

Twilight Mirage 24: godspeed, glory Pt. 3

Transcriber: Vesta

AUSTIN: An excerpt from the journal of Keen Forester Gloaming, agent of the Rapid Evening, Intercessor of the Twilight Mirage.

AUSTIN (as Keen): I watched the colors spring into view, Gray. Pink and blue and yellow and red. Waves of light flickered through the windshield, covering my hands, my face. It has been a week since I crossed the border, but my clock says it's been two years. Time is twisted here, I can feel it. I can feel the past.

[MUSIC - "The Twilight Mirage" starts]

AUSTIN (as Keen): [continued] I can smell the cup of coffee in my hands, I can see you running through the backyard during a sunshower, the damn dog barking up a storm, you laughing... it was a long time ago, Gray. And it was yesterday, too.

AUSTIN (as Keen): [continued] I wonder if you two know that you set the world on fire. Rapid Evening agents abandoning post by the dozens. Dozens ain't much in the face of hundreds, but it's more than ever before. And because you did not hit that button, the future of the Mirage is at risk of splintering. The New Earth Hegemony, Volition, and after analyzing every last speck of that data you've sent back, Crystal Palace has confirmed the most dire news of all for the Fleet. The divine Empyrean might fly through the Mirage, but it is a con. It is a machine with no soul. It has been dead for months. This is the world you and Demani have chosen to save.

AUSTIN (as Keen): [continued] Well, you may not like it, but I am determined to help. I stood in front of Crystal Palace, I spoke to it directly, and I have been assured that we remain aligned with guaranteed events. I was shown the evidence and I was shown the path, and my place in it. I have been commissioned as Chief Intercessor for the Twilight Mirage. In that way, you have what you always wanted: someone to do more than sit back and watch. I will observe, yes, but my agents and I are no strangers to action. We will be advocates for the Mirage in the way that the hammer is an advocate for the unsecured nail. We will help it find its place.

[music ends]

AUSTIN: Fourteen. I think we just jump-cut to Fourteen Fifteen on the deck of this spaceship? Of The World Without End?

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Just- how do you do this? What's this look like? What does fishing look like here?

JACK: So. I think it's like- you know those machines that make cotton candy?

AUSTIN: Uh huh. Yeah totally.

JACK: And and- you know, the cotton candy- the machine does a lot of the work.

AUSTIN: Oh yeah.

JACK: But at the same time, if there isn't someone that's operating the cotton candy machine there's no cotton candy for anybody.

AUSTIN: Uh huh. You gotta twirl the stick inside the cotton candy machine.

JACK: You gotta twirl the stick. So I think what happens is this. I think there are rails on the outside of this huge long thing, that the Fisherman and I are clipped onto.

AUSTIN: Ooh, I love it.

JACK: And we can- we can move pretty freely because like, you know, it's zero-G. And we're at no risk of like drifting off. And The World Without End is kind of slowly unfurling this gossamer stuff. It- it's kind of- it's kind of pouring very slowly like, like a cloudy liquid into a clear liquid?

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: Out of these big ports on the side. And you know, halfway like, someone making cotton candy, and halfway like, someone, like trimming a rose onto a frame, rather than just letting it grow?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JACK: The Fisherman and I are like- like teasing this gossamer out of this thing? Encouraging it out and kind of like, laying it flat onto supports and beams and joists and things. Joists? Joists.

AUSTIN [overlapping with Jack]: Is that a thing?

JACK: Joist. It's like a- like a metal bar, like a-

AUSTIN: Okay, yeah. A length or timbre or steel supporting the structure of building, typically arranged in parallel series to support a floor or ceiling. Sure.

JACK: Not joust, where we all go on horses and try and kill each other [Austin, Ali and Janine laugh]. [Jack chuckles] But yeah, no, and I think it's like, it's very slow. But I think it's slow largely because we're in zero-G and like you know, you can move at full speed but it's gonna- it's gonna get really, really like difficulty really quickly. I saw a video the other day of training astronauts in zero-G, and it suddenly made it clear why you always see astronauts moving very slowly [Austin chuckles] because these people are moving at the speed humans move to do things-

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

JACK: And they were just losing control constantly?

AUSTIN [overlapping with Jack]: Like all the time. Yeah, of course.

JACK: And so I think that the Fisherman and I are like working very slowly. And obviously he's working much more carefully than I am.

AUSTIN: Right.

JACK: But I think I'm doing okay.

AUSTIN: Yeah? You think this is a roll, or do you think this is just like-

JACK: I'll roll if you want me to roll.

AUSTIN: Yeah I think- