

Twilight Mirage 33: This Year of Ours: The Speaker

Transcribed by Kieren (@kieren_sz)

AUSTIN (with robotic voice): Feedback by Janus, Red Equity of the Golden Clause, on a term paper exploring the emerging legal jurisdiction of the Quire System.

Please note: the grade you've received here reflects your successful ability to follow the assignment's instructions, cite relevant academic and practical work, and build an argument supported by precedent. For that, you should be commended.

But I am disappointed that you would take up this line of thought.

["The Speaker" starts playing]

As you've written, politicians of certain persuasion point to moments of crisis, to freshly mapped worlds, to technological frontiers, and say that the law does not apply in these places, that those in power rule arbitrarily during these states of exception.

But if you take one lesson from me or from this seminar, let it be this: there is no such thing as a lawless place or a time outside of jurisdiction.

Deep below explicit legal precedent, unlisted in any codex, there lie unspoken rules by which society functions. They are fluid, yet bottled by the shape of culture. From the racist resolution of border-region land disputes to the public opinion pardoning of war criminals, a cultural paradigm of gestures and sensibilities guides action.

The so-called "state of exception" is an alibi. If tyranny rises and the people of Quire do not stand to stop it, that is not a sign of the oppressor's strength, but a memorandum on the population's capacity to love a despot.

Jurisprudence simply follows suit.

Fourteen Fifteen, you are a good student, and I hope you grow to understand our role in this system: we are as adjudicators on the verge.

Our role is not simply to interpret the law as written, it is to translate attitude into index. And, in instances where indices are incomplete, to passionately propel the world towards justice.

[music ends]

AUSTIN: So... Tell me about Fourteen Fifteen. So way we've been doing for other people has been that we've done like the mechanics talk and then we talked about the year that they've had. So let's start with mechanics and get that out of the way. Fourteen Fifteen in "Scum and Villainy" is... a speaker? [Jack makes a sound] Is that correct?

JACK: Yeah. I'm gonna be playing as a speaker which was... [pause] when you pitched this to me and you-you suggested the scoundrel and...

AUSTIN (cutting in): I did

JACK: and I kind of... It was [laugh] It's kind of like.. It's been a good arc of choosing playbooks

AUSTIN (crosstalk): Yeah..

JACK: Cause what happened was when you suggested it to me and... you've knew that I kinda sucked my teeth and then-

AUSTIN: Mhm

JACK: we- we talked about it and realised that a scoundrel would be really interesting and- and kinda fitting...

AUSTIN: Yeah

JACK: I think my reluctance with the scoundrel was that I didn't want to just end up playing the Hitchcocks again?

AUSTIN: [inhale] Right... Which is ironic given that we're about to say next.

JACK: Right! Umm... Because- because [Jack laughs] because then... [Austin laughs] We spent a lot of time going over this and going over the things and- and in the end it's sorta became clear that the book that would be interesting to go for would be *the speaker*.

AUSTIN: Aha

JACK: Which is the opposite of the Hitchcocks, at this..

AUSTIN (crosstalk): Well..

JACK: Well... well...

AUSTIN: It isn't [Jack hisses] is the actual truth Jack. It's the same playbook.

JACK (crosstalk): So this is the... Is it really? [Austin laughs] Is it actually the same..

AUSTIN (crosstalk): It's the closest one. Yeah, because remember

JACK (crosstalk, resigned): God damn it..

AUSTIN (crosstalk): the Hitchcocks were not like... like [Jack laughs] like if I pull up the blades handouts, right, if I pulled...

JACK (crosstalk): The Hitchcocks aren't like- rogues. They're like, they're like..

AUSTIN (cutting in): Right! They're speakers!

JACK (over Austin): *Rogues*.

AUSTIN: Right, right. They were *slides* in- in blades terms-

JACK (crosstalk): Fucking jeez..

AUSTIN: -which were... Which were like [Jack laughs] you know. For instance some of their moves were things like you could always tell when someone is lying to you [pause] and they have like a special- special armor that said like, you may spend your special armor to resist a consequence from suspicion or persuasion [short pause] or push yourself for subterfuge-

JACK (cutting in, excited): Oh no! I love this!

AUSTIN: Ye

JACK: I love this and I can- I- so, I love this for a couple reasons which is, when i first looked at the speaker, a lot of the speaker in this game is framed in terms like, like [pause] discussions of and surrounding respectability?

AUSTIN: Yes.

JACK: And I kinda sucked my teeth about that and then after couple of days I was like, oh no this is really interesting, I- I really want to try and do this.

AUSTIN: Yeah

JACK: And now realising that it is just Hitchcock is like... Tech- doubly technically interesting cause now I'm like, all right, ok, I have a very similar two playbooks, how can I try and make something completely different [Jack laughs]

AUSTIN: Well, it's gonna be completely different in that like, the whole- the whole pitch on the Hitchcocks was that they were rogues who... mostly talked good? [JACK: mhm] And like, snuck into places?

[0:05:00]

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And that's what they've always been doing. Right? They always were kind of commen. Fourteen Fifteen-

JACK (cutting in): Whereas...

AUSTIN: Is a hit- is- is a you know, is a killer. Is a- is a- is a- is maybe like, I hope we'll see is like the GTA character done well of like, 'I had a violent past but I want to put that past behind me to help people'.

JACK: Right! Right. And like, there's... You could say a lot of things about the Hitchcocks but I don't think you could necessarily say they're genuine?

AUSTIN (laughingly): Right. No, not at all.

JACK (crosstalk): And I think there are definitely aspects of Fourteen Fifteen that are genuine or like..

AUSTIN (over Jack): Right, they- they...

JACK: Fourteen is trying to be genuine.

AUSTIN: Right, they like... I mean the pitch you gave me for this character is that like, they have gone on to want to help people by being, like, legal counselor. By being kind of pro bono, like go around the world... Go around the *worlds*. And help people..

JACK (cutting in): [amused] Worlds.

AUSTIN: ..who need help and by like learning the law a little bit and that's a hard thing to do because the law is still coming together all around you, you know, and this- this new- this new system

JACK: Yeah. Like you and I have talked a lot about 2016's Hitman and- and how sorta characteristic in that game that is phenomenally endearing is how, when 47 puts on the clothes of the character to embody them?

AUSTIN: Yeah

JACK: He kinda just begins to- There's a great bit where he puts on the clothes of a drummer and-

AUSTIN (crosstalk): Yeah

JACK: - reveals himself to be a remarkable, like-

AUSTIN (crosstalk): [laughs] he just happens-

JACK: - technical drummer. [Jack laughs]

AUSTIN: Yep! He's just a fantastic drummer! That's great is they set this sequence up as like, oh boy, is it gonna give him away and no, of course not, because he's 47.

JACK (laughing): He's a professional, yeah

AUSTIN (crosstalk): He is a professional. He knows enough of drumming to get into this shitty band [Jack laughs] and like- and make it look like he is the drummer.

JACK: And I don't think that's the case with Fourteen Fifteen always.

AUSTIN (cutting in): No

JACK: You know, we talked about how Fourteen Fifteen can- it- it, you know. The- As far as Fourteen Fifteen is concerned the bodies are the bodies. They- they're not disguising as someone,

AUSTIN (crosstalk): Right, right

JACK: they are that person, and that's really important to me. But the-there is something [pause] exciting and- and narratively pleasing about this idea of Fourteen kinda going like, well...

AUSTIN: Yeah

JACK: I'm supposed to be a lawyer here so why don't I just.. [Jack laughs]

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: Why don't I just start thinking about that stuff?

AUSTIN: Yeah. I'm into it. I'm totally into it. So let's talk about like, your- your stats really quick [JACK: mhm] just so we have all of those in mind.

JACK: Okay. So my heritage is that I'm- I'm from The Sky Reflected in Mirrors?

AUSTIN: Sure, which gives you extra study?

JACK: It gives me extra study and that- that feels like a- a pretty transparent mapping there of like, that's what Mirrors is good at.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: My background is Castlerose assassin? I wrote down 'Castlerose assassin on the run' and then deleted those last three words [both chuckle] cause I kinda wanna talk about that?

AUSTIN: Yeah, I'm not sure... if they're on the run at this point... I think there's... I don't know.

JACK: The situation is- I doubt the situation is clear cut [AUSTIN: Yeah] in the way it was for most of their career. This gave me scrap, because I think we depicted Castlerose assassins as... having the capability for subtlety? But not always... the willingness.

AUSTIN: [laughs] No. Yes. A hundred percent.

JACK: And I wrote down like- I was really struggling with my vice, in part because- because Fourteen transformed so frequently.. It's hard, and it's kinda necessarily hard, to get to the bottom of..

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: You know, what- what motivates them and that's [slight laugh] like that's a lot of what Fourteen is, this kind of cloud of- of confusion there... but I like the idea of-

AUSTIN (cutting in): Who- Go ahead.

JACK (interrupted): Oh, go on. [short pause] Oh, I like the idea of-

AUSTIN (over Jack): Yeah, I wanna hear what your idea is.

JACK: -obligation to an extent, because a) it's written really well and in 'Scum and Villainy' this- this obligation thing describes an obligation to like a family or and organisation [AUSTIN: Mhm], or a church in a way that feels very different from syndicate? [pause] Where, you know, syndicate is like, you- you- [pause] your vice is the syndicate or- or you- you owe something to the syndicate.

AUSTIN: Right..

JACK: But the obligation is... I feel closer to how we've portrayed the assassin up to this point with like, they're being bound by contracts.

AUSTIN: Right.. So the thing that I wanna emphasize with vice is that both mechanically and narratively because those two things are pretty firmly on lockstep. [pause] This is about what Fourteen does *to de-stress*.

JACK: Yeah.

Austin: What does give them that relaxing? What- what does give them that pleasure of- or that, that kind of vent to let them re-center themselves. [Jack sighs] And if it's obligation is it- is it a Castlerose obligation? Is that what we're talking about? [pause] Or is the obligation going to be the job that they have currently, this kind of legal, advisory thing

JACK (overlapping): Yeah, is it-

AUSTIN: where they're doing little, little jobs on the side.

