

## Twilight Mirage 56: The Vault of Anticipation Pt. 2

Transcriber: vesta

CW: This episode contains discussion of suicidal ideation.

JANINE: Previously on Twilight Mirage.

[recap begins]

AUSTIN: You arrive on Altar, we see y'all meeting up with Shoghig- the- Sho Salon, who runs the Temple of the Lost,

[MUSIC - "The Notion" starts]

AUSTIN: [continued] Where she explains and kind of confirms at least part of what the Waking Cadent told you. Which is, there is a relic of Anticipation here. And, she does also believe that- that it could be used to bring Anticipation back. The two groups undertook this expedition together, and what they found out was, all these little blue threads that were all over Altar, were actually tied together as a single thread. And eventually, it leads to the- this volcano, but if you have someone pluck each of them at the same time, the outer gates of the temple to Anticipation, the Vault of Anticipation, will open.

AUSTIN: [continued] So they've opened that vault. They've not opened the inner vault yet. And the base camp is kind of sizeable, because it's Sho, it's a lot of Sho's best students, including a recent arrival, Winchester Went. Weyerbach Zwei, who is the leader of the group called the Method of Apotheosis, which is the group that y'all gave Polyphony to. Barricade too, to kind of like, figure out how to turn Barricade into a Divine? And then there's- some- someone else that you both recognise here, which is that the Waking Cadent sent Blooming, who is now the Excerpt of Compulsion. And- and to be cl- I think that- I should be clear about why they are there, which is like, in a sense, they are both vying for whatever you find. So those are- those are the kind of factions at play, I think, at the base camp.

AUSTIN (as Sho): I know you're both tired, this- you've almost made it. There is a lot in the Basilica. Many threads to pluck, and also lots to learn. There were things there that would have surprised me, if- if I had not been so devout a student. So, prepare yourselves and each other, if you can.

AUSTIN: So you walk on, and you come to the front of this Basilica. And this place is its own kind of minor temple to the 300 Divines. Which Sho would have told you is basically

that Pleroma was a Divine devoted to understanding the Divine Fleet, and was sort of built by Divines to have, not an outside perspective necessarily? But to have a perspective devoted to understanding the place of Divines, and kind of looking through everything.

[music ends]

[recap ends]

AUSTIN: In fact I think you catch a trend. The Excerpts of Anticipation started dying sooner and sooner. Closer and closer to Anticipation's own death. And the youngest, not their final one, but their youngest who died, died only after thirty five years. Very young. Not sure why.

ALI: Yup.

AUSTIN: Mhm. You have a second question?

JANINE: Yeeeah. I think Signet would wanna know about the first- this is like a complicated one be- specifically because of COUNTER/Weight.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: But I think Signet would wanna know about the first Excerpt and Divine that have like a mutually [short pause] caring relationship, like?

AUSTIN: Mm.

JANINE: Like, empathy going both ways, interest going both ways, like.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: A true bond.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Go ahead and- go ahead and give me that roll. Alright, it's a four. That's like standard information. So I think you get the divide between Excerpts and-and Candidates here, right? In the era of COUNTER/Weight, the second season of Friends at the Table, there were Divines, but they were piloted by Candidates. And Candidates lived much shorter lives, like much much shorter lives. And did not always have healthy relationships with their Divines. The first Candidate we ever see in that series gets it rough [chuckles]. And- and many of the Candidates we see in that series just had a rough time. They are disposed off. They are- they are bled dry, right? But we do get a brief image of an early Candidate who has what seems to be a fairly positive relationship with their- with their Divine. And again, this is a different thing than an Excerpt, so I can also talk to you about that. And the answer there is actually very quick,

right, like, it- Kamala and Inde- Independence had that relationship for a moment. You know, before it all fell apart. That is not like you know, she- she did have her Excerpt name. Kamala Cadence's Excerpt name was "Many". She was- she was- "The light of us is Many, and yet seen across the distance, it is as though it is one".

AUSTIN: [continued] And so, in terms of Excerpts like, the first Excerpt had that relationship with her- with Independence, with her Divine. It's just that things then fell apart, fairly quickly, especially in the scales of time we are talking about. But, if you come back to the- the earliest point at which there were things called Candidates, there were people who were called Candidates, you can learn about Kadaknath. Who was again, Independence's first Candidate, you know? Before Kadaknath, they were called pilots. They were called helmsmen. They were called soldiers. They were people inside of machines that pulled triggers and locked onto targets and ran diagnostics. And then, I'll just read. Kadaknath's first victory- was fighting against this terrible foe, Kadaknath's first victory lead to an alliance with the Loose Coalition of Free Booters and Rebels that fought against Rigour's regime. And their second lifted them from simple soldier to hero. And with the third, they'd been lifted into something altogether anew. It was California Rose, reporter for the Diaspora's largest public broadcaster who coined the terms, an accidental rush of purple prose. "Those great heroes," Rose wrote, "in who we find the living ideals of our democracy, Truth, Equality, Independence, they fly alive and bright- alive and bright and virtuous are divine candidates."

AUSTIN: [continued] And the relationship you learn between Kadaknath and the Divine Independence, was one of mutual respect and one of kind of shared honour and devotion to the cause. They fought this terrible foe that they had, and they understood each other as beings. As- as living beings. You know, they- they came to decisions with each other, not necessarily for each other, and you know, that was not always the case. It was not long after that that other- that Divines at certain periods of history were lifted up to be sort of above humanity? And at other points were- were made to be again, reduced to sort of very powerful machines. Depending on where you were in the galaxy and who was in charge and you know, the- the swaying of history. So there's your answer. Again, the Excerpt answer is Kamala. Is Many, is the Excerpt Many.

AUSTIN: [continued] I don't think you get- I mean, I guess you get the hint of it, right? You get like- you feel that like until things went bad with Independence, and until she started- till Kamala Cadence started feeling really resentful of Divines, she had this deep affection for them. Even when she wasn't- even when she was no longer an Excerpt, as the Cadent, she had that deep affection for them. And she started from this place of incredibly deep affection, of wanting to protect them because they seemed so important and so distinct, that like, it was not enough to- it was wrong to kill them. It was wrong to go to war- go to a war that would hurt a lot of humans, but also probably kill all of the Divines at the end of the day. So yeah. That's two. You can again ask a third if you'd like, but it will cost you one stress.

JANINE: I have other questions, but I wanna know if Ali also does.

ALI: I don't have anything right now? So if you wanna go-

JANINE: Okay.

ALI: Wrap back around?

JANINE: I- I imagine there's a lot of like, Signet is maybe then asking questions without meaning to?

AUSTIN: Yeah, definitely.

JANINE [overlapping with Austin]: As she's working like- it's just a thing of like, her mind is wandering in a place that's receptive to it?

AUSTIN: Right. Totally.

JANINE: Because, yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah, makes sense.

JANINE: So I think the next thing her mind wanders to is, that dying wave. The- the wave of Divines-

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: Starting to just drop off at a more precipitous rate than was normal by- by a bit.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Oh that's a good one.

AUSTIN: That's a great one. [Ali chuckling] Give me a roll.

ALI: Can I assist with this, because I think that it's very much like, Tender looking over [chuckling] Signet's shoulder.

AUSTIN: Well it shouldn't be looking over her shoulder right, because this is all mental, right, so.

ALI [overlapping with Austin]: Right, yeah.

AUSTIN: But it could be minds intertwining, right?

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So do you want to take a stress to assist- take one stress to give Signet a bonus die.

ALI: [exhales while lip trills] I would love to.

AUSTIN: Go for it.

ALI: Cause I lost all that stress.

AUSTIN: Uhhuh.

ALI: Stress to spare.

JANINE: Alright.

AUSTIN: Ooh, there's a six.

JANINE: Nice.

AUSTIN: Look at you. This is like a really depressing thing. They- and I guess like you get some of this- you get it from- I- there is a really deep feeling of regret here. Which is that Pleroma- Pleroma was built to study the Fleet. And to had that outside- that sort of an outside perspective, a devoted perspective, still interested, still a Divine perspective. So can't ever really be outside, right? In- in a sense you know, as, as the- the Doyenne said, we could only ever have built them in our image, right? So, so Pleroma was always still itself in the image of the Divine and therefore in the image of people and the first people who ever mel- built Divines, and in the cultures that would lift up an algorithm and say 'this thing here, that is a Divine'. So it carried. Still with us in it. But also, was devoted to this idea of having an outsider's perspective. And, from that perspective, Pleroma- again you got a great, so Pleroma introduced this idea. A couple of them.

AUSTIN: [continued] One, Pleroma discovered the truth about Kamala, which is that she had regretted her decision to save all the Divines. That she in fact- or at the very least didn't regret her decision to save them, but- but had changed in such a way to believe that they should be put on leashes, and should be made to help as many people as possible. And that they would be better off dead. That- that was what was coming. Pleroma's perspective- Pleroma's like hypothesis, was that on a long enough timeline, non-Divine beings, whether those are humans or synthetics, and the Divines were always skeptical of any sort of like synthetic-Divine allegiance? I think they always thought it would fall apart, but especially after this hypothesis. From Pleroma's perspective, it was inevitable that the Divines would be reduced to tools again. And it just drilled into their fucking heads, and they weren't- I want to be clear this isn't suicidal depression, as someone who has struggled with suicidal depression in his life, in some cases it

was, right? In some cases Divines absolutely struggled with suicidal depression and ended up taking their own lives. But in other cases it was just this disarming thing. And none of them wanted to bring more Divines into the world. Because in every case, all they could see was, one day, this thing they built will be a slave. Maybe not to someone in the Fleet. But we know the NEH is out there. We know that whatever is left of OriCon is still out there. And it- it's a despicable, terrible, terrible realisation for them to have confronted. And it- it broke- it broke them.

AUSTIN: [continued] It just [short pause] it was- it's the feeling that Independence made people feel? That you could never really connect to anyone for real. You could only ever have that approximation. And so suddenly this entire society that was built on belief in that connection started to shake a little bit. And you had some Divines who said no, and who refused? But like, you- you start rocking the boat, right? Like, this is why- they all took the level 1 'distracted' [Ali chuckles] harm, you know? Because none of them could prove it wrong. Even though some of them tried. I mean I probably think you learn this now. This is one of the problems Anticipation was so focused on. Anticipation's whole thing was like, figuring out scenarios right? Running simulations to figure out the best strategy and Pleroma again, I think this is pretty recent from being near literally the- the Vault of Anticipation, it can even now, feel Anticipation trying to work through this. An imagined world where eventually it isn't reduced to being a slave. And that is what has drilled into the Divine Fleet. That, however many gains were made at recognising the Divines as being not like people, but also still valuable? Those gains would slip away. That is why they started dying. Now I think as part of that is also a confirmation again of the Kamala Cadence stuff, right? Obviously, Signet still does not have the Waking Cadent connection here. [Ali chuckles] I just got a six, so maybe, maybe you-

JANINE: Nothing there would make that connection make sense.

AUSTIN: There is her face. There is her- there is what- how she is. There's her voice, right? Like-

JANINE: I don't know that that's honestly good enough for Signet.

AUSTIN [overlapping with Janine]: Maybe not, but we see that.

JANINE: I mean the Waking Cadent is like a weird ice person who could- who can get in vents and stuff, like I think-

AUSTIN: Totally.

