

Twilight Mirage 60: The Restitution Of All Things Pt. 1

Transcribed by Alexis @alexiorsays

[*The Notion* begins playing]

AUSTIN (as Narrator): Deep in the heart of the Restitution Of All Things, flagship of the New Earth Hegemony's fleet, Our Prophet walked slowly, one foot directly after another, down the snow-covered lakeshore of the Centra Centre Diplomatic Retreat. In just a few hours, guests would begin to arrive. Some she knew well, and some were strangers. Some she could trust, and some moved like serpents in grass. Our Prophet knew too well that those first two categories did not map up cleanly with the latter. No, things had never been that simple. But that didn't matter, really. She didn't need sycophants in this moment. She only needed leaders, who could dream.

Our Prophet had arrived like a storm, just over a month ago. With her exposure of the Rapid Evening, and the lighting of Prophet's Star, which blinded their crystalline sage, she was the Bolt's Spark. With her fleet's strength of number, she was the Whirlwind, overturning unspoken agreements and presumed allegiances through show of force alone. For her assiduous believers, she was the Cool Rain, and now, with the Splice, she knew she could be the Rising Tide of the Quire system too.

Though it had been only a year since the Miracle, it was, paradoxically, a millennium ago now that Our Prophet first learned of the Twilight Mirage and its wondrous powers. And it was all the way back then that early tests of the sunset-hued ether which held the system aloft led her and her scientists and her poets to envisage the Splice—an endless web of creativity; a collective dream world that disrupted the very ideas of real and virtual. A network turned nation, spread across all of the galaxy. Freedom for minds and freedom for bodies and, maybe, if the poets were right, freedom for souls, too.

But to get there, she had to start here. Diplomats in the lakehouse. Walks on the shore. And her words, crafted into a thunder that could promise the future.

[Music ends]

AUSTIN: Welcome to Friends at the Table, an actual-play podcast focused on critical world-building, smart characterization, and fun interaction between good friends, I am your host, Austin Walker. Today we are playing Scum and Villainy, by Stras Acimovic and John LeBoeuf-Little, a hack of Blades in the Dark by John Harper! A heads-up, I just want to briefly before I introduce people, Scum and Villainy is now available for pre-order! Via... the internet! So if you just go on the internet and type in... [typing sounds] "Scum and Villainy RPG pre-order," it will take you to various websites! I would buy the one probably from evilhat.com, which is their actual publisher, and you can also go to, like DriveThruRPG if you just wanna get

a PDF, and if you want the PDF, the PDFs are all available right now, but the physical books will be shipping, I think, during Gen Con, or around Gen Con time. So, I think it's August, Art? I know you're a Gen Con-er.

ART: First weekend in August.

AUSTIN: So a little uh... by the time you hear this, you know, less than a month! So that's super exciting, it's a really beautiful looking book from what I've seen, it's really cool to have the final PDF. This is our third game of Friends at the Table starting with a play-test doc and ending with the final released product. Fourth, if you count The Vale, but I think the version of The Vale we had was very close to production by the time we had it. Today, joining me as you already heard, Art Martinez-Tebbel.

ART: Hey, hi, how's it going, you can find me on Twitter @atebbel, and you can listen to One Song Only, the podcast, @onesongpod on Twitter. And it's in that place, probably.

AUSTIN: I'm in that podcast. It's good.

ART: We're doing all right, yeah.

AUSTIN: Mm-hm. The episode that came out either just before or just after this episode of Friends at the Table is a very good one, so I'm excited for people to hear that. If you want to hear us decide which version of "Diamonds from Sierra Leone" is the best version, you should listen to that. Also joining us today; Jack de Quidt.

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

AUSTIN: A truck just drove past, outside my window, and it has a slogan on it, it's like a mover company, and it says, "We will make sure that nothing breaks during your move. Especially, you." And that is a very Friends at the Table slogan for a company to have. Um, we are, as I said, continuing our game of Scum and Villainy; my goals today are: to convey the fictional world honestly, to bring the Twilight Mirage to life, to play to find out what happens, and to make everything cool, weird, and touchable. So... [sighs and laughs]

ART: It sure is a day for playing to find out what happens.

AUSTIN: It sure is. And I'm gonna complicate things literally immediately. So, last time we played, with us, it was the downtime game, right? And what had happened was, Fourteen Fifteen had died and lost another one of their bodies, and had turned up in a new body. In the body of Carcanet's Ironclad, who was a synthetic person, a robot person, in a kind of a big suit of knight armor, I believe? Is that right, Jack?

JACK: Yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: Who was inside of the Restitution Of All Things, the massive supercarrier that is at the heart of Our Prophet's fleet, which I have a name for, now. The name of her fleet is the *Argosy*, *Spliced*, A-R-G-O-S-Y, comma, "Spliced," like S-P-L-I-C-E-D, and we'll get to why it's "spliced" soon. And it had been weeks, right? You had been knocked out, basically, weeks? Or did it just take you weeks to get communication out? I forget what had happened, Jack.

JACK: I think— it might be that the signal takes a long time to come out? I don't remember... I know that time has passed, and perhaps it's not even clear the manner in which time has passed?

AUSTIN: Right. I know that time has passed, a month since the last game.

JACK: Oh, geez.

AUSTIN: Based on the events of the other two games. The other— for you two, who maybe haven't heard all that stuff yet, phew. [Sighs] For you... phew. Do you want the full context of things, or do you just want to wait to listen, to some of that other stuff.

JACK: [Laughing slightly] Part of me likes the idea of all these groups kind of playing in closed rooms?

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah.

JACK: And then going, wait, hang on, what!

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: 'Cause we've had situations where that's actually transpired and that's always been super fun, but if something comes up...

AUSTIN: Okay, then, I won't...

JACK: And you're like, oh, yeah, this doesn't make sense.

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah. I mean there's stuff that you wouldn't know, probably, anyway. I mean here's a thing that you would know: You would know that there has been the first actual conflict— the first actual warfare is happening over Brighton currently. Or, over and on Brighton, between... It's a civil war, it's part of the Rogue Wave, the Brighton Lineage, you know, Kent Brighton, supported by some of the members of the Notion— has been fighting against some of the members of the Herringbone Flotilla, which is a group of people who used to run the Rogue Wave, including a former Excerpt, named Will, and that is like the first real armed conflict,

besides kind of small-scale skirmishes. It is like out-and-out war, with warships and new weapons being developed, and, you know, new techniques, and stuff like that. And the Notion has been part of that by way of Gig and Even and Echo. And that was a big part of what their arc is. I won't talk more about that stuff, but you already saw the big picture of "what if Connecticut was a space ocean," so, you have at least some context there.

And so, in the wake of that, a lot of things have been happening. And we'll learn about those, I don't want to spoil those quite yet, but that's why I know it took a month. Because that conflict has been a month long, and then the stuff that was happening in the Signet and Tender arc was also a month long. They did... they explored a planet for a month, and we kind of skipped over that.

And so the reason I'm just saying it's a month, maybe you've been awake for more than a day or two, at this point, Fourteen, but you've definitely been busy. You've been doing stuff here, or else, you're about to be doing stuff here. Either way is fine with me. But I just kind of want to know, for you, when in your mind did Fourteen wake up, and what have they been doing up until that point on this ship?

JACK: I think there's been a lot of... I think that human bodies, organic bodies [Austin mm-hms], at least speaking about my own, get restless very easily?

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: I don't think that this synthetic body does that.

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: And so I think that at times, for long stretches of time, sometimes hours, sometimes stretches of twelve hours or so, Fourteen has just realized that a thing that doesn't give them any problem whatsoever is just to stand. Or just to sit.

AUSTIN: [Laughing] Right.

JACK: Just to be like, I don't have any muscles. And I'm not feeling any tension in my body now.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: I'm just sort of here. In the same way that a post-box is.

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: But other than that, I think very limited, *very* limited exploration of sort of the area around them.

AUSTIN: Sure.

JACK: Beginning to get their bearings.

AUSTIN: So I think that we get them kind of looking around, just kind of trying to, just kind of doing that light exploration, getting their bearings, and we get an image of them turning a corner, and then seeing like a video-game palette-swap version of themselves? [Jack laugh] Like, if you're gold and red, like gold with red gems and stuff, you run into someone who is silver with blue gems, and they give you a little nod, and they go:

AUSTIN (as Your Friend): I've been looking all over the place for you! I'm Your Friend!

AUSTIN: And, says like, "come with me! We got a lotta paperwork to do!"

JACK: Greetings. It has been a long time.

AUSTIN: [Laughing] And, Your Friend, which is the name of this character, begins to lead you through a bureaucratic nightmare of registration forms, and documentation, and body scans, it's like *Brazil*, or like that scene from, did y'all see *Jupiter Ascending*?

[Art and Jack mm-hm]

AUSTIN: Do you remember that weird space bureaucracy scene in *Jupiter Ascending*?

JACK: Oh, yeah.

AUSTIN: It's that, except, except! So a couple things about this ship. One, this ship is super bright and clean, and it's empty. Like, there are places where lots of people go. But they feel like food courts at malls, right? Or, you know, there's a variety. This is a huge ship, it's city-sized, it's, I decided while doing a Drawing Maps episode the other day, that I think it has like 400,000 people on it, right? Or 500,000 people on it? It's big, for a spaceship. Do you know what I mean?

JACK: Mm.

AUSTIN: It's as big as Seance, or as Anticipation were. But, it is the fleet in general is like five million people. So, it's spread out to a bunch of little ships, comparatively. But, this ship *could* hold millions of people, and it just hasn't been, it's like future-proofed for a much bigger population, eventually? And so it's lots of big, open hallways, it's lots of people-movers, where like, instead of having, you know, like a people-mover, like a flat escalator, do you know what I'm talking about?

JACK: Yeah, yeah. Like a travelator.

AUSTIN: Yeah, exactly. A tra— is that what they call them in the UK, a travelator?

JACK: Y-yeah.

AUSTIN: That's great. We call them people movers. And your word is way better.

JACK: "People mover" is, I think people mover is good because you look at it, and you're like, what does that thing do? And it communicates it immediately.

AUSTIN: [Laughing] Just instantly! Oh, it moves people? Got it.

ART: I've always just called those "moving walkways." I know that's the worst of the names we've thrown out there, but that's what I've... that's what those are in my head.

JACK: The floor that goes!

AUSTIN: That's... they're apparently also called "moving sidewalks."

JACK: Oh, that's...

AUSTIN: Um, apparently, in British English, they're also called "skywalks," and that feels cheat-y.

JACK: Never heard that. No, I've never heard of that.

AUSTIN: But here's actually good news! I've just googled an image of this, and Detroit's Metropolitan Wayne County Airport has one of these, with a very good visual help for us, which is, I'm gonna paste this image in our chat...

JACK: Oh, thank you.

AUSTIN: Instead of it being... instead of the Restitution Of All Things, Our Prophet's ship, being filled with regular travelators, with the kind of black vinyl or whatever that is, material, or metal, or whatever it is, it's that weird like shell-rainbow iridescent light, basically? And it's almost like a liquid. It's almost like a little bit of a sticky liquid, where if you step in it, and you feel like you're stuck in place, like it's like, not stuck, but, oh, I'm holding you! And you can let go, you can step away, and it's fine; you just have to put a little bit of extra effort in, and you don't have any goo on your feet or anything, and this material, this like liquid light is everywhere in this ship. That is its, its textural touchstone, is this sort of like gooey liquid light, that never sticks on your fingers, but like, the touch screens have it, you know, everything has this kind of thing. Like the doors, you put your handprint on it, and it reads your thing, your hand, and it has this kind of gooey, sticky, almost like those gooey sticky hands that you throw on the wall? Do you know what I'm talking about? When you were a kid, not now, obviously, you're not throwing gooey sticky hands

on walls these days? But, it does that, and then the whole wall like retracts, like a big weird slime goo, into the walls, but like, it's really pretty? It's *really* pretty.

