff to do now.

JANINE (as Signet): What stuff?

ALI (as Tender): Okay, but this is our party, what are you talking about?

ART (as Grand): I lived here. Until last week. I had—this is where I wanted to spend my holidays. I wanted to see you all again.

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): And then you were going to leave.

AUSTIN: —says Morning's Observation.

ART (as Grand): Yeah!

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): You were going to see us all, and then you were going to leave, like that's a thing people do.

ART (as Grand): That's a thing people do all the time! You never known anyone who moved away before?

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): People move but they don't, like—like, you're moving like I moved from Earth to here. Like, there was an agreement which was, I'm not going to see those people again. Forever. There's not gonna be letters, because that's not how time works, [voice rising] because space is big and time is long!

ART (as Grand): Why did you yell that part?

[Ali laughs]

KEITH (as Gig): Plus the Advent part of it.

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): Plus the Advent part of it!

KEITH (as Gig): Yeah! Yeah, yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): I wasn't like, "Oh, you know what, Jerry, I love your breakfast sandwiches so much, but I'm gonna go join some fucking fascists, actually." Are you fucking kidding me?

ART (as Grand): I just delivered a fucking package!

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): Fuck you! You didn't deliver a package, you delivered a bomb that almost killed three people in this room!

ART (as Grand): I don't know the bomb was in that package.

ALI (as Tender): It's—what? It's like a—it's a weapon of war, right?

ART (as Grand): What is?

KEITH (as Gig): A war that while you were gone, I was getting shot in, by the way.

ART (as Grand): I mean, I don't think you should be in the war either! Let's all stop being soldiers.

ALI (as Tender): [laughs] Okay, Grand.

JACK: Fourteen stands up at the other side of the table.

JACK (as Fourteen): When do you get to choose when to stop being soldiers?

SYLVIA (as Echo): Yeah, if that was a choice we had, I would have loved to make it ages ago.

JACK (as Fourteen): We're the Notion!

ART (as Grand): You can stop being a soldier right now!

KEITH (as Gig): Yeah, just join Advent!

JANINE (as Signet): Just join Advent and go to all your family dinners, that you apparently care a great about—

AUSTIN (as Gray Gloaming): Hey, hey—[sighs]

JANINE (as Signet): —in a suit of armor—

KEITH (as Gig): Yeah!

JANINE (as Signet): —that you're not even in!

AUSTIN: Gray—

KEITH (as Gig): No, but it's okay. At Advent, people show more interest in Grand as a person.

AUSTIN (as Gray): Hey, listen.

AUSTIN: Gray Gloaming is like—who is in one of her robot bodies—who has a little wheel on the bottom, she rolls around like a Jetsons robot, is like—

AUSTIN (as Gray): Hey, let's not throw people under the bus for stopping being soldiers. Demani and I stopped being soldiers also, because it was shitty.

KEITH (as Gig): Did you stop being soldier by delivering a bomb to Advent?

AUSTIN (as Gray): ...No.

ART (as Grand): I didn't know it was a bomb!

JANINE (as Signet): It wasn't a fucking cake!

JACK (as Fourteen): Alright, okay—

DRE (as Even): Wait, you built it!

ALI (as Tender): Didn't you design it?

AUSTIN: No, no, no. There's two bombs—

ART (as Grand): No.

JACK (as Fourteen): It's a—

AUSTIN: Waltz Tango Cache is like—

AUSTIN (as Waltz): There—okay, I have to explain now [Ali laughs]. From my understanding, there were two bombs. One is like a figurative bomb. The other one is like a limited self—it was one of those Roombas what a person comes out of, but there was also a bomb inside.

AUSTIN: And I think the Cadent is like—or I think Declan's—no, Declan's Corrective knew this, right? I think Iota Pretense is like:

AUSTIN (as Iota Pretense): *You* delivered the bomb that almost killed me?! Are you fucking kidding me?

ART (as Grand): I didn't know it was a bomb!

KEITH (as Gig): Hold on—

JACK (as Fourteen): Alright—

KEITH (as Gig): I think we need to—what—who know—

AUSTIN (as Iota): Why am I working with any of you people!

KEITH (as Gig): Who knows what the worst thing that Grand Mag did that he knew that he was doing at the time? [Ali laughs] 'Cause I think we really need to pin that down. 'Cause delivering a package to the bird leader of Advent—

AUSTIN: The Cadent stand up, the Cadent says—

AUSTIN (as the Cadent): Listen. I think we can all find common ground here. Everyone was trying to do the right thing, they just made serious mistakes.

JACK (as Fourteen): No, no, no. This isn't how it works. I'm s—Sorry, I didn't mean to speak out of hand. No, fuck this.

AUSTIN (as the Cadent): Excuse?
[Jack and Janine laugh]

JACK (as Fourteen): No, sit down.

KEITH (as Gig): Yeah, fuck you! Wait, hold on.

ALI (as Tender): Hey!

JACK (as Fourteen): Gig.

KEITH (as Gig): Sorry, I got caught up, I got caught up.

ALI (as Tender): Don't talk to her like that!

AUSTIN: I think Sho—not Sho, 'cause Sho doesn't give a fuck either. Sho is like:

AUSTIN (as Sho): Yeah, sit down!

[Austin laughs, Keith laughs loudly]

AUSTIN: But I think weirdly, I think—God who is the one who's like—it's probably Open Metal, right? Who is like:

AUSTIN (as Open Metal): Don't talk to the Cadent like that!

ALI: I said—I just said that!

AUSTIN: Oh, okay. You stopped saying it! Go ahead and say it.

ALI: Yeah, no, I was like, "No, don't talk to her like that!"

KEITH: You can say it together.

ALI: Me and Open both say it, obviously.

AUSTIN: Yeah. A hundred percent, yeah.

[Ali laughs]

KEITH: The Cadent has a lot of fans, I guess. Listen, I barely even understand the Cadent thing.

AUSTIN: You're from the Fleet!

KEITH: Yeah, I know, but I still didn't pay attention to it!

AUSTIN: [laughs] Okay.

JACK (as Fourteen): Alright, we're getting away from this here. Firstly, stopping being a soldier when you realize you're fighting for the fascists is the good thing to do. Demani, I'm not—that's—you made the right call.

AUSTIN (as Demani Dusk): Thank you.

JACK (as Fourteen): You don't stop being a soldier when you're fighting the fascists.

