

Twilight Mirage 07: Second Street Drifting

Transcriber: the dread biter#0090

[MUSIC - “THE TWILIGHT MIRAGE” starts]

AUSTIN (as Primary): Dispatch 93A.

I'll tell you one thing, Satellite. Even now, even with so many of the Divines gone, the Fleet is really good at knowing how to take care of its own. So much of what they do is about understanding what people need and how to get it to them. But I have my doubts, Satellite, if they're any good at understanding people outside of the Fleet.

The Assemblage has this book, *Overcoming the Problem of Other Minds*. It's... kind of a slog, all about knowledge and selfhood and all of that. The first half is an epistemology textbook meets holy tract, but the second part, it turns, and suddenly it becomes a story, a sort of longform fable. It's about this Divine, or a stand-in for one, anyway, who can't convince someone of his divinity. He tries over and over again to display his power, his knowledge, his technological superiority. But the would-be convert just shrugs.

The lesson, as the Fleet teaches it, is that there are people that you cannot teach, many who do not or will not understand. But they don't know what we do, do they, Satellite? We know that when someone shrugs at a display of power, at a display of knowledge, at a display of technological superiority, it is not because they do not understand. It is because they are not impressed.

[MUSIC ends]

[2:38]

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): You said I'd get outta here. What was your—you had a long name.

JANINE (as Signet): People just call me Signet.

AUSTIN (as Morning's Observation): Cool, Signet. You said I'd get out of here if I helped. And, and you fed me, and that's cool. And I've told you everything I know—like—as far as I know, I don't—there's no other s—I mean, well. [Amused huff] I've told you the stuff you asked, and I can't just tell you this, okay? Let me think on this, please, and let me just weigh some options. Just give me some time, okay?

AUSTIN: And Cascara, like, nods her head, and she says,

AUSTIN (as Cascara): We can give him time. We have something else. I'll tell you about it after dinner.

AUSTIN: And unless there's anything else, the dinner goes off without a hitch, Massalia manages not to try to start shit, for once. Comes close. Massalia definitely, you can see them get, like, a good insult ready. And then just, like, hold it down. Like, "Not tonight." It's a very plain pasta sauce, by the way. It's not a very good sauce. It's fine. It's not good.

And then after dinner, Cascara makes the call to let Observation stay in a special room instead of in a weird glass tube that is like constantly monitored, and doesn't have any connection to the Mesh, or to like even the local Mesh, so it's just like a plain grey room. Guess it still has the mosaics, those are real, right?

AUSTIN: The kind of tile flair.

JACK: Mhm.

ALI : Yeah.

AUSTIN: And it has like. It's a decent bed. It's just not a—a—I think he—it might just have an old style TV like it's just has a—a remote control. Or it doesn't even have a remote control, it probably is just—like, has a touch screen or something.

JACK: [amused noise] You have to get up.

AUSTIN: With voice, it's voice activated. I think it's actually the opposite. It turns off if you get up and try to go near it. Because then you could try to rewire it or whatever, and—and—or like touch it and try to hack it, and so it's just voice activated. You can only say like [beleaguered voice] 'Show me some squirrels' or whatever.

[JACK and ALI laugh]

AUSTIN: And it'll show you some squirrels.

ALI: Yo, the future owns.

AUSTIN: Yo, the future is dope, this is a utopia, you can be just like } Hey, TV, give me them *good* squirrels!" "Hey, TV, what's a—how does a *crab* eat?" and then it shows you.

[ALI and JANINE laugh]

AUSTIN: That's how you activate it, you say, "Hey, TV!"

[JACK laughs]

AUSTIN: And so, yeah, he has his own room now, and is not being treated like such a prisoner, as kind of an extension of your—your act of decency, Signet. And then afterwards, Cascara pulls

just your squad, plus Sho, Sho Salon, into a—a briefing room. [Sigh] And lays out what she needs from you.

AUSTIN (as Cascara): We've received a message.

AUSTIN: And she hits a button and it's a picture of Seance, which again is this kind of like rotating city in the Twilight Mirage that's—it's kind of like a long cylinder, like a—like a—I guess I've described it before as being hexagonal, as kind of having eight sides, and like the city all around the whole thing, there's like a park district... There's a bunch of different districts, we'll fill it out as we go on. I actually want to kind of map it, I think, throughout the season, and then I'll have to set that up for our next session, because [amused] I don't know how to map out a hexagonal city, by default. [sheepish laugh] A hexagonal like weird cylinder column in the sky, it's kind of a weird thing.

And so she—but it kind of rotates, and then it zooms in on a long—or kind of a square, flat structure that is in one of the city districts. And I think you've all been here for long enough to know as soon as that—as soon as you see it, that that is Contrition's, Contrition's Figure. Contrition's Figure is a rehabilitation center. It's a prison, basically, but—but this is a utopia and prisons are different. She says,

AUSTIN (as Cascara): [sigh] We've received a message from Vice Warden Tetragon, from Contrition's Figure.

AUSTIN: And she hits a button and then like over—this big square thing, a cube with like a face on it, just like a stick figure face, like a two-dots-and-a-smile face show up. And it says like,

AUSTIN (as Tetragon, in an exaggerated Southern drawl): I'm sorry to say, things are going a little—a little weird here in, in Contrition's Figure.

[JACK laughs]

AUSTIN (as Tetragon): Could use a little help.

AUSTIN: Cascara says,

AUSTIN (as Cascara): As you know, the way that the rehabilitation center works... Well, the way it's supposed to work, it would build prisoners unique rehabilitation programs, using the Mesh. And that was great. Because everyone got the attention they needed, and they got a plan that was built perfectly for them. And in the last, well, since any of us have been alive, without Contrition, there hasn't really been a way of doing that. And so, instead, there's only a handful of rehabilitation programs. We do our best, obviously, and there are counselors, and there are rules, and—and all of that. But the Mesh there is basically only supposed to be able to provide a handful of simulations. And, well.

AUSTIN: And then she hits the button, and Vice-Warden Tetragon starts speaking again and he goes,

AUSTIN (as Tetragon): And, well, things have gotten a little out of hand. I'm lost.

AUSTIN: And then it like zooms in on the map, and reveals a city inside of the tetra—inside—inside of the prison. Like, a huge, sprawling city with huge statues, and it's like bright and orange and strange. And the thing that you see happen at that point is Sho's dress, the kind of gothic lolita dress that she has on, the—the blossoms—or the budding flowers all blossom, and then they begin to match the color and vision of the city there as that happens.

And she also just like [gasps] covers her hand with her—with her, or covers her mouth with her hand, and—and says,

AUSTIN (as Sho): Is that a real city?

AUSTIN: And Cascara's like,

AUSTIN (as Cascara): Well, we'll need to figure that out. I need you to go there and make sure that the prisoners inside haven't done anything terrible. We never have an issue like this. It's been years and years and years since the prisoners tried anything. Mostly you go in, you serve your time, and you come out better to face the world. I've never seen anything like this or even heard of anything like this. Even—even since Contrition 's been gone. Okay? Sound good? Any questions?

AUSTIN: Sho raises her hand.

AUSTIN (as Sho): How many prisoners are there?

AUSTIN (as Cascara): Fifty.

JACK (as Fourteen): Fifty prisoners built a city?

AUSTIN (as Cascara): Well, I don't know that they built the city. That's part of the question. They're not supposed to have direct access to the Mesh, or anything else that would give them the sort of material to build something like this. They just have their limited, localized Mesh. It's off the grid. So to speak.

JACK (as Fourteen): So our goal is to enter the facility, identify the source of this... of this.

AUSTIN (as Cascara): Apparition? I don't even know what to call it, frankly.

JACK (as Fourteen): Yeah. And...

AUSTIN (as Cascara): Locate the Warden and the Vice Warden and make things return to normal. That's what Empyrean wants us to do. There is something else, though, that I've been thinking about.

AUSTIN: And she hits a button and a figure, a face comes up next to Vice Warden Tetragon. And it's the face of like a Hispanic looking man with a beard. He—he—it kind of looks like what Benicio del Toro looks like with a beard, like today-Benicio del Toro, not younger Benicio, like fifty-year-old Benicio del Toro.

JACK: Mm. Benicio del Toro's fifty?

AUSTIN: Yeah, Benicio del Toro is fifty.

JACK: Wow.

AUSTIN: I have a picture, actually, that I can show you a little, that's exactly what what he looks in—in my mind. Here. Let me find it.

JACK: He's exactly fifty.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: I know this, 'cause I—

JACK: When did Benicio del Toro get fifty?

[JANINE laughs]

AUSTIN: Yeah, I'll put it in. I'll put it in our Discord, actually. This face, that I just linked you to, shows up.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: Very stern look, like his eyes are squinted. His - his beard is like this weird mix of well-kept and overgrown, right, like the shape of it is maintained but it has like some—some fuzz going off in directions that might not be intentional. And his hair is slicked b—slicked back and still very thick. And she says,

AUSTIN (as Cascara): We've had this prisoner in lock-up for years and years and years and he has a connection to the Earth Cult, to, I guess, the Hegemony. You should maybe talk to him and see if he knows anything. Or—or—well. [sigh] So there's a rule. Part of the way that Contrition's Figure works is you're not allowed to talk to any prisoners if

you haven't gone through a month of acclimation to their simulation. So, I—you can't talk to him. That's the rule. I'm telling you that's the rule, it's my job to tell you that's the rule, but he might have information.

JACK (as Fourteen): What's his name?

AUSTIN (as Cascara): Declan. Declan Corrective.

JACK (as Fourteen): Okay.

AUSTIN (as Cascara): He is no good. Be careful. That's all I can say. We're not allowed to give any information about what any of the prisoners have done, but I've heard things about him. ...Just let me know when you're ready and we'll move out, hm?

AUSTIN: And then you're dismissed. Sh—oh, I guess she makes it clear.

AUSTIN (as Cascara): Sho will be joining you on this mission. Our hope is for Sho to be part of a new team of the Beloved.

AUSTIN: And like sh—Cascara smiles, and then Sho smiles too and—and says, like,

AUSTIN (as Sho): It's really an honor. I—I—I'm gonna make sure not to miss this chance!