In any case, that's what the people movers slash travelators look like here. And I should note, Our Friend is also made of vinyl, Our Friend is like, not made of metal and gems, Our Friend is like the kid robot vinyl toy palette swap version of you? And what you notice, is like, everybody has Your Friend. There is a Your Friend for everybody on Our Prophet, or on, sorry, on the Restitution Of All Things. Not everyone, but during— whenever they're dealing with like, the civil world, whenever they're dealing with like, needing to do paperwork, they're assigned a Your Friend, who is, like, just like them, but a little bit different! So it's like, you know, diversity! And that is what's happening with you, at this moment. I think we probably just get a shot of you going in to sign a form, Your Friend is extremely excited to explain to you how detailed these forms are, and why it's very special that you're like, [excitedly] did you know that you're one of *two different* demographic minorities here! You're a synthetic, and you've been recently revived from the Castlerose apparatus, or whatever it is.

[00:15:00]

JACK: [Patronizingly] Am I really!

AUSTIN: Yeah. That's exactly— yes. One hundred percent. Um, and they are just very joyous in explaining to you all the minutiae. So I think we get a shot of you just like, in an office, doing that stuff, if you're doing it? Are you going along with all of this?

JACK: Yeah, I think I'm just... Why are we doing this?

AUSTIN (as Your Friend): To get you registered, of course! Once you're registered, you receive all of the goods and services that all members of Earth receive! We don't think that citizens are better, but we know we have to take care of our citizens. That makes sense, right?

JACK (as Fourteen Fifteen): What does that mean?

AUSTIN (as Your Friend): A home, food vouchers, of course, and soon enough, you'll be able to join the Splice!

JACK (as Fourteen): I... I don't know what that is!

AUSTIN (as Your Friend): You will!

JACK (as Fourteen): Er... Uh, quick question—

AUSTIN: And they grin at you, but *you can't do that*. Because you don't have a mouth. [Jack laughing] But they do a grin, and their whole face just like, mmmreeehhh, it's grinning now, I'm grinning.

JACK: Augh, god. Can I just ask a real quick question, just pausing briefly to fill in a form, or countersign something?

AUSTIN: Mm-hm.

JACK (as Fourteen): So you're name is... is My Friend? Or—

AUSTIN (as Your Friend): My name's Your Friend. I'm Your Friend.

JACK (as Fourteen): So are you—

AUSTIN (as Your Friend): You can just call me Friend.

JACK (as Fourteen): Right. Okay, so, I'm not calling you... Okay. Thank you so much... Friend. Were you... were you made... for this?

AUSTIN (as Your Friend): We were all made for this.

[Long pause]

AUSTIN: Big smile. Teeth appear.

JACK: Are they like, synthetic teeth?

AUSTIN: They're like synthetic cartoon teeth, yeah. Actually, I think that their face is this liquid light stuff, right? So it can like, animate, basically?

JACK: Oh, god! Have you ever seen those... that like, fake WALL-E?

AUSTIN: [Laughing] WALL-E? Do— wait!

JACK: [Laughing] No, let's be real, WALL-E is a dear friend.

AUSTIN: Do you mean like, a bootleg WALL-E?

JACK: No, like a WALL-E toy. What's he called? He's like a very expensive toy. He's like two-hundred and fifty dollars. And he looks like a WALL-E. And he has these very expressive eyes that are made by ex-Pixar people.

AUSTIN: Oh, interesting. No, I don't know this.

JACK: He like, goes around, he like moves boxes around and gets sleepy and all the sort of stuff that...

AUSTIN: Co... Cosmo?

JACK: Cosmo! Cosmo.

ART: I've never heard of this before in my life.

JACK: Cosmo... toy. Look up this thing, and I, I know that this is not the light thing, but Cosmo's eyes, the way Cosmo's eyes move and animate is definitely what I'm thinking of here, for this.

AUSTIN: Oh wow, that's very good! I actually think another robot who's going to show up momentarily literally just looks like this. Or, has this exact face.

JACK: Oh, let's leave it then.

AUSTIN: But I think the expressivity you're talking about is exactly right, the way one eye can be bigger than another one? Wow, this is SO expressive! Holy *shit!* It's—

JACK: Yeah, he is very weird.

AUSTIN: Cosmo is tricking me into thinking he has a mouth, and he *doesn't* have a mouth! Oh wait, he does have a mouth. Does he have a mouth?

JACK: [Laughing] Oh, yeah. Also, I don't know what Cosmo's—

AUSTIN: Gender, pronouns are? Yeah, I don't know what pronouns are either, for Cosmo. Anyway, they, I'll use they/them for Cosmo, uh...

JACK: They are weird and cool. Would I spend two hundred pounds on them? I don't think I would!

AUSTIN: That's a lot of pounds.

JACK: But I'd like to see one.

AUSTIN: Yeah. The website which owns Cosmo obviously uses he/him, so.

JACK: [Laughing] Okay.

AUSTIN: Welcome to... Capitalism... So I think we cut from you asking that question to Cosmo, or I'm sorry, to Your Friend, to a different robot face. And this is the robot face ADri, which stands for Automated Driver, who is the pilot of the Bolero... what's the rest of the ship? The Bolero Smooth, which is Waltz Tango Cache's ship, and it is, you remember how you described Memorias to me, Art? Forever ago, with the cubes that could re-form themselves into different shapes?

ART: I do, yes.

AUSTIN: So that is what this whole ship is, this ship is like a small version of Memorias that can do that for its own silhouette, but also, it can do it internally, and so, a little mailbox, postal-box shaped robot appears in front of you, in the kind of rear passenger compartment of this ship. It's a smallish ship, you know, it's almost like a transport, in terms of its scale? Like I imagine it's like a cockpit with two or three seats, and then a passenger compartment that holds like six people, and then like a turret, one turret up top, and then some automated weapons on the bottom, or whatever? That are basically useless, post-Mirage, post-Miracle, rather? But, in front of you appears a... ADri, who is this cube... this cube-formed robot that can change how they look based on how they rearrange their own cubes, and they just say, like:

AUSTIN (as ADri): Why so glum, chum?

AUSTIN: At you, Grand, who is in the back, who is in this passenger seat. And you are like, approach, you're on your like distant approach to the Restitution Of All Things.

ART (as Grand Magnificent): Oh, you know, it's... It's a lot.

AUSTIN: So, I'm gonna give you a free flashback here, Grand. As you know, you got this call to come rescue Fourteen Fifteen, right?

ART: Yes.

AUSTIN: At some point, you were like, I should ask Waltz Tango Cache for backup. Or, that's the person who should help me do this, right?

ART: Mm-hm.

AUSTIN: Y'all went to the planet Moonlock, because that is where the Restitution Of All Things was orbiting, and while you were doing your prep, and getting your ship ready, and getting equipment—and we'll talk about whatever you need, or have, when it's time to talk about that stuff, but— you... maybe you were grabbing a bite, maybe you were settling in for the night, I don't know when this was, maybe you can tell me, but a member of the Concrete Town Particulars came to you. It's a man we've seen on-screen before, named Kentucky's Corona.

JACK: Ah, fuck this guy!

AUSTIN: [Laughs] And he asked you to come with him, because Advent had an offer for you... [inhales deeply] that word had gotten out... and I think I'm just gonna narrate this as a flashback for Grand, so that it's not... I'm gonna get you to the point at which the offer is made, instead of us playing this out slowly, if that works for you?

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: You are brought to a facility, to a Concrete Town Particular facility, where Kentucky's Corona introduces you to Kitcha Kanna, who was, at one point, simply the head of Advent's technology division in the Quire system, and has since become the head of Advent's entire Quire system operation, with his success doing some other stuff, and so now he's looking to make a bigger play and like, basically turn Quire into the new HQ of Advent. But that's not what he's here to talk to you about. What he's here to talk to you about is that, he's, I don't know if you remember that character, he's like a big bearded vulture? He's like a big dinosaur-bird-man, basically?

ART: Sure.

AUSTIN: Who has on white armor, and has kind of like, bright pink-red feathers, and scales, and such, and talons, and he, you know, basically says that:

AUSTIN (as Kitcha Kanna): From what I understand, you want to live forever in luxury and security, a long way from here. Is that right?

ART (as Grand Mag): The last part's the most important one, but yeah.

AUSTIN (as Kitcha Kanna): You're flexible. That's good. We can make that happen for you, Grand Magnificent.

AUSTIN: And he like, enunciates every letter of the name.

AUSTIN (as Kitcha Kanna): But, safety, security, and *especially* distance have a cost... you understand that, right?

ART (as Grand Mag): Of course. Of course.

AUSTIN (as Kitcha Kanna): That said, as far as costs go, this one is low. We have a simple favor. We know you are going... to save your friend. [Pauses] It is a simple delivery. These devices—

AUSTIN: And Kitcha Kanna kind of gestures at the table, and Kentucky's Corona drops this kind of silver disk, it's like a Roomba-sized disk. In fact, you know what these are, these are limited-self projectors. Back during the "This Year Of Ours" game, you were visited by the Marquis of Style and Transportation...?

ART: I believe that's his name, yes.

AUSTIN: Via one of these things. And Kitcha Kanna says:

AUSTIN (as Kitcha Kanna): These disks help us to be more places at once than we can. And it is imperative that you carry this one onto the Restitution Of All Things. There is a meeting there that we need to be a part of, but I cannot attend in person, and they will not let me bring this on-board. [Pauses] All I need from you is to carry this on-board, and hand it off. There will be a rendezvous point assigned to you, yes?

ART (as Grand Mag): Uhh... If you say so.

AUSTIN (as Kitcha Kanna): This is all.

ART (as Grand Mag): And this is... I know you wouldn't tell me. But this is... this is on the up-and up? This is legit? This isn't... this isn't secretly a bomb, or a...?

AUSTIN (as Kitcha Kanna): Would you like to know? Or would you like safety, and security, and distance?

ART (as Grand Mag): I don't wanna blow up.

AUSTIN (as Kitcha Kanna): Then hand it over to someone else. When you arrive. And you will be fine.

ART (as Grand Mag): Thats... [Muttering] I've been more convinced. Alright.

AUSTIN (as Kitcha Kanna): When you are done, we have secured a point of egress for you. Come to Harbour Andora, Dock Twenty-Two, we will have a safe passage away.

ART (as Grand Mag): [Unenthusiastically] Alright! Sure. Fine. Great.

AUSTIN (as ADri): [Cheery] Why so glum, chum?

ART (as Grand Mag): It hurts.

AUSTIN (as ADri): What's that?

ART (as Grand Mag): Um, you know. Choices.

AUSTIN: They like, reconfigure themselves to be laying down across six different chairs, or three different chairs, like horizontally, but they are still shaped like a post-office box, but like a post-office box resting its head on an elbow. And they go:

AUSTIN (as ADri): We all have down times. But we gotta keep our heads in the game. That's what Waltz always says.

ART (as Grand Mag): Yeah. Waltz is good at that, huh.

AUSTIN (as ADri): The trick was, he removed his head and added a grenade. Easy to keep that involved.

ART (as Grand Mag): Yeah, I guess so. I mean, it seems like a bad plan, you know, but I hear ya.

AUSTIN (as Waltz Tango (Cache)): What're you two talkin' about back there?

ART (as Grand Mag): I don't— Biology?

AUSTIN (as Waltz): ADri's an expert in biology. Mostly their own.

AUSTIN: And Waltz slams his hand on the side of the ship, and the whole thing reverberates, and changes shape, from like a combat vessel into like a really inauspicious— not inauspicious, wrong word! Uhh... I mean, it is inauspicious! This whole thing is pretty inauspicious!

[Jack laughing]

AUSTIN: Uhh, uh, what's the word I'm looking for?

JACK: Inconspicuous!

AUSTIN: Inconspicuous, thank you. An inconspicuous cargo vessel.

[Jack laughing]

AUSTIN (as Waltz): So. Are we sure about how we want to do this?

AUSTIN: And this is me asking you, Art, how do you want to do this? How do you want to get into this place?

ART: Um, I mean, how inconspicuous are we?