JANINE: Signet would just totally be like, oh she's just taking that from the fucking-

AUSTIN [overlapping with Janine]: I just wanna know that like when the credits roll, this is the same voice actor, you know what I mean? [Ali giggles]

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: When- when she's design- like if you look at her meshes, it's the same facial mesh underneath the mask, you know? She probably even has the same headwear on. So I think that's an important you know, continuity for the show type thing. But you do get that Kamala Cadent- Cadence had that arc. From wants to protect the Divines because she sees the inevitability of humans killing all the Divines and reducing them to slaves, to they should be our slaves and- and maybe even we shouldn't have as many as we do have. You see that arc in her, in her lifetime, largely because of Independence. And as a reminder, cause here's the thing that lived in the show notes? One of the things you pick up here too, is that the divide between Independence and Kamala Cadence had to do with death. He- Independence wanted her to promise to let Divines die. Once and for all, to let them die. And she refused. She refused to say that one of the founding tenets of the Resonant Orbit was that Divines were allowed to die. Because her whole reason for building it was that Divines shouldn't be made to die. And so there's- this is like what their split eventually was about. And again that is, if you dig through the "godspeed, glory" show notes, you'll find that story being told.

ALI: [Ali giggles] For the listeners at home.

AUSTIN: For the listeners at home, go to god- and you can find the notes from sci-fi Frank Ocean and Tyler the Creator as they learn about this in a school somewhere. We are really extra this season.

ALI: Mm.

AUSTIN: So yeah, so take that one stress for making that roll. Otherwise, where would they go? And again I can't em- over emphasise the guilt that Pleroma feels over this. Just feels terrible- because like it started happening, right, when Pleroma was still alive when they started dying out. And like couldn't convince anybody. Pleroma and their Excerpt couldn't convince anybody to start building new Divines. And just like, "oh no this isn't what I intended, I didn't want everybody to get real sad. Fuck!"

JANINE: I have one last question I think.

AUSTIN: Sure.

JANINE: And that is, I don't know how to phrase this? Because it's a very loaded question?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: And I think it like, forks?

AUSTIN: [chuckles] Sure.

JANINE: But basically, I think it's. Was the harmony that Signet perceived in the Fleet real?

AUSTIN: : Mm.

JANINE: Or, even- here's where it forks. Was it real? Was it a coincidence? Was it only like a golden period?

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: Was it often on, like-

AUSTIN: Yup, I gotcha.

JANINE [overlapping with Austin]: It's not just the story of like, you know.

AUSTIN: Yup.

JANINE: You know what I mean.

AUSTIN: I do. So really quick about that previous one while you roll. Both of you get those answers from that last one? Because you helped.

JANINE: Right.

AUSTIN [overlapping with Janine]: Because Tender helped.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So you both get all of that information, which also means that Tender totally sees the person from sounds and looks like the Waking Cadent, but does not know what Signet thinks about seeing that. Because we know that Signet- we know that Signet [Ali starts laughing] didn't make the case, didn't make that connection, but Tender doesn't know that necessarily.

ALI: Uuuugh- ohhh.

AUSTIN: [slapping something] Dra-matic irony.

[Janine chuckles]

ALI: Mmmm.



AUSTIN: That's a-

ALI [overlapping with Austin]: I have to commit now, I can't halfway through the session be like, well now's the time.

AUSTIN: Uhhuh. Totally. Uhhuh. [Ali laughing] That's what you got you- that's what was so good about that last season- that last episode, right? Totally things went great- not last episo- last arc, with Wind's Poem, you just commit to the bit. Alright. So you got a four. So.

AUSTIN: [continued] How does- how do you judge this? Is this about a shared feeling of- of this kind of greatness of harmony? Is this like does- does Pleroma's theorem effectively also state that, or do Pleroma and their Candidates feel that? Is that basically what you're looking for?

JANINE [overlapping with Austin]: I think so yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: Because you know, they would be the ones who would have that overview perspective-

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: -in a way that an individual-

AUSTIN: Yes.

JANINE: -or a Divine wouldn't.

AUSTIN: Yes is the answer, and but- but-

JANINE [overlapping with Austin]: But, yeah-

AUSTIN: So the answer is yes, there was that perceived golden era, that perceived harmony. Absolutely existed. And there were downtimes and uptimes. And there were improvements and there were distractions. But yes, for those inside of the Fleet, it's two things. One, for those inside of the Fleet, you could live a better life than maybe anywhere else in the galaxy. And Pleroma probably has a really broad understand- has actually a pretty broad vision on the events of the rest of the galaxy too. In a way that very few other Divines do, like, it was part of its purview was, hey, weigh us against other cultures, you know? Like how- how are things [Janine chuckles] going here compared to over there? And so like, you know, in- in the kind of feelings of the Excerpts and- and of Pleroma, the high points of the Divine Fleet of which there were tens of thousands of years of them, very good. Genuinely e- even in the dying days. A camaraderie and real concern for your neighbour in a way that was unique.

AUSTIN: [continued] But also I don't know that- I don't know that Signet's ever experienced a moment in which she can- she can more firmly see that the Fleet was only ever a speck of dust in the galaxy. And that, you know, again, Kamala Cadence's point was these Divines can be made to help more people. Our Profit's point is that the Mirage could be made to help more people. And they're not wrong about those things, like I- I- one of my watchwords season is like, no alibis, right? I'm not saying they are not wrong. The Mirage could be made to build a utopia for everyone in the world- in the galaxy. It would also come at a cost to some people who are alive currently. But ninety nine point nine nine nine percent of people and everybody eventually, could live in a world of their own creation via the Mirage's power. It also fucks some people over in a very direct and real way immediately. Same thing with the Divines. The Divines could have helped way more people in a different organisation. If they were reduced to slaves, if they were reduced to- if their innate like, selfhood, was denied. They could be pushed harder. They could be made to be what Candidates once were, but for people, you know?

AUSTIN: [continued] And that version of Kamala Cadence like, one, people didn't like that. The people who- who were her students, and who were other Excerpts, one hundred percent were like: nah. Don't do that. But in this moment, two, you see where she was coming from. Maybe don't see where she was coming from? But you can see how small the goodness of the Divine Fleet was in the grand scheme of living, of life in the Milky Way galaxy. Where lots of people were suffering. Where lots of people were starving, where lots of people were you know, imprisoned, and were in terrible situations. Pleroma had that perspective, and that goes into kind of, it- what it kind of puts forward as- as the failures, and- and the failures of the Fleet, but more importantly, the fact that eventually those people, the people who are suffering the most, would look at the Divine Fleet and go: y'all have infinite food, and you've decided to fly around and high five each other all the time? [Ali chuckles] Fuck you. Come to my snow prison. I'm going to plug your machine in the wall, and it's going to feed us all. Are you fucking kidding me?

AUSTIN: [continued] Like, and that is very clear, and again like, Pleroma doesn't have a judgement of that person who would do that. Nor does it have a judgement of the Divine Fleet. It isn't saying that the Divine Fleet is flawed in a moral sense. It's- it's like almost a- a very historical, materialist understand- it's very much like, hey! History has- has a flow. And this flow is taking us in this direction. And eventually, some people are going to chain us the fuck down and make us feed them. And they might not be wrong to, who knows? I don't know if- if they're wrong or not too. But that's what's going to happen. And that is- that is also kind of communicated here with that broad view.

AUSTIN: [continued] So yes, absolutely had a golden age. Absolutely had a harmony among all these people, and there's a lot of people in the micro sense, you know? In the- in the Austin Ali Janine sense, it's a lot of people, right? But it's not even as many people- the Divine Fleet was never as big as the current human population of Earth, right? It was never this big. You know, we're talking about cities that had- ships that had a few million people. We talked about, you know, Anticipation being the size of Manhattan- or the By-and-By being the size of New York in

terms of its population. There were no ships that were the size of India, or China. There were not- and even if there were, there was one of those, you know? The Fleet was always meant to be a small place. It could only be a small place in- in some sense because it was a fleet and not a collection of worlds that could spread their- their population out.

AUSTIN: [continued] And because they were devoted to this idea that hey, we should have this really careful harmony, we should be very cautious about who we work with, we should be very cautious about who is allowed into the Fleet, I think you probably learn here that there were definitely Divines who were like “oh yeah, I would love to be a part of it”, and the answer was like, “we can’t find a place for you, sorry. Like- there isn’t- there isn’t room- you will break the- the resonance of this orbit, you know? The orbit will become un- you know. Will become messier. You’re very belligerent for instance, you know? Sorry for the Divine- for the Divine Militarism, you don’t- you’re not coming in here”. And like, yes and no, right? Like, Militarism has a mouth to feed too.

AUSTIN: [continued] So, so there were decisions made, and sometimes they weren’t as clean as that. Sometimes it wasn’t Militarism, it was- it was Frugality or something. And they said “well, we kind of don’t need any Frugality right now, we actually need lots and lots of Generosity, and we don’t really, we kind of got it covered”, you know, or whatever. And so, there were definitely times where’s like “that’s not necessarily a bad Divine, but they didn’t make it- they didn’t make the cut”. So yeah. That is- that is my complicated branching answer to your branching question. Alright, anything else or are we moving on?

JANINE: Ummm.

AUSTIN: Again take a stress for that because you asked another question.

JANINE Yep. Yep.

AUSTIN: I think it’s just like, the weight of Divinity is- is hard. It’s hard to lift, it’s hard to sit with.

ALI: Yeah. I- I don’t know, I feel like. I don’t want this to be a wasted opportunity but I feel like, there is- Tender was never an Excerpt, and never wanted to be one,

AUSTIN: Right.

ALI: Right?

AUSTIN: Right. Mhm. [Ali chuckles]

ALI: She has a very personal problems and like, respect for the greater like, scope of these things.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: And is super bummed by that answer that [Austin chuckles] she just got. But like, I don't know. I can't like, think-

AUSTIN: That is totally fine.

ALI: Yeah, I can't like zoom in on anything I guess.

AUSTIN: No worries. [Ali chuckles] Alright. So, as you begin to leave this room, this room- this entire Basilica, you come to the final thread. And the final thread is- it's a- it is the exit hall. The exit hall is a statue of Kamala Cadence, again with the same headwear, there's a look there, where Signet didn't recognise her before, she probably wouldn't recognise her now either [Ali chuckles] but that's her. And- and just like, it's a room devoted to the Cadent. And it's- I imagine it's almost sort of like the, the temple that you built, Tender? With all the Excerpt versions, except instead of having- instead of having like the lenticular - you turn your head and the things turns, it's just Kamala with like, a line under her, little figurines of each of the other Cadents through history. Tiny, tiny things made of this like, magma stuff, of each of the- of each of these- of each of the Cadents, or each of their symbols, you know? But there she is. Like right- right there in the middle. And you can pluck that string and leave.

ALI: Hmm. Mmm. Umm. This sucks. [laughs]

AUSTIN: Uhhuh. Just listen, I just need to make the opportunities present. [Ali continues laughing] You know. Jesus wasn't like and you'll deny me one time Peter, and Peter was like probably yeah, one time. Yeah. That seems likely. I'll probably be like oh, I thought you said hey Zeus, and different dude [Ali chuckles]. Three times, five times, like- I want those numbers. I need those numbers, you know.

ALI: Doesn't it just feel insignificant now, in the wake of all the knowledge they have?

AUSTIN: Oh yes, super insignificant that that person could also be this other person. Alright.

ALI: God, that's- no. I- ohh. [laughs] I feel like this sucks. God. Cause I don't even know-

JANINE [overlapping with Ali]: I'm also gonna say I deliberately made a choice to make this harder for you.

AUSTIN: Uhhuh!

ALI: Oh wow, cool.