[pause]

JACK: Yeah, i- it's um..

AUSTIN: Like, is it pro bono legal aid work?

[0:09:50]

JACK: I mean, I- I wonder if it is something like that but.. [Jack hesitates] I kinda want to make sure that we don't.. [Jack exhales] I think you say a lot that is always like, really helpful is like 'oh I don't want a scene of someone sitting and writing'. [Jack chuckles] Or like, 'oh I don't want to just repeat of previous scene' or I don't want like-

AUSTIN (cutting Jack off): Yeah, yeah, yeah. Though I will say that the- the vices are not... By and large what will happen you roll your vice, you give me two lines about what you did this time and then we will move on, right? Like, the vices-

JACK (as Austin speaks): I'm just thinking... Yeah..

AUSTIN: Unless they go bad, vices tend to be-

JACK (crosstalk): We don't-

AUSTIN: -'I've spent a night out drinking' or 'I-I've spent a bunch of money at the gambling table', 'I danced until my feet hurt'. You know?

JACK: Yeah, I'm just thinking about like, that one that we hit on with the Hitchcocks where like, the Hitchcocks are betting with each other as to whether or not he's gonna heal himself?

AUSTIN (cuckling): Yes. Yeah.

JACK: And like, that was like, a narrative framing that I- that I was really happy with. And I guess like, this is just, you know, essentially beginning of the new system enquiries?

AUSTIN: Yeah [Austin laughs] I got ya

JACK: But... yeah, I think it is. I think it's- I think it's umm... I think it's some... I think it's something like research. O-or something like legal- like legal.. [Jack sighs] They are either doing the work or I just sort of picture them at the desk.

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: Like- like calling someone and checking something

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: Or like.. Or like typing out letters.

AUSTIN: It could even be... Ye, it could- could be sort of work of like, getting people in touch with resources that they could [pause] that would help them? You know what I mean?

JACK: Yeah! My- when.. my parents were lawyers they... would talked about.. this is back before like, computers?

AUSTIN (over Jack): I had no idea your parents were lawyers at any point in their lives, that's funny.

JACK (cutting in): Wait, really?

AUSTIN: Hundred percent

JACK: They were both-

AUSTIN (over Jack): I've always thought of them as... Cause again, I know your father is an author [JACK: Yeah] so like that's what's your father is to me. And I don't think you ever spoken [Jack humms] about what's your mother's job.. Was.

JACK: Ah, they were- they were both [pause] they were criminal lawyers for a time and then my mother was a family lawyer. [pause] But ye, no, they- this is far before, you know, computers were in legal offices and, um, they'd talk about... getting... like legal amendments would come through?

AUSTIN (exhaling): Right.

JACK: Every week that had to be like, legacy style taped into the- the- the references books? [AUSTIN: mhm] They had to like, be.. pasted in.

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: Umm, but nobody wanted to do this? [Austin breathes out] So they'd just pile up. Just, in every- in every- um, lawyer office where they've worked these- these pages and pages and pages would pile up and then, one day like, all the senior partners would be like, alright, ok, this is it, here [Jack laughs] here we go.

AUSTIN (over Jack): [laughs] Time to- Yeah, make order of this bullshit.

JACK: Everyone would sit down and it would take like, nine hours and- and you had to put them in- in order?

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: Because otherwise you'd- you'd get yourself lost. [AUSTIN: Right] So first you'd have to like, sort through all the mail and- and put it in the right order. [Jack inhales] And we know that like, law and legal stuff is like, [pause] changing so rapidly in the wo- in the worlds? Right now?

AUSTIN (over Jack): Right. Hundred percent, yeah.

JACK: So I wonder if it's some sort of rudimentary level of that of like, just- just like, trying to connect people to people who need it? Or trying to work out whether of not something that was written down here..

AUSTIN (over Jack): Right [pause] Has changed in the last..

JACK (at the same time): Works with something that was written down there?

AUSTIN: Right. Oh especially because we're going back, or- [Austin hesitates] a think that is staying the same is that communication between major.. Places is [Austin inhales] difficult still, again. Like.. getting message from Altar, which is where Seance is, to.. Moonlock, which is where the Sky Reflected in Mirrors sat down- set down. Like, that still takes- like, that's still not a thing that you could just do. Like you still have to send that it via ship. [JACK: Yeah] Or use like

the one thing on that planet that lets you do a like a.. Broad transmission. You know? Like there's still.. We're just still in that world? And so-

JACK (over Austin): It's like, we have the one satellite phone.

AUSTIN: Right! Exactly. And so like, there's definitely this notion that I like, of.. During their downtime they like.. Get all of the stuff that they can get. They get all the-the notes, they get all of the... the... you know... updates. Like-like open their mailbox and inside is a manilla- o-or three manilla envelopes [JACK: Yeah] and each of them have- have... the- the... kind of case. A case that they have to break down to make a sense of before they can [Austin chuckles] figure out what the fuck is going on [JACK (trying to say something): And a-] and like how to put these.. How to update whatever what they have on record for whatever planet or whatever community.

JACK: And this is just like- this is like a complete nightmare, right? Because like, every planetarian community already has the rule of law.

AUSTIN (chuckling): Right. Yes.

JACK: Like, we're not *inventing* the law here. We're inventing like-

AUSTIN: Variations and- and amalgams, right? Where like oh, this is the New Earth Hegemony like, city on a world that is... ostensibly controlled by... the- the, you know, the Divine Free States. Or.. Is- is a- you know, a- this community decided that they don't wanna be part of any larger government, but they want to inherit all of the basic laws and so- but now they wanna change something about.. You know, censorship. Or now they want to change something about property. And like that's hard to keep track of. [Austin breathy chuckles]

JACK: Yeah! And- and like, I don't know. It's important to me to like make the distinction that like [pause] people listening to this are gonna be like, oh, Jack and Austin are doing bureaucracy again. Umm.. Which is, you know, that's what we do.

AUSTIN (over Jack, fake offended tone?): One- [pause] Yes.

JACK: Yes.

AUSTIN: Welcome to Friends at the Table motherfuckers

JACK (as Austin speaks): Well- [Jack laughs]

AUSTIN (over Jack): But two-

JACK (still laughing): Welcome to Friends at the Table, we invented the New Archiven in our first *fucking* session.

[0:15:00]

AUSTIN (chuckling): Yeah [Austin laughs] But there's an important distinction, right?

JACK (over Austin): Umm.. No, like-

AUSTIN (crosstalk): Which is like the- the-

JACK (over Austin): Also- here's the thing like, I feel like- like- like Uklan Tel.. and Lem.. and Morbash are like, professionals.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: And they're- they're like, trained in this stuff. And for them this- this work is like, all they've ever known.. It's what they've grown up in and- and I want to make it clear that like, I'm not painting- I'm not recontextualising Fourteen Fifteen as a bureaucrat? Fourteen is like sitting at their desk, wearing glasses, just like with their head in their hands looking at this stuff most of the time?

AUSTIN (over Jack): Yeah, yeah

JACK: This is like..

AUSTIN: 'Aww, jeez..', you know?

JACK: Yeah, it's like, you could make sense of legal precedent? But it would take you a while and you'd just like sit down with a pen. [Jack chuckles]

AUSTIN (over Jack): Right. Right. There's- [Jack finishes] There are those great episodes.. This is like a- this is like a genre of This American Life episodes? [Austin thinks]

JACK: Oh yeah.

AUSTIN: Where they're like about a person who decides to.. Like, represent themselves in a- legally, you know? [JACK: Mhm] And, like, alright, I'm gonna learn how law works and like... *ok...* like, [JACK: Yeah] you *could* do that but that's gonna take *a lot of work*. And you're going to have to... like, figure out how that- how all of these things that you have *no familiarity with* actually connect together? And I think- I imagine that's what they're like. I imagine that's Fourteen is like [JACK: Yeah] around this.

JACK: Cause they're a hitman. They're not-

AUSTIN (laughing): Right! [Jack chuckles] Right. That's at the end of the day is they're hitman. Which is why.. Uhh... They do have that scrap. Point.

JACK: Yeah. I have that scrap point. Umm

AUSTIN: What else do you have? Let's- let's keep on moving..

JACK: Yeah, I wanted to make sure that I didn't do the Marielda [Jack laughs] problem here, with like..

AUSTIN: No one knows pr...

JACK (over Austin): I wanted to distribute my points here, so I have like

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: [pause] I have study one, I have scrap one, I have skulk one..

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: I have command one, I have consort two and I have sway one.

AUSTIN: All of that to me, like, one of the things about this what's nice about this is like, that reads like Fourteen Fifteen to me. Like, little bit of fighting, little bit of sneaking around [Jack chuckles], a little bit of figuring things out, and a lot of 'I know- I know a guy'. [JACK: Yeah, yeah, yeah] And con- consort is that. A consort is like "ah, yeah, I think I know someone in this town who can help us with that".

JACK: And "I know a guy a guy and they resent me".

AUSTIN (laughing): Right! Yes. Exactly, exactly. We don't have to get into specific abilities unless they come up in the little vignette we're gonna do. [JACK: Mhm] But I like that, I like- I like this whole thing, I'm gonna take that questionmark away from obligation. And like, write down 'legal aid' next to it.

JACK: Yeah

AUSTIN: But I think that's it in terms of.. this stuff.. I guess there's some- theres some cool things with like equipment that we could talk about? I'm- there's one thing on your sheet that actually I'm little actually curious ab- curious about enough to say 'hey, what is this thing'.

JACK: Mmm, yeah.

AUSTIN: So the the way that- that- um.. The way that equipment works in Scum and Villainy and then Blades in the Dark is that you have like, everybody shares a certain pool of potential stuff? So like.. We- a weapon of some sort is like, on every character sheet. So.. things like, you know, a- a hacking tools, repair tools, medkit, spy gear. Anybody can have those thing if they wanna spent an inventory slot when they go on a mission. But, every class also has its own set of special things. So like, yours are like, *fine clothes* [Jack laughs] which I love partially because they take up on- they take up a slot.