AUSTIN: I dunno! You know, when I look at the job, in Scum and Villainy, there are six plans. Assault, deception, infiltration, [inaudible], and transport. Um, which are you interested in doing? We can talk through them, however you want.

ART: I mean, infiltration sounds like it... Infiltration sounds like it most fits what we're trying to...

AUSTIN: Right. Sure.

ART: That seems like the right choice.

AUSTIN: Yes. So that's like, sneak in, it's... it's land without being detected, right? It's like, not having to go through any kind of cargo scans, or anything like that.

ART: I guess... I guess we could be deception. We could just...

AUSTIN: Right.

ART: I'm a little better at that.

AUSTIN: Well, so the way this roll works, is it's not based on your skill in any way. It's a fortune dice—

ART: Right, but once in it.

AUSTIN: Oh, right. Yes. Totally.

ART: The component rolls of the rest of the game.

AUSTIN: So then, if it's deception, then what I need from you is the method of deception, and because we're trying to knock this whole session out in just like a few hours, we're gonna like skip the legwork stuff, so you'll have gotten the shit you need to do your plan, I just wanna hear what that method of deception is. Having a ship that can reconfigure itself into different shapes helps enough. You know?

ART: Um... Yeah, I mean, we would just have to figure out, like, what kind of ships do come in, look like one of those, and just kinda like, roll up, right? Like...

AUSTIN: Yeah. So, here's one thing, is, you're... You would have successfully made this "Gather Information" roll. There is a thing that is called the... the Quire Leadership Summit happening, right now, and there are representatives from the Church of the Self, obviously from

Our Prophet, who's already here, Soul's Vanguard, which is the NEH's big military, the Qui-Err Coalition, Seneschal's Brace, the Divine Free States, Advent, and the Waking Cadent all have representatives here.

[00:30:00]

AUSTIN: So, there is a great deal of activity right now, more than is usual for this ship that normally only deals with stuff from their own fleet, and again, is like bigger than it needs to be. So, it's a little overwhelmed, in terms of its staffing, you know?

ART: Sure. But it also means there's probably so many ships coming in, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally.

ART: Like, this delegation, and that delegation and the support for these people, and these people. So we just need to pick what we think is the most disorganized group.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Up to you. And also, think about what the consequences would be, if you were caught and if you were tied to one of those groups, you know?

ART: Sure...

AUSTIN: Or don't, because maybe Grand doesn't give a fuck.

ART: I don't super give a fuck!

AUSTIN: Honestly, the...

ART: But like, Waltz probably doesn't want to have, doesn't probably just want to throw at the dart board and pick one, right?

AUSTIN: No, I think Waltz probably... Waltz, probably, is like, we should just go in as Advent. 'Cause Advent has so many different types of ships, and like, is such a weird mish-mash of groups. You might not want to go in as Advent, though!

ART: Eh! What's the worst thing that happens.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Okay!

ART: Like...

AUSTIN: So is the play here, then, you're gonna land, you're gonna try to get in, under false pretenses, basically?

ART: Yeah, we're just gonna lie.

AUSTIN: Okay. Um, so, let's build out this roll. And see how it goes. So the detail is that the method of deception is that you're pretending to be like an Advent, like a late-arriving Advent something?

ART: Yeah, we're just like, you know, I want to say catering, but that's probably not a thing they need for here, but like, we're the support staff. It's a note-taker and a... and a research assistant, you know?

AUSTIN: Okay. Okay, gotcha. Perfect. Perfect. What's the ship look like, what do you make the ship look like. Is it like a luxury transport, is it like a... what's an academic ship look like? Or, what's a diplomat's ship look like?

ART: Um, I wanna put this in like, car terms?

AUSTIN: Yeah, sure.

ART: It's like a 2003 Lincoln Town Car.

AUSTIN: Yeah, that's exactly— that's *literally* exactly what I had in mind. So... Perfect. So, um, is this operation bold or daring, or is it overly complex? I don't think it's either. I think it does expose a vulnerability, which we talked about, which is that they're overwhelmed right now, so take plus one there. Can any of your friends or contacts provide aid or insight... I'm gonna give you plus one from Waltz's ship. Any other elements... not here. So 3d6? Gimme a 3d6.

[Jack sighing worriedly]

ART: It's gonna be fine. That sigh was completely unnecessary.

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally. That's a six! You are in a controlled result. You are in a controlled position, rather. So, I think you land, you get in, they like, look for your name on the thing, they can't— they don't find it at first, but then, either you or Waltz does the thing that adds— you have your fake paperwork, or whatever, right? And you not only get in, but with a controlled position, you get in without your stuff being scanned. So that's like, flawless. Nice work. Um, I should note that you have two gambits, I'm gonna put that on the screen.

JACK: This is going pretty well, actually, right from the beginning.

AUSTIN: Right from the beginning, everything is going great. You know?

ART: Yeah, as soon as I decided not to be on everyone else's team, I started to roll real well.

[Jack laughing]

AUSTIN: Uh-huh! Sometimes things just work out the way they do, don't they. [Talking to self] Um, let's go with that... I'm gonna make that big, so we can all see it. Boom. Two gambits. Um, give me one second to just go through something else real quick, I'm just double-checking some stuff. I just wanna look at your abilities, and you're... okay, quick note, status, Grand, you're "obsessed" with escaping this scary, dangerous life, correct?

ART: I sure am.

AUSTIN: And... Fourteen, you don't have a status, right? You resisted that status last time, right?

JACK: Nope. Yeah!

AUSTIN: You do, however, have the level-one harm "Aaaahhh."

JACK: Yeah, I don't know, it seemed like that was—

AUSTIN: Isn't that cleared?

JACK: It seemed like it was... I guess it did. I have a new...

AUSTIN: Body. And a new brain. I'll clear it. I think that's, I think it's fair. We've done a time jump.

JACK: Yeah, it was the shock, it was the pulse.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: That killed...

AUSTIN: Yes. What I'm not getting rid of, is stress, though, and you have six stress.

JACK: No... sure do.

AUSTIN: Grand, you have one stress. And here's the other thing—

JACK: Oh, dear.

AUSTIN: I think, and I thought really long and hard about this, I think you have your gear, but you don't have the gear you have normally. So, which is to say, you have fine clothes. You have

a legitimate ID, you have a luxury item and a memento of a past encounter, and you know, you could get a blaster pistol, a detonator, hacking tools, or whatever. But one, you'll need to tell me for stuff like blaster pistol and repair tools, and all that stuff, is where did you get it on this ship, or is it built into your body, or something? Two, what is, if it comes up, memento of past encounter... that's not *your*, that's not Fourteen's old pistol. That's back on the World Without End, right?

JACK: Oh, no. Yeah, it's just in my desk drawer.

AUSTIN: Right, so what is the memento of a past encounter that Carcanet's Ironclad has? If that comes up, you know? Think about that.

JACK: Jesus. Okay.

AUSTIN: Um, and we'll hop over to you, as we get the shot of Waltz Tango Cache and Grand, are you wearing, like, disguises?

ART: Yeah, but they're not super involved disguises, right? Like, what does a researcher look like, right? They look like... just a—

AUSTIN: Well, the one note that I'll have is that everybody in Advent has those stark white uniforms, so I kind of like the idea of like, what's a researcher wear? Now put it all in white. [Laughing] Which is just like, what's a researcher wear? Uhh... a button up shirt and some slacks? All white.

ART: Yeah, that's what Grand is wearing.

AUSTIN: Yeah, good.

ART: It's also, like textured? Like it has a pattern, but it's white?

AUSTIN: Ooh! Ooh. [Laughing]

ART: And Waltz Tango Cache has a... what am I thinking... like a stenographer! Like a reporter—

AUSTIN: Yes, yes.

ART: Has a, has a slightly more dressed-down—

AUSTIN: Right.

ART: Or maybe more dressed-up look? Maybe he's just like, in a suit?

AUSTIN: Maybe he's in a suit...

JACK: But it's all white?

AUSTIN: It's all white.

JACK: White shirt, white tie...

AUSTIN: But does have a bolo tie that's a white bolo tie, and has...

JACK: [Laughing] Oh dear...

ART: Like Colonel Sanders with a grenade head.

AUSTIN: Yeah, a hundred percent. Colonel Sanders with a grenade head. A hundred percent. Um, I wish I could give this weird grenade cube head glasses somehow, truly. Maybe what it is is like, the parts of his head that can come apart are sealed, and they have like, a nice, like a really nice seal on them, you know? Like a, like a metallic chrome seal on them, that's sort of like jewelry, you know?

ART: Sure.

AUSTIN: With like some good engraving, that'd be cool. Alright, so y'all leave the cargo hold, and, I guess I'm asking you, are you headed... where are you headed? Are you trying to find Fourteen, or are you going to drop off this thing, uh, in the place... Oh, I guess on the way, or on some point you were told, that you have to drop it off, the limited self projection device, at Aftville Resource Stockpile 8. And Aftville is one of the many, many, many residential districts on this ship.

JACK: So it's like a town?

AUSTIN: Yeah, it's like a town. So Art, or Grand, are you going there first, or are you going to find Fourteen, or what are you doing, once you get through this cargo hold?

ART: Um... I guess... [Pause, thinking sounds] I guess I'm gonna... I guess I'm gonna do it last? I think... I think Grand, Grand wants to, wants to do it last.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ART: I'm not violating the deal yet, right?

AUSTIN: I don't think so, no. So, uh... You... how do you go about trying to find where Fourteen is, on this big ship?

ART: Oh, was that not part of our original conversation?

AUSTIN: Naw.

JACK: [Laughs] No, I think the message I sent did not contain that information, right?

AUSTIN: The message you sent was like, broken up, in a bad way, too, if I recall correctly.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Or maybe it did just take a while to show up, maybe that's what it was.

JACK: No, I think there were bits and pieces that were clearly missing, that I must have said but just did not come through.

ART: How do you find a Fourteen Fifteen?

AUSTIN: I truly don't know!

JACK: Oh, god, 'cause you don't even know what... shape... I could be anybody, right?

ART: Yeah!

AUSTIN: Did you know your name when you sent that message? Did you know that the name of this body was Carcanet's Ironclad?

JACK: I knew, but I don't think that came through.

AUSTIN: Okay!

JACK: I think— 'cause we actually did the message, we, in the previous recording—

AUSTIN: Yeah, I think so too. Oh, boy.

JACK: Listeners have heard the message, and I don't want to, like, fudge that.

AUSTIN: Yep!

JACK: It's just like, an addendum to the message: [laughing] "My name is Carcanet's Ironclad! I'm like a weird gold thing!"

AUSTIN: I mean, maybe there's like a way, right, maybe Waltz is like,

AUSTIN (as Waltz): We gotta get to some sorta person directory. Look up... any new arrivals. Any new citizens.

AUSTIN: That's Waltz's suggestion, that I just came up with off the top of my head, that's not from my prep, or something. I just genuinely—

ART: That's so much better than my idea.

AUSTIN: ... Wait, what was your idea?

ART: We could make some trouble and hope that Fourteen Fifteen would identify it as a rescue attempt and find us.

[Austin laughing]

JACK: Oh, shit!

AUSTIN: That's not a bad— that's not bad either, honestly!

JACK: That is pretty good!

AUSTIN: So, I think Waltz says,

AUSTIN (as Waltz): Let's try mine, and then we'll try yours.

ART: Alright! You got it, Jack Nicholson playing Colonel Sanders!

AUSTIN: And begins to head— That's it, you got it! And the two of you head off down through this cargo hold. The cargo hold is huge, first of all. And it slowly kind of becomes an industrial district, that's like between... I'm drawing a map here, and there is like, this ship is huge. It's huge, and we're looking at it flat on the screen, but you have to understand it's also very tall, so just assume that certain decks are really tall, and other decks are not that tall. But I think you all find your way through an industrial zone that is in my mind very much like... did y'all both play Titanfall 2?

JACK: Yeah!

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Remember the level that like, suburbs were being built inside a giant factory, by like—

JACK: Absolutely! That's a great level!