[Amused noises]

AUSTIN (as Sho): Should I bring my sword?

ALI (as Tender): Uh... probably not?

JACK (as Fourteen): Yeah, okay.

[ALI and JANINE laugh]

AUSTIN (as Sho): Sounds good.

[Laughter]

AUSTIN: And then she like, like turns around to like walk out quickly and she turns back and she says like,

AUSTIN (as Sho): Thanks again!

AUSTIN: And like does like a little bow and then like turns back around and walks out. And—and leaves. And you can all get ready to go on this mission.

[ALI sighs]

AUSTIN: You have any other questions, or set-up before you go?

JACK: I think I'm goooooood?

AUSTIN: Okay.

JANINE: I think before we go, Signet would probably go visit Morning's Observation, just to like see how he's doing, how he's like acclimating.

AUSTIN: He is asleep when you go in. The lights are off.

JANINE: Okay.

AUSTIN: And you can check with like cameras and stuff that he's like completely like. Just deep, snoring, like, deep-dream sleep. You could wake him up but that doesn't—I don't know if that's what she's about.

JANINE: No.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JANINE: I think she would leave him a note, though.

AUSTIN: Okay. What's it say?

JANINE: In very nice handwriting, but handwritten—handwriting that's written like, she's not using her cursive, you know.

AUSTIN: Okay. Yeah.

JANINE: She's, she's writing to—for the letters to be clear.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: She I think writes like, "We have a place, and it's shoulder to shoulder with them."

AUSTIN: Mm. Okay. That's good. I'll write that down. Okay. So, is—is it the next day, is it just a few hours after this, do you get like sleep in first?

ALI: Probably, that seemed kind of like a long night.

AUSTIN: Okay. Yeah, it was a long night.

JANINE: Yeah.

[14:56]

AUSTIN: I think it kind of started in the afternoon, but then went for a while, right, so, so yeah, the next—

ALI: Yeah, I mean we had dinner so like—

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah, exactly. The next morning—space morning, (amused exhale) the, you take another balloon back to Seance—back to Seance, and kind of just walk there on foot... Like what's the, what's the plan for getting there? I'm not here to charge you or anything. And also, are you doing any like research on this place before? Are you—you have—you have ways of doing that, like I'll just say this stuff out loud so that you know and people know.

So things that you could do at this point: you could *Lift the Veil*, which is like when you look through the Mesh for information. "*When you try to pierce the constant illusion of the Veil, search for information, or recall something you may already be privy to, roll.*" And on a hit i'll tell you something new and interesting, on—on any roll I'll ask you a question or two and you answer them. On a 10+ I give you good detail, and on a 7-9 I'll give you an impression. You could also do stuff about contacts, right. You could use, there's a really good move called... Do-do-do... *Link*.

"*When you introduce a new NPC to the game by name, look and outlook, decide how you know them and feel about them, and then roll.*" Which is like a way for you to basically say, "Oh, I know someone who could help us with this." And that's a thing you should totally use often. But then you also roll, and then that determines what the relationship is. So I think those are the two moves, for me, that are like "Hey, I wanna know more here." *Lift the Veil* and *Link*.

JACK: I'd be prepared to *Link*.

JANINE: I could—

JACK: Oh, go on, no.

JANINE: No, you.

JACK: What were you gonna say?

JANINE: I was also gonna go for *Link*.

AUSTIN: You can both link.

JACK: Should we both link?

AUSTIN: [amused] Link and build.

JACK: We could *Link*.

JANINE: Both do—a prison *Link*? Wh—

AUSTIN: D—what do you have in mind, in terms of. ‘Cause, remember, you decide the name, look, outlook of those characters.

JACK: Mhm. Okay, so I think the person that I would like to *Link* with is someone who—could I *Link* with someone who'd been in there?

AUSTIN: Sure.

JACK: Someone who was released.

AUSTIN: Like someone who got out. Yeah, that's a good idea. I like that.

JACK: So, this is someone called... Activation... Stevenson.

AUSTIN: P or V in Stevenson?

JACK: V. And they are a drinking buddy of mine...

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: They... work in a newspaper.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: They're—they're a journalist and—what do I roll?

AUSTIN: Roll, you roll!

JACK: Which is...

AUSTIN: Well, you don't roll *Link*, you roll—you roll... So, how are you feeling about—about this?

JACK: About Activation?

AUSTIN: Yeah, what's your relationship like with them? When you say like, ‘Okay, it's time for me to go - get in touch with them,’ what is your, what—also, also, what are their pronouns, really quick?

JACK: Uh, he/him. I think that... I'm a little sad.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: Because I think that what started out as a personal relationship—

AUSTIN: Hm.

JACK: —has gradually become increasingly professional?

AUSTIN: Right, you go to them for—or go to him for information, you go to him for contacts, you don't go to him to drink.

JACK: Yeah, and we—we still hang out—

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: —but it's like, I don't know.

AUSTIN: How—

JACK: We both work in the games industry, and sometimes we end up talking about E3, y'know?

[AUSTIN and JANINE laugh]

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. How, how many bodies has he seen you in? Does he know?

JACK: Oh, yeah, he knows!

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: And I think maybe like four?

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: Three? Four?

AUSTIN: Sounds good. Go ahead and give me a Sad roll. [laughs] Welcome to Friends at the Table!

JACK: Okay.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: [trailing off] Our actual...

JACK: [laughs] Sh—so I—do I—do I mark it after I roll, or do I mark before?

AUSTIN: You mark it right away. You mark it right away.

JACK: ‘Cause I mark sad, and now I roll Sad.

AUSTIN: Yep, you got it.

AUSTIN: Hey, that's a 9.

JACK: It's a 9, that's a good Sad roll.

AUSTIN: That's a good, sad roll right there, all right. So on a 7-9 it's strained or frayed in some way, and they have one faith on you. So add a faith, that they have a faith on you, here. [typing noise] “Has faith on Fourteen.” Where do you meet—where do you meet him?

JACK: At his office.

AUSTIN: Okay. At like the the newspaper office basically?

JACK: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Or whatever, the—the journal, the media office, the media place? Y'know, I think there are newspapers. This is a utopia, there's still newspapers.

[ALI and JACK laugh]

AUSTIN: They're not printed on—or maybe they are printed and then like everyone just recycles them.

JACK: Print media is dead, and then it wasn't dead again!

AUSTIN: Yeah, we found—they found it, that's part of the utopia.

ALI: Oh my god, is it—is it like that ink that likes expires after a week?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: So you like turn them back into a bin and they get reprinted.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yes, totally. 100%.

JACK: Yeah!

AUSTIN: They're. You can't do that with a lot of things, like, we've talked about this before, there is like—perfect recycling doesn't exist anymore, Belgarde helped do that.

JACK: Mm, mhm.

AUSTIN: Signet's, Signet's Divine. That's gone now. But this is one of the things where like “Oh, the technology just does this itself.” It's basically really fancy e-ink, right?

[ALI laughs]

JACK: yeah.

AUSTIN: All right, cool. So, is it frayed for the reason that you talked about, which is just like, you've come in too—for one too many things, or not even one too many things but just like you come—you only. Maybe that's how it starts. You walk into his office, right. What's he look like? Cuz you de—you determine—

JACK: He—he has... longish hair, tied up in a bun on his head. He's wearing I guess just like a business suit, or like a shirt and tie?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

[20:08]

JACK: He's... oh! He's got like a—a cat curled up on his desk—

AUSTIN: Good, uh-huh.

JACK: —because people can just bring, I guess, pets to work here?

AUSTIN: Yeah! Totally.

JACK: But yeah, he's just got a cat on his desk, some potted plants, and he's, like, typing. He's just working on a story or something. I think as he's typing, it's appearing live on the newspaper that's in front of him.

AUSTIN: Oh, it's like a test copy, basically?

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I like that a lot. That's really good. Okay. God, I'm trying to think of a good name for this, this newspaper. It doesn't matter. It doesn't matter, but I'm gonna think of one—

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: —because that’s—that’s me. Do I want a double S? Do I want like “The Seance Signal”? Is that too much? I think that might be too much.

ALI: Uh, “The Signal” on its own is pretty good.

AUSTIN: It's pretty good. That's pretty good.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: Yeah, *The Signal*, I think it's just called *The Signal*. Yeah.

JACK: Its slogan—pick up a signal, pick up *The Signal*!

AUSTIN: Pick up *The Signal*. Yeah, exactly.

ALI: Yeah, oh yeah.

AUSTIN: Does he have a beat? Like does he, is he a writer about a specific thing?

JACK: Yeah, he's a sports writer.

AUSTIN: All right, yeah, good! Oh, this has been a rough week for him, or rough month for him, actually.

JACK: [laughs] Sure has.

AUSTIN: He like wrote about the shit that happened at the Coliseum, right, like that was—

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: —and probably... In fact, I bet you he wins an award for the thing he wrote about that, right? Like he's the one who cracked how to write about that, that like captured the grief of the event, and the ways in which sports are tied in with grief and hope and all of that stuff?

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And in this way it's very strange, because this terrible thing happened, but he has this, his reputation got this huge boost from it, right? And that's a hard thing to unpack, and he keeps being tempted to write about that, in the column. But he won't let himself do it, he's too professional for that. Anyway.

JACK: So I think he's just working late writing, like match reports.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah.

AUSTIN (as Activation): Oh, come on in.

JACK (as Fourteen) I'm sorry to come here at this hour. You know.

AUSTIN: No, you know, it's—it's... it's rare that I see you anytime before fourteen, fifteen o'clock. So.

JACK (as Fourteen): [chuckles] This is about work.

AUSTIN (as Activation): Yeah, I know. You want some coffee, some water?

JACK (as Fourteen): Yeah, yeah, coffee would be good.

AUSTIN (as Activation): Okay.

JACK (as Fourteen): This is kind of short notice...

AUSTIN: He like puts the cat down, or the cat's on the desk, or is—was it on his lap?

JACK: It was on the desk.