JACK (over Austin): *They take up a slot*

AUSTIN (crosstalk): There are things that don't, but like, those take up a slot. And they're not like- it's not armored- secretly armored clothes.

JACK: It's great. I love that.

AUSTIN: It's so great

JACK crosstalk: Because then you're dressed up really formally it- you- you know. It feels like wearing something fancy.

AUSTIN: Right. And you have some other things like luxury items and large luxury items and the legitimate ID

JACK (chuckling): So good..

AUSTIN: But the one of them is 'memento of a past encounter' and I'm curious what that is.

JACK: Yeah.. So I- I kinda went back and forth on this [long pause] We kn- we know that's- that's [pause] one the one hand I am [pause] reluctant to make it Fourteen's glass gun?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: In part because it's a- it's a gu- it's a, you know, it's a gun. I have those. Why- why is it that? But, the more I think about it, that gun has- had a more interesting, um. It's been more interesting in the show when it's not been a gun. It's been more interesting in the show when it's this item that's being passed between people? And not actually used. You know, when we're using it it's just- it's just a firearm. [AUSTIN: Right] So I wonder if.. It is.. I wonder if- I wonder if it's this. In part because of the connection that it gives Fourteen with- with Sho.

AUSTIN: Right. [pause] One think I'll note is [pause] guns are different now.

JACK: So this is- this was the other thing I was gonna say. [AUSTIN: Yeah..] What if it doesn't work?

AUSTIN: I think it works, but you fire this gun once it's gonna break. It's made of glass. Like that- the whole thing now is.. That with rare exception, and there are exceptions in the party even, based on character, like a- what- what characters have available in terms of equipment.

[0:20:00]

AUSTIN: Guns are largely single use things. Or maybe you have a version of it where you can- you can like, reload it? But reloading it means basically reattaching a key part of it? [Jack laughs] Like, there is..

So basically the glass that- that the Doyenne brought up out of the *sand* in Quire back in like, the first ground game arc. That got dispersed *everywhere*. And it's very thin, it's very- it's like little- it's like microparticles to where you're not even seeing it. Your body, you know, breaks it up if you breathe it in, or as you breathe it in. And it *seems* to almost like the life- almost with the life of its own.. Become denser? At the notion of gunfire. At the like- as the trigger is being pulled it condenses.

It's as if Quire does not want guns anymore. And this is the best it can do to stop them. And a... so what you have is the situation where like, there are mass produced guns that you fire once and that's it, you throw this gun out. Or militaries might have a version of it where it's like you-you slide the receiver and the slide and the barrel off and replace it with a new thing and you just keep the- the kind of grip. And the chamber or whatever. Like, and everything else gets reattached. [Jack hums]

And then you have like, you know, a soldier who has *five* of those *on* them. Like, they have the one grip and then five extra shots, and that's a lot- that's a lot. To have six shots is a lot.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Even tho it takes you a turn so to speak to- to reload the whole fucking thing. And that's the worlds that we're in. Where we have a lot of batons, we have a lot of.. You know, probably swords and melee weapons, but in general like, it means that the world is less shooty then what we think of as a sci-fi and science fantasy?

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: They're- you know, at least at this point. You know there are big robots still. But this e big robots have to get close to do anything, there's no like, 'and then they open up their shoulder and then a b-billion missiles come out and scatter off into the- into the many people. You know?

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Scenes like, the one with... AuDy and the- the.. What- what happened in.. The Kin- with The Kingdom Come in [pause] the... Seabed city. Just like, that's not a thing in this world anymore

JACK: Yeah [Jack chuckles]

AUSTIN: In- inside of the Mirage which is I- like- an important distinction for me, and it's the distinction because.. Quire doesn't want that to happen. [Austin chuckles] And so [JACK: Yes.] it's done what it can to to stop that. Which is interesting and- I- I think, I don't know.

JACK: So yeah. I-I think it's-

AUSTIN (cutting Jack off): So ye, so I like it as a gun, I do actually like it as this gun that you know that if you pull the trigger it's gonna break.

JACK: Yeah! Umm.. I think that like, It's a.. We-we've talked in the past.. Someone? In their.. Do you- do you- rem- recall their name, Austin?

[pause]

AUSTIN: Who?

JACK: Someone.. Made a really great p- A fan made a really great point about the weapon.

AUSTIN: No... I don't. What was the point- I-

JACK (over Austin): That they miss- They misinterpreted it..

AUSTIN (at the same time): OH, yes! I can pull it up.

JACK (at the same time): And I want to make that canon [Jack chuckles]

AUSTIN: I can pull it up. Which is.. [pause] Someone noted... [quieter] God, where is it? That in the- in Fourteen's gun. We had been speaking about the.. Ah, here it is. This is from Earthcube in the fan... The Fans at the Table discord. 'I misheard the description of Fourteen Fifteen's gun at some point, as that it had an actual flower preserved within the glass of the handle, and I haven't been able to correct it, that's just my headcannon now'. Headcannon is a good joke, also. It's like a hand cannon? But like a Headcanon?

JACK (over Austin): Oh, yeah.

AUSTIN: And like. I think you and I both meant 'engraved'? Instead of 'have a flower in there'?

JACK: Yeah, it's like- it's like- it looks like la- like laser engraving.

AUSTIN: Right. But. I have to say, for months, I also have been thinking about it with a flower in there, because we go a long time without recording? So when that person said it I sent it you and like, 'wait a second, isn't- isn't there a flower in there? [Jack and Austin laugh] And you were like, no.

JACK (crosstalk): Umm... No i don't think so. But I think there is now? [AUSTIN: Yeah] However I think it's new. I think whatever has happened [AUSTIN: huh] has.. I-I think that- the gun has blossomed.

AUSTIN: Right. Well that's- that's also funny for other stuff that we will get to.

JACK: Oh, nice!

AUSTIN: I like that. (JACK: but ye-) I like the notion of like, yeah, there's a f- a blossomed flower in there. Yeah.

JACK: It's- it's in.. it's in Fourteen's- the drawer of Fourteen's desk?

AUSTIN: Mhm

JACK: And... you know when you move into a new house and you're looking for [Jack chuckles] something to fill the drawers with you just put one thing into the drawer and close the drawer?

AUSTIN: Yes.

JACK: And you open it months later and you're like, why is there- why is there like just a lightbulb in there..?

AUSTIN (smiling): Mhm [Austin quietly laughs]

JACK: I think it's the only thing in the- in- in the drawer.

AUSTIN: Gotcha. Cool. [Austin sighs] Man... OK. I think that that's it for... stats and stuff then.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Let's talk about.. [pause] Fourteen Fifteen. Tell me what your year's been like.

JACK: It's been *weird*. Um. [Austin laughs] It's- it's been really weird. Everything came to a head in the- in the very fast and strange way..

AUSTIN: Yeah..

JACK: In that we went into a situation expecting a.. Hostage negotiation. And, as we left, [with humor] without having fired any weapons

AUSTIN: [negative] Uh-uh.

JACK: Oh... We ca- Well.. I did- yeah..

AUSTIN: You fired a weapon-

JACK (over Austin): I mean *in* the hostage- [laughing] I fired a weapon [AUSTIN: Right] in a lift. I meant *in* the hostage negotiation. [Austin laughs]

[0:25:00]

JACK: We like- we literally left to find that- that- the world h- had changed? [AUSTIN: Yeah] Or was in the process on changing?

AUSTIN: It was in the process of changing, yeah.

JACK: So I think that the- [Jack stutters] the first is- is almost.. Just chaos, right? Just like, having no idea what's happening? [AUSTIN: Yeah..] Or- or in what direction it's happening? O- Or who should be where? But I think that.. Fourteen.. Has.. once the dust has settled. Set up a.. A shop, or- or a house in a remote community on- on Moonlock?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: Which is..

AUSTIN (over Jack): Which is where the- the sky Reflected in Mirrors set down? And- and.. I think on paper is actually a New Earth Hegemony.. World? But it's a little more complicated than that? I'll give you a little bit about..

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: ..Moonlock right now? Things to know about Moonlock [Austin chuckles] It's creepy? In the- in the similar way to the Sky Reflected in Mirrors? I.. it is not a black and white world? But it- it is desaturated in- in an emotional sense? I feel? Like, [Jack humms] I- I think my initial description of this place to you was that it had a- a sort of a- film noir...

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I need to find that exact note here that I had. I don't know where it went... Here it is. 'Technically controlled by the New Earth Hegemony but unstable and predictable'? There's this uncanny film noir capital city. I'm drawing on things like 'The Spy Who Came In From The Cold' or 'The Third Man', or 'Alphaville'? Or even now that think about it a little bit of 'Atomic Blonde'? A little- a little bit of Atomic Blonde's... Berlin?

JACK (overlapping): Oooh, yeah, yeah, yeah..

AUSTIN: Both east and west, both- depictions of both east and west in that- in that film I think are pretty strong? And pretty in line with what I have in- in mind for Sky Reflected in Mirrors? Which is still called Sky Reflected in Mirrors, this city is still called that.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: The rest of the planet... So. So.. you have- There's kinda three main settlements on... on Moonlock. It is The Sky Reflected in Mirrors. It is a... a place that I don't have a final name on quite yet? I'm thinking of calling it the Qui Err Assembly? Which is a place where.. There are.. people from the Quire... Race. [Jack: Hm!] Who have re-cloned themselves. And... who are.. [smiling] Recognised by the Hegemony as a.. As a- a sovereign nation of their own? [Austin chuckles] the New Earth Hegemony has gone out of its way and has been very loud? About.. And very hypocritical about this? But very loud about criticizing the notion that.. The- the Divine Fleet had a... a.. not invaded, but colonized Quire? And had [Jack hisses] you know as far as the- in- in their telling had recovered this cloning technology? And had not been public about? You know, we know that the Castlerose is the one who found that s- that- that thing and used it to [Jack laughs] build and assassin... like, group? An assassin..