AUSTIN: By like the robots were just like, giant robots building houses, and then it's revealed eventually that, oh, shit, it's not just building houses, it's building an entire mock neighborhood, to do combat trials inside of? It's great. It's one of my favorite—

ART: Justice for Titanfall.

JACK: Yeah. For real.

AUSTIN: Yeah, honestly? Fuck. So it's like that, except it's... the stuff that's happening in the industrial district is that ships are being built here. Entire ships, starting at, like, the cockpit. It's like everything from buttons for people to press, to the thrusters on the back of a ship, to the seating— it's like an all-in-one mega-factory? And there aren't supposed to be humans in here, but this is the way that Waltz takes you through, because this is like, the easiest way to get to the nearest people-zone, without going— or like, person, uh, directory, without being picked up by any sort of security. Right? Like, he is still very much like, "Ah, I'll just go this way, this is the easiest way to go," and it is lots of big, free-floating arm drones that lift and toss the components across, like in the air, across the entire room, so it's like it's picking up an entire ship chassis, and throwing it like fifty yards, where another big floating arm drone catches it. Like a robotic arm that's just hovering catches it, and then places it down, and then screws the front of the ship on. And it's... it's working perfectly fine, it's just also kind of scary.

I'm not gonna roll to make you— or, I'm not gonna ask you to roll to go through this area, but, y'know, just remember that this is here, just in case. You know? Um, Fourteen, you are continuing to go through all this paperwork stuff, it's taken you a day or two to get through it all, probably, maybe longer. But I think you finally have done it, and Your Friend is like,

AUSTIN (as Your Friend): Congratulations, citizen Ironclad!

JACK (as Fourteen): Thank you.

AUSTIN (as Your Friend): Come with me! I have to show you your new home. Aftville is beautiful.

AUSTIN: And takes you to like a, uh, leads you down an elevator. A lot of this should just remind you of, um... [thinking sounds] what is... The By And By! A lot of it should feel a little bit like the By And By, in that there are parts of this that are just, like, Aftville is not at the top of this ship, but when you look up, there is sky; there is also like, fake blue sky, it's very much a BlueSky dome situation, where you like come down a giant elevator, and you step inside, and it's like you're in a little suburban sprawl. And Your Friend gets into like a golf cart, and asks you to climb on back, and you know, Your Friend doesn't weigh anything, because they're actually a big vinyl toy, but you are a big robot person.

[Jack laughing softly]

AUSTIN: So I think it just goes like, crunch cronch, and then, they go “No Problem!” And they hit a button, and then the tires extra-inflate, or whatever, and there’s a little more give for you? And they drive you to a little home of your own. A little, like, white picket fence, you know, one-bedroom ranch. And they say,

AUSTIN (as Your Friend): Go on in, this is yours!

JACK (as Fourteen): This is my... this is my house?

AUSTIN (as Your Friend): This is your *life*!

JACK (as Fourteen): I don’t belong here.

AUSTIN (as Your Friend): [inhales deeply] I know it can be hard sometimes, to think about all the gifts, that Our Prophet has given us, and that... we as Earth people really deserve. It can be overwhelming sometimes, but just know that...

AUSTIN: And they like, reach out to put a hand on your shoulder.

JACK: I just brush it off.

AUSTIN: And it just falls away.

AUSTIN (as Your Friend): Our Prophet is devoted to bringing this life of perfection... and safety... and luxury... to everyone in the galaxy. Head on in!

00:45:00

JACK: Uh... Okay! What’s inside the house?

AUSTIN: You tell me. What’s inside the house? You filled out all that paperwork, right?

JACK: Oh, god, it’s—

AUSTIN: So what did it build, for you, based on everything you said?

JACK: It’s, it’s um... oh, god, it’s... I think it’s Fourteen’s house back, Fourteen’s office back on Moonlock?

AUSTIN: Oh... yeah.

JACK: Except it's kind of— that was Moonlock, right?

AUSTIN: Mm-hm!

JACK: Yeah. Except it's kind of... put it this way. If you build your home in The Sims—

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: You'd be able to look at it and go, ah, that's my house! But you'd also go, wait, hold on, this is not my house. All the proportions are the same, this is definitely not my house.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Right.

JACK: And if someone said to you, "well, how is it not your house," you probably wouldn't be able to answer, because all the walls would be the same color.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: And I'm not talking about something as simple as, "well it's not my home, this doesn't feel like my home." I think this feels a lot like Fourteen's house on Moonlock, it's just... not on Moonlock.

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: And I think it also, it has the trappings of the like, white picket fence, one bedroom sort of...

AUSTIN: Yes. Yes.

JACK: ...thing, that I didn't necessarily ask for, as well. There's just kind of that.

AUSTIN: Right. Right. But your office-slash-home was on the seventh floor of a... like a tenement, right? Like, this is not that.

JACK: No. It was like, um, yeah. I had the like—

AUSTIN: Oh, no, I'm sorry, I was thinking of the pre— that was a pre-Mirage thing, right? You had the...

JACK: I had the farm.

AUSTIN: Like a farm, yeah.

JACK: Like a bungalow.

AUSTIN: Yeah. You had like a bungalow, with some farmland, and you had like the ostriches, and all that. Yeah. I'd forgotten about that.

JACK: And like a little office...

AUSTIN: Yeah! Totally. This is not that, at all. Inside, it's close!

JACK: Yeah, absolutely! And in fact, I think Fourteen catches themselves, right, the first thing they do is they sit down and they reach for their desk drawer, where there's like a desk toy, or a book, or something in there, and there's just nothing in there, and it's like... it's the model home version of their home.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Right. Right. Or, they open it, and what's in there is like, "The History of the Blue Path and the Church of the Self," you know?

JACK: [Laughing] Oh, god.

AUSTIN: Or whatever. Um, so you sit down at that desk, and you open that drawer, and you, like, shake your head or whatever, and close it, and then like as soon as you do, there's a ring at the doorbell.

JACK (as Fourteen): Who's there?

AUSTIN (as Your Friend): It's Your Friend!

JACK (as Fourteen): Where do you li— come in.

AUSTIN: And they come in, you know— That's the other thing, is, the door looks like a regular door, but it's one of these light doors, that goes like, wwwhchhht!, it goes like schhhwwcht, I have to go inwards, it's like, ssswwwsshhht! Like that!

JACK: [Laughing] Okay.

AUSTIN: It's like that. And it's like, whoop, goes away! And, Your Friend walks inside, and goes,

AUSTIN (as Your Friend): Citizen Ironclad, you're late for your assignment! What's going on?

JACK (as Fourteen): I just got here!

AUSTIN (as Your Friend): You gotta get going! You have a very important duty! Come on!

JACK (as Fourteen): You just— you just showed me this house!

AUSTIN: And they go,

AUSTIN (as Your Friend): Well, by my records, you were due at the Center Centre Diplomatic Retreat seven hours ago!

JACK (as Fourteen): I was with you!

AUSTIN (as Your Friend): That may be, but duty knows no time.

JACK (as Fourteen): What does that mean!

AUSTIN: And is like stepping, is already like, what is the equivalent of grabbing your hat and coat from a... from a....

JACK: [Laughing] For a synthetic that doesn't wear...

AUSTIN: Yeah, for a synthetic that doesn't wear a hat or a coat... maybe it's...

JACK: I think it's rapidly turning off the lights in the house.

AUSTIN: [Laughing] That's exactly it! Like going, you just walked in, we got like the camera, the long camera pan of you going in and flipping on all the lights and looking at each room, and they walk through—

JACK: Just like click, click click.

AUSTIN: Like click, click, click, click, click, off. And then they like, go out to the front door, and their golf cart is actually just like literally at the front door now to get right back in, and they look at you, and they go,

AUSTIN (as Your Friend): Our Prophet needs you.

JACK (as Fourteen): I don't think that's the case.

AUSTIN (as Your Friend): It really is!

AUSTIN: And they... their face disappears, and it becomes a screen, or it becomes... it just becomes like the... it's almost as if they've turned their face inside out, and the information that's in their head—

JACK: [Quietly] Oh my god.

AUSTIN: Which is just like an Excel spreadsheet, is now on the outside of their face, instead of the inside, facing where their synthetic brain is. And it's... you see that Carcanet's Ironclad, as soon as you were registered, you got like your day's events scheduled, and you, as Carcanet's Ironclad, are one of the personal bodyguards of Our Prophet. And because you have that tag in the system now, it automatically back-scheduled you for today's activity being protecting Our Prophet.

JACK: [Laughs] And it did this like, not even once they'd been, congratulations, you're a citizen now, it did it like when I'd completed like, form 13A, which triggered this, essentially.

AUSTIN: Well the thing that you'd completed was, you got into your home, which is the final moment of—

JACK: Oh, god.

AUSTIN: Listen! At some point, in the distant past, maybe not even that distant past, maybe this is one of the reforms that Our Prophet put into place, you would have signed that last document and then would have immediately had to go to work, and at some point, Our Prophet was like, "No. Dignity before work." And—

JACK: Time to go home.

AUSTIN: "You get to go home. You have to go home first. Before anyone has to— before anyone can bring you into the workplace, once you're a citizen, you deserve to go home first." And then immediately that turned into, the second they sit down, they can be called upon.

JACK: Oh, Jesus.

AUSTIN: I think it's at this moment, maybe, Grand, that you and Waltz find one of these giant liquid light touchscreen things that's inside of this big industrial zone?

ART: Sure.

AUSTIN: And it's just a huge... Waltz is like, scratching, not scratching his head... um... Waltz is like, running a finger down one of the weird metallic seals on his grenade head, and is like,

AUSTIN (as Waltz): I don't know how to work this thing.

AUSTIN: Do you wanna try to find...

ART (as Grand Mag): I can give it a shot... yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah. So I think this is just a Gather Information roll, or you know, no it isn't. Because, you have to like, get access to this stuff, right?

ART: Sure.

AUSTIN: So what do you do?

ART: Um, what's like the public-facing interface? Is there like a phone book?

AUSTIN: No. Or, there is like... You know those touch screens? When was the last time you were in New York?

ART: Um, earlier this year?

AUSTIN: Did you do a subway at all? Did you see those new, the subway touch screens that are in various parts of New York now?

ART: Yeah, I've seen those, I haven't used one. I know where the subway goes.

AUSTIN: Okay. Right. Well, if you needed to know where the subway went, or, when it was coming, or like, some light other stuff, like, where is a museum? Or, you know, shit like that, that's what this has. So you could find how to get to a place here, and because it's the New Earth Hegemony, it's the equivalent of the Yellow Pages, where, or it's like, there's the Yellow Pages, there's the grey pages, and there's the white pages, right? Or maybe it's the red pages? Or, what's the gig economy version of the Yellow Pages? The blue pages? Let's call them the blue pages. So— or no, the blue pages are real, right? There were blue pages, weren't there?

ART: Yeah, I think blue pages were like, stuff? I don't know.

AUSTIN: Blue pages were states, with state stuff, apparently.

ART: Mmm.

AUSTIN: That's interesting. Jack, you probably— do you know what the Yellow Pages are?

JACK: Yeah, we have the Yellow Pages, too.

AUSTIN: Okay. Alright, so, we'll call them the white, grey, and yellow pages... Grey is like, Yellow Pages is, in this interface, is businesses, and there aren't that many of those? There are some businesses here, but what there's a lot of are people in the grey pages, for people who have paid to be listed as a business as an individual contractor business. And then there's the white pages, which are private. You don't... the citizens' privacy is incredibly important, and so you can't just look up where someone lives, or how to get in touch with them. If you were a government agent, now, maybe you could.

ART: Um...

AUSTIN: Or if you hired a private eye, who you could find in the grey pages...

ART: Sure, that sounds like a lot of work.

AUSTIN: Mm-hm.

ART: But I mean, I'm not ruling it out.

AUSTIN: But that's the public-facing thing, yeah.

ART: I don't have the skill to do this.

AUSTIN: What skill, hacking?

ART: Yeah, um...

AUSTIN: Yeah, you've got zero hack, currently.