KEITH (as Gig): Or to help the fascists fight!

JACK (as Fourteen): Here's the thing, Grand. You keep saying you didn't know it was a bomb. Fine, alright, let's say I believe you. Maybe—

ART (as Grand): I didn't know it was a bomb.

JACK (as Fourteen): Yeah, okay.

ART (as Grand): You can tell when someone's lying; I didn't know it was a bomb!

JACK (as Fourteen): No I—alright, fine. But you knew who Advent are right? You know what they do, what they've been doing. You know what kind of a person Kitcha Kanna is. You know what kind of a person Kentucky's Corona is.

KEITH (as Gig): Listen, the bird leader of Advent doesn't subscribe to Blue Apron [laughs].

JACK (as Fourteen): Look, they give you a package. And you're like, "Fine, alright, I'll take this to where they are. It's not my job to ask what's in the package." Yes, it's your job to ask what's in the package! We're the Notion!

ART (as Grand): I'm not—I don't care!

JACK (as Fourteen): Right, okay, good. Great. Thank you.

ART (as Grand): I don't want to be in the Notion anymore. I want to go back to having a normal life and that was the way out.

JACK (as Fourteen): Grand.

ART (as Grand): Being paid an amount of money to deliver a fucking Roomba-thing.

JACK (as Fourteen): It's a bomb, Grand.

ART (as Grand): I didn't know it was a bomb!

AUSTIN (as Iota): You know what, no, this is good!

AUSTIN: —says Annex Iota Pretense.

AUSTIN (as Iota): This is actually—Grand Magnificent, let me tell you, Grand Magnificent is a portrait of what all of your people are actually like [laughs]. They're happy to deliver a package that could be a bomb to my people, over and over again. None of them will cede a bedroom to the Qui Err. So let's stop pretending that Grand Magnificent is some outlier here. You want us all to join hands and sing songs and through our willpower throughout the system? You want to fight fascists? None of you have ever reached out to us and said, "We'll help you get your home back." None of you have done that. The closest one is Echo, who doesn't want to be a soldier, and who still is the only person who has given us something material in that fight.

KEITH (as Gig): Wait, did I give something material?

AUSTIN (as Iota): No, I didn't say your name.

KEITH: This is out of character.

AUSTIN: No.

KEITH: No? I—didn't I do the—doesn't the communications thing that I helped set up during—

AUSTIN: Okay, yes.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Fair.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: Yes. I'll give—yes.

AUSTIN (as Iota): Also Gig Kephart gave us something material.

KEITH (as Gig): Yeah.

AUSTIN (as Iota): [laughs] Which is wild, by the way.

[Ali laughs]

KEITH (as Gig): [indignantly] Why is that wild?

AUSTIN (as Iota): You just have a lot of allegiances in play. Besides those two people, none of you have helped us. None of you have said, “Well maybe Thyrsus should belong to the Qui Err, the people whose planet we ruined.” Grand Magnificent dropping off a package that happened to be a bomb is what your entire fleet did when they decided to land on our home. It's what Independence did when, through a circuitous route, understandably, your descendants, er, your—

ART: Forebearers.

AUSTIN (as Iota): Your ancestors, your forebearers—

AUSTIN: —pointing at the Cadent.

AUSTIN (as Iota): —gave Independence to your forebearers—

AUSTIN: —pointing to Declan's Corrective.

AUSTIN (as Iota): Until eventually they fucking threw him at us. And billions of people died. I'm sorry your fleet, I'm sorry for whatever the fuck Independence did to Earth, Earth seems to be doing fine as far as I can tell, but take all of your high and mighty heroism and shove it up your asses. Collectively. Someone told me that they genuinely thought that this group of people would be the one to figure all this shit out. I don't see it. I don't see it.

What I think I'm gonna do is I'm gonna head home. Thank you Gig, for setting up the communications network. Thank you Echo, for giving me my ship back. I'm gonna go home and we are not gonna continue these peace talks. I don't know what happens. I don't know if—I don't know which group of fascists is gonna try to stomp my people out. Maybe it'll be yours. But I'd rather be on the bottom of your boots than standing next to

any one of you. Again, barring Echo and Gig. But also, Echo and Gig, maybe you shouldn't fight with these people. Consider it. Whatever coalition they're building is based on self-deception at best, propaganda at worst. And regardless, the effect will be the same. It will be a system run by people who don't belong here, one in which we are given some garbage dump of a corner to live out of.

AUSTIN: And so she takes her stuff, puts on her hat, gives a shoulder-tap to Gig and Echo, and leaves.

[Ali and Keith laugh]

AUSTIN: Keith says, "What's her name, again?"

ALI: Iota.

KEITH: Listen, there's a lot of fucking names in this show!

AUSTIN: There are. It's Iota. Iota Pretense.

KEITH: There we go.

AUSTIN: Mm-hm.

KEITH: Listen, knowing her name doesn't mean I didn't do the thing I did!

AUSTIN: Yeah, I know, I know.

KEITH: That was half in character.

AUSTIN: The Waking Cadent, sorry, not the Waking Cadent, the Cadent-Under-Mirage sits down.

JACK (as Fourteen): Alright, this is where we are. Happy Patina [emphasis on 'pa'] Day. Patina [emphasis on 'ti'] Day. I think we say it differently [Austin laughs]. We got it all out of our system?

KEITH (as Gig): No, Grand has to leave too!

JACK (as Fourteen): He's going. Here's the thing. Turns out I—alright, Grand, I think everybody should be able to go. I think it's a dereliction of duty, and I think it's reprehensible—

ART (as Grand): Dereliction of duty is only a crime if you're a soldier.

JACK (as Fourteen): Right, hang on [Ali laughs]. Why'd you have to do it with the fascists, though?

ART (as Grand): 'Cause they were the people who were offering me a civilian life.

JACK (as Fourteen): Do you know what you just said? Who else would you be prepared to team up with? Is it just—

ART (as Grand): I don't want to team up with anyone. I just want to be out.

JACK (as Fourteen): Okay. Does that position not, you know, you have no qualms with that position?

ART (as Grand): I don't, I just don't—I don't want to be in a war anymore. I just want to be out.

KEITH (as Gig): So what is it? You don't want to be in a war or you're sad because none of us really liked you very much? Is it one because of the other?

ART (as Grand): I mean, you weren't in that conversation even a little bit [Ali laughs], but yes, it's both. I just don't want to be here anymore. I want to be out.