AUSTIN: All right, so yeah, he just gets up and makes a coffee, the cat like just kind of wiggles when you sit down, is like a little bit disturbed, but then kind of settles back down into a little nap.

JACK (as Fourteen): [laughs] Nice cat.

AUSTIN (as Activation): Yeah. Yeah. Anyway.

JACK (as Fourteen): ...Okay.

AUSTIN (as Activation): What do, what do I, what do you need.

JACK (as Fourteen): This is a weird one. I know you can only help so much here. We're going into Contrition. You can't tell anyone about this.

AUSTIN: He like closes his eyes really tight and rubs his temples.

JACK (as Fourteen): But we're going into—can we talk about this?

AUSTIN (as Activation): I thought it would be professional, and it is, but it's also it's like business AND personal right now.

JACK (as Fourteen): It is like business and personal, yeah.

AUSTIN (as Activation): Yeah.

JACK (as Fourteen): [jokingly] Well, I thought I'd, you know, bring a bit of personal in there as well—

AUSTIN (as Activation): Yeah...

JACK (as Fourteen): —it's been lacking, you know.

AUSTIN (as Activation): Yeah.

JACK (as Fourteen): Have you heard what's going on in there?

AUSTIN: He puts a cup of coffee in front of you.

AUSTIN (as Activation): Have I heard what's going on there? No. What's going on there?

JACK (as Fourteen): Okay. Ummmmmm.

AUSTIN (as Activation): You tell me and I'll tell you what you need to know.

JACK (as Fourteen): Are you going to write about this in the newspaper?

AUSTIN (as Activation): *I'm* not gonna. But if I have a tip, I could tell someone else, and they could look into it. And I won't tell them where I got it, and I'll tell them it's from a very good source. And we won't publish it without real reporting, but if I can tell them there's a thi—I mean, listen—listen, you already told me you're goin' in. Right?

JACK (as Fourteen): [laughs] Okay. Yeah, all right.

AUSTIN (as Activation): So what's—what's happening?

JACK (as Fourteen): Something's going on with the Mesh. Umm, you know those—the rehabilitation programs? Like, um.

AUSTIN (as Activation): [laughs] Yeah, I know.

JACK (as Fourteen): They're—they're all... It's hard for me to get a sense of what's actually happening without getting there, but, like, it seems like there's just one of them now. And it's a city. Like, a whole city?

AUSTIN (as Activation): Huh.

JACK (as Fourteen): We've only seen like overhead pictures of it, it's really hazy. Um.

AUSTIN (as Activation): Hm.

JACK (as Fourteen): And the warden? Is lost. In the city.

AUSTIN (as Activation): The warden or the vice warden? Or both?

JACK (as Fourteen): The v—uh, the vice warden, we—we didn't hear from the warden.

AUSTIN (as Activation): Uh, that tells me that the v—that, okay. If you only heard from the vice warden, then the warden's probably also missing.

JACK (as Fourteen): Yeah, so, we've just been kind of—we've been kind of sent in there, and I—I wonder if there was anything that... I wonder if there was anything that you could give us that might—that might help—

AUSTIN: Okay. What sort of thing—out of character, what sort of thing are you looking for here? What do you want from him?

JACK: I'm looking for some—some means of—I feel that like th—what is happening inside this place—

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: —is—is going to make interacting with the normal systems of this place difficult?

AUSTIN: Yeah. Mhm.

JACK: So I want some sense of what the normal systems are, and how someone who's been there would get a sense of how—how they can be pushed slightly.

AUSTIN: Right. All right, so I think he just lays it out for you, and I'm not—not gonna do it in character 'cause it would take a long time. So traditionally there are four types of rehabilitation programs. Or—or again, traditionally, over the course of the last thirty thousand years, there are as many rehabilitation programs as there were people, but in the last, like, five to six hundred, there have only been four.

And that's confrontation, in which a prisoner relives the events of their crime, and all of the events leading up to it, so that they can consider what they did, and why they did it, and work with a counselor to work through what their thought process was, and try to, like, figure out if they would do it again, if it's, like, they—wh—What was the reasoning behind what happened, where was the failure? Was the failure in them? Was the failure in society, et cetera. And if it—if they determine that it was in them, then how do they fix that? And if they determine it was in society, how—how does society address that?

There's, like, positive ideation, where it's just, like, exploring possible other lives that they could live once they get out, because otherwise they're not going to be able to—to like mesh back in with society.

There's just, like, pure skill trial and training. So—so positive ideation is mostly about 'You have skills, how do we get you to want to use them?' Right, like, how do we get you to want to be a member of society again? What's a positive life look like for you? What type of world would you like to live in? Skill training and—and trial, is just, like, oh, like, every couple of weeks you get to try out another thing. Like, do you want to be a keyboardist? Do you want to be a—a—a chef? Like, what sort of things do you like? And then like how do we get you trained up?

And then just resocialization. Which is like, the pra—it's a practice of interacting with all sorts of different type of—types of people so that you can address the beliefs that you have about different parts of society and different individuals, and different identities, until you are comfortable around different types of people.

And some people never get out of prison, right, like, some people are never able to reenter, but 99% of people get the—the hands on that they need to... Everyone's also assigned a specific counselor. The counselor is the only person who knows the crime they committed, no one else in the facility does, including the warden. The warden doesn't even know what crimes the people inside have committed. That's behind lock and key. The counselors are the only ones, and the—the—the...

In general, the results are really positive, right, like, there are still, of course, going to be cracks, but there are very few prisoners altogether, let alone ones who have to come to THIS facility. Most prisoners don't even come to this facility, they go to other facilities where they get this same sort of thing, but in a much less Mesh-heavy environment. The four things I just described are, like, complete—like, complete alternate reality, like, you're in the mixed reality... You're in, not the mixed reality, but the actual, like, deep Mesh.

And so he kind of explains all that stuff to you. He says that there are—it is of course, also—there are—there is a sort of mixed reality s—space in there, too. Like, there are a bunch of different lobbies that people get put into, then go into the Mesh, basically, inside of this big structure. Trying to think if there's anything else he can give you. Is there anything else you specifically want?

JACK: Um...

AUSTIN: He says if you wanna, like, push things around a little bit, he says that, like, you know. Every place in there builds on whatever the people are in there. Like, it pulls from them, to help—to help give them a version of whatever they need. It's not the same as when Contrition was around, right, Contrition was able to do that super well, because it had direct access to the, like, the minds of people?

JACK: Mhm.

AUSTIN: But this is not that. This is, like, 'oh, like, this place is supposed to feel really nice, what sort of things feel nice to you?' and—and it's just not there, y'know.

JACK: Okay. So we're feeling the—the effects of the death of the Divine again.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: But it's still not—it's still 99% recovery rate. Do you know what I mean, like—

JACK: Mhm. Yeah, yeah, yeah. It's just not quite Divine.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK (as Fourteen): Okay. I mean, I probably ought to go, I got an early start.

AUSTIN (as Activation): Yeah, I bet. Listen, be safe. You owe me a drink, and probably a few other things. Mm?

JACK (as Fourteen): [laughs] Okay.

AUSTIN (as Activation): I mean it.

JACK (as Fourteen): You didn't hear it from me, right?

AUSTIN (as Activation): I didn't. But one of these days, I'm gonna be the one who shows up at your office. Do you have an office?

JACK (as Fourteen): Look, I'll be ready. Mm?

[30:05]

AUSTIN (as Activation): Do you have an office?

JACK (as Fourteen): No! I don't.

AUSTIN (as Activation): Okay, well. One of these days you're gonna get a—a call, or a...

JACK (as Fourteen): [laughs]

AUSTIN (as Activation): How the hell do—be safe.

JACK (as Fourteen): I'll be safe.

AUSTIN (as Activation): All right.

JACK (as Fourteen): All right.

AUSTIN: Signet. Were you also gonna *Link*?

JANINE: Um. I actually changed my mind, because the th—I was... Mm. I was a little torn, 'cause I was thinking of a person I could link to, but I realized they might not be available because of what's going on with the prison?

AUSTIN: Oh, okay.

JANINE: Um, and so I'm thinking maybe it would actually be smarter to *Lift the Veil*.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JANINE: I shouldn't s—just lead with a move, but that's...

AUSTIN: What are you doing—yeah, yeah.

JANINE: I feel like I—I think maybe Signet was here.

AUSTIN: Mm.

JANINE: Or she was in a place like it?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: Like, immediately after she abandoned Belgarde.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: I could absolutely see her, like, not on her own home ship, because—

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: —there might have been some, like, weirdness there.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: But they might have—I could totally see—

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: —her being bundled off either to this place or a place like this, just while people figured out like 'what do we do?'

AUSTIN: Yeah. Totally. All right, then *Lift the Veil*!

JANINE: Like, there's something—there's something up with her, and we also need to figure out what we're doing with her, and...

AUSTIN: Yeah. I actually like that a lot. I like that she was here. She probably was here.

JANINE: But it would've been, like, a really long ass time ago, too. So.

AUSTIN: Totally. Um. Give me a, um. Give me—how do you feel?

JANINE: Probably sad.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: Like, that's the honest thing, right, is, like, this is—it's not a bad place, it's not a place she has—I imagine it's not a place she has bad memories of, specifically, like, it's not a place that, like, on its own made her feel bad—

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: —quite the opposite, but, like, she was in a bad place when she got there.

AUSTIN: Yeah. All right!

JANINE: Like, it's a reminder of a very unhappy time. And that's not good.

AUSTIN: Mhm. That's a 5. All right!

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Um, so...

JANINE: It was a very long time ago!

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. 'On any rule the MC will ask YOU a question or two. Answer them.' Did you ever meet Declan inside? Declan Corrective.

JANINE: Mm. Probably not, 'cause, again, like, we're talking like—

AUSTIN: [firmly] No. A—

JANINE: —hundreds of years, maybe, aren't we, or?

AUSTIN: [ominously] Mhm. We are.

JANINE: Oh, I don't know, I still think—I still think no.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JANINE: I think she probably wouldn't have been too mingly with the general population.

AUSTIN: Okay, yeah. Second question is... What was her rehabilitation like?

JANINE: Uh.