ART: Unless I could use forged documents to convince this thing that I am a private investigator...

[Jack laughs]

AUSTIN: I could... I would like, give you a bonus... I would give you some sort of bonus with that, do you know what I mean, but I wouldn't... It wouldn't just work. You know? You wouldn't be "Sway"-ing still, I don't think.

ART: But that might be the best option I have?

AUSTIN: Yeah. I still think that's kinda fun. So what's the... what is the thing you're using? It's like, forged documents that makes it look like you have access?

ART: It's just one of my items?

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

ART: Yeah, just, I have a forged document, that says, “yeah, I can do this.”

AUSTIN: Right. You’re allowed. You’re allowed to have access to the white pages.

ART: Yeah, I’m a PI.

AUSTIN: Alright, so then, I think it’s still Hack, you’re Controlled, we know that you’re in a Controlled position, which is good, and it is Hack, which would right now be 2d6, take the lowest... What I’ll do is raise the effect from Standard to Great; you can spend Gambits, you can Push Yourself to get an extra die.

ART: Alright, I will spend a Gambit.

AUSTIN: Okay. Go ahead and spend a Gambit. ...I will lower it back to one, so that’s 1d6, Controlled, Great. That’s... a six! Look at you, today! And wait, don’t you have the move that says— oh wait, it’s Controlled, not... “generate Gambits on Desperate rolls...” so no, you still don’t get that Gambit back.

ART: But I also generate Gambits if I spent a Gambit. Is that— that’s a different sentence.

AUSTIN: Right...but you can’t... that’s a different.... It is, but you can still only generate normally on Risky.

ART: Aw, okay.

AUSTIN: Yeah. It’s Risky, then you have an ability that lets you get them also on Desperate, and also if you spent one.

ART: Alright.

AUSTIN: But in this case, you do it. So like, I think you just pull down the thing, that says “where is”... Carcanet... or where is Fourteen Fif— wait... I guess, right. You do the thing Waltz suggested, which is “new residents,” right?

ART: Yeah, I’m sorting by “new.”

AUSTIN: Totally. So, and... I’d say that you’re able to find that a handful of new people came on board in the last week? The most recent is someone that’s named Carcanet’s Ironclad, and you’re able to see that they are a synthetic being, which is different than everyone else here, and also that they were part of the Our Prophet’s, like, continued personality system, or

whatever, which is... the system that's being rolled out for certain people in government positions where they are given extra lives to live, à la Fourteen Fifteen.

ART: Sure. So that sure seems right.

AUSTIN: Yes. And you know that they are at... they're currently at Aftville, and they are going, or they are scheduled to be at— it's like, "current location: Aftville, you know, unit 1728." And then, you know, "current task: political guard, or bodyguard, at Center Centre Diplomatic Retreat, Deck 6," or whatever.

ART: Does it have a picture?

AUSTIN: Sure!

ART: Alright, great.

AUSTIN: [Laughing] Fourteen, what's that picture look like? You took it, like, an hour ago.

JACK: Oh, it's... this is an opportunity, right, I think that there is something under Fourteen's Helmet?

AUSTIN: Oh, is there, okay.

JACK: Ah... We've said that I can't smile in the same way that My Friend could, but that might be because the helmet was closed.

AUSTIN: Mm-hm.

JACK: I think that that's not my face, I think I have a face underneath.

AUSTIN: Mm!

JACK: And I think it's... I think it's a human face? But filtered through the rest of the metalwork of the armor.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: And also that kind of wood, and metal, and, I guess, ivory? Or, um, whalebone? That the wooden soldiers in Dishonored 2 have, that the clockwork soldiers have.

AUSTIN: Right, I love that. That's great, fantastic. And kind of creepy.

JACK: Yeah, absolutely kind of creepy! I think what the actual photo is, is Fourteen with the visor either halfway up or halfway down, the camera went off—

AUSTIN: In-between—

JACK: As they were preparing for the photo.

AUSTIN: [Laughing] Perfect. Let's say halfway up, or, I guess it doesn't matter, it's either. It's halfway.

JACK: Yeah, it's some eyes, some jeweled eyes from underneath.

AUSTIN: [Sighs] So that's what you're looking for. And Waltz says,

AUSTIN (as Waltz): I'm not one to talk, but they change a lot.

ART (as Grand Mag): Yeah, I don't... I don't really know anything about that, if I'm being honest.

AUSTIN: Ah... so where do you go from here, Grand?

ART: To... to the stuff, right? To where the... to the Diplomatic Retreat.

AUSTIN: Okay. Okay. I wasn't sure if you were going right there, or if you were gonna try to— again, they are currently in Aftville, they are going to the Center Centre Diplomatic Retreat. Are you trying to like, cut them off on the way, basically?

ART: Yeah, I guess so. I was sort of thinking we could just show up and figure it out.

AUSTIN: Oh. Sure. Sure. Okay! Either one's fine, up to you!

ART: I'm clearly not thinking dynamically enough for this mission... I'm just like, we'll get there whenever! We'll cause a big ruckus and maybe it'll all work out!

AUSTIN: And maybe it'll all be fine! It'll be great! Um, I think you—

ART: I just feel like I'm rollin' sixes today, so it's...

AUSTIN: You are! You are rolling sixes today. It is working out. I think you start heading in that direction, and then the thing that you notice very quickly is, it won't let you get closer. Like, the doors just don't open in that way, and it's like, oh, we'll just go around. And then you get redirected, and it's like, you're looking at maps, and you're putting it as your destination, and it's giving you directions. Then you go down a side alleyway, or you go down another deck and try

to come through this other weird... you know, tunnel, or whatever? And then again and again, like, you hit a wall, and it's like, sorry, you're detoured, you can't come through here, go this way! And it's just sending you in fuckin' circles. What do you do?

ART: Hmm... Um, what's a... what's it like to just crowbar a door open?

AUSTIN: I don't know! You tell me.

ART: I don't know that I have anything that does that.... I don't.

[01:00:00]

JACK: Also, the door's got to hate it, right?

AUSTIN: I'm sure! Let's see, what do you have that you could, you could... fuck around with a door. Uh, you have repair tools!

ART: Yeah, repair tools, I guess, are pretty...

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: Pretty vague.

AUSTIN: If you wanna mark that— also, what are your loads? I should note. I should ask.

ART: Grand always goes light.

AUSTIN: Okay. You're not wearing your special armor?

ART: Umm, it would appear not, no.

AUSTIN: Yeah. I think that that's... given your disguise, especially?

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Alright. And, Fourteen? What are you wearing? Or, what's your load?

JACK: Ah, heavy!

AUSTIN: Alright. Let's mark that.

JACK: I'm a... I'm an *enormous* suit of armor.

AUSTIN: Yes. Yep! Uh huh! You sure are. Cool. Um, alright. So yeah, do you want to just try and crowbar this thing open?

ART: Umm, yes?

AUSTIN: It's up to you! You're still "Controlled" right now.

ART: Umm... what kind of roll would you say crowbarring a door open is?

AUSTIN: It's probably Rig, which you're pretty good at, right?

ART: Alright! Yeah, I mean, I just gotta get through a door! And if it doesn't work, it serves as my original plan!

AUSTIN: Yeah, [reading from book] "Rig together mechanical solutions; disable, modify, repair, or create mechanisms; disable a trap; pick a lock; or crack a safe. Rig explosives."

ART: I'm sort of like, cracking a lock, but yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah! Yeah. Let's do it. Controlled Standard.

ART: Controlled Standard, alright...

AUSTIN: Yeah, you got it. That's a five. So... on a Mixed Success, on Controlled, [reading from book] you hesitate. Withdraw and try a different approach, or else do it with minor consequences. A minor complication occurs, you have reduced effect, you suffer lesser harm, you end up in a Risky position. Um, do you want to try a different approach, or, I guess here's how I'll frame it is... What is it that you're using? Is it like a crowbar?

ART: Yeah, I think it's like a space crowbar.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: What is that?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: [Laughing] You know, like a crowbar you would have in space? Um...

JACK: [Laughing]: Oh, okay, alright. Fair.

ART: It's... it's probably a little lighter, because of gravity changes?

AUSTIN: 'Cause it's space.

ART: Um... there's probably like, tiny little engines, you know, like the ones in um, you know like that a space station has, or like the suits...

JACK: Oh, like, the little thrusters.

ART: The little micro-air thrusters?

AUSTIN: Micro-thrusters, yeah. The little propellant ones, totally.

ART: In case you're trying to crowbar something in atmosphere...

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally.

ART: It's probably got like a lightning bolt painted on it...

JACK: Plus that'll probably give it a little extra heft. Oh, right.

AUSTIN: Definitely. A hundred percent. So I think what you do, is like, [effort grunt sounds] and try to get it, and you're like, got it! And you pull on it, and it goes wwwllcchhht, and one layer of the goo goes away, and then it goes like, brnt, "Access denied." And then it... or you know what, it can't do that, because you did... Alright, let me go back. It makes that sound, that I'm not gonna make again, it makes a squelching sound, and then it goes like, mwehh, and then it's like, "Access granted!" And it's super loud, and you're alone in this room, or in this long hallway. And so it just echoes out and reverberates. And it does that in both ways, and you see that, as the door opens, off in the distance, ahead of you, are three robots, that at first you think are Torch Units.

And then you see that they look like maybe more advanced Torch Units? They're different than Torch Units, that's what you can tell. And as it goes like, "Access granted," they all turn to face you, and begin to walk in your direction. What do you do?

ART: I mean, it said "access granted," we're in, right? That's...

AUSTIN: Right. You got in because you crowbarred a door open. Uhh...

ART: But I think that they have to respect that. I think that's the law.

AUSTIN: Is that the law?

ART: It said, it *said* access granted.

AUSTIN (as Waltz): Yeah, I'm not so sure about that.

AUSTIN: And Waltz is getting a little nervous, you can tell. He's like, double checking to make sure all of their ammo is in the right place.

ART (as Grand Mag): Um.. I don't know, if you wanna bail, we could bail, but I feel like we can... We're dressed the part, we're just late, we took a wrong turn.

AUSTIN (as not-Torch Unit): [Robotically] Arrivals. State your name.

ART (as Grand Mag): Oh, fuck, do we have fake names?

AUSTIN (as Waltz): [Whispering] Do we have fake— *I* was about to ask *you* that!

ART (as Grand Mag): Oh, fuck!

AUSTIN (as Waltz): My name is Tender Sky!

AUSTIN: ...says Waltz.

AUSTIN (as Waltz): [Whispering] That was the first thing that came to mind...

ART (as Grand Mag): Sure.

AUSTIN: And they go,

AUSTIN (as not-Torch Unit): Ddd-dd-dd-dddd— not found.

ART (as Grand Mag): What!

AUSTIN: And they turn to look at you.

ART (as Grand Mag): You don't— do you know who this is? This is Tender Sky, the best stenographer... in, honestly, maybe in the whole of all of stenography.

[Austin laughing]

AUSTIN (as Waltz): Yeah, that's right.

ART (as Grand Mag): A titan... in... in their field, to be sure!

AUSTIN (as Waltz): I've won awards.

ART (as Grand Mag): Yeah! Stenography awards. Probably. As far as you know.

AUSTIN: Um, are you doing a Sway here?

ART: Yeah, I'm—

AUSTIN: It sounds like you're doing a Sway.

ART: Um... It's probably Risky, now.

AUSTIN: [Holding back laughter] Oh, yeah, dog. It's Risky.

[Jack laughing]

ART: Standard?

AUSTIN: Risky Standard, yeah.

ART: Um, you know what, I'm gonna take a Stress. I think I want, like, an extra—

AUSTIN: That's two Stress. Two Stress for a die.

ART: I'll take two for a die.

AUSTIN: Okay. Sounds good.

ART: I lost my little thing. Oh, there it is.

AUSTIN: You got it, yeah.

ART: Oh, my god.

AUSTIN: That's a two, a one, and a two... so...

JACK: Oof.

AUSTIN: They, um... [laughs] They immediately—

JACK: Rolling good when it counts.