JACK: Industry

AUSTIN: Industry- Yeah. An entire industry of assassination and- and... killing. And- I'm sure, bounty hunting and other sorts of recovery, you know? All sorts of... industrial espionage type stuff [Austin laughs nervously] But *now* like, there is a place that is on this planet, that is run by.. By... I think right now I've written her down as- as princess Pretense. She was a princess from the era of... The war [JACK: Oooh!] against Independence on Quire. Yeah. And she was one of the people saved in the Sky Reflected in Mirrors. In- in the kind of cloning... system that was deep in it's - in it's- in the bowels of that- floating city. That- that- that flying city. And so... She's back. And is like advocating for.. More control? And like, more land and all of the things that she deserves to have for her people? She doesn't- she isn't that same *person*. Like again, we've -we've been ov- like, and if she dies they could print another one of her.

JACK (chuckling): Yeah.

AUSTIN: Because that's- Which was not a *feature of their culture*. To be clear. It isn't a *culture of clones*.

JACK (over Austin): No.. No.

AUSTIN: And I think that- I've *no idea* how they're gonna tackle that. I don't how they're like, 'well? There are, you know, a fe- there are a few thousands of us now. And that's it. That's all that there are. Like, we don't have... more data than a few thousand of us. Soo.. [Jack laughs]

JACK: But we have lot of.. Ability to make bodies.

AUSTIN: To make us again? Yeah, exactly. So I don't know, I'm precarious how that all plays out. And then there's another place. There's one- there's one other... major place and that is called... Or actually, there's a- more that that. There's one other place that is like, highly populated. So that's- the sky reflected in mirrors there's the- the... the Qui Err Assembly. Which I need to write down on this... [sound of typing] ..page. And then there is the- the 5th Expansionary Hard Materials Settlement? Which is f- kinda familiarly called Concrete Town?

[0:30:00]

AUSTIN: Here's the thing that happens these days on Moonlock. [pause] The world.. Especially the world inside of.. The Kajj Umbra. Just this- this dark spot on- on the inside of the- of the... Not the inside but on the- the kinda side facing towards volition? That sort of inwards facing side of- of Moonlock? There's this dark area and especially in there but even- even just in the wilds.. Axioms... show up sometimes? And other times other things show up? And people think that they are axioms but what they really are, are memories. From Curiosity. Strange creatures Curiosity scanned on a distant planet or.. A... buildings? A little, like- the suburbs show up once? The suburbs of a- of a- of an alien world? Giant archways, geographical features.. Without any- without any cau- apparent cause the world outside changes.

AUSTIN: Sky Reflected in Mirrors seems to be protected from that, it's still in that dome. And... Concrete Town, The 5th Expansionary Hard Materials Settlement, a-also resists it because it's made of this special concrete. That has been designed explicitly to shut down weird supernatural Twilight Mirage [Jack laughs] bullshit. And that place is actually kind of- birthed a- a group of paramilitary militiamen called the.. Concrete Town Particulars. And they are a- an increasingly ... important military force in the planet? Because they do a lot of settlement. They do a lot of like, 'oh you gonna move to this new place and- and build it out of concrete. Out of out special concrete.' And they they will be able to be settled. They are also {pause} sort of.. Not allied with but have- have a... sympathy to Sui Juris? The Divine Fleet- The group that kind of splintered off of the Divine Fleet? Because there's a lot of sovereign citizen shit happening [Austin laughs] in both of those groups? [Jack laughs] There's a lot of like-

JACK: Yeah..

AUSTIN: 'We determine our own future'- like, they're from.. They're like- they are- they are Earth's colonists? Most of the Particulars? But they are not... They are.. loyal to themselves first and foremost. They'll- they'll use New Earth Hegemony dollars but they're not- they're here to build- to build and colonize their own world. And so that's- that's one of the other major forces and then the third thing is the- is the wild that I mentioned. And the Umbra. The Kajj Umbra. It was always called the Umbra and then... probably like three weeks ago? A month ago? Six- six weeks ago? Something like that? A- a... An [pause] adventurer. A- a... treasure hunter? From outside of the Mirage whose come in and actually made a bit of a- a stir named Tannoy Kajj managed to be the first person ever to cross the entire of Umbra alive.

JACK: Oh wow!

AUSTIN: And so now it's called the Kajj Umbra? Or- or at least that what he calls it and so [Austin laughs] it's been catching on..

JACK: Is there like- is there like any funny business there?

AUSTIN (over Jack): Inside of the-

JACK (over Austin): Or did he actually managed to do it?

AUSTIN: Who could say.

JACK (laughing): Okay.

AUSTIN (over Jack): The data- the data says he did it? He definitely went in one side and came out of the other side? So...

JACK (laughing): There may have- It's a weird place.

AUSTIN: It's a weird place. It's called- it's called th- it was called the Umbra. So, you know, weird stuff happens

JACK: Yeah, yeah, yeah..

AUSTIN (crosstalk): And that is a- that is this dark spot. It's like a circular dark spot on the planet that is from where the Volition cast its shadow. And the reason the planet is named Moonlock is you've- mentioned to me is.. It doesn't rotate. It is tightly locked with Volition at the center of the- of the- the- the system.

JACK: What we're calling this? Is it the system?

AUSTIN: It's the Quire system, yeah.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I'm also calling it like, the eight idylls [first syllable rhymes with eyed]? Or the nine idylls [eyed]?

JACK: Like idols like I-D-O-L-S?

AUSTIN: No, like I-D-Y-L-L-S. Idylls [first syllable rhymes with id]?

JACK: Oh, idylls [id]?

AUSTIN: I've never- I've never know how to say that word. I've never [Austin stutters] The thing is I would say 'idyllic' [eyed]. You say idyllic [id]?

JACK: [pause] You do say idyllic [id], yeah. I say idyllic [id]

AUSTIN (over Jack): Do you? I've always said idyllic [eyed]

JACK (over Austin): Well, I mean- [chuckling] We-we do have different accents.

AUSTIN (laughing): We do have different accents.

JACK (over Austin): Also- We should also bring up that if- if one thing is that Friends at the Table likes is bureaucracy, another thing it likes is *homophones*.

AUSTIN (laughing): Yes. it's true. A hundred percent. [Jack laughs] So. Yeah, I've been calling it in my notes either the Quire system [typing sounds] the... the eight idylls [eyed] the i- the eight idylls [id] depending on where you're from in the world.

JACK: What if we call it 'idylls' [first syllable rhymes with e]. Like Ibex [e-bex]

AUSTIN: Like Ibex, yeah, exactly. No [Austin laughs] So that's- that's the... that's what I've been calling it.. But like I think most, like, paperwork would say the Quire system. You know?

JACK: Yeah

AUSTIN: So yeah, those- that's basically what's happening on Moonlock. And I kinda just want to zoom in and like, we'll get the vignette for Fourteen Fifteen. Like, I imagine- like you said you have a house? You probably still have the- The World Without End? Somewhere? [Jack hums] In a garage or something? Or a hangar?

JACK (over Austin); Yeah.. So I- I think The World Without End is- is.. Oh no. I don't think it's in a garage or a hangar. I think it's parked behind the house.

[0:35:00]

AUSTIN (laughing): Okay. Good. It's like an old boat. It's like, literally is the old boat parked behind the house.

JACK: Yeah. It's like- No one knew whether or not-

AUSTIN (over Jack): What color? In my mind it's gold. Is it gold? Am I misremembering that?

JACK: I think it's- it's- it's- It's like umm... It's not like *gold* gold? It's like... Like burnished gold? Or like..

AUSTIN (over Jack): Yeah, yeah, yeah.

JACK: No, like ta- like tarnished?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: And it has like- it has the ship's name written along the length of it?

AUSTIN: Yes. That I remember. That part I've got. Yeah.

JACK: And we didn't know if it could land on the surface. Cause if you remember like, these things don't dock by landing,

AUSTIN (chuckling): Right, right.

JACK: like vertically they go into these little.. Holes.

AUSTIN (over Jack): Right

JACK: But it can. It has landing gear.

AUSTIN (over Jack): It can. Yeah. Aha.

JACK: When it rains the ship gets wet and Fourteen, like, pulls on boots and goes outside and tries to drag a cover over like, the engine block?

AUSTIN (over Jack, amused): Aha?

JACK: Cause the- there's nothing big enough to cover all of it and like, in- on very hot days it steams and like, sometimes parts pop off it... But it's not like a derelict? The ship works, Fourteen uses it but also I- I don't have a garage or a dock I have like, a house.

AUSTIN (amused): Aha?

JACK: And I have an outhouse. And I have like a *massive* [pause] fishing ship

AUSTIN (laughing): And that is it. Yeah. So let's actually... So you're not there today. Where you are is.. You are in the zone that is... [murmuring] I'm gonna just... open up a new page in Roll20 real quick. [Jack hums] Wait, is anything on this? Can I draw on this?

JACK: This page is just bad memories Austin.

AUSTIN: I'm gonna move this off of this. So- so that was not even your bad memories. That's like, somebody else's, right?

JACK (over Austin): No, it's unique- it's uniquely different bad memories

AUSTIN: This is also bad memories, this is Contrition's Figure. The map for Contrition's Figure.

JACK: Oh my god, it is!

AUSTIN (overlapping with Jack): I'm gonna add to it. I'm gonna add to it real quick. So [pause] I'm gonna draw some shapes here... That's not right. There we go. There's a circle. So let's call that Moonlock. Let's call... This section that I'm adding. So I've dra- I've drawn a circle on the- on the map?

JACK: Mhm

AUSTIN: I'm now adding the Umbra... Right in the middle there. Near the middle there. It's almost like an eye. And then Concrete Town is... let's say... here? It's probably very small? It's not that small but there? You see the gray mark I've made? Where you are today... So I've made a- kind of a circle. On the top right light, li- like 2 o'clock there's little gray square? Which is where Concrete Town is. The center of it almost like iris in an eyeball. An iris? Is that right? I always get my-

JACK: I think so, yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: A pupil. A pupil.