JANINE: I totally could've been like [people laughing], yes, Signet thinks that looks a lot like the Waking Cadent, that's great,

AUSTIN: Yeah of course you could've.

JANINE: You know.

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally.

ALI: God.

JANINE: Why would I do that?

AUSTIN: Because, no alibis, it's more interesting-

ALI: I know.

AUSTIN: For- for Tender to make the choice, or not.

ALI: I know. It just sucks because it just feels like, I don't even know.

AUSTIN: Sometimes you fucking lie to people, and then you gotta be like. "Uhhh, listen, I was real bad".

ALI: Uhhhh. I- I'm like trying to think about what her like, genuine- cause like- oh this is heavy. Cause like, I don't even know- I mean, the weight of like, being able to get Anticipation back potentially.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ALI: But then also seeing Blooming, like two hours ago,

AUSTIN: Yup.

ALI: Right? Like is a little intense.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: So, let's just try to like, figure out how that would actually feel, and not like, what- to- a story about how that feels. [laughing] You know?

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah. I mean, here's what I'll say actually is, two things. One, is- There's a noble and often correct impulse. Which is like, let me get into my character's head, instead of thinking

of telling a story. Here's another noble impulse. We're telling a story. [Ali chuckles] What is interesting for- what is interesting to you the player, and co-writer of this story for Tender to do in this moment?

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: She's right there. Like, it's- it's fucking the Waking Cadent is right there [Ali laughs].

ALI: I just- yeah, it's tough to not like, be disgusted, right? Like.

AUSTIN: Right.

ALI: I don't know. Cause like- I don't know, that was the one question that I assisted on, was a tough one.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: And that's not. That's- that sucks. That's- saying it. That's one that sucks.

28.40

AUSTIN: We don't think that she's the sort of person to be like- to lie about this, right? Like wait a second I just learned something [Ali laughs]. She's not that deceptive of a person.

ALI: No. I- How do I even- I just- Waltz just told me, right?

AUSTIN: No, Waltz gave you the- the Exuvia equivalent of- of the Waking Cadent. Which he stole from her [Ali laughs] palace, as a reminder. On his way out, he was like snatch. And then you opened it. And in a very- in like a very attorney new type space, Stratus communication thing, you know, you got the life story of Kamala Cadence leading to the Waking Cadent. Like, from a person who wanted

ALI [overlapping with Austin]: Right.

AUSTIN: To defend all the- all the Divines, the person who wanted to enslave them, slash kill them, to what she is now. Which is, I- I should be very clear here. There is a big distinction between the Waking Cadent- the Waking Cadent's goals, and what Kamala's end goal was before she was kicked out, right?

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: Which is, Kamala was like, we need to bring Divines to everybody. No more Fleet. Like, we need to expand. The Waking Cadent does not believe in expansion. The Waking

Cadent is actually back to Resonant Orbit like, we need to get the fuck out of here, and take care of our own and repair and recover, who knows what she'll say in five hundred years? [Ali giggles] So, I- also- also real talk I guess that's the thing. So that's the thing, where if you had gotten a great, you would've gotten that answer. Right?

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: Is the oldest living Cadent is Kamala, right? But you don't- or the oldest living Excerpt- she isn't an Excerpt anymore either, so it's a- it's a little complicated. So.

ALI: Yeah, I feel like this would be the place. If we were going to have this scene- if we were going to have this scene of Tender being like, [chuckles] I have something to give you, I guess. [laughs]

AUSTIN: Uhhuh.

ALI: It would be in this room with- [groans] this sucks.

AUSTIN: Uhhuh.

ALI: Yeah. I don't know, I like- I don't even know how you breach something like this, besides being like-

ALI (as Tender): When we came here I didn't even know that this was- Sho saying that she can't do this seems so strange if I'm here? And since being here I only feel like it is even more outside of what I am capable of. So I think that if anyone should have this, it probably should be you. Cause this can't just be a thing that I fix on my own, again, right? Like.

ALI: And then I think she probably still like has it with her? I guess I started that mid-conversation, but is probably like, "Hey Signet, [Austin laughs] do you have a minute?" No, it's actually not even that. It's very much like the- the like, Korth- that's not a name.

AUSTIN: Nope.

ALI: Yeah [Ali laughs] the \_\_\_\_ thing of being like-

AUSTIN: That's- Orth Godlove's- that's Orth Godlove's Kotor OC. [Ali shrieks] Korth.

ALI [overlapping with Austin] Korth..! Yes. Just being like. Tender looks like she wants to talk.

AUSTIN: Right. [Ali bursts out laughing]

ALI: Just like,

AUSTIN: Right, but Signet's cold. I don't think Signet's going to- it's up to you Janine, obviously.

JANINE [overlapping with Austin]: Yeah I know. Tell- tell me what- so, does she say "hey can we talk here's this thing?" Is that what happens? Cause I can tell you-

AUSTIN [overlapping with Janine]: Wow you sound so scornful! [Ali shrieks and Janine laughs]

JANINE: Cause I can te- I just need to know how this goes down cause I can then tell you what happens, but-

ALI: Right. How does he interchange if that's no right? Like, I guess-

JANINE: Well I can't tell you that. [Ali and Austin laugh]

AUSTIN: Right but like, is this apologetic?

ALI: Yeah...

AUSTIN: Is it just like casual, are you just-

ALI: No, it is like so-

AUSTIN: -trying to be like, bee tee dubs-

ALI: -defeated, obviously,

AUSTIN: Okay.

ALI: Right? It's just like, I just okay, yeah. This is. Cause I think like having to walk into a room and like, it's as if she was standing there right?

AUSTIN: Yeah, a hundred percent.

ALI [overlapping with Austin]: It's not just a statue, it's just like oh

AUSTIN: A hundred- a giant statue that is like, evoking the full power of Divinity, you know?

ALI: Yeah. I feel like-

AUSTIN: Which like, also think about this: Pleroma knows the truth about Kamala Cadence, and also in Pleroma- in the Basilica of Pleroma, there is still a room devoted to her.



ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Fuck!

ALI: Well, you know.

AUSTIN: Love is wild. [Ali giggles] That's the- that's the thing, right? The John 3:16 love is wild, love is good [someone makes a spitting drink sound] right?

[Ali groans] I don't- yeah, I don't know, I don't know that she holds it in anymore. I think that like Tender like, she's a cat, right? So she- [wheezing] she- she does the mopey thing for a while but like, the point- that Signet is not doing the thing that she does. I think both being in like, the bad mood that she is in, and then also being like Signet isn't as like- [giggles] you know.

AUSTIN: Right, isn't like, talking in the way she normally is, basically?

ALI: Right, or isn't as like- yeah. Like.

AUSTIN: Gotcha.

ALI: If this was other, you know- if this was any other day and I and- you know, was mad about a parking ticket or whatever, she would've said something to me [Austin and Janine make agreeing sounds] and now in this church she isn't. That it's time to be like, hey, Signet, while we're here, I've decided that this sucks, and it's gonna your problem now, no. But that's the- that's the gist of it.

JANINE: What's- what's the object again?

AUSTIN: It is, a star made out of like, rose coloured silk, basically? That is- has jewels embedded in it. So a little star thing that you can hold. And it unfolds itself to communicate, basically. That is- that is what it is.

JANINE: Okay. So-

AUSTIN: So this is a thing you could hand over, it is like the size of the Exuvia,

JANINE: Yeah, yeah yeah yeah.

ALI [overlapping with Janine]: Yeah.

JANINE: I think- Signet accepts it and she like looks at it in her hand for a second, and looks up at Tender and like, Tender's clearly like in a place.

AUSTIN: Uhhuh.

JANINE: And I think Signet's like

JANINE (as Signet): Okay, well we're almost done, so. You know, let's- let's go to the vaults.

AUSTIN: [laughs] You're the fucking worst! [slow claps]

JANINE: And then she puts it in her pocket.

AUSTIN: You and like- Signet knows that it's a cybertome, immediately? Just to be clear?

JANINE: Yeah!

AUSTIN [overlapping with Janine]: Okay. It's a whole thing.

JANINE: And opening up cybertomes is a very draining process, it's not a thing you wanna do when you're on a deadline.

AUSTIN: Uhhuh! Yup! Good job, this is good.

ALI [overlapping with Austin]: But like-

AUSTIN: Thank you for- thank you. You know what, [Ali laughing] this is- my heart is swelling with joy.

JANINE: This is what happens when I start DM-ing.

AUSTIN: Uhhuh, it's a hundred percent that. That's exactly what it is.

ALI: Okay. I'm not mad. This is great. But like, Tender is- [Austin laughs] like, just so like, just like aghast. Just like-

JANINE: Does she- does she say anything? Or does she like-

ALI: I like- she's a person who says something right? Like-

AUSTIN: Yes.

ALI: Like-

AUSTIN: She is not cold. She does not have that status, right? [Ali chuckles]

ALI: Right! Also, just being like,

ALI (as Tender): Y- wh- for real? Signet.

JANINE (as Signet): Okay.

ALI (as Tender): We have to- I don't-

JANINE (as Signet): Okay, you're. You're upset about this, I can see that.

ALI (as Tender): Yeah!

JANINE (as Signet): Okay.

ALI (as Tender): Signet!

JANINE (as Signet): Look, we're doing stuff, I just- okay.

ALI (as Tender): I know, but this is attached to all this stuff. And like, you know-

JANINE (as Signet): Oh, well you didn't say that.

ALI (as Tender): Well this- what? [wheezing] Signet! We're gonna leave here eventually, right? And like, we need to answer like- [sighs]

JANINE (as Signet): I just thought- I didn't know it was related, I just thought it was a thing that had made you sad.

ALI (as Tender): [wheezing] Do you not think that this sucks?

ALI: Like, I guess I haven't said the thing, right? Or is it like-

AUSTIN: No, you haven't! [Ali shrieks] You haven't! That's the thing Tender is avoiding saying it! She can't bring herself to say "I knew this shit".

JANINE (as Signet): We've been here for like, three hours or something just plucking strings of thinking about sad stuff and looking at magma. [Austin chuckles] And then we get to the end and we look at a statue of a bunch of religious people, and you hand me this- this silk thing, and you're like: here. I'm sad.

AUSTIN: BIG MOOD HONESTLY. This whole thing!

ALI: Yup.

AUSTIN: What a good date, honestly.

ALI: God.

JANINE: Okay, so I think- I think Signet takes it out of her pocket then, and- and opens it so Tender is like-

ALI (as Tender): Yeah, it's a big deal, Signet! [laughs]

JANINE (as Signet): Yes. Apparently so.

JANINE: When- when Signet opens it, does she just get the full- the thing?

AUSTIN: Oh yeah, everything.

JANINE: Kind of like last time?

AUSTIN: I mean I think it all shows up, right?

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I think you get the whole thing- I think you've from a different perspective on it?

JANINE [overlapping with Austin]: I think also we don't even- we wouldn't even need that much of what that was to-

AUSTIN: No.

JANINE: -understand-

ALI: Yeah.

JANINE: -this now.

ALI: If anyone can know what to do with that thing it's probably Signet.

AUSTIN: Right, Signet has experience with a cybertome, right?

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah no, you get exactly what it is, it's all the same stuff we've talked about already, and it's the Waking Cadent is Kamala Cadence. Again, who knows whether that means

she was brought into existence now, found in a weird pod. We do know that she was ejected into a weird pod thirty- you know, twenty nine thousand years ago or whatever? So it's possible it's her. It's also possible that she came into being as a- as a dream of someone in the- in the Fleet during the Miracle, who could say? But she's here now, and that is who she is. That is who she's claiming to be, and she has enough material to at least make the claim. You know?