AUSTIN: Yeah, a hundred percent. Um, it's like super quick. You like, say all of that, and they say, "Tender Sky, come with us." And one of their faces opens. So, they have like, boxy faces, instead of the Torch Unit faces, and their... they have like, six little LED light eyes, basically? They're also cameras? And their boxy faces open vertically. So it's like, and I don't mean they

open like a jaw opens. I mean like they, they open like a box opens. Do you know what I mean? Like, the whole top part of it opens up a little bit, and it's being held up by two struts. Um, I'm trying to compare it to something... Um, imagine you have a box, right? And then you have a metallic brace around that box, like a two part box. It has like a bottom part, and then it has a top, like a lid. Like a lid that has like the... Not just a lid, but the lid that has the sides on it? And then the whole bit lifts up, and then the brace lifts up with it.

Anyway, it does that, and inside there are a bunch of wires and cords. And one of them just shoots out immediately and ties up both of Waltz's hands. Like, *super* quick.

AUSTIN (as not-Torch Unit): Identify yourself.

ART (as Grand Mag): This is gonna be an *incident*. Um...

AUSTIN (as not-Torch Unit): We are designed to avoid poor human biases. This will not be an incident.

ART (as Grand Mag): That's Tender Sky, the stenographer.

AUSTIN: [Laughing] You just repeated that?

ART: Yeah...

AUSTIN: Oh, sorry, when they said "identify yourself," they were pointing at *you*, now, and saying identify yourself to you, Grand.

ART: Oh, I'm sorry. I was...

AUSTIN: Uh-huh.

ART (as Grand Mag): Well I am, of course... [long pause] Fourteen Fifteen's new name. I'm, uh...

AUSTIN: Carcanet's Ironclad?

ART: Uh-huh!

JACK: [Muffled, distant] Jesus...

AUSTIN: Give me another Sway roll...

ART: Oh, I should be my fake PI!

AUSTIN: Who's your fake PI?

ART: I have forged documents for that guy!

AUSTIN: Yes. You could be that guy.

JACK: Oh!

AUSTIN: What's... what's that guy's name?

ART: Um... that's an excellent question. Um... Um... Chip Graderson, from Magnificent Investigations.

AUSTIN: Okay. Great. [Laughs] Give me a Sway...

ART: Here's my identification.

AUSTIN: Give me a Sway; it's Risky Great, because of the... because of the ID that you have to support this. That's a six.

ART: Hey, we get a Gambit!

AUSTIN: You do get a Gambit back. That's true. Um, they go...

AUSTIN (as not-Torch Unit): Mr. Chip, you are not allowed in in the vicinity of the Diplomatic Retreat. Please follow us as we return you to appropriate environs.

ART (as Grand Mag): [Offended] I am hired security for Tender Sky, stenographer to the stars!

AUSTIN (as not-Torch Unit): Then you should accompany him as we take him to the facilities.

ART (as Grand Mag): You know, I think I...

ART: I like, look at...

AUSTIN: Waltz?

ART: Waltz, for like—

AUSTIN: Whose hands are tied up in these cords, and like shrugs at you, and is like,

AUSTIN (as Waltz): Should we go hard? What's... [seriously] what's the play here, Grand?

ART (as Grand Mag): Oh, I don't have an award for this... Um...

AUSTIN (as Waltz): Yeah, you stopped doin' the thing you won awards for.

ART (as Grand Mag): Ah, yeah, I know.

[Austin making sympathetic sounds]

ART (as Grand Mag): Okay... I'll come with y'all, then...

ART: And I like, click the holster off on my gun.

[Austin sighing]

AUSTIN: I'm gonna... on that, we get the shot of you clicking the holster off, I'm gonna hop back over to Fourteen. Fourteen! Did you get in the golf cart?

JACK: Yeah, I mean, yeah. I think— yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay. Okay. So you're like, pu-pu-pu-pu-puh putting your way towards the elevator, and you get in this giant, like, multi-deck elevator, and you're still just sitting in the... in the golf cart, and Your Friend is like,

AUSTIN (as Your Friend): You have to tell me. What's it like working with Our Prophet?

JACK (as Fourteen): Isn't this my first day?

AUSTIN (as Your Friend): That's right. She must make quite the impression.

JACK (as Fourteen): Oh— I have to have an opinion now?

AUSTIN (as Your Friend): I was asking!

JACK (as Fourteen): Oh, um, well... she's a character. She's a character.

AUSTIN (as Your Friend): Wow. She must be.

JACK (as Fourteen): Have you met her?

AUSTIN (as Your Friend): No, she has her own friends. Like you! Sorry, I'm being presumptuous. You work with her. That may not mean that you're *friends*.

JACK (as Fourteen): No, we're not friends.

AUSTIN (as Your Friend): Oh, I'm sorry to hear that. Do you have friends, besides me?

JACK (as Fourteen): [Laughs nervously] Besides you? Yes. I have friends. I hope to see them soon.

AUSTIN: Pu-pu-pu-pu-puh, [laughing] and you're going down the hallway, and boy, did you see them pretty quickly!

[Jack laughing]

AUSTIN: At first, I don't know that you recognize— two people in all white, and then you recognize the head of Waltz Tango Cache immediately. Right? Grand, what were you gonna do? Were you just grabbing that gun? Were you gonna do something, or are you just gettin' ready to do something?

ART: Oh no, my plan if this— I was gonna, like, be cool, but as soon as I thought I had the opportunity I was gonna try to... shoot Waltz free? Shoot the one—

AUSTIN: Gotcha.

ART: ...holding Waltz, to try to get out of this with violence?

AUSTIN: Okay. So maybe the shot is y'all walking towards Fourteen Fifteen, who's on this golf cart, as they're saying you hope to see them soon. And you do, and you know, Your Friend is just gonna drive past them. What do you do?

JACK (as Fourteen): Oh my god. Stop the— sorry, please stop the car.

AUSTIN (as Your Friend): This is a golf cart!

[All laughing]

JACK: I say,

JACK (as Fourteen): Alright, stop the golf cart.

AUSTIN: It slowly comes to a brake. A stop.

AUSTIN (as Your Friend): We've stopped.

JACK (as Fourteen): These two, who are they?

AUSTIN: Um, they scan them, and they go,

AUSTIN (as Your Friend): ddd-dd-dd-dd-dd— Records indicate that that one is Tender Sky, the world's greatest stenographer. According to them, anyway. And—

ART (as Grand Mag): [Shouting, as if from a distance] The greatest stenographer on many worlds!

[Austin and Jack laughing]

AUSTIN (as Your Friend): And the other one is, dd-dd-ddd— Chip Granderson, of Magnificent Investigations, registry: Aftville circle circle cube.

JACK (as Fourteen): Oh, my god. Friend, where were you gonna take me, can you.. Can you go on ahead? I can catch you up. I just— I know these people, and there's important people that Our Prophet needs to tend to.

AUSTIN: Your Friend slowly turns to you, like very slowly turns to you, and locks eyes, and then puts a hand on your shoulder, and says,

AUSTIN (as Your Friend): I'm Your Friend. I'll wait right here.

JACK (as Fourteen): Right. Well, that's not going to work.

AUSTIN (as Your Friend): I'm Your Friend. I'll wait right here.

AUSTIN: The two of your friends are actually walking, like, literally walking past you, like, you're on opposite sides of like, a huge airport-sized hallway, and you're literally right next to each other. Not next to, but like, across the hall from each other. What do y'all do?

JACK: I'm gonna stick my foot out, surreptitiously, and try and trip one of them.

AUSTIN: Okay... good. Uh, that's a roll of some sort, for sure. What is it? What do you think that is, what are you using for that.

JACK: Um, let me try and see what's happening here. So, this is...

AUSTIN: Are you—

JACK: This is like a very low-level Scrap, right? But—

AUSTIN: Mm-hm. Are you focused on not trying to get seen?

JACK: Yes.

AUSTIN: Then it's Skulk, probably. It could be either, and, if you succeed or fail, whichever one you choose, I'll fail in that direction. Do you know what I mean?

JACK: Okay, yes, that's fair. Alright, yeah. So what I'm basically trying to do here, is, I guess I'm targeting Waltz, whose arms are bound—

AUSTIN: Oh wait, so you're targeting your own friend.

JACK: I mean, I guess.

AUSTIN: Or are you targeting one of the robots with them?

JACK: ... I think I'm gonna target one of the robots.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: Just to give Grand an opportunity here. Yeah, I was thinking about whether or not I want to make it look like they are doing an escape, or whether or not I actually want to effect an escape, and I think I probably want to try the latter.

AUSTIN: Right. Okay.

JACK: So this is a...

AUSTIN: It's a Skulk, then.

JACK: A Skulk, yeah.

AUSTIN: Risky Standard.

JACK: Okay.

AUSTIN: You wanna... so yeah, what do you wanna do here?

JACK: Here it is.

AUSTIN: Do you wanna spend any, any Stress... I guess you're at six, so probably not...

JACK: No...

AUSTIN: And, do you wanna spend a Gambit?

JACK: We have, we have two remaining.

AUSTIN: You have two remaining.

JACK: Yeah, given that I'm in a game with Art, I think I am gonna spend a Gambit.

AUSTIN: Sounds good. Go down to one!

JACK: This is Risky... Standard. One bonus dice.

AUSTIN: That's 2d6.

ART: That didn't work out last time, I'm just gonna...

AUSTIN: [Laughing] Put that out there.

JACK: Let's try it.

AUSTIN: It's a two and a three. So it immediately did not work out. Um, so, I mean the thing that, you put your leg out, and this unit, just like, brrrrrt, I think, actually, trips. I think it trips. It totally trips, but then every other unit stops, and turns, and looks, and then Your Friend goes,

AUSTIN (as Your Friend): You tripped that Rigger!

[01:15:00]

AUSTIN: Ah, these are Rigger Units, they're called Rigger Units, because, you know, the other ones were Torch Units, and these ones are more like, they're all filled with like, theater rigging? Basically? In the same way the other ones were filled with like, theater lights?

JACK: And they're called... how is that spelled?

AUSTIN: Ah, R-I-G-G-E-R.

JACK: [Reluctantly] Okay...

AUSTIN: And they are immediately— it like, falls on its face, and then stands back up.

JACK: Just straight away.

AUSTIN: And just turns and looks at you, and again Your Friend goes,

AUSTIN (as Your Friend): You tripped that Rigger Unit! That's a criminal thing to do.

JACK (as Fourteen): It was an accident. It was an accident.

ART: Bang?

AUSTIN: You're—

JACK: Everybody—

AUSTIN: Uh, bang, okay. So you were totally found out, one second, I have to finish resolving this... Bang is gonna work. I'm gonna let you, I'm gonna let you bang. It's gonna happen. But I need to... be clear here... that the complication that occurs is that as soon as it stands back up, its... it has like, six LED lights, and they all turn red at once, and then the lights in the room all turn red. And then bang.

So, you are all now still in a Risky position, but... reinforcements are coming. Gimme that, that Shoot roll. You have three bullets, right?

ART: Yeah.

JACK: How does Grand's gun work?

AUSTIN: It's... Scrap, with Great effect.

JACK: Oh, no, I mean like, narratively. How many— does it like, have...

AUSTIN: I think we described it as having, as literally having three rounds that could be fired from it.

JACK: Alright, it's a single-use thing.

AUSTIN: It's a Cascabel gun that doesn't get destroyed, because Cascabel makes the Q-Glass rounds that resist the Quire effect.

JACK: Yeah, yeah yeah.

AUSTIN: So, give me that roll. That's probably a Scrap?

ART: Yeah. Risky Great?

AUSTIN: Risky Great.

ART: Um... I'm gonna take that Gambit. That last Gambit.

AUSTIN: Okay. That last Gambit. Now zero Gambits. ...That's another six! So you get it back, you did need it. You got a one and a six. So you get that Gambit back.

JACK: This is like Stardew Valley, but for Gambits. We're making them all over the place.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh! So, you're shooting the one that's holding...