SYLVIA (as Echo): Congrats, you're out. I'm gonna leave too. I'm done.

ART (as Grand): I'm so happy to hear that.

SYLVIA (as Echo): Shut up. I don't—I'm not siding with you. You're an asshole. I'm just done with all this bullshit.

ART (as Grand): Cool, peace.

AUSTIN (as ?): Grand, wait.

ART: And Grand's thing just dissolves. Oh, what?

AUSTIN: Oh right, 'cause you're just a weird projection, right?

ART: I mean, it's a physical thing.

KEITH: Well, it's a mech, it's a mech.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ART: I had another idea, but I don't think we're there.

AUSTIN: Yeah. [laughs] I was gonna have Cascabel ask for his gun back, but if you're just a weird projection he would not be able to get that from you. I think what does happen though is Cascara, before you disappear, says:

AUSTIN (as Cascara): Grand, I take some of the blame here. I read you wrong. I should have just left you with the haulers. You were a good hauler.

ART (as Grand): Yeah, and I was out then.

AUSTIN (as Cascara): Yeah. I thought it was a sign of quality that you knew a lot of people, and that that was something that was like, that must mean that people like him. That he knows how to build bridges. And what I've learned is you know a lot of people a little bit 'cause you don't know anybody real well. You can't put it on other people, man. You can't. Wherever you go next, make the effort.

ART (as Grand): Nah, I'm good.

AUSTIN: [laughs] And then you dissolve

ART: Yeah, I think it's like a Star Trek: The Next Generation Transporter, but if, like, it didn't go up, you know?

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah, yeah.

ART: It kind of turns bright and vaguely blueish, and then it doesn't exist.

AUSTIN: [exhales] I think when that happens, Cascara kind of rolls back over to the table—like the head of the table—and naturally moves into commander position, because that's who she is still, even though—maybe even more now that she's blended with Quire in this way—and is like:

AUSTIN (as Cascara): Echo. I understand you want to leave. You don't need my permission. I support you.

SYLVIA (as Echo): Cool. Don't need the support either though. Bye.

AUSTIN (as Cascara): Yeah, okay. Everybody else: what's next? Really. Because if it's time to pack things up and go home and let things fall out the way they're gonna fall out, then we all need to take certain steps to start protecting the people we care about, making sure we live through the storm. But if we're gonna try and put this thing back together, then we have even more work ahead of us figuring out what the hell this thing

even is. I wish I could say I could go somewhere, but I can't. This is where I am and giving up is really, truly, giving up for me. But I need to know who I can count on here. Who we can count on and Quire can count on. So what's it gonna be?

KEITH (as Gig): Uhhhhhhh. Yeah, I think I'm out.

AUSTIN (as Cascara): Yeah. You did good stuff, Gig. I mean that.

KEITH (as Gig): Yeah.

AUSTIN (as Cascara): I expected you to build more ice-skating rinks, and I thought that would be a pretty good step in the right direction. You did better than that. Don't get yourself killed over nothing. Kent, take care of him.

AUSTIN: And Kent like nods.

AUSTIN (as Cascara): Even, how about you? We've flown together a long time.

DRE (as Even): Don't have a reason to stop.

AUSTIN (as Cascara): Alright. Tender, Open?

ALI (as Tender): [sighs] Cascara, the street I grew up on is forty feet in the ground underneath the planet I live on, so I'll be staying there. Apparently, the people I work with should be reaching out to Iota more, but we'll settle it later.

AUSTIN (as Cascara): [sighs] Alright. Fourteen Fifteen? I don't want you to stick around if you're just gonna throw yourself into trouble the way Gig has been doing. I get the anger at Advent and agree that they should be brought to justice, but I saw the anger in you, in your posture and your words. We need to figure out how to build something, and I know there've been times you've leaned that way and I know there've been times when you've leaned different ways, so...what do you think?

JACK (as Fourteen): I mean, I'm angry at Advent in the sense that they seem like the clearest vector for the really bad shit. And so that's where I, you know, that's where the compass points, I'm like, "Alright, that's enough of that." But what Iota said, you know, the compass is swinging all over the place and—[sighs]. I want to stay and build and I want to find a space to stay and build, but I don't know if I'm the one who should be doing the building.

AUSTIN (as Cascara): [sighs] Yeah.

JACK (as Fourteen): And sometimes it's a real—It's a move you have to make sometimes to understand that, or to have faith that, building will take place when you're not looking at. Even if that feels like a dereliction of duty. But there have to be places, there have to be places in which I can be useful, but there are people for whom this is more important than it is to me. And it's pretty damn important to me.

AUSTIN (as Cascara): Well, do you want to go find those people somewhere else? Or do you think we could be those people?

JACK (as Fourteen): I don't want to go, and I'm happy to stay, but I don't know that I can be—I don't know that I can act in the same capacity that you once asked me to. And if you're okay with that, I'm okay with that, and we can find what that capacity is.

AUSTIN: She nods.

AUSTIN (as Cascara): You aren't Beloved anymore.

JACK (as Fourteen): No.

AUSTIN (as Cascara): That doesn't mean that you still can't help people with us. Signet? Are you still...committed?

AUSTIN: And there's a look, just for you, of vulnerability in her eyes. You know, during the This Year of Ours episode, she went to everybody else to convince them to join up, she went to you to be convinced that this was worth doing. And I think she's quietly doing the same here. I think that Blueberri looks to you similarly here, as like they are hanging on to whatever words you're about to say because of the conversation y'all had earlier.

JANINE (as Signet): I, for as long as I can remember, have been committed to the same thing. And that thing has served under different mastheads, or different banners. It's served a lot of different leaders and a lot of different people. I am still committed to that and I know where I need to go next. And I don't know that that's where you're going. I don't believe we should be here.

AUSTIN (as Cascara): So the Waking Cadent then?

JANINE (as Signet): I don't believe she should be anywhere.

ALI: [laughs] Tender drinks.

[Austin laughs]

AUSTIN (as Cascara): So then, you're just going to leave too? You and Belgard, and whoever else?

JANINE (as Signet): Like I said, I'm committed to the same things I've always been committed to. I'm not leaving to go live comfortably. I am leaving to speak with Belgard and tell Belgard where I think we should be and I would like to hear where she thinks we should be. That's always how it's worked, and that's how it will work for as long as I am alive.