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So yeah. Signet knows. And it happens in- I don't think a flash. I don't think it's- I mean, how long did opening Signet's cybertome take?

JANINE: A little while but that was like- oh wait no, that was in-

AUSTIN [overlapping with Janine]: Was that also in a weird flash? Yeah, it was in the ship outside the Privign- Privign.

JANINE: Yeah... It was, we- I think- I think there was like a- there was like a peek opening and then like, a full opening.

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah. I think that's right.

JANINE [overlapping with Austin]: I think that's how we ended up doing it.

AUSTIN: Yes. Right and the peek opening-

JANINE [overlapping with Austin]: But the full opening was also just, let's look at this collection of merged consciousnesses.

AUSTIN: Yes. [Ali chuckles] Yes.

JANINE: That's a bit different than this. This is probably pretty quick.

AUSTIN: Well so, the thing here is, there is actually something here that is a little bit different. So Tender opened it and got the story of Kamala Cadence. I do think that because Signet is an Excerpt there is one difference, which is, the Exuvia is- the Exuvia was the collection of all of the Excerpts of- of Belgard, ever, right? Plus the data-

JANINE: No it was-

AUSTIN: Or it was all the true names?

JANINE: It was the backup of merged consciousnesses for each Divine that had been like around within the Exuvia's lifespan-

AUSTIN: Gotcha gotcha gotcha.

JANINE: But only- but only it was like, when there was an Excerpt for Anticipation for example, when there was a new Excerpt, that would overwrite.

AUSTIN: Gotcha.

JANINE: So it's only like one.

AUSTIN: So it's like a snapshot.

JANINE: The most recent-

AUSTIN: That's right. Okay.

JANINE: Like the last or the most recent Excerpts and Divines.

AUSTIN: Right. Well so this is the cybertome for Kamala Cadence, but- therefore is also the Excerpt- the- the- cybertome for I think whoever piloted Independence? Because that was Kamala Cadence's Divine. Cadence's Divine, and so I think in this case- especially cause it is Independence, we get that opposite- opposite thing? Where it's not at all about merging. It's not at all about a kind of gestalt consciousness. It's very much about this picture of individuals as individuals, separate from each other, often opposed to one another?

AUSTIN: [continued] It's like- if you could imagine- if you could imagine seeing someone's internal psychology, then you could imagine a bunch of internal psychologies next to each other. Put that image in high contrast. All of the darks are darker, right? All of the distances seem starker and worse, and the gaps harder to cross. And so, especially I think coming off of what we just saw in the rest of this place, that's part of it is emphasised, and I think Signet knows that that's an effect of this thing being the thing it is, but like- so she gets all that information, but also has a very- not a very similar, but- the kind of Independence version of the Exuvia, of all the different pilot- all the different Excerpts and Divine consciousnesses, but instead of being this kind of combined collective consciousness, it's this completely subdivided, completely like, firewalled collection of different- of different voices and different beings. And that's kind of a bummer too.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: All at once is a lot.

JANINE: That maybe takes her a little longer to process.

AUSTIN: Right, right.

JANINE: I think when Signet's done though, she- she's- there's probably like she- when she's looking back there's a very like faraway kinda look in her eyes, she's like focusing on a whole bunch of shit that's as much in her head as anything else.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: I think she asks Tender,

JANINE (as Signet): Did you find this here?

ALI (as Tender): No. Waltz gave it to me.

JANINE (as Signet): Is Waltz- Waltz isn't at the base camp, right?

AUSTIN: No.

ALI (as Tender): No.

AUSTIN: Waltz is currently trying to break-

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Fourteen Fifteen out of Our Profit's ship along with Grand Mag. That probably already happened at this point.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: One way or the other.

JANINE (as Signet): So Waltz is very far away and we've been here for a month.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Uhhuh.

ALI (as Tender): Yeah. I mean I told you like, hey I'm gonna go for lunch with Waltz today, see ya. Like a month ago, during that downtime thing.

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE (as Signet): Yeah. And you've opened this.

ALI (as Tender): Yeah, but I just. I didn't know what to do. It didn't seemed-

JANINE (as Signet) [overlapping with Ali]: You opened it when you got it.

ALI (as Tender): Yeah? Yeah I did do that. And. I. Hated it. So I didn't want to talk about it. And now we're here. And I still hate it.

JANINE (as Signet): We're here doing a mission, ostensibly for the Waking Cadent.

ALI (as Tender): No?

JANINE (as Signet): For a month.

ALI (as Tender): We could be- betray her. We could be two timing her, and it would be fine. And- and that's why I didn't tell you, cause it sucks. And I hate it. And I don't wanna know about it. Cause it would be easier if we didn't.

JANINE: I'm trying to like unpack some math in my head real quick [Ali wheezes, Austin chuckles] of like. Yeah. I think for Signet, it has always been easy in the way- I think this is still- I'm like trying- trying to work it in my head, like, her opinion about this before and her opinion now and like, the actual factor that just changed, and the actual factor that has changed- has been like associating a name and a- but like- the Waking Cadent already made it clear to her what the Waking Cadent wants.

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: So, there is that part doesn't really- the revelation here isn't that the Waking Cadent wants to enslave Divines or some shit, like-

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: We've- we've had-

ALI: Right.

JANINE: That's a thing that Signet's already aware- so the thing that changed here, I don't- this is- [chuckles] this is such a mean thing. I don't think Signet's perspective on like what they're doing here has actually changed all that much?

ALI (as Tender): It's just I thought- I wouldn't have spent all this time dealing with Declan, and trying to do the best that I could if, when the Cadent said that she needed me, to feel like I can make sense of this. And then learn this. I mean the Waking Cadent still sucks, but like.

JANINE (as Signet): Do you still believe that?



ALI (as Tender): I mean, I don't want to have to have to consider her opinion. And I feel like I do now.

JANINE (as Signet): Well then you shouldn't have taken this mission.

ALI (as Tender): No- f- frick! I mean, I shouldn't have ta-

JANINE (as Signet) [overlapping with Ali]: You put yourself directly in the line of her opinion,

ALI (as Tender): Yeah, I super shouldn't have taken this mission. I should be finding Fourteen who like, died in their sleep, and probably was my fault, I guess. I don't know. I don't want to be here! And like, Signet, we're gonna- we're gonna get this thing and what's going to happen? We still don't have an answer! This sucks. [in a breath] I hate this.

JANINE (as Signet): We should go to the vault.

ALI (as Tender): Sure. Yep. Yeah. We should just do that. This is dumb.

AUSTIN: Alright. Do you go to the vault?

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So I think we get- each of the representatives appears to you on your final walk up this like last winding path to the top of this dormant volcano, and it's Sho, and it's Weyerbach Zwei, and then it's Blooming. And each just checking in. And each makes their pitch again. Sho says that,

AUSTIN: [continued] If you bring her or whatever's left of Anticipation, then it will be housed in the temple and studied, and be an object of- of meditation. Something to focus on and something to think about when you study the teachings of Anticipation.

AUSTIN: [continued] And separately, in a different conversation also made out of sand and rocks, Weyerbach Zwei says that, they can recreate Anticipation, they can bring Anticipation back. And Anticipation will choose a new Excerpt, and will rejoin the Divine Free States, and will be exactly what the Free States need in the ongoing conflicts cold and hot, in the sector.

AUSTIN: [continued] And Blooming, in a very probably nonchalant way says,

AUSTIN (as Blooming): The Waking Cadent is not tied to history. Anticipation, whatever it was, could be something new. And the two of you could help shape that. What is important is the core of that thing. In the same way that, my Divine was once made to be a weapon. Purely and simply, when it was an Axiom. And now, is something that can help others. So too could

Anticipation be something that focuses on action instead of analysis, or which understands things tactically instead of strategically, or- or anything else. Her power is that great. I have seen it. As is her wisdom.

AUSTIN: Feel free to talk to any of those people, or not to.

JANINE (as Signet): Tender? [Ali chuckles]

ALI (as Tender): [clears her throat] We should just give it to Sho. I'm not coming all the way here to revive it, to watch it die again for the same reason.

JANINE (as Signet): Yeah. I agree.

AUSTIN: Alright. So you move past them, I'm guessing? Y'all- y'all talk private- that was a private conversation you just had?

JANINE [overlapping with Austin]: Yes. Yeah. No, it was just like to Blooming's face.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: It could've been- I fucking don't care.

AUSTIN: Uhhuh.

ALI: It could've been.

AUSTIN: So, you make your way to the vault. And it's- it's- so it's exactly like immediately very at home for you, Tender? It's the bottom bottom bottom bottom bottom floor of the By-and-By. It's the recreation of the bottom- the furthest down floor. And there's-

JANINE: Is there any crepe places?

AUSTIN: No, there's crepe places on every floor, right? The whole thing is that you can get crepes from different floors.

JANINE: That's true.

ALI: Right, yeah.

JANINE: That's true.

ALI: Tender with a trembling hand, pulls out her fucking stamp col-

[all burst out laughing].

AUSTIN: God. Missing the one- the one stamp from the bottom floor, oh no! Because it got cut off. So yeah, you- you- it is- I think we- we've been here- we've been close to it before in the- the Holiday Special. Like, down a bunch of ducts and shit. But there's a- there's an elevator here. And there is like- it's almost like a ribbon- like a ribbon cutting style ribbon? That's in front of the elevator. And it's the last one, it's the thread that it goes across it? Like across the front of the elevator door. And then like, is on the call button. Do you both pluck it?

ALI: We should in unison right? If this gonna be one of those episodes like Sailor Moon.

AUSTIN: Uhuh.

JANINE: Yeah.

ALI [overlapping with Janine]: Yes.

JANINE: And also like, you can't summon an elevator twice, really.

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: That's just silly.

AUSTIN: So you pluck it, and the button goes in by itself. Like the call button goes in by itself. And, the elevator doors open, and inside is nothing? Is like, it's black. It's probably more like- it's actually probably like a- a sky blue, is actually what I'm gonna say. It's like a sky blue. It's like the sky is in there. And the elevator is made of this thread. And it's not pulled- like it's not like an elevator but covered in thread? It's like, there are gaps. You have to like, stand- you have to balance on the thread. It's like a spider web in that way, do you know what I mean? It's like, there is a big middle section that is like a- a big kind of rope of this thread, of this powder blue thread? And then like you know, a cross beam, and then a couple of other cross beams, but like, it's not like a complete floor that you can stand comfortably on? You have to be a little careful around it. And have to like balance on it when you step inside. And the- there are no buttons, there are like, pulleys that you can pull on, that are each marked with like- they each have different knots in them for different floors and stuff like that. But you don't pull any of those. If you step in, it's just going to take you somewhere. You both step in?

ALI: I definitely do.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay. [Ali chuckles] It brings you down into this like, again it's like, powder blue on- on the sky itself, it's- you're back, it's like- you both stepped into the Mirage, right? This is a liminal

space, this is a realm unlike- unlike the pure physicality of our own. And it drags you into- it doesn't drag you, it lowers you, into a realm of other threads. Like, you're kind of in, brought down, and in like dings open, and there is again, a kind of pathways made of- of thread that you can balance on? And there's like handrails made of thread that you can balance on.