ART: Waltz.

AUSTIN: Waltz. Right. What happened? I mean, it's dead, right?

ART: Well I hope it also lets go. I hope it's one of those kind of...

AUSTIN: Yeah, it does. It does. Like the wires and stuff retreat inside of it. I'm gonna put some clocks out...

ART: Good clocks?

JACK: Oh, jeez.

AUSTIN: Mmm... not from that last roll, certainly!

ART: Excuse me, I had a six?

AUSTIN: So. Yeah, I got that, that's great. Which is why I'm gonna tick... actually, that's not enough. This is. That's why I'm gonna tick three whole boxes off of this Rigger Unit clock, right? Which is fantastic, and then I'm also gonna put down this "reinforcement" clock, one second here... Boop. I'll have to name these real quick... So this is "reinforcements," okay. So, you've gotten through three of an eight-step clock for the Riggers, and the problem is that three of the reinforcement clock... three of the four-step reinforcement clock has been stepped, has been hit. There are two other Riggers up right now, plus Your Friend, who is currently changing into another Rigger. Like, their whole body is slowly vinyl changing, and it sounds like someone's inflating a pool toy. Or like, inflating and deflating, basically, at like different parts of their body.

AUSTIN (as Your Friend): You've done a criminal act! You should come with us now, Ironclad.

AUSTIN: And the other two Riggers like, immediately slam into the— spin out and slam into the side of the golf cart for cover, basically. They're big robots, they're not necessarily... good... at hiding, but you know, cover is cover. And I think one of them radios back, and says,

AUSTIN (as Rigger Unit): Rigger Grape is down. Please send reinforcements.

[Art sighing]

AUSTIN: What do you all do?

JACK: Um, I think Fourteen just sort of hisses across...

JACK (as Fourteen): What are you doing here?

ART (as Grand Mag): I'm rescuing you!

JACK (as Fourteen): No, but what are you doing *here*?

ART (as Grand Mag): This is where you are!

AUSTIN (as Your Friend): We're on our way to meet up with—

AUSTIN: And, I mean, the Riggers are now immediately, now that you're talking, one of them whips out like a heavy metal cable, and tries to slam it at you, Carcanet. Fourteen. What do you do?

JACK: Alright... I think I'm going to try and... yeah, alright, I'm just going to straight up attack this... this...

AUSTIN: This Rigger?

JACK: This Rigger. I think I'm going to, just in a motion that I don't know that I have, reach to my back and pull a huge, sort of a greatsword from my back.

AUSTIN: Okay! Has that been there before? Or was it like, stored inside of you, or...?

JACK: It's um, I think it's one of those things where the sword... where the back of the armor was almost acting as a sheath for the sword, it was flush to the back of the armor—

AUSTIN: Mmm, okay.

JACK: So what I do is I reach for the handle— is that what they're called on a sword?

AUSTIN: Hilts.

JACK: The hilt?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: And it just slides out of the sheath on my back.

AUSTIN: Okay. Mark "blaster pistol" on your sheet.

JACK: Yeah, I feel like we got a blaster pistol here...

AUSTIN: Yeah, that's what we're gonna call that, anyway. Alright, give me a... sounds like a Scrap, to me.

JACK: Yeah, this is definitely a Scrap roll.

AUSTIN: Risky... Risky Standard.

JACK: Um, is this something that Grand can help me with?

AUSTIN: Totally. Y'all are together now, so...

JACK: Is this something that you want to help me with?

ART: Yeah! I wanna get us out of this particular situation.

AUSTIN: Tell me how you're helping. And if you want, you can add an Assist, by taking one Stress and giving Jack one die.

ART: ...All I have are really bad ideas. Um...

JACK: I mean, I have this golf cart.

ART: Well, that's better than what I had. Sure. Oh, but is Your Friend still in the golf cart?

AUSTIN: All three of them are now behind the golf cart. The golf cart is now kind of making up like, a...

JACK: Well, it's not cover if it drives away.

AUSTIN: Totally. It's like two tiles of cover, basically, in like an X-COM sense. You know?

ART: Yeah, I'm gonna try to just drive the golf cart away.

AUSTIN: You're just gonna hop in and drive it away. Okay.

JACK: Wait, without me? This is...

AUSTIN: Well, just move it, right?

ART: I can come back! Golf carts can turn!

AUSTIN: Slowly, but yeah! Okay, give that one die, I love it.

JACK: Alright. So, one bonus dice.

AUSTIN: Take the Stress, Grand.

JACK: Alright.

AUSTIN: So that's... 2d6? Hey! That's a six! And that gets you another Gambit!

JACK: Oh, yeah. No, I can't...

AUSTIN: Yeah. Everybody gets a Gambit.

JACK: Oh, yeah, I get Gambits. Everyone gets Gambits.

AUSTIN: Everybody gets a Gambit when the roll a six on a Risky, as long as they didn't spend a Gambit, which you didn't. Right? You just got—

JACK: Unless you're Grand.

AUSTIN: Right. Unless you're Grand, in which case you can, then, do that. Anyway. Yeah, awesome. So, you just clean this thing in, in, in twain?

JACK: I think the golf cart goes.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: And my blade follows the golf cart.

AUSTIN: Oh, great!

JACK: In that it's like, we get that shot of the golf cart moving across the camera right-to-left, and then the blade coming right-to-left. Just taking out one of the Riggers.

AUSTIN: Totally. So I think maybe you take both of them out. The two—

JACK: Oh, damn. Okay.

AUSTIN: —of them get cut in two—

JACK: In twain?

AUSTIN: In twain, and then your blade goes into Your Friend. And then it just stops there, because of like, the weird vinyl-ness of Your Friend, and it just like, holds in place there. And they like, grab the blade with their hand, and begin to like, cover it in that liquid light. And it's... you can like, your blade starts to short out, somehow?

JACK: Hm.

AUSTIN: And that might mean that they're adding some sort of tech to it? And they say,

AUSTIN (as Your Friend): Ironclad's Carcanet. Sorry, the other way around. Carcanet's Ironclad. You are a new citizen. You work for Our Prophet. Don't throw this away. Come with me. We'll make it all better.

AUSTIN: And begins to pull you closer to them. Again, the blade is in them. But that's not, it's not, they aren't Riggers.

JACK: Oh, god.

AUSTIN: Like, they aren't just made of metal. They're made of this other material that is just like, absorbing it. What do y'all do?

JACK: Oh, I... I have a— [laughing] I have a suggestion.

AUSTIN: Sure.

JACK (as Fourteen): Grand, how would you feel about trying to hit My Friend with your golf cart?

ART (as Grand Mag): I would love it. That was my idea, I was just gonna let you go first.

AUSTIN: Alright, what's the roll... I think that's a, I think that's a Helm.

ART: Alright.

AUSTIN: Fourteen, are you helping? At all?

JACK: Uh, what's my Stress at?

AUSTIN: You're at six.

JACK: I see... what's my maximum— ooh, eight.

AUSTIN: Nine. Nine, is your maximum, right?

JACK: Oh, I can get one, two, three, and then four.

AUSTIN: You get three more. No, it's three more, and then you're out.

JACK: Yeah. Oh, so seven, eight, nine, I see. I understand how numbers work.

AUSTIN: Uh-huh. Uh-huh!

JACK: Um, yeah. I'll, I'll take one.

AUSTIN: Okay, how do you help?

JACK: What I do is, I go towards My Friend.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: I lean into it.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: And when my head is close to... theirs? Do they have a head any more, or is it just this big cluster of LEDs?

AUSTIN: No, they do. 'Cause they are... well, they still have like a head-shaped thing. Because they are a vinyl toy version of these Rigger Units.

JACK: I think we get this like, I'm happy to narrate this now before we see the outcome of the result, because if it goes badly, it's just very also good and funny, as if it goes well. And I think

we get this real anime close-up of the... the gap in the visor, and we see these gem eyes through the visor.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: And Ironclad whispers to My Friend,

JACK (as Fourteen): When did I ever tell you I cared about your planet.

AUSTIN: Alright! Give me a Helm!

ART: So this is Risky Standard?

AUSTIN: Risky Standard.

ART: One bonus die...

AUSTIN: One bonus die.

ART: Bam!

JACK: [Excitedly] And they just, just the golf cart, ka-phoooooow!

AUSTIN: And they— yeah. Another six! And another Gambit earned. Yeah, the golf cart just... explodes on them? Just knocks them the fuck— oh, like, what's it do, what happens? Do they deflate all the way?

JACK: I— I, do you wanna narrate this, because you hit them, Art.

ART: Um, I want... I really want the golf cart to stay functional. It's also our escape.

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally.

JACK: [Laughing] I also want the golf cart...

ART: I think it's like, um, did you ever have one of those things you could punch, as a kid? Those like, little bop-bags, that you'd punch—

AUSTIN: Yeah! Yeah!

ART: —and it would come back up?

JACK: Oh, yeah, yeah yeah.

ART: What do you think would happen if you hit a big one of those with a golf cart? Don't you think it would kind of like, scoot over, and then like, deflate and fall down?

AUSTIN: Yes! Like, it's so bottom-heavy that it just like, slides over, and then it, yeah, and then it falls over and deflates. Perfect.

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And then your golf cart's still there. And Waltz is like,

AUSTIN (as Waltz): God damn, I don't even know why the two of you need me.

ART (as Grand Mag): I'm terrible at everything. This is an amazing stroke of luck, though.

JACK (as Fourteen): This has all just been lucky. This has been... lucky.

AUSTIN (as Waltz): Well it's good to see you, in any case. Now let's get outta here.

ART (as Grand Mag): [Laughing anxiously] I have a stop I need to make first.

JACK (as Fourteen): Yeah, me too.

AUSTIN (as Waltz): [Incredulously] What're you two talkin' about? What're you talkin' about? We have our ship, it's ready to go!

ART (as Grand Mag): Yeah, I gotta drop something off for someone. What do you have to do?

JACK (as Fourteen): I... I gotta see Our Prophet.

AUSTIN (as Waltz): *What're you two talkin' about?*

ART (as Grand Mag): Alright, mine's *way* safer.

JACK (as Fourteen): No, they know... I mean, I'm supposed to be working for her. If that helps. I'm not—

ART (as Grand Mag): Does it? I don't feel helped.

JACK (as Fourteen): Well, you don't have to come.

ART (as Grand Mag): Great. So—

AUSTIN (as Waltz): *Nnnnnno!* No. Uh-uh. We're gonna go back to the Bolero Smooth. And then ADri's gonna fly us outta here, and it's gonna go great. That's what's gonna happen. We came in for this rescue op. None of us have a second job to do.

JACK (as Fourteen): I do.

ART (as Grand Mag): I also do.

AUSTIN (as Waltz): [Sighing]

JACK (as Fourteen): So really, I feel, Waltz, that we're at a— look. Do you want to leave?

AUSTIN (as Waltz): Do you know why this worked? Do you know why the two of you just worked? This all came together great 'cause you worked together. Now, you're gonna go your separate ways, and everything's gonna fall apart.

ART (as Grand Mag): We could all go to all of them together.

JACK (as Fourteen): Wait, what's your thing?

ART (as Grand Mag): I just have to drop something somewhere. I'm— I—

AUSTIN (as Waltz): [Fuming] You took a deliv— You— Mmm.

ART (as Grand Mag): That's what I do! That's my job! I make deliveries!

JACK (as Fourteen): What were you gonna say, Waltz?

AUSTIN (as Waltz): You...

AUSTIN: Waltz's head opens up and you can see the grenade flare, for a second. It's like, like an exhale, like phhhhhw.

AUSTIN (as Waltz): [Acidly] No, it's fine. I don't wanna know. I'm gonna go back to my ship.

ART (as Grand Mag): You're gonna wait for us, right?

AUSTIN (as Waltz): Yeah. I'm gonna wait for you. In my ship. That's docked, and is under cover, and is ready to go. Because that was the mission. That's the mission you brought me on for, and that's the mission I agreed to.

JACK (as Fourteen): We've always had another mission, Waltz.