AUSTIN: A pupil. A pupil. Sorry. Iris is like, the color part, right?

JACK: Yeah

AUSTIN: Ok. I don't know my eye terms. Like, a pupil is this- is the Umbra. And then, [Austin sighs] kind of equal distance between the two.. is where you are. And I- I want to know how you get there. It's a- it's a- it's a big farming [pause] establishment. A- a big farm. Like, industrial farm that has a lot of robotic- Like, purely synthetic. Not- non sapient workers? But also just has like a little house attached to it? Nearby? And I think that the- the sunlight is kind of filtering through the clouds... I mean obviously it's the Twilight Mirage so it's always sunset here? Right? [Jack hums] But we get this like, it's a very hazy orange light today. And you can't even.. I mean. You can never place the sun anymore. There's no more sun. Volition is at the center of the system, right? But the system is still colored. It still has its own internal brightness because of the way the Mirage works. And so that's like a weird thing, right? [Austin laughs]

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Like you can see other planets in the sky. You can see other planets but you can't find a sun ever. And so.. You get this- this image of this little house in front and what you know is... Someone from Concrete Town has shown up and has told the person who runs this place that like, it's time for some eminent domain. And we own this now. [Jack hums] And you are keyed in enough to know that this is a... This is a- people has been waiting for this case to happen for a while? There were... There were agreements made? Between the New Earth Hegemony and the Concrete Town Particulars. That gave them the right, on paper, to... Basically... I don't know. Let's just get into it. There- there- you know that there's some weirdness and you know that at some point which might have come up. I don't know if you know more than that. Like, I don't know if you know more [Jack laughs] than what was in the paper which was: The agreement with Concrete Town Particulars makes it hypothetically possible [pause] that they could take the I- they could take land from somebody. [Jack hums] So how you get out there?

JACK: Umm... I- I keep picturing a horse but I don't think it's the horse, cause this is the Twilight Mirage.

AUSTIN: Yeah. You don't- you don't have- you don't- you're not taking Gig's... horse, right? You're not just-

JACK (over Austin): No, no

AUSTIN: Yeah, okay.

JACK: Um. [pause] So I- I don't know whether or not it's a- [Jack laughs] I don't know is whether or not it's a rob- it's a robotic method of transport? Or if it's like a- like a mount. If it's like, a I-living thing.

AUSTIN: Right... But you're definitely think you are on the outside of a thing. You're not in a car. You're not in like a buggy.

JACK: No, no, no. I think it's a [long pause] [Jack laughs]

[0:40:00]

JACK: It might be a *bird* of some kind. [AUSTIN: Oooo] Like a- like a *walking bird*.

AUSTIN: Okay. Like some sort of weird ostrich situation.

JACK: Yeah! But rather that it being like... rather than it being like twitchy, like a- like an ostrich is, it's like- it's like focused [Austin hums] like a- like a horse is.

AUSTIN: Right. Does it have a big neck? Or is it different sort of bird situa- is it like the - is it just like a big chick? Like, is it like- you know that i mean?

JACK: I think it has a- I think it has a- I think it has a big neck?

AUSTIN: Okay. Like a tall neck. A long thin neck.

JACK (over Austin): Yeah. Like- like a- like a- like a long thin neck. And I don't think that this is Fourteen has just gone like "I will ride that" [Austin laughs loudly] I think these things.. [Jack chuckles] I think this is the thing you would like buy.

AUSTIN (over Jack): This is the thing that is gone out here.

JACK and AUSTIN (at the same time): Yeah

AUSTIN: [weird bird... noise] It like squawks. It does a whole thing. Yeah. [pause] So as you arrive you see... there's a- a figure.. In- next to a- like a- sort of hover vehicle? That's been parked out front? It's like a- I'm picturing it as a very boxy, almost like a- a boxy truck that has like a flatbed in the back and doesn't have a- it doesn't have a- there's no roof on the front, right? So it's like- it's like a two seater truck almost that has a big flatbed in it that has like, you can- as you pull up you can see a.. As you pull up in your bird you can see inside of it it has like a- it has kind of a concrete [Austin hesitates] bags. Right? It has like bags of cement and-

JACK: Yeah

AUSTIN: And, you know, buckets- you know, not buckets but containers of water and other chemicals and stuff and you can see there's like a bumper sticker basically that identifies this thing as being part of the Concrete Town Particulars. And there is a person there sitting on the- like leaning on the side of this truck with red and orange armour. They have a gas mask on? It's like- not a gas- it's actually a helmet- like, it looks like a gas mask at first cause it has those big filters on but when you get closer you can see it's like, it's a full helmet that also has has these gas mask style filters? And every, like, 30 seconds or so the filters open and it's a vent and it vents out air. It never like, there's no like [sound of air being inhaled] suck in, there's only ever this exterior vent.

JACK: Hmm..

AUSTIN: And this person has a large pistol [Austin laughs nervously] that has this clear delineation between the grip and the receiver and the slide and the barrel as if the slide- like the top of the pistol is a separate thing that you could remove and replace? And this is like a type of thing that military and other kind of armed.. People who- people who are not only.. do violence but who are well resourced? Have access to- very few people has access to this? Which means that not only does this person- not only is this person in the Concrete Town Irreg- Particulars, but they are also clearly high rank, because regular like, Joe Schmoes in that- in that militia don't get that sort of weapon, you know? What them mostly have are there big concrete bats. That they like carry over their shoulders and- and, you know. Threaten people with. And that also, reportedly have the ability to.. Fight things that shouldn't be. Creatures on Quire that resist other sorts of- of attacks,

JACK: Ooh!

AUSTIN: Axioms. People who can do things- can do uncanny ability, who can do uncanny things. You know. You hear a rumor of a traveling martial artists, who can flow in the air. One hit from this thing, they can't float anymore. And that's what these people are. They are like.. They hunt the weird. [Jack humms] They settle it. They settle it literally with concrete. And so you have this person who is just like [Austin laughs] sitting there, across their arm there are like 10 more of the tops of those pistols strapped in various places. Like, almost- almost like with a... with like a sort of velcro-like material? Or like it's- or maybe it's magnetic? You're not sure, but there's like attached across- across their armour where they can like reach up and grab it. And they're just leaning on this truck. And your business- you were not called in by this person. You were called in by whoever runs this place.

JACK (over Austin): Yeah, yeah, yeah..

AUSTIN: And you can see a sign. There's probably like a wooden sign out front that has been placed in the ground and has been like, slavishly painted and designed and it says "Sunlight Farms" comma "Moonlock". [Jack laughs] There are no Sunlight Farms on any other planets as far as you know. But, you know. It's good to have ambition.

JACK: That's aspirational, yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah, exactly. What do you do?

Jack: Aaah, so.. [pause] You know. I ride up to a- a small distance away, sort of 10-15 feet and I get off the- the bird. And.. You know, I walk forward but not like, not hurriedly.

[0:45:00]

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: And I call out and I say:

JACK (as Fourteen): You came armed then?

AUSTIN: Just the nod.

JACK (as Fourteen): You expect this is gonna go south?

AUSTIN (as stranger): Depends.

JACK (as Fourteen): Yeah?

AUSTIN (as stranger): Could go.. One of two ways. We have the-

JACK (as Fourteen, over stranger): Is this the-

AUSTIN (as stranger): We have right to this place. You go inside. [gas mask exhale] You go inside and you tell him we have right to this place.

JACK (as Fourteen): Well, I wasn't called here by you.

[pause]

AUSTIN (as stranger): Well, I'm here.

[pause]

JACK (as Fourteen): Okay.

JACK: And I walk past this figure up towards the- the front door of- of.. Is it "Sunlight"? Or "Sunshine"

AUSTIN: "Sunlight"

JACK: Sunlight Farms.

AUSTIN (as stranger): 8 minutes.

JACK (as Fourteen): I have 8 minutes?

AUSTIN: And he nods.

JACK (as Fourteen): Oh, we'll be done in 8 minutes.

AUSTIN (as stranger): The law goes into effect. 8 minutes.

[pause]

JACK (as Fourteen): Okay. I'll keep that in mind.

JACK: And I knock on the door.

AUSTIN (as the farmer): I told you to leave!

jack (as fourteen): No no, no. I'm [Farmer: I to-] Fourteen Fifteen. I'm the lawyer?

AUSTIN (as the farmer): Ohh [stressed sigh] Wha- How do I know? How do I- how do I know?

AUSTIN: And he peeks out from the side of a window. It's a- it's a- it's a... like a.. guy with a-kind of an asian guy who has on... I don't know, what the farmers wear in- on Moonlock? [Austin laughs] What does industrial farmers wear?

JACK: What's he farming?

AUSTIN: Um, so he was farming a mix of things. He is farming.. jelly fruit? Which we know is a [Austin laughs] a delicious Quire delicacy.

JACK (overlapping): Oh yeah! It's a- [Jack laughs] I've forgotten about that!

AUSTIN: Aha, and we know.. He is also farming like.. Beans? And.. it's like lots of- it's lots of protein. Because animals often get eaten by wild animal- by other wild animals here? [Jack laughs] Or the world changes and kills them!

JACK (with amused tone): Oh, so you just- you come out one day and you're like, ah, they died.

AUSTIN: Yeah, exactly. Or they're just gone? Or they're just inside of a- they're on top of a weird arch that showed up? Or they're in a cave that wasn't there a day before?

JACK: Oh... God..

AUSTIN: So yeah. And you can see that his farm is built- his farm- but his farm is his farm. His farm is like, not changing. He is probably in his thirties? I'd say?

[pause]

JACK (as Fourteen): Uh.. Look sir, we don't have a lot of time. Here's the letter you sent me?

AUSTIN (as the farmer): Mhm

JACK: And I like, pull it out from like, a pocket.