AUSTIN: [continued] And, there are entire like, floating in the- in the kind of- the sunset, like not attached to anything except itself, is this entire clockwork, like machine, that is effectively the nerves and the arteries and the veins of Anticipation. This is like, the circulatory system, the nervous system of Anticipation. And you know, as you step on it, you feel things, you can feel different predictions it's trying to make. There are places where you can kind of see literally just the- the threads spooling and unspooling over and over again. It's like a U2 video you would watch at night, do you know what I mean? It's like a weird thread toy machine? [Ali chuckles] There are places where it's making music, and there are other places where it's like grinding to a halt, and like, making sounds you don't think thread should be able to make. And, you kind of walk down all these different pathways, and you can kind of innately learn the different- the different- the two things it's caught on. It's caught on two things, right?

AUSTIN: [continued] The first is that it is- it is a- a Divine that came pretty late in the cycle. And it didn't know about Kamala Cadence. And when it learned about Kamala Cadence, via the- the Pleroma hypothesis, or whatever, I think I'm gonna call it the Pleroma Hypothesis. Pleroma Theorem isn't as good.

JANINE [overlapping with Austin]: You say that it sounds really good.

AUSTIN: Yeah, the Pleroma Hypothesis. She, Anticipation, became obsessed about this, and was like, is that right? Could that be right? Could we have gotten here if that is right? And started running that simulation over and over again. And then it started running the second part of it, which is, could it be right about- about us being enslaved again? And- and then the bigger question, which was, should the Divine Fleet endeavour to touch others, to help other people, or should the Divine Fleet be- it is that- is that a pathway- okay, one is that a pathway to becoming enslaved again as Divines? Two, is it worth it, to become enslaved again if it means helping that many more people?

And those questions, it started running through them at like, with all of its power, and neglecting its duties, and burning through Excerpts. And then you see kind of, tied up in all of this thread, the last Excerpt of Anticipation. It learned about Candidates. And I don't know if this is like a dark sense of humour thing, or just bad luck, but, the name of this Candidate is- the name of this Excerpt is, "Under the cover of night, the civet stalked mouse and berry alike," and Civet is like, is the call name for this person. And is also an animal name, like the way Candidates-

JANINE: It's the one that poops out the coffee beans.

AUSTIN: It's the one that poops out the coffee beans,

ALI: Ohhh.

AUSTIN: One hundred percent. That is literally the one it is, also like, perfume and mu- and the musk,

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Comes from the civet. And so, this is Civet. And she drained of life and wrapped in this thread. She actually looks a little bit like an Iconoclast? And is like, a marionette, and is operating? The nerves of Anticipation? Or is being used as an operator? It's hard to- it's hard to say. It's hard to say. But is moving. It is alive. Or- or at least maybe you sense a life there. And this is where you are. And- and here's the thing you see, right? Is, there is a small like a, spool that you could fit in your hands, and all the thread leads to this little tiny wooden spool. That is like, the center of this nervous system. And it seems to make the thread as much as it wants, right? Like, it- the- Civet can pull on- on part of it, and more thread will come out of it, and it will spin as if it's unspooling more thread for a spool, but it never runs out. And that is what is left of Anticipation. I mean, it is Anticipation, right? Again, it's not tied into the By-and-By, but there it is. And- and I wanna be clear, maybe this complicates things more, which is like. It might be able to just tie right back into the By-and-By, directly. I think those are kind of your four choices here. [Ali chuckles]

AUSTIN: [continued] Right? I- I- There's a fight scene here that I have prepped, where this thing like, jumps around and fights you? This- this Civet does? She's like, again, drained of life but is still a devoted Candidate at this point? But I think that fight is gonna go the way that fight's gonna go. I don't think she's gonna kill you here, you know? I- we could it just to see if y'all stress the fuck out, but. [Ali chuckles]

JANINE: I mean the tricky part is that I think Signet would rather like, ask.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

Than- than like, do something that would immediately instigate a fight.

AUSTIN: Totally.

JANINE: But like I don't know how you ask-

AUSTIN: What do you- what do you do? What do you say?

JANINE: I don't know. Like, does Civet even have a mouth?

AUSTIN: Civet can speak. Civet can communicate.

JANINE: Okay.

AUSTIN: Civet can communicate.

JANINE: I mean- think of this as like, I'm Signet, I want to talk to the Excerpt but I want to talk to the Divine too.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: I want both.

AUSTIN: Yep. So what's- what do you say and what do you roll?

JANINE: I wonder if this is actually- thing this is again, I'm always so bullshit [Ali chuckles]. With Exuvia stuff.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: But I'm wondering if because this is Anticipation's last Candidate,

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: I could like, essentially like use the Exuvia like a kind of like a voice box kinda thing?

AUSTIN: Sure.

JANINE: So I don't- just sort of connect with them, and- but also- yeah it's more of a connection point, it's like a-

AUSTIN: What I would do with that is I would say that because you have Exuvia, this will increase the effect-

JANINE: Mm.

AUSTIN: Of your roll from like standard to great, basically.

JANINE: Okay.

AUSTIN: Because you have all that infor- you know who this person is. Like you do know- you have that snapshot, right?

JANINE: Then how would this be? Is this Consort?

AUSTIN: It could be Consort, it could be Sway, it could be Command, it could be Doctor. Doctor could be really interesting, actually.

JANINE: Actually,

AUSTIN [overlapping with Janine]: Given-

JANINE: I think, yeah, the difference-

AUSTIN: Right?

JANINE: -between Consort and Doctor is really academic cause I have two in each,

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: But, this is totally like, what I haven't said but with this is totally about, is this- there is like a, there is an element of this that is more like, how do I help you?

AUSTIN: Right. Totally.

JANINE: Than it is like,

AUSTIN: Totally.

JANINE: Hey what's up, you wanna go? [Austin chuckles] You wanna go?

AUSTIN: [Ali chuckles] Yeah, right. Do you wanna go, huh? Yeah, so give me a Doctor.

JANINE: Okay.

AUSTIN: Standard Great, or Risky Great, rather. That is a four. So, you do it but there's a consequence. You suffer or a complication occurs, you have reduced effect, you end up in a desperate position. I think it's that last one. So what do you say, specifically? [Janine sighs] Or maybe not specifically, but sketch me what you're saying.

JANINE: I think- I think Signet first introduces herself as Belgard's Excerpt, says her full name and the whole, you know.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: The whole pre-Miracle dealie.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: And- and says that sort of, they've been sent there to help Anticipation in some regard, but now that they're there, Signet does not know what help looks like.

AUSTIN: So I think this is- this is the consequence? Which again you could resist. Threads wrap around your legs. They like, like creep up from- from the sides of this like thread walkway, and wrap you down, until you're in a desperate position. They don't drag you down, but they do like wrap around your ankles basically, putting you in a desperate position. And, Civet pulls on the threads, but again it's hard to see where she ends and where Anticipation begins. Like, it looks like a marionette pulling on its own threads, do you know what I mean? And, says,

AUSTIN (as Anticipation/Civet): We need no help. We are where we should be.

AUSTIN: They- they-

JANINE: Is there anything distinction between Civet and Anticipation's like- does Anticipation have-

AUSTIN: Maybe they speak in- in continu- or they speak simulta- no. I think this is how they both speak at this point. This is- this is- Civet has been ground down, Civet is a vehicle, right?

JANINE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Here is- here is the case made by those who originally wanted to exterminate the Divines in the age of Kamala Cadence. Look at what they can fucking do to us. So yeah, no. This is- this is- Civet is alive, but Civet has no ability to counter what is being said by Anticipation here. Civet also believes in things Anticipation is saying, this isn't- if there was once a time in which Civet was resisting whatever Anticipation wanted, that time has long since passed.

JANINE: Mhm.

ALI: Yeah I don't know.

AUSTIN: Just to be clear, Signet, you did not resist being tied by the threads, right?

JANINE: I don't think so. Do we know if like, if we just like, took this spool and put it in our pocket and left and gave it to Sho, would that essentially be killing Anticipation? Because we'd have to cut those threads and shit, right?

AUSTIN [overlapping with Janine]: You cut the threads- no, the spool is the thing. The spool will always be able to unspool more thread.



JANINE: Okay.

AUSTIN: The spool is like the- is not the heart, is the like, circulatory- is the nervous system of Anticipation. It would not die. It would be painful, probably, right?

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And also, I mean, maybe this is new- maybe this is the new information, it would just do this again, eventually.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Like, [exhales]

ALI: Is there a way to like, just keep it here? Or like,

AUSTIN: Totally. You could leave, right?

ALI: But like, I don't know. Like. What's the like- [short pause] what's the like quadruple double cross version of this? Where we're just like, you know. Fucking, Tender just puts it into the- the temple that she made, right? Instead of giving it to anyone.

JANINE: I mean, I know what that is. [Ali chuckles]

AUSTIN: Wait, was is it? What are you- what are you saying it is, Signet?

JANINE: The quadruple double cross here is, if they didn't see us get all the way in and we just say the pattern was wrong. Cause there was always that doubt, right?

ALI: Oh, yeah, that like, we would have to pluck all the whatevers again.

AUSTIN: Right, I guess-

JANINE [overlapping with Austin]: If it's wrong they won't try this path again.

AUSTIN: Mhm. The- I'm gonna be hyper super clear about one thing, that I think Signet and Tender probably at least crosses their mind. Which is, it has also been spreading all of these threads across the entire planet of Altar. You don't know why. [Ali chuckles]

ALI: Are you sure that's clear in our minds?

AUSTIN: I think they're smart people, who-

ALI: Okay.

JANINE: Yeah, it is- it is weird that the threads of one Divine have been intersecting all these other Divines.

AUSTIN: Yup. A hundred percent.

JANINE: It's not like Anticipation was a Uber Divine or anything, like.

AUSTIN: Nope.

JANINE: It's just a Divine.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Mhm. Like the last time you saw- like, it is not a mistake- I'm reticent often to point out things that I do in this show sometimes, and people often say, Austin just fucking say the thing you're going for, stop trying to like, just let it- like, it shouldn't always speak for itself, so. If I've been evoking Iconoclasts, If I've been evoking Volition, in some of the things Anticipation is doing, that is intentional. In the same way that because I've been evoking things like duplicates, lately, things like Ache and Acre, things like the three Gigs like, all of that stuff is hyper intentional at this point? And the notion of like, are we repeating ourselves, are we- are we stuck in a loop of history? Are- is an outcome inevitable? All of that stuff is hyper intentional, and I think the characters are- are attuned enough, literally, to start to see some of that? And so coming of- especially coming right out of the Basilica of Pleroma like- Pleroma, I always say that backwards, because it's a weird Greek word that I've never used in my fucking life. [others chuckle] Pleroma. P L E R O M A. At the very least, there should be something in your gut that's like- hey, this doesn't feel great. This also isn't a puzzle, this isn't one of those- this isn't one of those sessions-

JANINE: Right.

AUSTIN: Where I put together a puzzle where like, the solution is saying the right words and then, Anticipation is okay? You know, oh I'm good now! Thank you. Maybe there are some rolls that could make that happen, but like I don't have the win in my- there's no win condition, right? There's no chess move here that fixes this. There are choices. And that's kind of it.

ALI: Yeah. But like, in terms of like, duplicity, right?

AUSTIN: Yes.

ALI: There's also Tender being like, you know, sure wish there was a part of me that just took Chthonic in.

AUSTIN: Right. Totally. [Ali chuckles] I would hope that this feels more threatening than Chthonic ever did in some ways?

ALI [overlapping with Austin]: Yeah. Right.

AUSTIN: But also like, is Tender saying I could probably leash this thing? You know?

ALI: Not even leash the thing, but just leave it undisturbed like, if, you know. If it truly believes that it's going to get to the end of this, right?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ALI: Why not try to put it into that thing that she built for it already?