AUSTIN: I mean, at this point, again, it was just either confronting the events over and over, exploring possible other lives that you could lead and kind of, like, positive ideation, skill training, or resocialization, kind of meeting different types of people and getting back...

JANINE: I think it would have been exploring other lives—

AUSTIN: Okay.

JANINE: —because, the idea of an excerpt leaving their Divine—

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: —the gut reaction would be, like, 'did you wanna be something else?'

AUSTIN: Right. Right. Right.

JANINE: Like, what's the problem, why would you not willing to—to stick with your shit?

AUSTIN: Did you—did you—so, there was a point in time in which they said 'okay, you can come out, and now what you are is this weird figurehead.' Is that because of things you did inside? And, like, kind of where you—you gravitated towards?

JANINE: I think—yeah, I think what would have come out from the exploring of other lives was that, like, Signet didn't actually want the other things. Like Signet did want to be an Excerpt.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: Like, she did want to be where she was—

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: —that was the—the role in society where she was comfortable, and that wasn't why she left.

AUSTIN: Okay. Cool. There is—how do you do this? What's this look like? What does Lifting the Veil in this case look like, like—like, physically?

JANINE: Uh.

AUSTIN: Like, obviously, to some degree, you're talking about confronting your memory here, but like—

JANINE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: —there should be this Mesh component to this move, right, so, like, I wanna know, visually, how does that look to the audience at home?

JANINE: I imagine it'd be something like, she's—I don't know if this makes sense, but, like, pulling up her memory of the place on her interface?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: Like, she's got a heads-up thing so I could imagine her like overlaying the place as it was—

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: —with how it is now.

AUSTIN: Cool.

JANINE: To try and like—she's, you know, she's trying to like actually draw on those memories to be something useful, but it ends up just being depressing, probably.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Do you—

JANINE: I just realized I haven't been marking my shit.

AUSTIN: Please. Please be marking your shit, it's very important.

JANINE: Yep.

AUSTIN: Also mark your XP on that, 'cause you failed.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Uh, last thing. So, in this interface—so, is it, like, a mixed-reality augmented-reality where like it's just, the room you're in becomes the memory space? Or is it just like—

JANINE: Um, I think it's—on her—on her like—

AUSTIN: —a projection screen.

JANINE: —HUD thing.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JANINE: It's, like, an image she sees.

AUSTIN: Okay. In that image, we get a shot of her being like escorted out. What is—what is she—not like, b—just broadly, what is she wearing, and—and, like, who is escorting her out?

JANINE: When she's leaving?

ALI: Yeah.

JANINE: Um, she's probably wearing, like, a very plain, not like a uniform but just like a very plain, kind of beige, dress.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JANINE: Like, cap sleeves, ankle length, not very embellished.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: Uh, her hair—is still very tidy, though.

AUSTIN: What's it made of?

JANINE: It's probably made of like a nice cotton kind of material.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JANINE: Like, still reasonably—you know it's not silk or anything—

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: But it is a more functional fabric than a fashionable one.

AUSTIN: Okay. And then who's escorting you out?

JANINE: The prison chaplain at the time—

AUSTIN: Okay.

JANINE: —or whatever the equivalent would be.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Okay. So, y—as you—you see this—this image of you leaving, and it's, like, it's actually a shot that you couldn't have seen at the time. It's, like, a drone shot, looking down, and as you walk, the—the cloth of your dress begins to trail behind as if there is, um, a—a trail, but there isn't—that's not the type of dress it is, right, like, it doesn't have—it's not that long. But it keeps—it, it stand—it, like, falls behind you as you walk, as if it's dripping off of you.

And then the chaplain steps into it and it begins to move up the chaplain's leg and replace the chaplain's clothes with the cotton itself until finally it moves up to the chaplain's face and goes in through its nose—through his nose, and through his mouth, and then covers his entire face with this, like, tan cotton. And then it pulls really tight [covers mouth, muffled] up against his face [uncovers mouth] and he reaches out and takes her by the shoulder, and pushes down, and she just collapses through the ground, and then turns to look at you. The Iconoclasts are coming.

JANINE: ...Shit.

JACK: Well. [laughs] Um.

[Nervous laughter]

JACK: They appeared in a vision? In like a Mesh—

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: —in like a.

JANINE: I. They're weird dudes. [laughing] They're. That's—

AUSTIN: I mean, let me be real, I could have had them appear on that *ship* with you. Like. This book is real clear about how they can just show the fuck up, so be careful.

[ALI laughs]

JACK: This is—this feels like the moment in Bloodborne where you get attacked by the man with the big bag for the first time.

[Laughter]

AUSTIN: Um. For the—for the people who did not listen to the worldbuilding episode, there's a bit on—on Signet's sheet that just says "The Iconoclasts: They're coming for you, they never

stop, and they've already taken the rest of your order! Under their disguises they look like: (Choose one or make your own.)” and you picked, "the past or future of humanity" but—and then you chose "they have no faces," and what was the other one? Um, uh.

JANINE: They are made of strange materials.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. Yes. So, you know.

JACK: [laughs] Which they used to murder a chaplain.

AUSTIN: They're coming. Well, I don't know, that's not what happened in your m—I—

JACK: No, they used to like display an attack on a memory of a chaplain.

AUSTIN: Yes.

JACK: Christ.

AUSTIN: Mhm. [excitedly] Oh oh oh oh oh oh oh, Signet!

JANINE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Take components on Morning's Observation.

JANINE: Oh, I already did.

AUSTIN: All right, good. Making sure.

JANINE: Don't worry about *that*, I'm on *that*.

AUSTIN: Okay, I'm. Okay, good.

JACK: Jeez.

AUSTIN: That's important. Okay! Cool.

JANINE: I took *notes*. Don't worry.

AUSTIN: Let's, uh. Let's—I think we get that shot of that happening, and then it cuts, like, it's like low hum as that happens, as the chaplain is consumed by the cotton, and then, mmmm, and then—[snaps fingers] and then we're at the—the same view of the—of the front of Contrition's Figure, which is just this huge square building and, you know, you imagine it goes down in to Seance, into the body of Seance, and... just, the—the four of you walking up. It's Sho, and then the three of you.

AUSTIN (as Sho): This place is a little creepy,

AUSTIN: she says, and then we, like, cut the shot from that top shot down to, like, the four of you standing in front of it.

JANINE (as Signet): It's not supposed to be.

AUSTIN (as Sho): Huh. Yeah, that's a good point. Um, so who's going in first?

JANINE (as Signet): [doubtfully] We're all... going in together.

AUSTIN (as Sho): Oh, right. Yeah. Okay. I didn't know if there was like a—like a plan—like a. Okay, I'm sorry, I'm just—I don't, I haven't really worked with people—

JANINE (as Signet): You're doing very good.

AUSTIN (as Sho): Thank you.

JANINE (as Signet): You are.

AUSTIN (as Sho): I appreciate it.

JACK (as Fourteen): Do you think we should have a plan?

AUSTIN (as Sho): I thought you were gonna be the ones who told me.

JACK (as Fourteen): [lying] Well, no, I'm just—I'm just—I mean *we've* got a plan, I'm just.

[AUSTIN laughs]

JACK (as Fourteen): I'm wondering... if you also have a plan?

ALI (as Tender): Yeah, this is a test. If—if you were coming in here, what would your plan be?

[39:57]

AUSTIN (as Sho): My plan would be... to... uphold the tenants, and to treat other humans with respect, but to act in—in complete dedication to my cause.

JANINE (as Signet): Tenants or tenets? Or both?

AUSTIN (as Sho): Oh, sorry, the—the right one. (laughs) Tenets. Not tenants. I—I'm not a landlord.

[Laughter]

JANINE (as Signet): I mean, in this case, both apply, so it's worth—I think they're—I don't think either answer is wrong.

JACK (as Fourteen): So, I think what we're gonna try and do here is... go in, see what's going on, and then, ah, the other steps, we can move forward on them from there.

AUSTIN (as Sho): Okay. Sounds good.

AUSTIN: And she like waits for someone else to lead, and then follows. The entryway is like—there is a fence around the place. Doesn't have barbed wire, it's just kind of like a for-show fence, it's a big chain link fence. And then there is kind of a—a—a huge grass field around it, and then a—a walkway in, like, it—it just—you—you can totally walk in, there are guards at the—at the—the gate, and they don't seem to know anything is up. But they were—they were made aware of you coming. And they say,

AUSTIN (as guards): Beloved.

AUSTIN: As you enter. And then you walk the long kind of pavement into the front doors of—of this place, which are just like two big doors that open up sideways, there's like a little scaffolding above them.

And inside is a lobby, and it's like—it's like the lobby of a police station or something, right. Like there are—there are chairs that are like linked together on a—on a little metal bar, and there is like a—a reception, like a—a—a person at—at the reception desk, who's in a—a—a uniform, which is like, it's not a police uniform, it's like, um, again, like, in my mind, they look like a school counselor. They have like a, um, I think has on like a skirt, like a dark brown skirt, with a slightly lighter brown jacket, and like a peach colored like dress shirt with like a really long collar on the dress shirt that comes out across the—it's—it's a look. it's a look. And then like little glasses, and her hair is up in a bun. And she just says like,

AUSTIN (as receptionist): All right, everyone, take a seat.

AUSTIN: And as you do, the—the like—as soon as you sit down, the—there's a TV on the other end, which at that point had been showing the—the skyline of Seance, just as it was in the—the... Composure's Coliseum. And—and now it just like—it flicks on to Tetragon, and Tetragon says, like

AUSTIN (as Tetragon): [exaggerated drawl] I'm so glad y'all could make it! Can't wait for you to get in here!

AUSTIN: Uh, and you get to see this, like, huge city behind them, and it's not—it does—you could tell that they're a little—they're a little scared.

AUSTIN (as Tetragon): Hope it happens any second now!!!

ALI (as Tender): Can you, like, describe where you are?

AUSTIN (as Tetragon): Oh, well. Uh, it's like... I don't know how to descriiibe it.

ALI (as Tender): Any like landmarks, or like streets you've walked by...?

AUSTIN (as Tetragon): I've never been to this place before in my life.