AUSTIN (as Waltz): What's your— no. You know what? We used to have another mission. Then everything went mad in this entire system, and then what I did was committed to one mission at a time, which is why I'm award winning.

JACK (as Fourteen): Fuckin' awa— Alright. Go back to your ship. Win an award.

AUSTIN (as Waltz): Meet me there. I'm givin' you an hour.

ART (as Grand Mag): That's plenty of time for my thing. How long is your thing?

JACK (as Fourteen): I don't know. Let's see how hot it gets.

ART (as Grand Mag): I just wish you had more... more of an idea here. I just wish that we had...

AUSTIN (as Waltz): You're droppin' a mystery package off! You shut your mouth! Arrgh!

JACK (as Fourteen): Right, I'm with Waltz on this one.

JACK: Are we just in this red room? Is this room still just red, with these...

AUSTIN: Yeah. And it's still going just, [alarm noises]. You'll note, I didn't erase the reinforcements clock, by the way. That's still there.

JACK: Oh, no.

ART (as Grand Mag): Alright, let's go. Let's just go. Let's do your thing first, we'll do my thing on the way out, we'll be fine. Let's go. Let's go, let's go, let's go.

JACK (as Fourteen): That's not a good idea.

ART (as Grand Mag): Why?

JACK (as Fourteen): It's gonna get bad.

ART (as Grand Mag): Okay, we'll do my thing first. Then we'll swing back and do yours.

JACK (as Fourteen): I don't feel— Can you tell me what we're doing?

ART (as Grand Mag): I just have a package—

AUSTIN (as Waltz): I'm leaving. I don't wanna know, because if they catch me, and try to brain-scan me, they're gonna find out whatever you're gonna say, and I'm not gonna know it.

JACK (as Fourteen): That's a good idea, get back to your ship, prizewinner.

AUSTIN (as Waltz): Bye.

AUSTIN: And he leaves.

AUSTIN (as Waltz): It's called the Boler— It's not called the Prizewinner, I'm the— hm.

AUSTIN: And he leaves.

ART (as Grand Mag): It's just a package, it's just, just a projector. It projects.

AUSTIN: Are y'all walking back to Aftville at this point, are you driving back?

ART: Yeah.

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: You like, leave Waltz at the entryway that y'all came in from, basically?

ART: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Hops off the golf cart... yeah, great.

ART (as Grand Mag): Stop using the alias Tender Sky, I think it's been burnt.

[Austin laughs]

AUSTIN (as Waltz): Yeah, yeah.

JACK (as Fourteen): What did you do to piss him off.

ART (as Grand Mag): What did I do? We just did the same thing, just now! We had a second job, we were doing great.

[01:30:00]

JACK (as Fourteen): You came here with him! Was he mad on the way in?

ART (as Grand Mag): No, I thought we were doing— I honestly thought, until we got caught, we were, we were really getting along great. I think... I think he likes me.

[Austin laughing hard]

AUSTIN: [Laughing] He does, yeah, mm-hm!

JACK (as Fourteen): Yeah... no. Um, it's a projector?

ART (as Grand Mag): Yeah, it's just one of those—

AUSTIN: Do you show it?

ART: Sure. Yeah.

AUSTIN: It's a limited-self projector. You know what this is.

JACK: I can recognize...?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: Okay... um, I'm just checking my character sheet really quick...

AUSTIN: Mm-hm.

JACK: Okay. Yeah.

JACK (as Fourteen): Who gave it to you?

AUSTIN: Yeah. Uh-huh.

ART (as Grand Mag): I mean... People pay me to deliver things for a certain amount of anonymity.

AUSTIN: That's not a lie.

JACK: Yeah, it's not an answer.

JACK (as Fourteen): Who gave it to you.

ART (as Grand Mag): I just don't feel comfortable betraying professional confidence.

JACK (as Fourteen): Are you with them, or are you with me, Grand?

ART (as Grand Mag): I'm with a lot of people.

JACK (as Fourteen): Yeah. Right now.

ART (as Grand Mag): Right now... I'm rescuing you. As a side bit, to my job, of just delivering this projector. [Pauses] You've never had a side hustle before?

JACK (as Fourteen): You're not telling me who gave it to you because you don't want me to— because I won't like who it is, right?

ART (as Grand Mag): I'm, I mean, but, like, bad guys need lawyers too, you've heard that? Guilty people need lawyers as much as the innocent? You've heard that?

JACK (as Fourteen): Yeah, you're not a lawyer.

ART (as Grand Mag): But people need the mail, too. I'm just the mail.

JACK (as Fourteen): Did Cascara give it to you.

ART (as Grand Mag): No.

JACK (as Fourteen): Did Sho give it to you.

ART (as Grand Mag): I mean, eventually, if you just name everyone, you'll eventually get the person who gave it to me, I don't— I promise, this is not gonna hurt you or anyone that we care about.

JACK (as Fourteen): I care about a lot of people.

AUSTIN: You can't make— wai-wait-wait. We need to decide if that's a lie or not.

JACK: Ooh. It is a lie!

AUSTIN: We don't— he doesn't know that.

[Jack exhales and laughs]

AUSTIN: Like, he doesn't know... I don't know how your ability works. Fourteen Fifteen has an ability called "Player," that says, "you always know when someone is lying to you." I think that's—

ART: I don't know— / think I'm telling the truth!

AUSTIN: Do you?

ART: I deliberately... concealed information from myself.

JACK: You know who Fourteen cares about, right?

ART: But this is just a projector! This isn't gonna hurt anyone!

AUSTIN: [Emphatically] Okay! I think Grand is smarter than that.

[Jack laughing]

ART: No one's ever been hurt by a projector!

JACK: Who cares who gave you the projector!

AUSTIN: Even—

ART: I'm not gonna hit anyone with it!

AUSTIN: At the— I think this is as opened, I think then, Fourteen, you know that that is— you know that Grand believes that no one is gonna hit anyone with this projector.

JACK: Mm-hm. Alright. Okay.

AUSTIN: But I think skepticism is... is perfectly fine, here.

ART: I guarantee no one's gonna get hit with this projector! Guarantee!

JACK (as Fourteen): Who are you giving it to.

ART (as Grand Mag): I'm not giving it to anyone. I'm just leaving it somewhere.

JACK (as Fourteen): Where are you leaving it?

ART: I don't—

AUSTIN: Aftville Resource Stockpile Eight.

ART: Yeah.

JACK (as Fourteen): You're just leaving it, in a place?

ART (as Grand Mag): Don't act like you've never left things in places!

JACK (as Fourteen): Yeah, whenever I have, I've told you why we were doing it.

ART (as Grand Mag): I'm doing it... for money!

AUSTIN: [Snorts] So that's true!

JACK: [Laughs] Ah, I think Fourteen just laughs.

AUSTIN: That's *mostly* true! That's mostly true. You're doing it for a bigger reason than money, right?

ART: Well, I mean, right now, what I'm trying to do is get enough money to not do this anymore, without hurting any of the people I've been working with. I'm hoping that this is just gonna— this is paying really well, it's a relatively easy job, no one's gonna get hurt...

JACK: Okay. Aftville Stockpile. Let's go.

ART: Alright.

JACK: I don't know where the hell it is. And I've been here for like—

AUSTIN: Ah, you, you have ways.

ART: It's aft.

AUSTIN: Yeah, it is aft. It is. It is. I mean, it's near your home. It's actually pretty close to your home. So y'all go back down this road, and into Aftville, and, you know, it's, again, beautiful, green lawns... And you eventually find a warehouse that says Resource Stockpile Six, or whatever, on it. Eight, eight is what I said. What do you do? Do you ring the bell? Do you just leave it on the doorstep?

ART: I'll ring the bell!

AUSTIN: Okay!

ART: It's just delivery.

AUSTIN: It is just a delivery. Fourteen, where are you?

JACK: Standing directly behind Grand.

AUSTIN: The door opens, and you see Kentucky's Corona. And he goes,

AUSTIN (as Kentucky's Corona): Where have you been, it's late.

AUSTIN: And takes the projector from you.

ART (as Grand Mag): Sorry, it's a fuckin' maze in here.

AUSTIN (as Corona): You're telling me. Anyway. Good working with you, Grand. Now remember. Andora, port twenty-two.

ART (as Grand Mag): You got it.

AUSTIN: And the liquid door closes. And— but not before you hear the sound of talons on the ground.

ART (as Grand Mag): Alright, let's go do your thing!

JACK: I think you just turn around, and Fourteen just doesn't move. Just standing behind you.

ART (as Grand Mag): What's the matter.

JACK (as Fourteen): Who was that.

ART (as Grand Mag): I dunno. They didn't even sign for it.

AUSTIN: Lie.

ART: Wait— do—

AUSTIN: Mm... You met that person before.

ART: But do I remember their name?

AUSTIN: You did not say "I don't remember their name." You said you didn't know them.

ART: Mm, alright. Fair enough.

JACK (as Fourteen): That's a lie.

ART (as Grand Mag): Look. I deal with a lotta clients, I don't remember everyone by name.

JACK (as Fourteen): I remember them.

ART (as Grand Mag): Okay, who was that?

JACK (as Fourteen): That's Kentucky's Corona. He's a real piece of shit.

ART (as Grand Mag): Well, pieces of shit need packages delivered!

JACK (as Fourteen): Yeah, pieces of shit who work for the Concrete Town Particulars, and the Concrete Town Particulars work with fucking Advent.

ART (as Grand Mag): I don't think this projector is part of some giant conspiracy!

JACK (as Fourteen): This package—

AUSTIN: Do you really— Do you really not?

[Jack chuckling]

ART: Yeah, I think Grand has chosen to believe that.

AUSTIN: [Laughing] Okay.

JACK (as Fourteen): Was the package given to you by Advent?

ART (as Grand Mag): No!

AUSTIN: *Lie!*

ART: No, that's true! It was given to me by the... it was...

JACK (as Fourteen): Fuckin' fine. Was the package given to you by Kitcha—

AUSTIN: Yes— Wai-wai-wai-wait, time out. It was given to you by Kitcha Kanna, who runs Advent in the system.

JACK: [Laughing] He's the Advent boss!

ART: But! In a Concrete Town Particular... meeting establishment!

AUSTIN: [Laughing] Well the Concrete Town Particulars are part of Advent.

ART: So?

AUSTIN: O-kay. I'm just saying, I just need to trigger when Fourteen knows you're lying, because of a move that they have.

ART: But like—

AUSTIN: You're allowed to lie! But they have a move, that is you *always* know when someone is lying to you.

ART: But like, it's like saying, did the government give that to you, if like...

JACK: No! It's like, if the President of the United States gives you something, and I ask you "did the Americans give you this," and you say "No."

[Austin laughing]

ART: Well, no! Isn't it more like if the Governor gave it to you?

[Pause]

AUSTIN: No!

JACK: He's an American!

AUSTIN: No.

ART: Like if the Governor of California gave me something, I wouldn't say "the Americans" gave it—

JACK: He's an American!

[*The Notion* begins playing]

JACK: [Laughing, incredulous] If you were talking to someone from another organization you would!

[Pause]

ART: I dunno. I feel like—

AUSTIN: This is a lie.

JACK: I think you have a—

AUSTIN: This is a lie. Let's be honest, this is a lie.

JACK: You have a vested interest in... in getting away with this, Art.

ART: I just feel like it's a regional, it's a regional thing.

AUSTIN: It's not! He's the leader of Advent in this sector.

JACK (as Fourteen): Alright, fine. Go and wait in the golf cart.

ART (as Grand Mag): Alright, but we're running out of time... I assume. I don't know.

JACK: I'm gonna ring the doorbell again.

AUSTIN: Bzz-onk. Bzz-bzz-bzzt.

AUSTIN (as Corona): Wha— One second.

AUSTIN: And Kentucky's Corona opens the door again.

AUSTIN (as Corona): Who— [sighs] Grand, you left your... guard.

JACK: Ah, I'm gonna try and swing at him!

AUSTIN: Okay!

[*The Notion* continues playing to end]