AUSTIN: The Cadent-Under-Mirage stands up, and I think there is a confidence in her voice that she's never had in her voice before. Certainly not the Cadent that we say completely hand over power to Tender Sky back during the Miracle a year ago, but also not the Cadent who was paraded around and attended to before their arrival—her arrival—here at Quire. And not even really the Cadent who is a dealmaker for Seneschal's Brace. And she says:

AUSTIN (as the Cadent): No. That is not how it has always been. Signet, Divines and Excerpts did not travel alone through the stars, helping who they could find. They did not try to make peoples' lives better. They were beacons, they were leaders. They helped organize chaos for the millions of souls that made up the Divine Fleet. They took on the most strenuous challenges. They reached beyond all manner of conceivable limit. They found within themselves the power to create justice, the space for difference, and the harmony that only the Resonant Orbit could bring.

It is fine if you leave now, but do not cast this new action as an echo of a past one. This is not what the Excerpts and the Divines were, and I have not been what the Cadents have been. We built things. We helped everyone and we faced the largest of foes, the most difficult of obstacles, that did not only impact someone's life today or tomorrow but that were true existential threats. And we built a society. That is what the duty is. That is what the responsibility is. Not to help individuals but to come together in a way that individual ever could. To collectively bring into being something holy, something impossible.

I'm still committed to that, and I'm still idealistic, and I know we have made compromises that are foolish and unjust. And this is the power of the collective. We can remedy those things and improve. The Fleet didn't exist once. The Fleet was always being built. Slowly, like Patina. Every moment was a verification, living, that the project was worth it. And if there has been a failure here in the Fleet, and there has, it was that we sat back and looked at this thing of ours and said, "A shame. It used to be so good here."

JANINE: I think it's really, really clear that what the Cadent is saying is not actually that relevant to what Signet is thinking of.

AUSTIN: Mm-hm.

JANINE: And the parts that could be don't particularly impress her.

AUSTIN: Mm-hm.

JANINE: I guess the most important idea to Signet in this is, or to go back to, is just like, at this point, why should we be special? Like, why—

AUSTIN (as the Cadent): Because we have a capacity that the millions of people on Altar and Gift-3 and Thyrsus and Crown and Skein and Brighton, all across the sector, do not have. Cascabel makes weapons that only he can make. He has a responsibility to do something with that, or to make sure others do not. Grand Magnificent was the finest designer of mechs I've ever seen. His failure is not simply that he went off and joined Advent. It's a big failing. His failing came earlier than that; I believe this honestly and it is hard to hear. His failure was in not pursuing his talents in a way that helped people. As you said, letting his desire to be a hero get in the way of actually being one. When Fourteen Fifteen was reborn in the Body Politic, they recognized that there was a need in the Mirage for those who understood the emerging legal causeways. And they stepped into that role because they had a talent for it. Divines are not so different, being an Excerpt is not so different. I'm saying, and you can disagree, but the Resonant Orbit is built on the belief that there is a responsibility. You cannot walk away from that and pretend like you're not turning your back. That is what my duty is to say here. That is what the Cadents have always been about. I do not put leashes on Divines, I am not the Waking Cadent. I am a reminder of what this entire project is about. We carry our own leashes here. That is the Resonant Orbit, that has always been the Resonant Orbit. Feel free to leave, Signet, I suspect Belgard would agree with you here. You two are very close in many ways. But recognize the irony that once, a long time ago, you fled to leave Belgard to die, and now both of you would do the same.

JANINE (as Signet): You're just proving how little you know about what it is to be an Excerpt, what it is to be with a Divine, if you're bringing that up. Because you have no idea. You know nothing. You weren't even alive, were you?

AUSTIN (as the Cadent): [scoffs] Oh, this is the Excerpt I've been dying to see. Please, tell me all your wisdom. Share with me what your age and your suffering has taught you and show me how it lets you help others, because I've seen no evidence of that.

JANINE (as Signet): You keep talking about serving the Resonant Orbit and what it means to be part of that, the responsibility we have, the burden we have, to use our powers, our unique abilities and knowledge, to serve all these people and do all—this isn't the Orbit anymore. This isn't the Fleet anymore. These are people who existed before us. These are people who don't want anything to do with us sometimes. What does us being benevolent, responsible protectors for them actually do? What does it

benefit? What is it if not just patting ourselves on the back and being the hero, like Grand?

AUSTIN (as the Cadent): It feeds people, Signet! For the last year, Bounty and Nebula have fed millions of people! If they'd left, those people would have starved. This is an easy question.

JANINE (as Signet): Bounty has left.

AUSTIN (as the Cadent): And now I'm worried about who will feed our people. That is my job. You can leave and I'll worry then about who will protect us, when Volition decides to unleash another Axiom.

JANINE (as Signet): Just because I'm not here doesn't mean I'm across the universe. Just because I'm not here doesn't mean I'm not serving people you haven't seen.

AUSTIN (as the Cadent): [heatedly] Where will you go, then? Wait a second. Where are you going? Are you going to visit us on weekends then? On certain days, on certain feasts, you'll show up and wave your hand? If it's an especially big Axiom, maybe then you'll show up, Signet, is that what you're telling me?

JANINE (as Signet): Not at all.

AUSTIN (as the Cadent): Or perhaps sometimes we'll call and you'll say, "Ah, no, I don't like the sound of this one."

JANINE (as Signet): You still have so little idea.

AUSTIN (as the Cadent): And you have so little of anything except yourself and Belgard. That is all you have anymore.

JANINE (as Signet): That's exactly it, isn't it? Excerpts and Divines.

AUSTIN (as the Cadent): [laughs angrily] It is, it absolutely is. It's not for others, let me tell you something. It's not for others. Do you remember what Blooming did, when Emphyrean died?

JANINE (as Signet): Yes.

AUSTIN (as the Cadent): Blooming stepped up and said, "No. I need to continue to carry people." That wasn't the first time that that had happened. This whole society had been built on the backs of those who would put others in front of themselves. It's fine for you to leave, I just [sighs] can't bear the thought of you leaving and thinking you're doing you're

doing it in terms that allow you to continue to see yourself as some savior. I don't think I'm a savior, I think we're doing the best we can. And I know the best we can is together and not separate.

JANINE (as Signet): Like you said, it hasn't just been an Excerpt and a Divine. It has been a group of them. And there are a group of Excerpts and Divines, aren't there?