ALI (as Tender): But you're there right now, and you—

AUSTIN (as Tetragon): Right but okay, well, there's a cow.

AUSTIN: It's like "mmmmoooo!" and a cow walks by, and like -

JANINE: In the middle of a city?

JACK: Okay, beyond the—

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: It's just a city cow?

AUSTIN: It's a city cow. Dirt roads.

JACK (as Fourteen): Uh. Hey, Tetragon, I'm Fourteen. Are there any tall buildings that you can see that are distinctive?

AUSTIN (as Tetragon): Lots of 'em, there's a bell tower, there's—

JACK: Okay.

AUSTIN (as Tetragon): —a—a—some sort of round top building. Um, there's a—I guess—no, that's called a dome.

AUSTIN: Um. And it's like this little square is like looking all around, it's like you're getting a shot of the front—like, a camera shot at a square like, LED face. Does not have any—

[Laughter]

AUSTIN: —it's just the LE—it's just the face, there's no—it's just like the eyes and the mouth, and the square around, the square outline that's walking through a city street. You like s—it's like the Spike Lee, like, camera shot right at the face as—as they are walking through these city

streets, it's like, completely locked. And you're seeing right through where the normal person, a human or a synthetic person's face would be. It's also just like a BIG square, like it's just a big square. So. Um. Heh.

JACK (as Fourteen): Okay, well. Probably a good idea to sit tight, don't move.

ALI (as Tender): Can you like wait at an intersection?

AUSTIN (as Tetragon): Which one?

ALI (as Tender): Which are you closest to?

AUSTIN (as Tetragon): The one with the cow.

JACK (as Fourteen): Right, well. That's gonna be moving independently—

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN (as Tetragon): I'm not quite sure I can help much, w—I don't have a map of the place or a...

ALI (as Tender): I just like, are you near, like, are there street signs, are you near a McDonald's—

AUSTIN (as Tetragon): No!

ALI (as Tender): [laughs]—like—would you—

AUSTIN (as Tetragon): Lord, I—I haven't seen anything like this before!

[45:05]

ALI (as Tender): [laughing] Oh, okay.

AUSTIN (as Tetragon): There's a big statue, there's a big statue of a man—

JACK (as Fourteen): [excited] Ha! Okay!

AUSTIN (as Tetragon): Oh, no, there's an—there's another one.

JACK (as Fourteen): [disappointed] Oh, okay... [laughs]

ALI (as Tender): You sit tight, buddy.

JACK (as Fourteen): Yeah, don't...

ALI (as Tender): We'll see you soon.

JACK (as Fourteen): [helplessly] Yeah.

AUSTIN: Um. Have you all gone in to the Mesh at the same place before?

JANINE: How so?

AUSTIN: Like have you all been in the same lobby before?

JACK: Maybe to get into the Steady, right?

ALI: Yeah, probably.

AUSTIN: Okay, I didn't know if you would go to the same lobby or not, you know what I mean. Ah, that's fine, I'm just, okay, it's like—does it—who goes in—who gets in first—who like become calm enough for this transition to happen?

ALI: Mm.

JANINE: I wanna say Signet.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JANINE: Maybe. Like, actually, maybe not, 'cause she's kinda—she's seen some shit very—very recently—

AUSTIN: Yeah. Uh-huh.

[ALI laughs]

JANINE: —that would maybe affect her calmness somewhat.

AUSTIN: Mhm. A little bit. A little bit.

JANINE: She might actually be second!

AUSTIN: Okay. That doesn't—it doesn't super matter, I was just curious.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Eventually all four of you slip into the Mesh, and kind of fall asleep, basically, in this lobby space, and you appear in a hallway. In a prison. And it's just like a long hallway with cell doors to the left and right, and each of them is empty. And then at the end of the hallway, I

guess—actually, it—it goes forward for a while, and then it opens up into a black space, where it's like, I guess, you can kind of see the borders around this... it's like a tunnel, you are in a tunnel, basically, and—and specifically, Tender, you can kind of see the construct space now.

Like you—this is—this is what you do, and so you can kind of see that you're in like a building space. This whole place could be all white. It could be all black. It could be, like, a grey box. It could be whatever—it—it is normally, um, or whatever the designer in question has set it to be, the kind of empty space.

But then that—that like hallway, that is kind of, like—becomes just—the ground of the hallway leads to a prison cell that's right in front of you, all the way, and then there are side roads that go off in, in different directions. There are—there's a city, off in the distance, to the like far down and to the right. There is a—a single room, um, just directly to the right of you but like a—a—kind of far away away, and there are little paths that lead to each of these, these things, that are - thin. They—they look hard to walk on.

And again, right in front of you is another—is just a single cell, at the end of this hallway, and then off to the left is a HUGE second building, and you look at it from the top down, and it looks like what the prison, what—what Contrition's Figure is supposed to look like? And you can just see motion happening there, you can just see, like, there are people going about their day there—

JACK: In the main body of the prison?

AUSTIN: Well. I—I—I'm just gonna give this to Tender, because she knows how these things work: that's like a duplicate, like, you can just see that it says, like, “copy of prison,” basically.

JACK: [huffs] And the “real stuff” is happening... in this city that is linked—that we are linked to by a—by a thin, difficult path?

AUSTIN: What do you mean by the real stuff?

JACK: I mean. Well. I'm putting heavy inverted commas of irony—

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: —on, I guess, EVERY word in that sentence?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: I. You know, I think the thing is, here, I—I mean. I'll lay it out like this: you could be in any of those places, instantly, if—if, uh, Tender wants to build a new bridge there.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I think that might count as taking a shortcut, though?

ALI: Yes. [laughs]

JACK: Yeah, it would, actually, wouldn't it.

AUSTIN: Um. Yeah. So yeah. I think that that's—that's what's—what's there, what's in front of you. I mean again, Tender, you know that that other prison is like, fake. Like—or it's not fake, it's... a copy. And that's all i'll say about that, without—without more investigation, or something.

ALI: Okay...

AUSTIN: But like, it should be in the place you 're in now, if that makes sense. Like it's—you're supposed to come through the lobby and be where *that* is, and instead that has been shifted or duplicated, and transferred over there, instead of here.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: I'm actually gonna change one thing, which is I *think*—and you don't have to edit around this, 'cause I just realized that this is a more interesting way to communicate what's h—what a—a larger thing that's happening here. Which is, there's just the city, there's the cell in front of you, and then there's the bit to the left there's the—the correct—or like the duplicate of what the prison's supposed to look like.

And then, suddenly, there is another room. And then that room has a new path that leads up to this main walkway that you're on. And. Like it's added, suddenly. So it seems as if someone is working on this place as we speak. Uh, so what are you—what are you all doing?

ALI: Oh, I wanted to disguise myself?

AUSTIN: Oh, that's a good call.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: What's that—how do you do that? What's that look like? and—

ALI: Um, I think that she -

AUSTIN: And, and what are you feeling?

ALI: [laughs] What am I feeling? Okay, I think that I am feeling... peaceful? this seems just kind of routine—

AUSTIN: Yeah, sure. Makes sense.

ALI: —you start a job, you—you put an outfit on, and then you kind of get going?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ALI: And I think that she like, kind of—she reaches down to like her ankle, and then like snaps—

AUSTIN: Mm.

ALI: —and then as she like lifts her hand up, it's like a—like the—the clothes that she's wearing kind of pixelate—

AUSTIN: ooh, that's cool.

ALI: —and then reform into like what she wants to be wearing.

AUSTIN: Right, right.

ALI: Which is a um—a uniform of someone who works at this prison?

AUSTIN: Oh, interesting.

ALI: Yeah! Just.

AUSTIN: What—tell me—tell me more about—I mean, make the roll—

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: —and then—and then we'll talk, I guess, actually, right.

ALI: Yeah. I said peaceful, right?

AUSTIN: You did say peaceful.

ALI: Okay. And I have the results, I got a 9—

AUSTIN: You got a 9!

ALI: —that's a 9, okay, cool!

AUSTIN: So, on... a... 7-9, when you—this is *Lady in Red*, is the name of the move, right.

ALI: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Uh. So it says, 'when you change your appearance within the constraints of the digital, roll +cyberbrain.' Oh, actually, sorry, you had to roll +cyberbrain, not +peaceful.

ALI: Oh...

AUSTIN: Uh, but I think that might be fine.

ALI: Yeah...

AUSTIN: What's your cyberbrain score?

ALI: I think my cyberbrain - I get a +1, because of...

AUSTIN: Ssss, fff, yeah, I think your cyberbrain starts at +1—

ALI: So does that just turn into a 10? Yeah...

AUSTIN: It does. So, yeah, I'm actually gonna—

ALI: Yay!

AUSTIN: Add cyber—1 to your cyberbrain here. In the—in the thing.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: That will be your other stat, here.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: Yeah, so yay! That's a 10, nice work. So, thankfully, you did not get a 7-9—

[ALI sighs]

AUSTIN: —which means [laugh] that, uh, some part of your subconscious did not manifest.

ALI: Cool.

AUSTIN: So yeah, describe what you're—describe what the uniform of the people who look here looks like, then.

ALI: Ummmmmm hm! It's tough, 'cause like it's definitely not like a prison uniform, in the way—

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: —that we think about it, because this is like, I don't think that the people who wanna work here are trying to look like an authority?

AUSTIN: No. like, a—a, things—

ALI: Like, the whole—the things—yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah, a couple things to note that I kind of suggested last time but i'd like to confirm, or like give a little more detail on, um, this time, is that like, no one in this prison knows what anyone in this prison did as a crime—

ALI: Mhm.

AUSTIN: —the privacy of all of these—these inmates is like incredibly important. The warden doesn't even know what the—what they did. The only people who know are their Mercy officers, who come to like help them get rehabilitated. Uh, and then when the Divine of Contrition was alive, Contrition knew, and built specific programs to help them... get rehabilitated. There are only like seventy-some, eighty-some like prisoners in this facility total, and, yeah, the people who are here are y—almost more medical than they are—but not even like clinical-medical, like, therapeutic is probably the best way to think about the people who work here.