AUSTIN: To- yes. That's. Yeah. [Ali chuckles] Totally?

ALI: Right? I'm just- I'm just- you know.

AUSTIN: I'm- do you want me to give you- there's like so much of me being like, how much do I want the stakes to be clear? [Ali chuckles] Because I think that's totally right for Tender, I think you're totally right that Tender could believe that one hundred percent, right? Like, Tender built this temple already.

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: How easy would it be to just add Anticipation to it? I don't think there's some way to do that without involuntarily becoming the Excerpt of Anticipation. One.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: Two, you'd be giving Anticipation access to yourself in the way you gave Chthonic access to yourself.

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: But we know that Chthonic was this kind of like, curious little cloud. [Ali chuckles] And that Anticipation is in a manic mode of trying to solve this.

ALI: I mean who isn't?

AUSTIN: Totally, [Ali laughs] but like- so I guess my question to you Ali is, are you curious about seeing that version of Tender? Because there is no way I let you put this active Anticipation's like, the- brain of Anticipation into your brain without it having- without us seeing different characterisation in- like I feel like that should just give you a status, do you know what I mean?

ALI: Right, yeah.

AUSTIN: And that's fine. I think that's super interesting, is like-

JANINE: The other aspect is like, Tender has an Excerpt in her head, also.

AUSTIN: True. Yes. Signet is already in there. [Ali chuckles]

JANINE [overlapping with others]: I'm not saying that should be a get out of jail free card, I'm saying that should be a very interesting complication if that's the path you go down.

ALI [overlapping entirely with Janine]: I mean it's just-

AUSTIN [overlapping with Janine]: I think it's like a double jail card. You're gonna put it in your head, and also it's gonna have another Excerpt at its fingertips, you know?

ALI: I mean Signet is just- [laughs]

AUSTIN: Just a weird echo of Signet.

ALI: You know, Signet the friend and not Signet the-

AUSTIN: Uhhuh.

ALI: I- I don't know. I mean that's the impulse, obviously. I can be stopped. That's what I would love to do, that's what Tender would love to do.

AUSTIN: So what's that look like? I mean I think that- we'll see if that happens, right? [Ali chuckles] But wha- what's the- how do you get from you're standing on this ropeway, to it's in my brain? Because then it's rolling time.

ALI: Right. I don't know I- I don't know like, if she just walks forward, and like makes the offer, right? It's like, yeah, she said that we were here to help you with the thing, but like, if you really want help, I can give you a fifth option, or a fourth option, or whatever we're up to at this point.

AUSTIN: Mhm. Yes.

ALI: I think she also introduces herself. Like, I'm Tender Sky, I-

AUSTIN: Right.

ALI: You know, I grew up on the By-and-By,

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ALI: I've been a follower of Anticipation for-

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: However many years.

AUSTIN: So I think before we roll, it- it has a question, which is:

AUSTIN (as Anticipation/Civet): If you want to help me, if you want to help us, why would I go there? Why not stay here with me?

AUSTIN: And like you can see the thread start to unfurl around Civet, as if it's offering just to bring you in, like a single thread reaches out to you, to take.

ALI: Oh my don't play this- [wheezes]

AUSTIN: [Austin laughs] I don't fucking know, right? Like.

ALI: [groans] I don't know it feels like a weird thing to say no to.

JANINE: The reason to say no is that like, if two of us go in and one of us leaves, then, Anticipation is suddenly putting itself in a risky position like, no one has asked us to- to destroy this place.

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: That doesn't mean-

ALI: Yeah.

JANINE: They couldn't.

ALI: I mean that's the actual answer, right?

JANINE: Especially if they perceive it as a threat, like.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: You can continue your work uninterrupted, or you can be interrupted.

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: Right.

ALI: Yeah. I mean that like,

AUSTIN: Give me a-

ALI: Yeah- that's probably the thing right, like it's, I- you know, I, someone else is gonna come after us. That's a thing that like Tender has-

AUSTIN: Right.

ALI: -said to everyone [wheezing] I think she's met, right?

AUSTIN: Totally, yeah.

ALI: There are [unintelligible]

JANINE [overlapping with Ali]: People know I'm here.

AUSTIN: Uhhuh. Alright. Give me- give me a roll.

ALI: What am I rolling?

AUSTIN: Again, I think Attune, Consort, Sway, all work here. There's enough honesty, there's enough duplicity, and also it's magic, and Attune is- includes talking to magic things.

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: Like it's not a- that's not a twist or anything you know? [Ali giggles]

ALI: [exhales] I feel like, I think I'm gonna do Consort? I have the same in Attune anyway, but I feel this is such a selfish thing,

AUSTIN: Right.

ALI: And such like a not- giving it to Sho would be the best option here, and trying to stop it.

JANINE: Except, then it like hurts Sho.

AUSTIN: Right. You don't want this thing in Sho's temple.

JANINE: That's- see, that's the thing, that's why Signet is not objecting?

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: To Tender- Tender's proposition because like, the thing it's doing right now is before Tender spoke up, the least objectionable thing to her, but is still not good.

AUSTIN: Right. Cause who knows-

JANINE: Giving it to Sho- is also- that's worse. Because now it doesn't have the protections that it currently has.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: Giving it to the Waking Cadent, terrible idea. [Austin chuckles] Giving it to the people who are like, we can maybe fix it, I don't know.

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: Nooo. Like.

AUSTIN: What about plug- okay, what about plugging it into its body? In Seneschal? I'm not advocating for that, that's the- for me, one of the least- well. So, I mean, cards on table. The things- the outcomes from these things are very much what it sounds like what we already think they are, right? Giving it to the Waking Cadent means that we would figure out what Anticipation 2 looks like? And, the Waking Cadent would- would shape that quite a bit. Giving it to-

JANINE: It's already horrible, so like, that's-

AUSTIN: R-Right.

JANINE: Terrible.

AUSTIN: I mean it would be some inverse of this. Is what it would be.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: It wouldn't be all the way to what the NEH would do to it, which would literally be stripping it completely of its personhood, right? Of her personhood. It would be Anticipation 2

would be- would still be a being. It would still be an agent. But would be- and again, I want to be clear with the Waking Cadent, the Waking Cadent has to build a coalition of people. And, we know what her historical tendencies have been. But, it also seems like she will not be as severe as the end of Kamala Cadence? Like, slavery is probably an option in the near future. She's trying to build a fucking fleet, right? And most people don't want to enslave the Divines, but they do want the Divines to help them, and- and I think that style of governance is very appealing to people at this moment of instability. So we know she would create something that would be first and foremost about helping people, and would- would be on a leash of sorts. The Excerpt, whatever whoever the Excerpt of Anticipation 2 would be, would be way more in charge than it being an exact partnership.

AUSTIN: [continued] Giving it to Sho, like- like you said, Signet, would be putting it at risk. It'd be very easy for someone to kick down Sho's door and take that thing, right? Think about how- Sho's faction is a Tier 1 faction [Ali sad giggles], right? Think of what Advent would do here, right? Boom, done. Giving it to Weyerbach Zwei and the- the Method of Apotheosis, who knows how long- they're still not done with Barricade.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And I wanna be- I wanna- I can just double check it real quick, but that's not because they've- it's a real hard challenge, they've just been failing roll after roll after roll, in a way that's like, kind of depressing? Yeah it's a six step clock, they're only on the fourth thing, they rolled like twice, and I've given them good rolls, it's- it's not, they're just not going well. So it's gonna take them a long time to even get to this, and in that time, it's in the open, and also could be doing whatever it wants to do.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Here.

JANINE: The solution that respects Anticipation's personhood that also respects what's left of her- her Excerpt as much as possible, that also puts the fewest number of people at risk, kind of doesn't exist.

AUSTIN: Correct, right? Because also giving it to Seneschal's Brace and having them reintegrate it with the body? Is like, turning over all of the planet to this Divine. Which, the people definitely didn't elect, right?

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So- but also would make that planet very powerful. I'll say right now if you do that option, Seneschal's Brace jumps from whatever low tier it is now, to a much, much more powerful tier. I think it would be a Tier 5 faction suddenly. So like, there's mechanical reason to



do that. If- if you're gonna toss in with Seneschal's Brace at the finale, if you're gonna be like yeah, Declan's Corrective and the Cadent Under Mirage, those are the two for me, [Ali chuckles] this kind of like, stable compromise-y centrist faction, that is the- that is a thing that would help them quite a bit. Or, right, you could take it into your brain, or could join it in some other way? In any case, you should make the roll to explain to it why- basically I think the roll that you're making is like, let me decide for you. You know? Because it was- why don't you just stay here? So I think this roll, this Consort roll or this Attune roll, is about-

ALI: Yeah, I mean the thing would be, because you're at risk here,

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally. Totally.

ALI: I do not want you to be at risk.

AUSTIN: Totally.

ALI: Is really the answer there.

AUSTIN: And just yeah. Give me the roll. And we'll- we'll go- we'll go from there with what you decide. And also it might have another offer, right?

ALI: Is- is this Controlled?

AUSTIN: No, this is absolutely Risky.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: Risky Standard, and so here's two things, to clear up before you roll. You might want to push yourself so that you get rid of that less effect.

ALI: I would love to.

AUSTIN: So take-

JANINE [overlapping with Austin]: I was going to say can I assist?

AUSTIN: Totally. [Ali laughs]

ALI: These-

AUSTIN: You also might want to spend a Gambit. [Janine chuckles]

ALI: Yeah.

JANINE: Oh yeah, we have a lot of Gambits.

AUSTIN [overlapping with others]: You have three Gambits you've never used. So Gambit, so take two stress to get rid of the- to ignore the less effect,

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: One sec just double check if that's how that works, I'm ninety percent sure. Then yes, assist will give you another- another one.

JANINE: How do I assist?

ALI [overlapping with Janine]: Oh wait, I'm not spending that stress, I am for real using a crystal.

AUSTIN: Oh yeah, good call. You have those. [Ali chuckles] You have those crystals. Janine, you just take one stress. To give- to give Tender a plus one.

JANINE: Okay, yup. Alright. Good.

AUSTIN: Yup.

ALI: Okay. So. Consort-

AUSTIN: Actually I just realised- oh yeah, yeah that works out, totally works out. Okay. You're fine. Alright, so you've pushed yourself, you've- you've spent a crystal to push yourself, right? You've- you're using so you have two d6, you get a plus one from Signet, and you're using a gambit. So four d6. Risky Standard.

ALI: So at the end I put bonus dice 2?

AUSTIN: Yes. Correct.

ALI: Okay. For the gambit and for the-

AUSTIN: Yep. And the assist.

ALI: Way hot in here.

AUSTIN: Mm.

JANINE: Wow.

AUSTIN: That's a 5, hey! Listen. That's not a 6,

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I wish it would've been a 6. [Ali chuckles] But here we are. So. I think, you. Alright, so. I think you- that it's the same harm as before? It is a- a Tier 1 harm? For entranced, again? And it like, touches your palm as you speak, and it says,

AUSTIN (as Anticipation/Civet): You do seem safer.

AUSTIN: And, she just lets go of- of Civet, and Civet just falls.

ALI: Ohhh. [whimpering]

AUSTIN: Just falls into the ether, like into the sunset.

JANINE: Uff.

AUSTIN: And just unspools and reveals like a torn, like suit, right? It has- Civet, she had on like, a similar like, blue and silver like plug suit style thing, right? Like, similar to what Signet wear-wears when she's in Belgard's cockpit. And just like, falls, into the ether, you know?