AUSTIN (as the Cadent): And there yet may still be some. Tender? Have your thoughts changed on this? Or do you still walk with the Resonant Orbit?

ALI (as Tender): I am here to build something new with you.

AUSTIN (as the Cadent): Thank you. I hope I can do that loyalty justice. Corrective, I will see you on the ship.

AUSTIN: And she stands, to head back to the *Lord and Bramble*. Waltz Tango Cache stirs a drink [Ali laughs]. Very loudly.

KEITH: Who's still here?

[Ali, Janine, and Jack laugh]

AUSTIN: Oh, everybody. No one left, except for the people who explicitly said left. And also, this fight happens in the galley but also like again, connected to the other ships here. It's just like, there are people hanging out in the airlocks between the various ships [laughs]. It's a fun scene.

KEITH (as Gig): I, uh, I think I'm leaving.

AUSTIN (as Kent Brighton): Where are you going?

AUSTIN: —asks Kent.

KEITH (as Gig): I'm going with Iota, I'm going to the Qui Err.

AUSTIN (as Kent): Oh but we—the ceasefire and Seneschal's Brace.

KEITH (as Gig): You can still be at a ceasefire. You can still—you can also come to the Qui Err.

AUSTIN (as Kent): I—It's just a lot at once. One thing at a time. You understand.

KEITH (as Gig): No. I have to go.

AUSTIN (as Kent): O...kay. Well, it's been a pleasure, Gig.

KEITH (as Gig): It has?

AUSTIN (as Kent): Yeah. We've had good times.

KEITH (as Gig): Yeah. We have.

AUSTIN (as Kent): Travel safely.

KEITH (as Gig): I promise that I will.

AUSTIN (as Kent): I mean it. Please.

KEITH (as Gig): Yeah, I will travel safe.

AUSTIN (as Kent): Please. You're—please.

KEITH (as Gig): Okay. I will.

AUSTIN: I think Sho comes over to you, Signet, and is like:

AUSTIN (as Sho): [whispering] You were exactly right. About everything.

JANINE (as Signet): That doesn't make me happier, but I appreciate it.

AUSTIN (as Sho): I don't know where she gets off, she was quiet her whole life. You should have seen her when Open Metal had her hostage. She was ready to sign over the whole Fleet.

KEITH (as Gig): Uh, so I guess I'll pack up my things, right? Or like—how many of us are going?'Cause we could—do we kick out the people who are staying [Austin laughs], or—? Do we get the ship now?

ALI (as Tender): Yeah, I'll pack.

KEITH (as Gig): Okay, so we get—I get the—we get the ship.

AUSTIN (as the Fisherman): Woah, woah, woah, who's doing what with my ship now?

AUSTIN: —says the Fisherman.

[Ali laughs]

JACK (as Fourteen): Yeah, I don't really—

KEITH (as Gig): Yeah well, we were, you know—It seems like most people were leaving, so I guess we take the—

AUSTIN (as the Fisherman): I mean it's my ship. I was—Fourteen has it right now.

KEITH (as Gig): Okay. Um, well then, we take your ship? I mean it's—or, is Fourteen staying, or?

JANINE (as Signet): Just go with Iota.

AUSTIN: Yeah, Iota has her ship here, still docked.

KEITH (as Gig): But if no one's using it, if no one's using this one, then I could take it. We could all—we could—We could take it.

JANINE (as Signet): Yeah, maybe you could take the car, right. No one else is using it.

AUSTIN: Vanya, I think, is like:

AUSTIN (as Vanya): Yeah, I'm gonna go with you actually, I think.

KEITH: Wait, so who is going?

AUSTIN: Um, and—I'm looking at this list of people. Surge and Janey too, I think.

KEITH: Who else of the players?

SYLVIA: Uh, I'm also gonna go with Gig.

AUSTIN: Okay, cool.

KEITH (as Gig): Alright, so it's me and Even* and Vanya and—everybody should come! Everybody can come.

AUSTIN (as Gray): We live here.

AUSTIN: —says Gray Gloaming.

AUSTIN (as Gray): So not really. Like, not on the ship but at the Brink. We're still docked at the Brink so like, we just—

KEITH (as Gig): Well, you don't have to come.

AUSTIN (as Gray): We're gonna go back there.

KEITH (as Gig): Yeah, you can do that.

AUSTIN: And Morning's Observation says like:

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): Yeah. This has been cool. Boy. I'm gonna go back to—[sighs].

AUSTIN: I think this is when this very small thing happens, in retrospect. There's a knock at the door, as Gig is heading for it. And I mentioned I rolled for entanglements already. The door—before anyone can even open the door, the door opens. And in walks someone who I guess a couple of you recognize—really Grand would recognize her the most. But it is Beatrice Temperance.

ALI: Oh, great.

AUSTIN: Who is from the Earthsphere Economic Concern. Who is—she's like a space cop. She's specifically like a transit—not a transit but transportation and goods and services cop. She's like a capitalism cop, is what she is.

JANINE: Is she a Maggie Darcy?

KEITH: Wait, a cop that arrests capitalists or a cop that arrests people?

AUSTIN: Sadly not. For capitalists.

KEITH: Oh, so a cop then. You're just—

AUSTIN: A cop. Sorry, what I meant is a cop. That's what I meant [Ali laughs]. And, what she comes in—so she comes in and says, um—I guess, God, who would even be—as soon as she sees you, Gig, she pokes you in the chest and starts pushing you backwards like an angry aunt.

KEITH (as Gig): What? What?

AUSTIN (as Beatrice Temperance): I'm here on behalf of—everyone sit down, I am Beatrice Temperance.

KEITH (as Gig): Nobody gives a shit! I'm leaving!

AUSTIN (as Beatrice): You owe the—

AUSTIN: Pulls up a data pad.

AUSTIN (as Beatrice): —Herringbone Flotilla two credits and three Angler units.

KEITH: I wave two credits and I put them in my pocket. I, like, take them out of my pocket, and I do a cool finger thing and then I put them back into my pocket, and then I spit on the ground at her feet.

AUSTIN (as Beatrice): [sighs] Banana! Avocado!

KEITH (as Gig): Apple! Oh. Wait, what?

AUSTIN: And two Torch units walk in.

AUSTIN (as Beatrice): Seize this man.