ALI: Uh. Okay.

AUSTIN: If that makes sense. So—j—let that lead be your guide on like what you're—what this looks like.

ALI: Yeah, I think it's kind of like a business casual sort of thing—

AUSTIN: Sure.

ALI: —but like instead of it being a uniform, it's like, you wear an armband to kind of identify yourself?

AUSTIN: Hm! Okay.

ALI: So I think that she's wearing like a-line skirt, that has like a floral print on it?

AUSTIN: Okay.

ALI: But it's like moving, as if the flowers were like—kind of in the breeze?

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

ALI: With like a—the really light colored button-down, with like a waistcoat, but it's one of those that has like a really like low neckline? With the armband with like the prison symbol on it.

AUSTIN: Interesting. So when you do that, without in—maybe without intention, Sho, her dress like starts—like, matches yours.

ALI: Aw.

AUSTIN: It had previously been an image of this city, that was like, alive. But like as you do your thing, it becomes the thing that is yours, it becomes that—it goes back to being kind of a floral thing. And previously her thing had been like f—a floral dress that, where the—the plants were—were budding, but now they're—they're already in blossom, and they are kind of blowing in the same breeze as yours. Like, you can see the breeze move from one dress to the other dress, if that makes sense.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: As if there's like a single breeze. In the room. Cool. So, what else—what else is everybody doing?

JACK: So I'm gonna try and—and head down the corridor towards this single room, at the end, since it's kind of the—

AUSTIN: Sure.

JACK: —it's closest to us.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Um. I think it is like, the image of—it is the image of like an old, old, old-school prison cell, right. Like it is open-faced with bars. With a—a metal—with metal bars and a metal gate, and there is a single window in the back and there is a bed and then there are like a handful of—of. There's like a—a desk that has a projected holographic interface, so that someone could write on it. There is a nice—like a very lush looking velvet red chair, and in that chair there is—I mean, how close are you getting? You just walking all the way up to it?

JACK: Yeah, I'm, I'm walking up to the room.

AUSTIN: All right. Sho -

JACK: But cautiously.

AUSTIN: Yeah, Sho kind of looks at the rest of you, as if like, should I follow, should I follow Fourteen?

ALI: Uh, yeah! We should—are we all heading there?

AUSTIN: Okay.

ALI: I'll h—I—

AUSTIN: That's what I'm—yeah.

ALI: We should probably stick together?

JANINE: I mean, it's the closest place.

ALI: Yeah.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: I think we—we're all going.

AUSTIN: So you see that there is a man sitting in a chair reading a book. He is—he is—has kind of brown skin, with—with like light brown skin, he—he's like Hispanic, and has like a pretty—I don't want to say a well groomed beard, because that suggests something slightly different. It's like this mix of very well groomed and kind of a mess? I want to send you a picture, give me a second. Uh, his hair is like oiled and slicked back. He's in his like f—mid-fifties I would say. He is modeled after this specific picture of Benicio del Toro. [sheepish laugh] Furrowed brow, like, dignified, but not like—but again, still kind of rough around the edges.

And I think he probably has a cigarette hanging from his lip as he's reading this book. The cigarette is like either not lit or is an electronic cigarette. There's no smoke coming from it. I—I kind of like that it's just—it's just not lit, like he just has it in his lip as he's reading this thing. His legs are crossed. And—or he has like one leg up on the other leg, and he's like falling back into this chair. But otherwise seems kind of relaxed.

ALI: Isn't this the guy? The bad guy? The big bad? I think he's, yeah...

JANINE: I also thought that was...

AUSTIN: Mh. Uh-huh. This is, this is Corrective.

ALI: Okay. Hoo. [laughs nervously]

AUSTIN: And he's not paying you any mind. Like, he doesn't—he does not even react—he doesn't—I don't think he even—you can't tell if he can even see you.

JACK: Is the door shut, Austin?

AUSTIN: Yeah, the door is—well, I mean it's—it's a—it's like metal bars, with a metal gate, and it's—

JACK: It's—it's—it's barred?

AUSTIN: Yeah, it is barred.

JACK: Okay. Oof. Okay, I'm gonna like look back at Sho and at Tender and Signet and sort of look at the—look at the guy—

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: —like, 'that's—that's the guy,' and then I'm gonna sort of approach the—approach the bars? And—and call out.

AUSTIN: Um. You can see—

JANINE: Wait! Can I grab them?

AUSTIN: Ah. Yes. If—as long as Fourteen like—Fourteen, are you resisting being grabbed?

JACK: Uh, my hand goes to my gun, immediately—

JANINE: It's -

JACK: —but as soon as I realized who's grabbing me, I -

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: I—I don't wanna say it's like a forceful grab, but I wanna just say it's like a—like a, upper arm, like—

JACK: Oh, like a—

ALI: Like a “wait.”

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE (as Signet): If there's no sign of him overtly causing any trouble, I don't think we should talk to him. It's detrimental to his recovery.

JACK (as Fourteen): We're not gonna be able to do this with everybody.

JANINE (as Signet): No, but does he look like he's—creating a city?

AUSTIN: He turns a page.

ALI (as Tender): There's a lot of ways to look like you're creating a city.

[JANINE laughs]

JACK (as Fourteen): I was—we went in here knowing three names, and this is one of the names on the list I was given.

JANINE (as Signet): I'm gonna walk back down the hall.

[ALI and JACK laugh]

AUSTIN: Sho like moves her eyes between the—the group of you.

AUSTIN (as Sho): We must use determination and resolution in the pursuit of justice!

AUSTIN: she says, and then like, makes a fist, and slams it down on her hand.

JACK (as Fourteen): We sure must!

ALI (as Tender): Yep.

JACK(as Fourteen): Determination! Um, okay. Uh—

ALI (as Tender): Opportunities like this don't come every day.

JACK (as Fourteen): No...

JANINE (as Signet): I'm not saying *you* should not, I'm just saying *I'm* not.

ALI (as Tender): [laughing] Okay.

JACK (as Fourteen): Okay. That's why you're further down the corridor, right?

JANINE (as Signet): That's—yes, that's right.

AUSTIN: Yes. Uh-huh.

JANINE (as Signet): I'm walking further down the hall. What happens at this end of the hall doesn't particularly concern me.

AUSTIN: Oh, okay, this is like a—this is like a ‘turn a blind eye’ situation, huh?

JACK (as Fourteen): You're going back towards the exit? Okay... all right.

JANINE (as Signet): There's other s—there's other stuff, kinda.

[AUSTIN laughs]

JACK: So I think I'm gonna approach the bars without touching them, and sort of cough?

AUSTIN: You can see like as you cough, there's like an invisible layer of—of like glass, basically, like, liquid glass that ripples with the cough. Um. But his eyes do move up when you do it.

AUSTIN (as Corrective): [gruffly] Hello.

JACK: Hello. My name is Fourteen Fifteen.

AUSTIN (as Corrective): [sigh] Names. One second.

AUSTIN: And he gets up, and walks over to like the holographic screen that's hovering above the desk, and like hits a few buttons, and a window appears. Like, he—like a—the rip—where the ripple is happening, you can see that it—a new ripple happen, like as if there was just a layer of water that ripples out, as a square opens up to be a—a window into—like in another—in—an invisible window in a layer of invisible, like, liquid glass, basically. In fact, I think maybe it even pushes the vision of the bars away, like the bars disappear in that section, to be like a—a pretty sizeable window. That you can s—that, you know, you could have always seen him, but now it looks like he can see out.

[1:00:04]

AUSTIN (as Corrective): Mm. Assassin? Or... just a regular killer?

JACK (as Fourteen): I'm employed, I think, is the way to put it.

AUSTIN (as Corrective): Okay. Always like a person* with a job.

**misspoken as “man”*

JACK (as Fourteen): These are my colleagues.

[ALI laughs softly]

AUSTIN: He like—he nods at you both, or at the—yeah, at Sho and at Tender, and then takes a lighter out and lights the cigarette.

ALI (as Tender): I don't—I don't—I don't do the—the killing.

AUSTIN (as Corrective): [exhales] A—and her?

AUSTIN: And Sho nods, and she says, like,

AUSTIN (as Sho): I... do.

JACK (as Fourteen): She's new.

AUSTIN (as Sho): Not that new.

JACK (as Fourteen): She's new-ish. Um.

AUSTIN (as Sho): I'm new-ish.

JACK (as Fourteen): So, uh, does it usually look like this?

AUSTIN: He like raises an eyebrow and says, like,

AUSTIN (as Corrective): Can't see out much, lemme...

AUSTIN: And he like leans v—he leans very close forward to the bars, and like. His eyes don't - he like, looks left and right a little bit, and then just looks you in the eye. Like, locks eyes with you, Fourteen. And like sniffs, a little bit? [sniffs]

JACK (as Fourteen): You okay?

AUSTIN (as Corrective): I'm fine. [sniffs] You smell funny.

JACK (as Fourteen): I've been better.

AUSTIN (as Corrective): Mm. Looks weird. 'Sposed to be a cell block. [sighs] You wanna come in? Take a seat, have a drink.

JACK (as Fourteen): Into this—into the cell?

AUSTIN: He like [sighs] I think probably like puts up one finger, and again like with the cigarette like dangling from his lip just barely, walks back over to the holo computer and hits a few buttons, and then like a second chair begins to phase in.

JACK: Wha—ooh—

[ALI laughs]

JACK (as Fourteen): I don't know if this is a good idea.

AUSTIN (as Corrective): I'll talk to you through a window, I'll talk to you in a chair, I'll talk to you... wherever.

[JACK laughs]

ALI (as Tender): I can keep an eye out.

JACK (as Fourteen): Signet?

ALI (as Tender): Signet's like s—

JANINE: Signet's just like down the hall.

JACK (as Fourteen): I think I'm going to go in the jail.

JANINE: She's—she's not.

ALI (as Tender): She's not gonna—I got you, it's fine.

AUSTIN: Sho—Sho says, like

AUSTIN (as Sho): I—I—I'm gonna go stand guard by one of the pathways.