AUSTIN (as the farmer): Okay [stutters] C-come on in. Cone on in. [pause] [farmer sighs] My name's Dusty, it's- thank you so much for coming out. [sighs again]

JACK (as Fourteen): Any time. Ah.. the man outs-

AUSTIN (as Dusty, cutting Fourteen off): This man is terrorising me! And he is saying that there's some law that says he could take this back and that's not fair.. This is my.. It says it out front. "Sunlight", Dusty Sunlight farms. That's me.

JACK (as Fourteen): That is- that is- that is the case. And I'm gonna try to make sure it doesn't happen. Um.. He says- has he told you? Eight minutes until the law goes into effect.

AUSTIN (as Dusty): Hey! He told me ten minutes two minutes ago.

[long pause]

AUSTIN (as Dusty): Wait, no.

JACK (as Fourteen): Right.

AUSTIN (as Dusty): Yeah, that's [laughs]

JACK (as Fourteen): Right. Yeah.

AUSTIN (as Dusty): Okay.

JACK (as Fourteen): So.. Do you have any deeds to the- deeds to the property?

AUSTIN (as Dusty): Of course! O-of course. C-come with me.

AUSTIN: And he lea-lea-- and he leads you to an office room. And like you just like get to piece together some of his life as you walk through which is like, he is from Earth.

JACK: Oh, wow.

AUSTIN: There are like pictures of him with his family, in front of the- the giant.. Um, I mentioned this briefly in a previous episode that earth is in the middle of building a dyson sphere around the entire Earth's system? This like, massive, um.. metallic structure that will inclose not just Earth but also all of the other planets at the center of the core of the universe?

JACK (laughing): Oh my god..

AUSTIN: And so it's like, it's him and his- and his like- it's him at sixteen with his- with his parents like, giving him thumbs up, and- and like, in a space station behind him you can see the like, one tenth finished dyson sphere around it. Um.. There's the- you know, there's pictures of- of him with like, at prom with his boyfriend, there's like pictures of him in school, there's pictures of him in military service. He like, he did like very basic military service for Earth. And then there's like a lots of pictures of him with animals and with.. Agriculture equipment. He went to like- he went to like an agricultural school, you know? He has a degree in agriculture. I guess maybe that's even what he was doing with the military. Was like, figuring out supply chain stuff, you know, doing experiments on, you know, new types of- of grains, space grains, et cetera. And so you get that. And like, you know, his- he came here as- as.. Sunlight's Dusk. Or sorry, Sunlight's *Dust*. But he has since, as many- as many colonists from Earth have adopted the more Twilight Mirage style name. Of just like, their name? [Austin laughs]

[0:50:05]

JACK: Yeah

AUSTIN: So he's Dusty Sunlight now, and calls his farms-

JACK (overlapping Austin): So he came- He came over on the.. Like, unpredictable [AUSTIN: Yeah] sleep detachment?

AUSTIN: Well no, he, so..

JACK: Like the huge one that showed up.

AUSTIN: No, there've been more. That's the thing.

JACK (laughing): Oh, really..

AUSTIN: Time has been weird? People keep showing up from earth. [Jack hums] And, they always are further apart than they should be. So like. It's like what if umm [Austin laughs] It's like what if the colonists arrived to Earth from the future? Like what if they showed up and before they got here they were from 23000 and then they got here and it was only 2017.

JACK (laughing): Right.

AUSTIN: And then- and then a- and then two weeks later more showed up? And they're from 26000? Um.. and it's like, oh, well. Y'all don't even, like... [confused noises] You're that person's great-great-grandfather and you're both here and that's super wierd!

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Um.. And so that keeps happening. So he's on one of these, like, colony- colonist, uh, sleep attachments. So..

JACK (as Fourteen): You managed to build this place up pretty quickly, huh?

AUSTIN (as Dusty): Yea... It's my life's work. I... I've always dreamed of having my own farm on the range and I care about it. I- You know, I- [pause] Anyway here is the deed.

AUSTIN: And he shows you. He has a deed. He has a bunch of paperwork on from of him. He's just bunch of paperwork in from of him! That's like, what he has [JACK: Oh- Okay, yeah] um, and one of them is clearly a deed but there's like, it's stapled to something? It's- there's a bunch of attached paperwork that is like, attached by a paperclip. There's definitely a missing page. And his office is just like covered in paperwork and in... [Jack's tired sigh] You know, it's- it's not an unfamiliar sight for you.

JACK: No, and especially because he's- he's

JACK (as Fourteen): Have you been looking for this all day?

AUSTIN (as Dusty): I've been looking for- for... yeah. It's- [sigh] You know, honest truth. [looking for words] They've sent me a letter a month ago and they said they were gonna come take it and that's why I got in touch with you because I thought, well, if someone's gonna come take it I gotta have something that says, someone who says I'm with the law and I can say you can't take it.

JACK (as Fourteen): We're not gonna let that happen. Um

JACK: When we see this. Is the deed, like, is the deed in his name?

AUSTIN: Do you wanna- do you wanna- sounds to me like you're trying to do a thing.

JACK: Yeah, I think I'm- I think I'm trying [humor in Jack's voice] to do a law roll.

AUSTIN: Yeah, so I don't think that this is.. Um... I don't think that this is like, an action roll. Because an action roll takes place when you do something potentially tro- dangerous or troublesome?

JACK: Yeah

AUSTIN: I think that this is a fortune roll. Which means that we're just gonna have you roll the dice... um.. According to one of your stats.

JACK (crosstalk): Is it one d6 or.. Two d6?

AUSTIN (overlapping Jack): No, it's actually gonna still- we're gonna use your study. So what is your- what is your study? [JACK: Um, so my s-] It might be a one d6. [both chuckle]

JACK: My study is... One.

AUSTIN: Okay, so ye, so you'll do a one d6. Unless you have any other moves or any abilities that would help you with this.

JACK: Um... I mean, I- I can... I always know when someone is lying to me?

AUSTIN: He is not... lying... [Austin makes a doubtful thinking noise] There's a little bit of- there is- there is... [pause] Depends on what we mean by lie. And I think that's how it feels. Do you know what I mean?

JACK: Yeah. Yeah, like I'm able to...

AUSTIN (overlapping Jack): He's not like, actively deceiving you but he definitely is.. Mis- he is definitely not being completely truthful about the situation.

JACK: Yeah. [pause] Right, let's see. Oh my god.

AUSTIN: You rolled a 2 which is *bad*.

JACK: Yeah, off to a great start of Scum & Villainy.

AUSTIN (laughing, overlapping Jack): That's a bad result. Um, so the- I mean, here's a thing you learn from this is... You know the thing that you were hoping to find. Maybe this is one of

the truths you've learned about the law. Is, it's never about the truth. It's about what sort of argument you can make, right? [Jack hums] The law.. The law is a c- a collection of... The law is analog. The law is not binary. The law has a bunch of various settings, It has a bunch of various positions and being legal aid, being an ad hoc lawyer, being a mediator means arranging those things so that you can produce a good outcome. [pause] it is not about the truth.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Often the case that you can see, uh... a large animal that you know is a bird but you could make a legal case that it's a horse.

JACK: Right.

AUSTIN And get the protections that horses have according to the law. Based on [jack laughs] clever argumentation. Unfortunately there's no argument here, Fourteen Fifteen. Um.. What this man did was sign an agreement when he first arrived to have a plot of settled land provided by the Concrete Town Particulars... that was part of *at the time* a loan that, ah.. was arranged by the- the New Earth Hegemony that was like a 20 year loan that he could pay back.

[0:54:55]

AUSTIN: After the Concrete Town Particulars did a few- gained status is what I'll say. They... gained status and after the New Earth Hegemony decided that they wanted to kind of divest from Moonlock? They bought a bunch of those loans. [Jack hums with understanding] On the cheap. And were able to change the... the conditions of the loan? So that is payments started to be missed there was no recourse. There was no going into forbearance or there was no sort of like, um.. Flexibility? If you missed the payment they could come in and collect. The land back. And that what's happening. He's missed some payments. Not- a year's worth, you know, he hasn't even been here a year [Austin chuckles nervously, Jack hums] but he's not- things aren't going great quite yet. He thought a lot of people would come to Moonlock. Moonlock's a pretty name.

JACK: [long exhale] It's very near the Umbra.

AUSTIN: Yeah... It's cheap.

JACK (as Fourteen): Okay. Allright. The news isn't good.

AUSTIN (as Dusty): Ho.. What do you mean?

JACK (as Fourteen): Well, this piece of paper... This piece of paper says they own it.

AUSTIN (as Dusty): But- I-I designed those- those- those robe that's out there? I b- I helped build the- the whole structure... [his voice breaks a little at the end] I've been here for months trying to get [searching for words] put one and one together to get two and now they're saying that no matter how many ones I add it's still gonna be zero.

JACK (as Fourteen): Yeah. And they're saying it with this piece of paper. Um.. I was hoping that there'd be something here that I could, you know, I could take out and I could- show that man outside. But I don't this that's gonna be able to works like that. Y- you missed payments. That's why it's- that's why default-

AUSTIN (as Dusty, distressed): Wha- how was I supposed to- [looking for words] The harvest only just hit.

JACK (as Fourteen): Oh..

AUSTIN (as Dusty): And I shipped out the things and the money ain't showed up yet. I haven't had a- [breath] I haven't had a [says 'a' a lot] a payment *in* in just as long. How was that my fault. My- I'm trying to cut people some slack.

JACK (as Fourteen, over Dusty): So you shipped-

AUSTIN (as Dusty, sad): I just want some jelly fruit.

JACK (as Fourteen): It's great. It's- it's- You- you make that stuff?

AUSTIN (as Dusty): Yeah..

JACK (as Fourteen): That stuff's really good. Um..

AUSTIN (as Dusty): Thank you. It- it's- nothing- there's nothing like it back on Earth. There's nothing like any of this, all the open space. It's beautiful, here, I just want to be a farmer.

JACK (as Fourteen): [inhale] [exhale] So you sent the goods off. You- you sent them away...