ALI: Rest in peace.

AUSTIN: Uhhuh. I mean, fucking- this probably better than this, right? [Ali sighs] And again, you can roll to resist entranced, if you'd like to. But which would be a Resolve, again. And, she says like. She senses- you can feel her sensing your power, right? And like you can feel a- without asking you this, like, she knows about the Reframe system now, [Ali chuckles] she being Anticipation. She knows about the Notion, she knows about- she's in your mind, right? Instantly. And she sees the temple, there? And you can feel that like, she begins to thread the door shut to it. And she says,

AUSTIN (as Anticipation): No. Carry me with you.

[Ali chuckles] [Ali groans]

AUSTIN: Like, she senses the Chthonic spot, right? She's like no.

ALI: Right, yeah.

AUSTIN: No, don't. Like,

ALI: The vacant apartment or whatever.

AUSTIN: Right. She- what she finds is like, the part of your brain where the cyberbrain once was. That is like, the active part, the part that lets you use the Reframe system, the part that gives you that power and says like,

AUSTIN (as Anticipation): I will be your partner. We will solve this together. You can protect me more than any hidden realm [Ali chuckles] ever could.

ALI: Never meet your gods.

AUSTIN: No. They ain't good. [Ali chuckles] I mean, real talk, one of the- one of the phrases that I thought about a lot, while prepping for this whole season, I- I think I have a conversation with Jack and I talked about it a lot was, is there's a- there's a phrase of, which is "If you ever meet the Buddha in the street, kill 'em". Any being you meet on the road, is not a Buddha but a deceiver, you know? If you- if you ever meet the Buddha on the road, kill him. So. That's.

ALI: I'm not- not. Right? Like- [bursts out laughing]

AUSTIN: No. Right, yeah. Also.

ALI: Playing a character here is like, in a crisis of usefulness.

AUSTIN: Right.

ALI: It's like, you know.

AUSTIN: The- the irony which being like, also the character who can snap her fingers and make a roller skating rink out of thin air [Ali chuckles]. I can't figure out how to be useful?

ALI: Yeah, it's tough, right? People want a lot of things.

AUSTIN: Mhm. I think this is instant, right? I think again, I'm gonna let- I'm gonna ask you, do you think a status comes with this?

ALI: [exhales with a lip trill] Those are some words, you know?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: So. Maybe. I would, you know.

AUSTIN: Really- really the thing is I- I definitely feel like I have the power in this moment to be like, alright, take 8 stress. Take 10 stress.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: You've taken in, and if you wanna do it that way, and like, wash your hands off it, but yeah, take 12 stress. And roll to resist it, and we'll see what that number is, and maybe you don't get a status. Do you know what I mean? But like, it's about finding what that number is, so that it's really likely you do [Ali chuckles], and if you don't it doesn't happen, and that feels dope. You know?

ALI: I- it just, you know, how do you walk away from this not a changed person?

AUSTIN: That's also that. Exactly. And I- and like, having that opportunity to play that and get XP for it, seems right, in a way.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: You know?

ALI: So yeah. I don't know. I mean, which one of these feels most-

AUSTIN: I think, any of them works, like. That's the thing, I think-

ALI [overlapping with Austin]: Right? I think like, Obsessed is something that we saw Tender already being at her worst, right?

AUSTIN: Right, right.

ALI: Like. [chuckles] That whole like, extended cutscene of her just like, chain-smoking, and like,

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ALI: [wheezing chuckling] Praying, you know?

AUSTIN: Yup. Love to be an anxious nun.

ALI: Ugggh-yup.

AUSTIN: Remember- remember when before this season started-

ALI [overlapping with Austin]: I was just about that same exact thing with the two nuns-

AUSTIN: With the two nuns at the baseball game? [somebody claps] We finally had that episode!

ALI: Yeah!

AUSTIN: The two nuns! That's both of you!

ALI: Mhm!

AUSTIN: At the fucking sports game.

ALI [overlapping with Austin]: At's the baseball game, yeah!

AUSTIN: Having a good time, drinking beer!

ALI: We totally got some ghost... No, they didn't share Gatorade with us.

AUSTIN: No, except they did share Gatorade, they just didn't talk about it.

ALI [overlapping with Austin]: Oh, okay, I'm glad. Okay, good.

AUSTIN: Perfect. So yeah, I think- I think Obsessed works, I think Paranoid works, you're carrying around an Excerpt, or you are an Excerpt now, you know what happens to Excerpts.

JANINE: Obsessed is cool because it sort of represents the fact that Anticipation is like, using your processing power.

AUSTIN: Yes. Totally.

ALI: Right.

JANINE: In a very like, technical sense.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Totally. I mean there's- for that matter, I do also think Soft, or Unstable would work there? Where like- like you're being pushed around by this thing in your brain now. Does that mean you're also being pushed around by everybody? I mean Unstable's one I hate, like I, Unstable of these list- of this list, is one where it's like volatility, is such a bad trope with mental- with like, trauma?

JANINE: Mm.

AUSTIN: And this again, Status is traditionally called Trauma in this setting? That I really hate it normally? Where it's like, oh yeah, you just like, swing between states or whatever. But like, this very much feels like because part of your brain is not there, [Ali chuckles] part of your brain is focused on this other thing, it just works, do you know?

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: But I do think Obsessed, I do like Obsessed a lot also, because I think it would also draw you towards thinking about that specific- to this problem.

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: To the problems of the Waking Cadent, of the history of humans and- and the ways in which we grind- we grind each other, and all living things to our whims?

ALI: Yeah. It's like-

AUSTIN: I like it.

ALI: The hyperextension of destruction- [laughing] and just like entranced.

AUSTIN [overlapping with Ali]: Totally, a hundred percent. Yes. I'm there for yo- you've already marked it in fact.

ALI: Yup.

AUSTIN: Go ahead and take it, clear your stress. And then what is this? I think this is like, all of the- all of the threads, on Altar. You can hear them. Actually there's two things, two ways this goes. Is this snipping the threads? Or it all retracting into you?

ALI: I think it's retracting, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Where it's like-

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Cause it's not like- I'm encumbered by this, right?

AUSTIN: Right.

ALI: Like.

AUSTIN: Yes, yeah.

ALI: I'm still tied up.

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah. I don't know I think it's like, I think this is very much like, what if the Venom symbiote was made of thread, right? It's like, you're able to wear regular clothes- it's already shit you do! [Ali chuckles] You already do this shit, right? This is already the way of the depths where you can push yourself to create shit?

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: It's just now you always have this thread with you that does this same thing. And I- it, I think we hear the ding of an elevator. I w- I'm also very happy we made it back to the elevators and shortcuts conversation. [Ali chuckles] And you're back in the lobby. You're back in the-

JANINE: The thing I was gonna ask before we go,

AUSTIN: Yes.

JANINE: Is there an Anticipation Exuvia equivalent?

AUSTIN: Oh, there must be, right?

JANINE: Because I feel like in that moment, like, I don't think Signet has any illusions about like when you take a Divine,

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: I think Signet knows what that means, even if Tender in that moment maybe doesn't understand fully-

ALI: Mm-mm.

JANINE: What she's agreeing to.

AUSTIN: Mm. Mhm.

JANINE: And I think like, there is- there is the moment where like, that all happens and then, the moment after, where the elevator dings, but Signet is like looking for something.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: In the area.

AUSTIN: It- it's, you know, my gut says it's probably the spool thread, or something made of this thread, or something made of this powder blue thread, right?



ALI [overlapping with Austin]: Is it like the- the- the wooden, the thing that's left over?

AUSTIN: Yeah, but all of the thread is gone? It's just the wooden spool?

ALI: The spool, yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah, I like that a lot. Yeah, that's what it is.

JANINE: I guess then-

AUSTIN [overlapping with Janine]: And it's small, compared to- to the Exuvia, right? Like it's- you can hold it in your palm, very easily.

JANINE: I can- I wanna, I really want- I really want Signet to like, hand that to her as if she's doing like- like this used to be a ritual, and kind of isn't-

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah.

JANINE: -as much anymore, because there aren't that many Excerpts being made.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: So I don't even know that Signet remembers how the like, thing is supposed to go. But I-

AUSTIN: Does she say that? Is she like, we used to do something like this.

JANINE: I think the thing she says is just like,

JANINE (as Signet): Do you have a favourite line?

JANINE: Or something like that.

AUSTIN: Mm.

JANINE: And then maybe just like,

JANINE (as Signet): Think about it.

ALI: That's a thing I didn't prepare, was [laugh].

AUSTIN: Uhhuh?

ALI: Tender's Excerpt name. Didn't think we were going here tonight, so.

AUSTIN: We'll make it up, you know?

ALI: Yeah.

JANINE: She probably wouldn't make her do it on the spot.

AUSTIN: No,

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN [overlapping with Ali]: You've time. You also- here's the other thing is, the- the spool, your version of the Exuvia, your cybertome- you have a cybertome now.

JANINE: Grats. [Ali chuckles] Grats on your tome. [Austin laughs]

AUSTIN: It's when you level in an MMO. Ding! Oh you have a tome now. You have a prestige class, nice.

ALI: Nice.

AUSTIN: You-

ALI: I unlocked my special forest.

AUSTIN: You did. It is like, the middle ground between Belgard and Independence. You know, Belgard we talked about having this collective consciousness that is composed of all the other Excerpts and Divines. Independence is about heightening the separation between them? I think Anticipation sees them as separate, but surprise, sees all the threads between them. And is all about this very- you know, frankly, manipulative way of pulling on those threads and seeing how those threads pull on each other. And that is- that is what like, you instantly have this knowledge about all the Excerpts, all the old Divines. And, and there it is. Do you come down the mountain like this? Like what- what do we get? What are the shots that we get?

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ALI: It's Signet and Tender lying to Sho, [chuckles]

AUSTIN: Yeah, is it? Or do you just tell her?

ALI: Or, I don't know, I mean-

AUSTIN: I mean do you two talk about this before you go down, is actually maybe the better question.

JANINE: Is there as elevator chat or?

AUSTIN: Or like, a walk down this whole long mountain chat, you know?

JANINE: I think it would be more like-

AUSTIN [overlapping with Janine]: Oh no, all of the thread is gone, right?

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: All of the thread is gone on the planet. It's just gone. I think in the future, I don't know how the rest of this season goes, I don't know if Altar is still here in the future, who the fuck knows. But for the time being at least, people on this planet do- do still refer to the thread like they still say like "see you at the threads" or whatever? "See you by the threads?" Because it's a saying and it sounds cool, and so they keep- they keep saying it. [Ali chuckles] "See you by the threads." Just means like, I'll catch you later.

JANINE: I think in the- in the elevator, that I think Signet asks Tender,

JANINE (as Signet): What do you want to say? [Ali chuckles] Or do you just want me to handle it?

ALI (as Tender): You can handle it. I mean, anything that keeps 'em from coming knocking.

JANINE (as Signet): Mhm.

So you walk the long way back down the- down the mountain path. And, you make your way through, back to the Basilica. And everything seems tamer now? Like, the thread was doing something here. It was tying into the other relics. And so, you know, you- again, have this feeling of release and confrontation with the Divine, but it's not as hot. And you move to the arena, and this time, you know, the- the ball is just on the ground. The- the beings, the ghosts aren't there. And you pass out through the- pass down through the kind of gladiatorial tunnel and back into the plains beneath the volcano. And you see the base camp in the distance, and Sho is waving at you- actually I think, Winchester Went is waving at you, and like running up to meet- meet with you. And, Signet you haven't met Winchester, but she's like a young girl who is very excitable, and kind of a young dork, lil' nerd. Very- very kind. And she's like,

AUSTIN (as Winchester): How'd it go? The- the thread all disappeared!