AUSTIN: And then like steps back to the—the one that goes to the city. And he—and you can h
[laughs]—you can hear the—the man inside the cell go,

AUSTIN (as Corrective): [amused noise] Pathways.

AUSTIN: And then like he hits another button and a door—like the gate opens. Like, the door of the gate door opens up.

JACK (as Fourteen): Oh. Can you leave?

AUSTIN (as Corrective): I can do a lot of things.

JACK (as Fourteen): Well, the reason I ask is because if I'm going to go in, I need some assurance that I'm going to be able to come back out again.

AUSTIN (as Corrective): I got the door button, right?

ALI (as Tender): [encouragingly] He's got the door button.

AUSTIN (as Corrective): What more do you need?

JACK (as Fourteen): Tender, are you trying to get me trapped in this cell?

ALI (as Tender): [laughs] I'm just saying if you go in there, I—I could probably get you out, it's probably fine.

AUSTIN: He like hits another button and a mirror appears behind the holo-screen, and he like shoves the screen off to the side. Like he just like 'Minority Report' moves it, and then like hits another button and like a little water faucet comes out. And he like gets some water and like puts it through his hair and kind of like makes sure he looks all right. And like, ah, like rubs his beard and is like 'ah, I fuckin' shoulda had a cleaner shave.'

JACK: [laughs] Okay. I'm gonna try and go into the cell.

AUSTIN: You walk into the cell. Um. The thing that you notice when you walk into the cell is like, the rest—like, from his perspective, from inside the cell, the things that are bars are just more brick walls. That like have a little shimmer to them, but they're brick, they're—he doesn't have like the gate view that you have from the other side.

JACK: Mm.

AUSTIN: You also see that there is, hanging in like—he has a window out, and the window out just goes to space, just outer space. And in the distance is a blue and green planet. Which I don't know how well you know what Earth looks like, but it's Earth.

JACK: I could not identify Earth—

AUSTIN: Yeah, I figured.

JACK: —if you showed me. Several pictures of it.

AUSTIN: Uh, maybe, though—though maybe you just saw a picture, given—

JACK: Oh.

AUSTIN: —the stuff with—in the last episode—

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: —with interrogating...

JACK: I've probably forgotten what it looks like, honestly.

AUSTIN: That's fair.

JACK: I've seen a lot of planets.

AUSTIN: Fair. Fair. Um, okay.

JACK: Um. Can I still see Tender?

AUSTIN: What are you—Signet—

JACK: Through the window?

AUSTIN: Teah, the window stays open.

JACK: Okay, cool.

AUSTIN: Signet, what are you off doing?

JANINE: Ah, I think that... what Signet did when she left was she truly like turned on her heel—

AUSTIN: [amused] Uh-huh.

JANINE: —and just walked back the way that they came. Probably past the first two pathways, but the—that last one that leads to the room that was like just made, right?

AUSTIN: Mhm. It's this one here. Yep.

JANINE: Or like we—yeah.

AUSTIN: The last pathway.

JANINE: I think she—she—once she comes to that sort of path, she takes the turn and goes that way

AUSTIN: Okay. the pathway there then like becomes a regular hallway, and it is lined with paintings... of the people in the prison. There are no names, there's just like, “Prisoner Number Three,” and like “Mercy Counselor Seven.” And they're—but they're like, pretty realistic portraits painted in very thick oil, and it's like, everyone is posed in this very noble way. And the floor is this nice thick carpet, and there's just like lots of furniture down the hallways, um—or down the one hallway, not the hallways, it's one long twisting hallway.

And it twists in very, like, organic circles, not in—it's not hard left and right turns, right, like it's—it's like a string that has been laid out, not like, um. Not like a—a cube, or something, right. And the furniture is like very polished wood, with brass handles, and there are some vases from like various cultures, and you're just kind of walking down this long hallway. The red carpet probably also has like little, like gold embellishment on it, like some sort of—symbol. Maybe

just a C, for Contrition or—maybe it's a C and an F for Contrition's Figure, which is the name of the—the facility. And you just kind of find yourself walking down this hallway. Are you doing anything else or are you just gonna make this trip?

JANINE: Um.... I mean, there's stuff she could be doing, but it feels kind of forced?

AUSTIN: Okay.

JANINE: I think she's just, she's just walking down this hallway.

AUSTIN: Okay. Tender, what are you doing, are you just hanging out outside this thing and monitoring?

ALI: Um, yeah, I feel like I'm standing like right in the—the like doorway between where the cell is and where that hallway ends?

AUSTIN: Sure. Okay. Cool.

ALI: Just to kinda keep keep a lookout.

AUSTIN: Okay. All right, so, so, Fourteen, do you sit in the chair, like, what's your—

JACK: Yeah, I'm gonna—I'm gonna sit in the chair, but in the moment, Fourteen, who I think it's also worth saying again on air uses they pronouns—

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: Is moving with the... rhythm and the caution of the gunslinger whose body they're taking on.

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: At the moment.

AUSTIN: Corrective moves with like a dancer's foot? Like, there's a sway in every move he makes.

AUSTIN (as Corrective): Drink? What do you drink?

JACK (as Fourteen): I'll take—I'll take water.

AUSTIN (as Corrective): Mm.

AUSTIN: And he just like opens up one of the bricks, as a—it's like, it's just a, it's just a cabinet. Like he just reaches up and taps it twice and then it—it's like, opens up. Four of the bricks reveal

themselves to just be a cabinet, and he pulls out a glass, and then he looks back, he like goes to put it under the tap, and then he goes—looks back and goes,

AUSTIN (as Corrective): Tap's fine?

JACK (as Fourteen): Tap's fine, tap's fine.

AUSTIN (as Corrective): Mhm.

AUSTIN: And like gives you tap, and then grabs another bottle of like brown liquor from the cabinet up there, and like holds it between a couple of fingers and walks back over to you, and he refills his own glass with the brown liquor, and then gives you the—the glass of water.

AUSTIN (as Corrective): So tell me what it looks like out there. Is it, uh. (sniffs) What I could see, all mixed up.

JACK (as Fourteen): There's like a—

[Train noise in background]

[ALI laughs]

JACK: Oh my god.

AUSTIN: That was a weird sound, I don't know what that—it sounded like there was a train.

ALI: [laughing] That's—should there be a train?

AUSTIN: I don't know.

JACK: What was that?

AUSTIN: I don't know.

JANINE: It was the prison express! Doot doot!

[ALI laughs]

JACK: [as though in character] Well, there's a train. [laughs]

JACK (as Fourteen): There's like a—it's like a corridor, that... [sighs] It—the Veil is, the Veil is, there's a lot happening out there. We—we can see down into a—into like a cell block, and we can see people in the cell block, and then, y'know, left from the—from—from your cell, if we were to leave it now, there's like a—there's like a city out there.

AUSTIN (as Corrective): Oh yeah, tell me about the city, what type of city?

AUSTIN: And he takes a drink.

JACK (as Fourteen): It's like very large. It's, ah. There's lots of statues...

AUSTIN (as Corrective): Hm. Ha ha.

JACK (as Fourteen): We need to go there. That's—that's why we're here. We need to—we need to get down there, somehow.

AUSTIN (as Corrective): About how manyyy, how many statues we talking about? Talking about, uh, four? Five? How many statues.

JACK (as Fourteen): [sighs]

AUSTIN: And he takes another drink.

JACK (as Fourteen): You're, uh. Corrective, right?

AUSTIN (as Corrective): [big intake of breath] Mm. You don't hear my name often. Yeah.

JACK (as Fourteen): Okay. Uh, maybe fourt-teen... to... thirty. A large number. Look, a lot of stat—look, I don't know, is that important? Is the number of statues important?

AUSTIN (as Corrective): There's a certain number of statues. And... if it's a certain number, then I know what it is. If it's a different number, I don't know the city. But if it's a certain number, I know what the city is.

ALI (as Tender): Oh my god.

AUSTIN (as Corrective): Count them. Count the statues. How many, how many statues there are.

JACK (as Fourteen): Tender. Tender, uh, h—h—

ALI (as Tender): Yeah, hi, hey, I hear the whole thing,

JACK (as Fourteen): Hi.

ALI (as Tender): We gotta go s—count some statues?

JACK (as Fourteen): Can you see from from where you are?

ALI (as Tender): I... you think I can count them from here? Actually...

JACK (as Fourteen): I mean, how big are they?

ALI (as Tender): Um.

AUSTIN (as Corrective): Uh, they're.

AUSTIN: And he lights another—he like puts out a cigarette and then lights another one.

AUSTIN (as Corrective): Should be pretty big. If it's the city I think it is.

[ALI sighs]

JACK (as Fourteen): They should be, he says they should be pretty big.

[ALI sighs again]

ALI: Can I see any like prominent statues? Or is it like in a city?

AUSTIN: Like, gimme—there are big st—there are huge statues, like, the vice warden was not lying when they said that there were big statues. For sure.

ALI: Okay. But like, if I look into the city, do I feel like I could be able to count them, or does it look like looking at the New York sky—skyline?

AUSTIN (overlapping): If you—I—when you look into—I mean if you looked at—if you looked at the skyline of New York, how many big buildings would there - how many skyscrapers would there be, specifically? Could you count them? From a helicopter? Probably.

ALI: [doubtfully] Probably?

AUSTIN: But it would take some effort, which means you'd have to roll.

ALI (as Tender): Okay. This is—okay. Let's do this this way. How many statues would there have to be for it to be worth my while to come back here and ask you about it?

AUSTIN (as Corrective): That's a bad, that's not—

JACK (as Fourteen): Oh, good question.

AUSTIN (as Corrective): That's not how it—I mean that's—how do I know you're not gonna lie to me about something?

ALI (as Tender): [laughs] Wait?

AUSTIN (as Corrective): It's twenty-seven. Twenty-seven statues.

ALI (as Tender): Okay, cool, 'cause if I lied to you then you would say that it wasn't important, even though it is. [confused by her own reasoning] What?

AUSTIN (as Corrective): Mm. Mm.

ALI (as Tender): Okay. Ugh. Yeah, okay, I'll go count 'em. Signet, you wanna go count some statues?