AUSTIN (as Dusty): And then they- it's a net 30, do you know what a net 30 is? Did you go to the business school?

JACK (as Fourteen): I- no, I did not.

AUSTIN (as Dusty, overlapping Fourteen): Did you take any business courses when you were doing the law? Okay. So net 30 means they get the shipment and then they have 30 days to pay it back. Today is day 37. [panicked] That money didn't show up! And then I also have second client who- had- they- they're a bigger client so they have a net 60 and they're on a day 72!

JACK (as Fourteen): [long sigh] And you have a receipt? Do you have a receipt for this?

AUSTIN: Yeah, he has a drawer. And he like, again, shows you all the paperwork. He- he's not telling- He's not telling a lie here, like, [JACK: Yeah] the thing he's done is what they will not do. Which is.. Everybody's struggling. And he's cutting people come fucking slacks. [JACK: Yeah] And he shouldn't be. Because there isn't- or, well, like, he- what can he do? He doesn't have a group- He doesn't have someone with a big concrete baseball bat to go collect for him.

JACK: Yeah. Or- or worse still, these automated weapons.

AUSTIN: Right, right, yeah.

JACK: Um, d-does this 8 minute land transfer thing, have I encountered it before?

AUSTIN: This is like the... this is the thing, right? This is like-

JACK (cutting Austin off): The working method, they roll up and the clock starts?

AUSTIN: No, no no. This is the... this is the example. This is the one that you've been waiting to see if it would happen. Like, this is the one that people said could happen based on the exchange- the buying of the loans by the Particulars. Someone in a newspaper somewhere said like, *now, of course, this means that we're moving into a world where the particulars could go start, you know, foreclosing on- on property that other people own. But that will never happen, you know?* This is the first case of it happening. And could set the tone going forward. Um.. so like the 8 minutes is literally, that law goes into effect in 8 minutes or now probably 3 minutes, right?

JACK: Yeah. [pause] [Jack laughs] Oh no... I think I have a hail mary but I d...

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

JACK (as Fourteen): I have... uh.. Okay. Wait here. Don't come outside. Whatever you do don't come outside? Okay?

AUSTIN (as Dusty): [stuttering and searching for words] Okay.

JACK (as Fourteen): I'm not gonna- Don't worry. I'm gonna try and- [pause] Look. I can't promise- I can't promise this is gonna work. That's the- that I'm gonna.. give it a shot.

AUSTIN (as Dusty, meekly): O-okay. Thank you.

JACK (as Fourteen): I need the receipt and I need the deed.

[1:00:00]

AUSTIN: He hands them over.

JACK: Okay. And then we just get this like, exterior shot of the building. With this figure leaning on their truck..

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: And then like, front door of the.. Thing opens slowly and Fourteen comes out and walks across the like, dirt, towards this figure.

AUSTIN: I think they like, stand up and put their like, concrete, like bat into the ground and like, push themselves up on it? You know what I mean?

JACK (as Fourteen): Okay. Here's the deal. This document says that, by all accounts, in three minutes, this place should be yours.

Austin (slowly): Nod.

JACK (as Fourteen): And you know why? It's because [slight pause] you know, some shipment didn't come through. And [sigh] a payment wasn't made and he couldn't make the payment on to you. And there's an argument I that I could make here. You know. That that jelly fruit is... going into, into your city? You know. Concrete Particulars' [deep sigh] you know. They're benefitting from what's here but I don't think that argument's going to work.

AUSTIN: Shakes. Shakes his head.

JACK (as Fourteen): What time did you wake up this morning?

AUSTIN (as stranger): Six. Just like everybody else.

JACK (as Fourteen): You sure about that?

AUSTIN: He nods. [Puhhh] and there's this little expulsion of- of air.

AUSTIN (as stranger): Six. We do things by the clock [Fourteen: Yeah..] in Concrete Town.

JACK (as Fourteen): When you woke up was it light outside?

AUSTIN: Nods.

JACK (as Fourteen): My alarm went up at six and.. it was dark. No sun to be seen.

AUSTIN (as stranger): Let me tell *you*. About how things are.. In Concrete Town. Every clock is on time.

JACK (as Fourteen): [inhale] This isn't Concrete Town.

AUSTIN (as stranger): Is that a threat? I'd like it if were a threat. [breathe in] [breath out]

JACK (as Fourteen): Okay. I'm gonna present you some alternatives here? [Austin laughs quietly] Eight minutes. Well, three minutes now.

AUSTIN (as stranger): Two.

JACK (as Fourteen, overlapping): But a... [a mix between laugh and sigh] Two minutes now. You're really certain that time is moving here in the way that you want it to be, right? But we could go in there together and.. I'm sure we could look at the clock that would say something completely different. And, you know. Clocks in Concrete Town run on time and, you know. You'll say that this place will be Concrete Town soon but it isn't yet. The second alternative is that this is a threat.

AUSTIN: Sound like this- this sounds like a- a risky standard to me.

JACK: Mhm. I love blades system!

AUSTIN (laughing): It's so good Jack! I'm so happy to be back to this system

JACK (overlapping with Austin) : I love that we can just direct action like this and then see what happens, it's great.

AUSTIN (overlapping with Jack): Yeah. It's so good. So wha- So what do you... what do you rolling? [JACK (at the same time): I think this is--] I think it's risky standard based on you're rolling actually- what do you- what do you rolling?

JACK: I think this is sway. Um..

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah..

JACK: This is not- What I am- what I am trying to do here is.. is .. I do not want this to resort to violence?

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah, yeah

JACK: And I am trying to make a case here? That's seems like the sway-est sway?

AUSTIN: That seems like right, yeah. And I think it's risky, you go head to head, you act under fire, you take a chance.

JACK: So how do I-

AUSTIN (at the same time): This is not a desperate. Desperate would be you overreach your capabilities, you're in serious trouble and controlled you'd be [inhale] you act on your terms, you exploit a major advantage.. Um.. But I don't think that's what it is. [Jack sighs] I think this is risky? [JACK(at the same time): How do I do this?] And I think the effect is standard. You Just- you roll the two dice and.. Whatever the highest one is, you get it. [pause] what are your... Let's see. Do you have any other abilities that have anything to do with swaying or anything like that? I don't think so.

JACK: Umm... Oh I- I might do actually. I have, umm...

AUSTIN: No, you have- What you have is the ability to *resist* something. Uhh.. extra and

JACK (overlapping with Austin): Oooh, a consequence of suspicion. [AUSTIN: Yeah.. yeah..] If he'd said "oh you're not actually a lawyer".

AUSTIN: Yes. Then you would- Well, then you would just be able to say "no I am" [laugh] because you are- well? You're not really so, yeah, maybe we would have to do that. [Jack laughs] Anyway. So go ahead and give me a, a sway which is what, two d6?

JACK: Two d6? Even tho-

AUSTIN: No, one d6. You have one d6 on sway.

JACK: Oh, wow!

AUSTIN: Your consort is two but that's not what's happening here. I don't... think..

JACK (overlapping with Austin): Yeah, And I- I think if we're being honest with ourselves, I- uhh, let me check consort...

AUSTIN: Alright, let me read, let me read these things. Ready? "You might Consort with a well connected friend to learn secrets of an enemy or rival, what do they intend to do, uh, what may I suspect about motives" um, oh, you know? Sorry, this is actually not the- I want to read the other one, one second, I have to go up to...

JACK: I've found this page really hard to find.

AUSTIN: Yeah, that's one of the things about this book that I wish was a little bit better.. Uhhh? Though- Ok here it is: "When you consort you socialise with friends and contacts you might gain access to resources and information, people or places." That's not what this is. Uh, "When you command, you compel or beat the answers with the force of personality" and when you sway... "You s- you sway with influence, with guile, charm or logic. You might outright lie to someone's face. You might persuade a sucker to believe you. You might argue the facts with an officer. You could try to trick people into affection or obedience, but consorting or commanding might be better". And so those extended- I'm gonna read those extended ones too. So for command it's: "You might intimidate or threaten to get what you want. You may lead an action with NPCs. You might order people to.. to do what you want though consorting might be better" and consorting's are: "You might make a good impression or win someone over with your charm and style. You might make new friends or connect with your heritage or background. You could try to direct your friends with social pressure (but commanding might be better).

[1:05:00]

JACK: Uh, I think this is- this is probably s- sway? [AUSTIN: Yeah, me too] I don't think that what I'm using here is force of personality or socialising [AUSTIN: Me- me neither] with friends and contacts.

AUSTIN: Me neither. So one d6.

JACK: Okay... Look, there's six numbers on here...

AUSTIN (over JACK): That's all. Uhh, you- you could, you could push yourself? You could spend- You- Take two stress to, to push yourself and take the extra die.

JACK: Uh, I'm trying to think, uhh, how- how that-

AUSTIN: Or-

JACK: -would work narratively.. [as Austin starts to talk] Or you could offer me a-

AUSTIN: Well no, so stress is just stress. Or I could offer you a devil's gambit.

JACK (as Austin finishes the sentence): Bargain.

AUSTIN: Yes. Devil's- devil's bargain rather. Umm.. But let's um, I think we can do those after the fact I'm pretty sure? Let me just double check. I know it's one of those things that always...

JACK (overlapping with Austin): I think we decided during Marielda that we could?

AUSTIN: Yeah, cause I think it was more fun? [Austin chuckles] Uh.. [Jack laughs] Yeah, I- I'm- I think I'm still gonna let you push yourselves after the fact... I think. [JACK: Mhm] For- for this roll at least let's say yes.

JACK: Okay, so let's see how it goes.

AUSTIN: I actually think that's wrong. I think it's wrong? I think it's wrong. [Jack laughs] It's pretty clear that like, there's an order of operations here? You push yourself in step 5, you roll the dice in step 6.

JACK: Hmmm...

AUSTIN: So actually I'm gonna keep it that way. The one that I might let slide is devil's bargain? I think devil's bargains are fun after the fact.