AUSTIN: And two Torch units come in because you've spit at her—

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: —and begin to try to arrest you.

KEITH: Yeah, try, operative word.

AUSTIN: Here's—I'm gonna read this thing. "A collection agency claims part of your ship. Pay them two cred [Jack laughs], give them their components, remove a ship module, or make them leave another way." And as she explains, according to—so, a thing that happened offscreen in between sessions—it's been going on through the Drawing Maps episodes every single w—every single downtime since switching here—is that the RKS, which is the shipping company that Grand Magnificent used to work for, actually, has been petitioning to become the sole controller of transport stuff, of like—the only group that can land on any planet, basically. And in the fallout from Schism, they successfully petitioned to control the space lanes between things here. And in doing that, they then enacted some pretty ridiculous laws around ownership of things.

And so, you know, adhering to Code 72-B, Subsection Alpha-Alpha-32-Red, because those ships were scooped up in a conflict—not ships—because the Angler units were scooped up in a conflict instead of being seized from the battlefield after their pilots were killed, they still technically belong to the Herringbone Flotilla, and the Herringbone Flotilla has sued you for ownership of them. And, Gig, also these space-robots, these Torch units, Avocado and Banana, are pointing batons at you and one of them takes out some handcuffs.

KEITH (as Gig): Uh, Kent, I thought these guys were our new friends.

AUSTIN (as Kent): They are, but [sputters], you know how lawyers are. No offense, Fourteen.

DRE (as Even): I'm gonna be right back.

KEITH: Oh boy [laughs]

AUSTIN: Um, I think—who's—I think Cascabel is like, "Woah, woah," and runs after Even and is like:

AUSTIN (as Cascabel): Don't—you're not gonna go get the gun, are you?

DRE (as Even): Yes, I'm gonna get the gun, and I'm gonna get all these fuckers off of my ship.

AUSTIN (as Cascabel): No! Just give them the two credits and the Angler units!

DRE (as Even): No! I need those Anglers units to fix all the shit that Gig broke.

AUSTIN (as Cascabel): Hey, woah. Woah, woah, woah. We—You said that gun helped you. We can't—Even.

AUSTIN: And hand on shoulder. Lots of hands on shoulders.

AUSTIN (as Cascabel): Even. You can't just bring it out because some people came calling for two credits and a couple of Angler units. We can build more suits. If things are that hard-up, moneywise, you should have let me know.

KEITH: I'm at die-in-the-street level of poor [Austin and Ali laugh], for what it's worth.

ALI: [laughing] Can I—

AUSTIN: Uh-huh? Can you?

ALI: I want to at least—I think that Even gets up and goes away but I at least as a hostess want to be like:

ALI (as Tender): Hey you don't have to—we have money, let's just sit down. You don't have to do this.

AUSTIN (as Beatrice): This seems to be a beautiful spread.

AUSTIN: She's slipping into David Lynch [laughter from the table]! [loudly] This is a beautiful spread!

JANINE: Can I do something here?

AUSTIN: Everybody can do something here, this is a shipwide thing.

JANINE: Okay.

AUSTIN: The people who've left have just happened to escape it before it hit.

JANINE: I think Signet was probably considering just slipping out and fucking off but also she's still Signet, somewhere in there. Um, I want to, like, I don't—what is the good—[laughs] I don't know how to describe—I want to, like, scrutinize her.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

JANINE: And try and, like, discern something and then be able to like, kind of play to her.

AUSTIN: Okay. What would you like to—I'm—

JANINE: This is her using her counselor powers in a somewhat not-great way.

AUSTIN: Right, right, right. But what are you looking to discern?

JANINE: I'm looking to discern—I want something like does she look hungry or do I know her from somewhere? [laughs] Or like—

AUSTIN: No. She's like a rude space-cop.

JANINE: I'm trying to find a vulnerability or something.

KEITH: I think I have something.

AUSTIN: Okay.

KEITH: So I have a move called Mechanic's Heart that says, "When you speak from your heart, your words can reach even the most hardened criminal, which includes cops."

AUSTIN: It does say that, yeah.

KEITH: Um, I—I think I’m going to, I dunno, quote-on-quote, “explain” that [as Gig] the Herringbone Flotilla committed war against us and the damage we caused was almost exclusively because we were being *attacked* by them!

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

KEITH (as Gig): [worked up] And they’re not gonna see a single fucking red cent from me, and I’m leaving!

AUSTIN: Mechanic’s Heart.

JANINE: Extremely persuasive.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Give me a Sway

KEITH: Alright.

AUSTIN: Or a Consort. You have a one in each. I think that’s—

KEITH: I’m gonna—I think this is Consort, ‘cause I’m not lying.

AUSTIN: [laughing] You’re not trying—no. It might be a Command. You can give me a Consort, it’s fine.

KEITH: I think it’s Consort and what is—This probably isn’t risky.

AUSTIN: Yes it is! There are two Torch units with batons pointed at you! [Jack laughs]

KEITH: We way outnumber them.

AUSTIN: You’re the one yelling.

KEITH: Yeah, I guess. So Risky—

AUSTIN: Standard.

KEITH: And then S—I gain potency.

AUSTIN: You do gain potency.

KEITH: So it’s Great.

AUSTIN: So it's Great.

KEITH: And, uh—

AUSTIN: Do you want to spend a gambit? Do you want to push yourself?

KEITH: Yeah, of course. I'm gonna spend—two gambits, what do we have?

AUSTIN: You actually don't have gambits.

KEITH: What do we have?

AUSTIN: Because—

KEITH: Because we're in the ship?

AUSTIN: Because we're in downtime. You're not in a mission.

KEITH: Alright, well what else can I do?

AUSTIN: Unless you—You can push yourself. I can give you a Devil's Bargain.

KEITH: What's the Devil Bargain?

AUSTIN: Oh, I don't know, what's a bad one?

KEITH: Don't give me a bad—I get a potency, remember?

AUSTIN: You do get a potency.

KEITH: Mechanic's Heart.

AUSTIN: I mean—Yeah, I know.

KEITH: "Words can reach even the most hardened criminal."

AUSTIN: Oh, you know, I think it's just, like, you're wanted in a big way, if you fail this roll.

KEITH: By the Herringbone Flotilla?

AUSTIN: No, no, no, no, no. No. By, like, space-cops. Like by Interpol. I know Interpol doesn't actually arrest people. But space-Interpol is like, "You assaulted an agent," because she's gonna register this as an assault. The spitting at her thing.