ALI: Yeah, we- oh Signet's taking care of this. I like Winchester though.

AUSTIN: Uhhuh. Yeah, she knows you. That would be weird if you were not talking to her.

JANINE: Maybe that's the thing, is Tender talks to Winchester while Signet sort of goes on to [unintelligible] other people.

AUSTIN [overlapping with Janine]: Right, yeah, totally.

ALI [overlapping with Austin]: And it's just a lot of like, it was really enlightening, I think you're gonna have a good time here,

Uhhuh.

ALI: What are you majoring in? Like,

AUSTIN: Totally, a hundred percent. And she's like,

AUSTIN (as Winchester): I'm majoring in- in Archaic Text and also Fencing.

ALI (as Tender): Ohhh.

AUSTIN (as Winchester): Double major I know! It's kind of a big deal!

ALI (as Tender): Yeah, fencing is gonna be useful, it's you know. It's good to-

AUSTIN (as Winchester): [whispering delightfully] They let me use swords!

ALI (as Tender): [chuckles] And it's the really thin ones, right? They're not-

AUSTIN (as Winchester) [overlapping with Ali]: It's the little tiny ones, yeah! It's-!

ALI (as Tender): Like what are you even supposed to do with that?

AUSTIN (as Winchester) [overlapping with Ali]: Well you can use a saber but they won't let me use a saber yet, I won't buh buh buh buh-

AUSTIN: And then we fade off and go to Signet, returning to Sho, Weyerbach Zwei, and Blooming. Each- each one their arms more progressively crossed [Ali chuckles].

JANINE: Mm.

AUSTIN (as Sho): Signet?

AUSTIN :Says Sho.

JANINE: I think- I think Signet like, talks to the group but is mostly talking to Sho? Like, I think she only really really feels like she owes an explanation to Sho.

AUSTIN :Yeah, of course.

JANINE (as Signet): What we found in there, is something that the Waking Cadent would see on the end of a leash. And, I won't participate in that. And it is also something that if improperly studied, or contained, would see those around it on a leash. And I won't participate in that. And it's something that if unwarded, would cause a lot of problems for everyone involved. And again, I won't participate in that. I also won't leave it here, where all of those problems are still on the table, in tandem.

AUSTIN (as Sho): So you've taken it.

AUSTIN: Says Sho.

JANINE (as Signet): Anticipation has a new Excerpt. [Ali chuckles softly]

AUSTIN: And I think that all their eyes like go from you to Tender talking and playing with Winchester in the distance?

ALI: They're like, fake fencing.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Perfect.

ALI: I've made two fencing things that just like, practicing?

AUSTIN: Out of- [Janine chuckles] out of the Mirage? Or out of the thread?

JANINE: Lil of both, maybe?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: What is this stuff that she makes it out of- now?

AUSTIN: Shit it's that- it's various types of-

JANINE [overlapping with Austin]: Is she just like Bayonetta?

AUSTIN: Yeah, she's Bayonetta, it's whatever type of textile-

JANINE [overlapping with Austin]: Is she just a full witch now? [Ali chuckles] Full techno witch?

AUSTIN: Full like a techno-

JANINE [overlapping with Austin] Excellent.

AUSTIN: She's like a tactile,

ALI [overlapping with others]: Fantastic.

AUSTIN: like a, like a, a materials witch. Cotton, silk, yarn, like whatever, flax? Whatever.

ALI: I mean she's had that- I mean since the reboot, the memento of my travels has been like, a necklace made of a bunch of different strings?

AUSTIN: Totally. [Ali chuckles] So that's how I got here,

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Was I looked at- to be clear I looked at the list from the very beginning of the season.

ALI: Oh, fair.

AUSTIN: Of doing the world building we talked about what the specialities, what the distinct things were from each ship? And one of the things that you said, was that the- one of the focuses of fashion and style is having the- having textiles from each layer of the By-and-By on. So that's why it's thread. That's specifically what the- [Ali giggles] the throwback to that is. Anyway.

AUSTIN: [continued] So they look at her being goofy and fake fencing. We get a little bit of steam coming out of- coming out of Weyerbach Zwei's face even though- even though they are not talking at this point?

JANINE: I already gave- I already gave them Divines, I don't feel like I-

AUSTIN: They say like,

AUSTIN (as Weyerbach): Yes. Of course. Yes. [Ali giggles]

JANINE (as Signet): They don't all place nice like Polyphony.

AUSTIN (as Weyerbach): Of course.

AUSTIN: And Blooming says- Blooming raises her eyebrows and she says,

AUSTIN (as Blooming): I can respect this decision, Signet. And I will tell the Waking Cadent as much. [exhales]

JANINE: I think the thing Signet says to Blooming, this like, I have to say this, it's,

JANINE (as Signet): When I asked you earlier, what it was like to be an Excerpt under the Waking Cadent, you only talked about yourself.

AUSTIN: She says like,

AUSTIN (as Blooming): I've seen the other side. Don't forget that you aren't the only one to have seen your Divine die. And-

JANINE (as Signet): You-

AUSTIN (as Blooming): Mine- *mine* died. Because I put it in situations that I fearlessly, unselfishly threw us both into. What I've learned is, that I should care about myself. And that is actually what is best for Compulsion. It is what will bring the most for the many. I will not tell you you act in the wrong the way, Signet. You and Belgard are formidable, and loyal, and admirable. But I know who I am. And I know what I need to do to help others this time. And for once it is thinking of myself.

JANINE: I think, I think Signet just like turns to Sho.

AUSTIN: Mm.

JANINE: Like, I think- there- there's a lot of Signet like letting a moment hang like, and being like, okay this moment is over, next one. [Austin chuckles] Like very deliberately, that is just how this is-

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: For her right now. I think she turns to Sho and like, does the thing Signet does where she just kind of takes someone's hands or whatever like,

AUSTIN: Uhhuh.

JANINE: Just like. We're going to hold hands now. [Ali and Austin chuckle] But I think like, in doing so, slips her one of the- the Psion cards?

AUSTIN: Mmm.

JANINE: Just kinda like, palms it to her almost?

AUSTIN: Mhm. Which one is it? Or what's it- what's it communicating?

JANINE: I think she like holds her hands long enough so she can't see it yet.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JANINE: And then she tells Sho that she really admires what she's accomplished here. That she's built something good and she should be very, very proud of it. And I think the card she slipped to Sho, like- like she lets go, and leaves the card there, like,

AUSTIN: Mhm, Yeah yea yea.

JANINE: That is, she is giving Sho 'Stewardship'. That's the card.

AUSTIN: Oh, I thought you were- like there was more, Stewardship of? Of?

JANINE [overlapping with Austin]: [laughing] I realised afterwards that's what it sounded like!

AUSTIN: Yeah. Mhm.

JANINE: No, she's giving her the card representing 'Stewardship'.

AUSTIN: Gotcha. I think as you- as you turn to leave, or as you like, continue to walk back to your tent or something, Sho doesn't chase after you, but like does- does turn- so ehh, chases after you, but not like runs you know? Just kind of walks past back you- walks towards you. And gets a little bit of distance from the other two. And she says- this is before she looks at the card right, I think she still holds it, hasn't looked at it yet. And she says like,

AUSTIN (as Sho): The Waking Cadent is wrong about so much. I- I fear her, and what she might do to the Divine. But, I need you to know that there is much there that resonates with the people of Altar, with the people of Thyrsus, with those who aren't on Seneschal and that resonates with me. I- I- [hesitates, sighs] I thank you for saying that I've built something great. I hope that everything I do-

AUSTIN: And it's old Sho, and like she's trying to find her words again? The way she used to? When she wanted to like impress people and be very careful? And she's like,

AUSTIN (as Sho): The great Excerpts were not simply great in action, but in reflection. Their deeds were- are our texts. My favourites Excerpts were always those who took names from the deeds of other Excerpts. And I've never wanted to be one, but, I've wanted to help us



understand what- what the Resonant Orbit is, and how it can- how it can help us, and each other, and the- the Divines too, and that is why I think the Waking Cadent is wrong, but. We should leave. She's- she's right.

JANINE (as Signet): She is right.

AUSTIN: And she's like- relief just like, washes over her face.

AUSTIN (as Sho): I thought you were saying that I needed to stay,

JANINE (as Signet): No.

AUSTIN (as Sho): -and keep the school-

JANINE (as Signet): No.

AUSTIN (as Sho): Thank you.

JANINE: I think Sig- I think Signet just straight up turns around and like,

AUSTIN: Yeah?

JANINE (as Signet): We should leave. She's right that we should go and we should regroup, and we should try and find ourselves again, and not [sighs] find ourselves at the expense of entanglement with people who never asked for it. But she is very wrong about who the 'us' and who the 'we' are when she says that. And that's why I can't. I can't back her. I can't. I can't.

AUSTIN (as Sho): I understand. It was so good to see you. I'm gonna go get Winnie and, say hi to Tender and see how she's taking all this.

JANINE (as Signet): That's a good idea.

AUSTIN: And she turns and walks back over to you, Tender. [Ali chuckles] You see her coming and she has like a very stern look on her face, and at some point Winchester sees the stern look? On her face? And like,

AUSTIN (as Winchester): Uhhh.

AUSTIN: And like goes into attention, and takes- takes perfect fencing form?

ALI: Awww.

AUSTIN: And- and Sho like, finger wags? And says,

AUSTIN (as Sho): I told you, you're not allowed to practice the double feint [Ali giggles] until you've perfected your- the form on the preliminary.

AUSTIN: And Winchester's like,

AUSTIN (as Winchester): I know.

AUSTIN: And like offers the- the fencing foil to- to Sho, and Sho picks it up, and turns to you, and like looks at you, and looks at the thing and is like,

AUSTIN (as Sho): You made this. [Ali chuckles]

ALI: I think Tender just nods, right? Like.

ALI (as Tender): Er-yeah!

AUSTIN (as Sho): I always knew. I always knew.

AUSTIN: She just says and smiles. And like nods.

AUSTIN (as Sho): Thank you so much for teaching me.

ALI (as Tender): I don't know that I was the one who taught you anything, but, I'm glad that you were by my side when you were. It's good to see you again.

AUSTIN (as Sho): You too. Excerpt.

AUSTIN: And she like, smiles and blushes a little bit? Like, ha! You're an Excerpt now! Like, [Ali giggles] Like yeah, exactly that [Ali bursts out laughing], one hundred percent that!

ALI: Yeah, I mean, I think Tender also just says exactly that, right? Like-

AUSTIN: Yeah!

ALI (as Tender): Yup. That's me. That's who I am now [chuckles].

AUSTIN: Uhuh. And then we just get like the shot, like hard cut to-

[MUSIC - "The Notion" starts]

AUSTIN: [continued] The entire temple covered in thread. And like not just the temple, but remember the temple was like connected to all of the rest of the Fleet at the time, do

you remember this? Like the exterior of the temple was like a shot of the internet, basically? Like- like you stepped- where Morning's Observation was waiting for you that time, on the outside of the temple. And it just like, this entire other world outside the temple covered in thread too? Not just covered, but like, similarly spider webbed, and just like, the threads pulling in every direction. And just like, a shot of Tender's face like, yeah, you're laughing and smiling, but like your brain is also on this other fucking thing. It will never not be on this other thing.

[music ends]

[episode ends]