JACK: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Because- because-

AUSTIN (overlapping with Jack): But I think push yourself and use a gambit should be ahead of time, otherwise they're too powerful. [JACK: Hmm] Cause you just don't do it? You know?

JACK: Mhm. [pause] Yeah I- I- I- [inhale] I don't think this is a push myself situation here. I-I- I mean I can't- [pause] narratively, I can't picture what that is.

AUSTIN: I mean, so, what it is- "You can use stress to push yourself for greater performance. For each bonus you choose below, take 2 stress" blah blah blah. Um, I would say narratively it's like not sweating while doing this. It's keeping it- It's not letting your voice warble, It's-

JACK: It's trying to be like, as...

AUSTIN: Yeah. You're standing in front of somebody who is like wearing a weird-

JACK: Armed to the teeth.

AUSTIN: Armed to the teeth, wearing weird gas mask helmet.. Um. Which in retrospect is maybe a thing you know they all wear? Something went wrong in Concrete Town and they all wear this now when they're not in Concrete Town.

JACK: [curious hum]

AUSTIN: They can only not wear helmets- with the gas masks thing when they're home in Concrete Town. Let me tell you, that's a good reason for them to wanna pave over this whole fucking planet.

JACK: Oh, yeah. [exhale laugh]

AUSTIN: Um.. [pause] But also it's- it's- this person's right, right? Like, you know that they're in the right to take this. [exhale laugh] [JACK: Yeah] So it's all of those things. So I think pushing yourself can just be like, [JACK: Yeah] "ok, I'm like, I'm gonna do this. It's me, Fourteen Fifteen"

JACK: So I'll roll one... I'll roll two d6..

AUSTIN: Two d6. Yeah, roll two d6.

JACK: And note on my character sheet [AUSTIN: Yes] that I've taken 2 stress. [AUSTIN: Mhm] [laughing] You- you're trying to inflict trauma on me in the first session this time?

AUSTIN: In the first session.

JACK (still laughing): bump it up a couple?

AUSTIN (also laughing, overlapping with Jack): Uhum. Yeah. Just go ahead and roll.

JACK: Okay. I'll just write down... two stress here.

AUSTIN: That's a six! There you go. That's a critical. [JACK: Ohohoho] suc- It's not a critical but it's- but it's a- a complete total success. So, umm.. What's that look like? Like, is it the- what's the part that this character- This character's name in Kentucky's Corona by the way. Um, so what's Corona... Like, what's the thing that he- he responds to.

JACK: Oh, god, I think it's the- and I- I don't know how this character does that so I'll be interested to- I'll be interested to hear, but I think what Corona recognises with, with kind of awful sinking feeling is that... if they are fully prepared to play the weird legal loophole game?

AUSTIN: Uhum.

JACK: Fourteen Fifteen is also? [AUSTIN: Right.] And... That kind of has to be, kind of grudgingly like, "oh, right, this- time cannot be guaranteed to work here." So... sure, they might be able to take this place in 2 minutes? But whoooooos- you know, what is two minutes?

AUSTIN: Right, what if- it's two minutes but then the- you check your calendar in there and it's wrong or whatever. Right? Like, how ????? days

JACK (overlapping with Austin): And it doesn't even matter if like, you know, you could see- he cou- he could look at his watch and see two minutes pass [AUSTIN: Yeah] but there's no damn way of proving that that's what's happening. Like-

AUSTIN: And at the end of the day this is gonna go before our judge. And you could make this ridiculous argument that in fact it is still [JACK This is still- Yeah] before that. Right. Exactly. Yeah, you own it. You own it in the future. We haven't gotten it yet. Forever. For whatever reasons. Umm..

JACK (happy): It's absolutely, it's like- It's um.. [pause, laugh] You know. It's the opposite of time.is.

AUSTIN: Right, right. Yes, yes. Everything is out of synch. Um.. And that's like, to lesser and greater degrees across the Quire system? But *especially* on Moonlock. And *especially* close to the Umbra. Like, this is where things are as- as like, Dark Souls timey-wimey as we get. I guess Volition [Jack hums] is even more like that but this is like, especially so.

JACK: Yeah..

AUSTIN: Allright, so I think he says like,

AUSTIN (as Kentucky's Corona): I give him a month. Pay up.

JACK (as Fourteen): Well, who knows how long that'll be.

AUSTIN (as Kentucky's Corona): Huh.. What's your name?

JACK (as Fourteen): My name is Fourteen Fifteen.

AUSTIN (as Kentucky's Corona): [Poofs the air out] Fourteen... Fifteen.. Whild names out here.

[1:10:00]

AUSTIN: Tosses the concrete bat into the back of the truck. [pause] um, and like, steps into the back of the truck and.. ta- like, [two knocks] hits the top of a- or hits like the side of the- the inside, like, this guy is in big armour, he isn't taking his armour off out here [Jack laughs] and the truck like, automatically does like, [engine starting foley] bbbhubububububwu and like starts to float up and turn around and head back. And he just kind of like, leans against the in- the inside of the cab of the pickup truck. And then like, the door opens and Dusty sticks his head out.

AUSTIN (as Dusty): You got him to leave... Ha- [pause] ho- how?

JACK (as Fourteen): It's a... they're gonna take this place eventually? But a- You know, eventually can mean a lot of things. I think. Maybe. It may mean a lot things. My hope is that eventually in this case, you know, means a long time.

AUSTIN (as Dusty): I'll pay my bills, I- I'll figure out how to get more money, just tell them that they come back- just- [deep breath] They're really gone...

JACK (as Fourteen): I hope so.

AUSTIN (as Dusty): T-thank you, F-Fourteen Fifteen. Thank you.

JACK: [sigh] And I think that like [pause] I think that like, um.. [pause] Like, the birds? In the- in the like, sparse scrubby trees around this place? Like, begin a murmuration and like, like start chittering and singing and like, lift up out of the branches and- and settle themselves back into the branches again? And we get this wide shot of the farm and then like in, I don't know, Assassin's Creed or- or in Grand Theft Auto, the position of the shadows just change.

AUSTIN: Yeah.. Um, I think that yeah, they shift from like- you know, a 2pm shadow to like a late in the day shadow, really long. And then there's another one. And a.. A ship. A shuttle. Comes to rest just outside, parking next to your bird. And the cockpit of that ship, um, like, or the side door, like, opens up sideways like it's as if the front left side part of the engine block and like the whole front hood of the- of this shuttle. The whole like front of it turns left and then opens up and.. Pure Cascara rolls out. [Jack breaths through the nose]

AUSTIN (as Cascara): Fourteen, I didn't know you farmed.

JACK (as Fourteen): I'm here on business. Um.. I'm here- I'm helping some folks here.

AUSTIN (as Cascara): Me too.

[pause]

JACK (as Fourteen): Why did you come out here?

AUSTIN (as Cascara): Because I'm gonna need some help, helping the folks out. People don't know this place the way you do. Not just Moonlock. The ins and outs of what's happening across the whole Quire system. Fourteen Fifteen you... [she sighs] You're putting the pieces together. This place is a puzzle. And you're figuring it out. I'm putting something together and I want you to be part of it.

JACK (as Fourteen): [sighs] Who have you managed to get?

AUSTIN (as Cascara): [sigs] Some old friends.

JACK (as Fourteen): What would we be doing? What's- what's- what am I signing out for here?

AUSTIN (as Cascara): What you're doing now. It's. [pause] The legality of it is... Gray... Which isn't to say that you'll be vigilantes. You'll be representing... [pause] They're only a handful of people in this system that want to see this place unified. People who want to weave together all of the parts of Quire. And you'd- go with their blessing. But when you get there, you're not reporting to some military officer or to some handler, you'll be reporting to the people. The people of the Quire system. The people of the Twilight Mirage. The only badge you have is their consent to listen to you. To enable you to take action. And you've never needed a badge before Fourteen Fifteen. I don't want you because you're a killer. You've- you've killer for us before. If I needed that, I would tell you. I need you, because you've spent a year learning how this place works and how to help people.

[1:15:00]

JACK (as Fourteen): [sighs] And you're sure that when I'm doing it over there for- for the collected people I could be doing more that what I'm doing here? That's something you can promise?

AUSTIN (as Cascara): If I came here, and told you I did all the calculations? And that all the numbers line up that the lives over there,

AUSTIN: And she gestures up from her chair to like, the three other planets in the sky.

AUSTIN (as Cascara): count more than the ones here? You better say no. What I can tell you is there is something larger that we're working on but it's not about the value of individual life. It's about making sure that the Mirage is a place where other people like you can continue safely do their work. It's not about.. Whether a farmer on- on Altar is worth more than a farmer on Moonlock. It's about making sure that, everywhere through this system the pieces are in place so that good people can make the Mirage whole. If we don't build a foundation, this will never be a home.

JACK: [humms] Yeah, I think- I think that like, a clock starts striking? Inside the house.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: Umm.. Though I think- I think that's what we get. We get like, slow low shots of the camera moving through Dusty's house as this like, clock on a mantle strikes.

AUSTIN: Yeah..

JACK: And Dusty's like sitting down, putting some of the papers away..

AUSTIN: Yeah..

JACK: Um.. Like, getting a drink.

AUSTIN: A cat moves by, you know. [JACK: Yeah] Slowly. Like a slow cat, not like a fast cat.

JACK: And... we come through the house and we come out through the open door and we see the like, landing gear of Cascara's ship, like, lift up, and the ship takes itself away and the camera moves out through the front door and to the year and like, there's nobody there.

AUSTIN: [Bird sound] There's a bird that's been [Austin laughs, "The Speaker" starts playing] hitched to the side of the

JACK: It's been like hitched- it's been like, it's like, it's been hitched to where there are other birds.

AUSTIN: Right, exactly. You've given- you've given Dusty Sunlight a bird. Maybe- maybe he can sell it for the money he needs.

JACK: Yeah, please sell the bird for the money you need to keep the farm.

AUSTIN: [laughs] All right, good. Good.

[music ends]