KEITH: Umm, is that gonna cause problems for the Qui-Err?

AUSTIN: Nobody else, just for you.

KEITH: Just for me?

AUSTIN: Just for you.

KEITH: Well then fine, yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: If you're around the Qui-Err, then yes.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: Then yes, you will be—I mean, you're a wanted criminal.

KEITH: Alright, well then I'll push myself instead.

AUSTIN: Okay, push yourself.

KEITH: What is that, one stress or two?

AUSTIN: Two stress for one die.

KEITH: Two stress, one die. So then that's...Consort...Risky...Great.

AUSTIN: Great. Uh-huh.

KEITH: But one bonus die.

AUSTIN: One bonus die.

KEITH: Does anybody want to assist me?

ALI: I guess I do?

AUSTIN: It feels like—I was gonna say, it feels like that's what Signet had already been doing.

ALI: Yeah.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: But it's up to—

KEITH: Okay. But this has to be official.

AUSTIN: Right. This would be someone has to spend stress here.

KEITH: Yeah. Is someone gonna spend—

JANINE: I don't know what assisting him would look like.

AUSTIN: I think it's what you already—I guess now I don't know because you would be doing the opposite thing, pitching like—

JANINE: Yeah, it's not like I would whisper to him, "She likes flowers."

[Keith and Austin laugh]

AUSTIN: Tender, what did you have?

ALI: Yeah, I can assist. It was just the thing I said before, which is, like, approach with drink tray and be like, "Listen, it's a party, we can talk about this."

KEITH: Yeah, just be part of the party.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ALI: "Let's just put the handcuffs away for right now, we can talk." Then Gig starts screaming, I guess [laughs].

AUSTIN: Alright. Give me a roll.

KEITH: Alright, so that's four dice—it's good cop, bad cop, but to a cop. It's I guess good—

AUSTIN: So you're pushing yourself and taking the assist? That's three dice.

KEITH: Oh yeah, three dice.

AUSTIN: Yeah, you only get one assist at a time.

KEITH: Five.

AUSTIN: That's a mixed success.

KEITH: Is five not full? Is five mixed?

AUSTIN: No, five is not—five is mixed.

KEITH: Okay. Well, five Great.

AUSTIN: It's five Great. So I think maybe that's the—she puts the handcuffs away but two more Torch units come in. And so it's slipped from a Risky position lower to a Desperate position.

AUSTIN (as ?): Can't someone just pay her?

KEITH (as Gig): No!

Dre (as Even): Yeah.

ALI (as Tender): Yeah.

SYLVIA (as Echo): Yeah.

KEITH (as Gig): They fucking—they shot up our ship! Look at it! There's all these holes—people have been talking about the holes all night! That was them, they did that!

KEITH: [whispering] No, that's not true. I'm lying.

AUSTIN (as Cascabel): Even, let's just go get the fucking suits and give her the suits. It's not a big deal.

AUSTIN: And Cascabel reaches up and, like, touches your cheek.

DRE (as Even): Kind of enjoying listening to Gig try to scream his way out of this.

AUSTIN: I know, but what if they start swinging? Let's go get the suits.

JANINE: We only have to give them three suits, right?

AUSTIN: Okay, by the way, you have three extra suits that you stole—well, that you captured—from the Herringbone Flotilla's Angler units. You have these extra suits, they're coming back for those.

JANINE: Wait, what the fuck, who even cares then?

JACK: These are just spare suits?

AUSTIN: Yes, to repair the broken suits.

DRE: Yeah.

JANINE: Jesus.

DRE: To repair the ships, yeah.

AUSTIN: Two credits, plus the three things.

JANINE: What if we give them four? What if we give them four Angler suits, 'cause Grand doesn't need his.

DRE: Oh, fuck.

AUSTIN: True!

ART: It was all the way broken.

AUSTIN: It was *all* the way broken.

JANINE: They don't know that! There's not enough of them to drive them out, right? Like [laughs], they're just gonna load them into a van.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: The other three are also all the way broken [laughs].

AUSTIN: Pretty fucked up.

ART: It was missing an arm. I don't think you can—

JANINE: They just need parts, it's fine.

ALI: Yeah, but it was like, premium.

KEITH: Listen. I'm not happy about it but technically, giving them four Angler units is not giving them a single red cent, so if they accept it then fine.

JANINE: They're taking our garbage away, you have to pay people to do that sometimes.

KEITH: It's garbage that I personally would have found very useful to have!

JANINE: You're leaving. You weren't gonna take them.

KEITH: I was gonna take mine! Which I still can, but still.

AUSTIN: You can still take yours!

[Ali and Janine laugh]

SYLVIA: I was bringing the hammer that I had, but the rest of the thing you can take.

KEITH: These guys suck, listen.

JANINE: Signet has left, she has gone to get the keys, she is giving them the keys to the bike locks on the Anglers or whatever [Ali laughs]. We're good, right? Are we good?

ALI: Yeah.

JACK: We don't need to make a mountain out of a molehill.

KEITH: We're not good, we're fine.

AUSTIN: God.

JACK (as Fourteen): Alright, are we good, Beatrice?

AUSTIN (as Beatrice): We're good.

JANINE: [laughing] I thought you said bitches!

[laughter from the table]

JACK: It's been a long day.

AUSTIN: It's been a looooong day.

JACK (as Fourteen): Happy Patina Day.

AUSTIN (as Beatrice): Happy Patina Day to you too.

AUSTIN: [in Beatrice's voice] I forget if this character is from the Fleet [laughs] or not. [normal voice] She doesn't have an apostrophe-s in her name, right? So. She takes the four suits, she doesn't take credits from anybody, and she leaves. Her and her extra Torch units. With that excitement done, what is left to be said or done?

JACK: I want to see Sho.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay, you can see Sho, I'll allow it.

JACK: [laughs] Thank you.

AUSTIN: Where do you see Sho?

JACK: I think people have begun to move away from the table.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah [laughs]. Yeah, they sure have, haven't they?

JACK: Yeah, like one way or another, in that sense where there was definitely that sort of transitional period where people were like, "Is the party still happening?"

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: And then they realized kind of no, so [laughs].

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: Like, the cops showed up, but not even in an interesting way [Austin and Janine laugh]. [chuckles] It wasn't like it was a noise complaint or anything.