ALI: And I'm like -

AUSTIN: She's gone, remember, she's—

JANINE: I'm still gone, I'm like—

AUSTIN: She's—she's—she's—

ALI: I'm, oh, I thought—I was like, yelling down the hallway—

AUSTIN: Oh, okay. She's down a little side hallway now.

JANINE: I'm like around—I'm like in a twisty hallway.

ALI: Oh, okay.

AUSTIN: Yeah, like, you call, and look back, and she's not there.

[JANINE laughs]

ALI: Cool.

AUSTIN: And then we actually just cut to a shot of Signet walking down the hallway and like one of those paintings just looks like it's looking at her. That's all.

JANINE: Cool. Great.

[ALI sighs]

AUSTIN: So you wanna count these statues?

ALI: Yeah, I'm, I might as well.

JACK (as Fourteen): Tender.

ALI (as Tender): Yeah, hey!

JACK (as Fourteen): Where are you—where are you going?

ALI (as Tender): I'm going to this fucking city, I guess!

AUSTIN: I mean—you don't have to—

JACK: Y—

AUSTIN: —go to the city to count the statues.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: That's what I'm saying,

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: Like it's—you're effectively in a helicopter over the city. It just, below you, in a distance—in the distance, it's like being—

JACK: [facetiously] I am communicating this information to Tender.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: No, I'm, *I'm* communicating this information out of character. This is the GM speaking and saying you can look down and see, it's like being in a plane over Manhattan.

ALI: [understandingly] Oookay. Okay, okay, okay.

AUSTIN: Oh yeah, there's the Statue of—there's the Statue of Liberty. There's the Empire State Building. Is that the Chrysler Building or is that—that other one that I always get confused? It's not the chrysler building, it's the other one. Um. So it's like that.

ALI: Okay. Yeah, I'll, yeah.

AUSTIN: Iiii. So how are you doing it is my question, like are you using your eyes, are you using some sort of special—like hacking... architect stuff?

ALI: So I feel like being able to like just look down at a thing and be like “oh that's a big building,—”

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ALI: “—that's a bigger building than other ones,” is kind of a weird thing, but I have those like cybereyes? That are forensic?

AUSTIN: Oh, you *do* have those cybereyes, yeah.

ALI: So I feel like if I just like do a search with the, like, statue tag—

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

ALI: —like, it'll be able to identify without her being like, 'wait, is that like just a guy, or is that a statue?'

AUSTIN: I like that. that's pretty interesting.

ALI: Um. And I—

AUSTIN: Um.

ALI: The....

AUSTIN: Go ahead.

ALI: And I think that I am frustrated?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ALI: And I think that's under mad?

AUSTIN: Sure.

ALI: Um.

AUSTIN: So I think that's *Analyze*. I think. When you assess a place or—or a situation.

ALI: Okay. But I'm still just rolling Mad?

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

ALI: Okay, cool, cool.

AUSTIN: That's fair. Make sure you mark your—make sure you mark stuff.

ALI: Yes.

AUSTIN: Oh, that's a—that's a 7, that's all right.

ALI: Yeahhhh, it's not great.

AUSTIN: It's not ideal, but it's all right.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: Uh, on a, well—on a 7 on—on *Analyze*, you get to ask two of the following questions and I think one of them will be the like—the one that is just how many statues are there, effectively. What's my best way out - hm?

ALI: Do, do I get a plus from my eyes, or is it just like roll...

AUSTIN: Yeah, you get a plus, uh, you can take a—you know what, y—I'll, you know what I'll say is like they'll give you advantage, which is a—which is a thing I always forget is in this game, because we've never played a—uh—Powered by the Apocalypse game that has advantage, um. And the way advantaaage works [typing noise] is... I have to look it up again. Because we'd never played a—an Apocalypse World game—

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: —that's had advantage! I *think* you roll a third die, and you count... the highest two.

ALI: Okay, I feel like we've done that before.

AUSTIN: We've done it, we did it once at least.

ALI: So do I just?

AUSTIN: Uh, yeah, you roll—so roll one, 1d6, and we'll just add it manually. ...Look at that, that's way better. So, it means you drop that 1 and you get a 6 and 5, that's a 12.

[1:15:05]

ALI: Nice!

AUSTIN: So yeah, you crush it.

ALI: Yes, baby.

AUSTIN: So you get 12 so you get, so you get...

JACK: Like, extremely good at statue counting.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: Yeah. So you get 3 questions here, from *Analyze*.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: About the city. Um. When you—and remember when you act on the answers you get +1. Forward.

ALI: Ohoho.

AUSTIN: So on the next roll that you do. “*What is your best way out, way in, way past? How is ___ vulnerable to me? Which enemy is the biggest threat? What, if anything, appears out of place? What is my enemy's true position?*” and “*Is this going to get worse before it gets better?*” and I think “*What, if anything, is out of place?*” will give you—like that's the one that I'll call—I'll say gives you at least the statues and then probably something else.

ALI: Okay. I definitely want to start with that one.

AUSTIN: Yeah, sure. There are 27 statues—

ALI: Cool.

AUSTIN: —and the thing that is out of place is like, they get all—they all get tagged, and the—the tags are names, um. You expected it to just be like “Statue One,” “Statue Two,” “Statue Three,” but your eyes recognize them as being rep—representations of Divines. So it's like, “Statue One: Mercy,” “Statue Two: Contrition,” “Statue Three: Composure,” and it goes through a list of 27 Divines.

ALI: Okay... Um...

AUSTIN: So you get two more. And as a reminder, the—the basic moves are just under “Handouts” in your sheet, so.

ALI: Yeah, yeah, I'm—I'm looking at the list. I feel like—okay, so, this is kind of weirdly worded for at the part that we're at right now—

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ALI: But I feel like “*What's my enemy's tu—true position?*”

AUSTIN: No, that's actually *totally* a good question.

ALI: Okay. [laughs]

AUSTIN: Um, right now. Because, what you see is—so you're using your eyes, and I think it's probably the tagging that does it, um.

ALI: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Or like you're in Tag Mode or something, and it's almost like you've gone to a—to—you've kind of zoomed out your layer in Photoshop, or like gone to a layer view instead of just looking at—you've gone to a view where you can see all of the layers, instead of just seeing the layer you're on, if that makes sense.

ALI: Right. Yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: Like, um, and you see like there's a macro running—there's something running, that is slowly taking the cell blocks here and—it—you kind of see the path that is—that is going to be happening in the—in the next few hours, basically. And one by one, each cell block or couple groups of cell bl—or like individual cells—gets turned into another room, or another city, or another, like, a closet, like.

And you can just see in the air above this hallway it—it's almost like a tree is growing new branches, that is like lifting it, like lifting a cell up, and then lifting it and dropping it over to the right. You can kind of see, like the—the, uh, like a shadow in reverse, right, of the different cells turning into new enclosures, new simulations.

And, so that's the—that's what you see happening. And then you notice that like all of it has... I think you just see, like, as it's doing that, the—the s—the world around you becomes—or like the sky ab—the—the b—it becomes a sky above you, right, like the sky above the city becomes the sky above this whole place. And I think Signet you actually see this moment too, where above you, instead of being the—the roof of this hallway it's just blue sky, and then there's a single white cloud in the sky.

And the tag your—your like eyes go to tag it, and then they're like,

AUSTIN: [robotic voice] Dun dun dun! Failure to tag! Dun dun dun! Failure to tag!

ALI: Mm. Okay. Um. *"How is that macro, I guess, vulnerable to me?"*

AUSTIN: Um, it's the cloud, it—the macro is what the cloud is doing.

ALI: Okay I get it. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: Uhhhhhh [sighs] it is... So *it* is not vulnerable to you, in a direct format. Uh. Oh, wait, so here's a thing you notice is when. If you got hurt in here, it would hurt you for real, right, we've been over that, like, it's happened t—to you, and it happened to, um... the, the kid that you pulled out of the Mystery, right—

ALI: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Whose name I've forgotten because it's been a while—Morning's Observation... the... I think that was Morning's Observation.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: This thing is *not* vulnerable in that way. If you somehow destroyed this cloud, whatever the cloud really was would not be destroyed. *But* if you can find a way to sever the connection, it will leave—it will somehow leave this place. But from where you are now, you can't reach it.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: There is a tower in the city that's tall enough, that would give you access.

ALI: [laughs quietly] Okay.

AUSTIN: So that is how it is quote unquote “vulnerable” to you.

ALI: Okay. Fair enough. Uh, cool. So I think I like kind of lean on the—the wall next to me and cross my arms and be like

ALI (as Tender): Teah, there, there's 27.

AUSTIN (as Corrective): Mm.

ALI (as Tender): They're like, Divines?

AUSTIN (as Corrective): They're Divines. It's... “Second Street Drifting”. It's a poem.

JACK (as Fourteen): A poem?

AUSTIN (as Corrective): It's a poem about a city with uh—with 27 Divines.

[ALI sighs]

JACK (as Fourteen): Can you give us a bit more than that?

AUSTIN (as Corrective): Oh, well... [heavy sigh]

AUSTIN: And he stands up and kind of straightens out his shirt and jacket, and then as if he's standing at a podium,

[MUSIC - “THE TWILIGHT MIRAGE” starts]

AUSTIN: He starts reciting the poem.

AUSTIN (as Corrective): In my dreams I've curved this place, flat boulevard from funicular, an overhang in the sidewalk patio, burnt coffee and barbecue and tilted strings and scaffolding and the inconsistent shoulder rubbing of people, Second Street drifting.

In my dreams I've curled this place around me, sitting still on a bench while many fill the streets with chatter, swilling drinks, dancing in the blush of starlight ink, who do not know how close they are to the one who left them drifting.

In my dreams I've curbed this place, the By-and-By and by and by, I cruised from temple top to agitprop pinnacle, a stop at each Divine: retired to statue, retired to shape, retired to tired symbol of then—to when these people, this fleet, these targets, these echoes of deceit, these simple, happy, joyous folk, these people, these people, they're people first—'til then, the long days before I came, when they could just be drifting...

[MUSIC - "THE TWILIGHT MIRAGE" ends]