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH: It was they were suing us for them attacking us.

JACK: Yeah. But I think Sho's still there, in some respect. I'm not sure what she's doing. I sort of have this image of like, Fourteen half-heartedly tidying, clearing up the ship, and Sho also being there. I don't know whether or not she's tidying.

AUSTIN: [consideringly] No. I think she's standing very—up straight, you know? Just kind of observing things right now.

JACK: Just watching the—

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN (as Sho): Fourteen, we didn't really get to talk. I hope you're doing well. You look a little beat up.

JACK (as Fourteen): Yeah, it's, um—I've been through a couple of bodies since we last saw each other. It's been a while.

AUSTIN (as Sho): Yeah. Are you doing okay?

JACK (as Fourteen): I mean, I was betrayed, in like a really galling way. Not even—

AUSTIN (as Sho): I heard, I heard. I was in the room.

JACK (as Fourteen): No, yeah, we don't need to relitigate any of this stuff. I guess the answer is no. And I'm sort of, I'm sort of—

AUSTIN (as Sho): You're sort of?

JACK (as Fourteen): I mean, I keep thinking about—like it's pretty clear that we've both been on a fairly long journey since we last talked, I don't know, is that fair?

AUSTIN (as Sho): Yeah. I think that's fair

JACK (as Fourteen): Um, I keep thinking about when we were—you know, when we went to rescue the Cadent.

AUSTIN (as Sho): Me too.

JACK (as Fourteen): When we spoke beforehand and about how convinced you were, I think rightly, that there was work to be done and that you were the person to do it. I don't think you were wrong, and I think perhaps I was, you know, maybe I was overly cynical. Maybe I had just been killing too many people, which is—that can contribute to it.

AUSTIN (as Sho): Yeah.

JACK (as Fourteen): So I tried to do less of that. And now I'm kind of at this point where I'm pretty sure that work needs to be done and I don't know if I'm the

person to do it. And I just—I guess I'm coming to you for advice, I don't know, Sho.

AUSTIN (as Sho): When I came to Altar, we knew that there were these tombs, I don't know if you've seen them. Places where scraps of the Divines landed in the sands and became, all at once, massive monuments, to the Divines of the past. And no one knew what to do, because there were so many of them and the desert was so hot. We were barely surviving at all, after the Miracle. And so, I took it upon myself to start, to try and go get whatever was in those tombs. You know, relics. The fingernail of one giant Divine, the, you know, left power socket of another. Ancient cannons and paintbrushes and recordings of the final words of an Excerpt whose name I don't even know.

And I started bringing them back and putting them in lockers and chests and safe places. And I didn't notice it at first, but each time I did that my place lifted up off the ground, just a little bit. I had no porch at all at first, but by the time I brought the second or third home there were a few stairs and a little deck. And by the time I taught others to go out into the sands and find relics of their own and bring them back, a deck turned into a tier. A tier into fifty feet, straight up, stairs. And soon there was a pyramid where my home once still. And at the top, little boxes with memories in them. Little reminders of what came before, brought there by people determined to remember them. Determined not to let time or sand or suffering force them to forget.

And at first, none of them were trained. At first, like me, what we had were swords and shawls and sandals. But soon we learned different routes through the sand, we learned how better to pack our rations, we learned what prayers kept us confident and safe. And now there is a temple where people come to worship, and they don't remember where it came from. They don't remember that they built it. But it is a place for them to worship. You'll find your place. I don't know that it's here. Sadly, I don't know that it's with me down on Altar. I don't know if it's with the Qui Err, I don't know where it is. But, for better or worse, you've always worked well with others. Make sure you keep doing that.

JACK (as Fourteen): Thank you. That—that means a lot. It means a lot that you'd say that.

AUSTIN (as Sho): I didn't always think it.

JACK (as Fourteen): Well, we get where we're going, don't we?

AUSTIN (as Sho): We don't have a choice.

AUSTIN: And just then, the camera clicks [camera click noise] out of place, and moves away from Sho and Fourteen, tracing a path towards each member of what had, until now, been the Notion. First to Tender Sky, who sits with the Cadent Under Mirage and Declan's Corrective, reviewing notes and talking blank strategy, all while Anticipation whirrs away, deep inside her head. And then, out a viewport, the camera tracks to Echo Reverie, as they step into the *Holiday Gambit*, offer the Qui Err crew a quiet nod, and receiving a returned greeting of warmth, from a snake made of living grass. Then it pans and dodges until it finds Even Gardner below the *World Without End*, toiling away with wrench, submachine gun holstered, as sweat drips down his face. And he is not alone; the gunsmith Cascabel works alongside him, at least until he is called away.

And the camera follows him too, until he meets with another old compatriot, Signet [[The Twilight Mirage](#) begins playing]. He unfolds a rifle and hands it to her, and now she is at the focus, an Excerpt, and soon her Divine, and soon the Mirage, and soon she and Belgard skating across color towards the rebuilt Temple of Privign, where the Waking Cadent holds her court. But the camera pauses in place as they go, and instead turns just so, until it locks with the half-bridge catapult that Advent uses to fling their plunder out of the Mirage. And we see it launch a massive container, a cube that turns suddenly, and comes to a sharp conical point, built to breach the Mirage. But this time, as it does, something strange happens. A blast from beyond the ether, and the container explodes into petals. And inside the catapult, in a luxury suite, Grand Magnificent, and on a screen a red word; "Blockade." His escape ruined by the arrival of the Rapid Evening's fleet. He's here to stay.

But as he receives the night's stream, he starts to think; he may not be as alone as he thinks. Because all around the system, people tune in to the season finale of Gig Kephart's DIY Guide to the Mirage, and they realise, quietly, that this hadn't just been entertainment. It was an encyclopedia for living independently, and together. Water purification and electrical engineering, gardens and kitchens and audio amplification. Lessons for hiking, and for building homes. If the apocalypse came, they would have Gig's guide by their sides.

And then the camera clicks [camera click], and one image becomes two [camera click]. And two four [camera click]. And four eight [camera click]. Sixteen [camera click]. Thirty two [camera click]. It is a wall [camera click], and with each click [camera click] it becomes clear that this [camera click] is not an abstract view [camera click]. This is Crystal Palace [camera click], sight restored [camera click]. And coming closer [camera click] by the second.

[camera click]

[camera click]

[camera click]

[camera click]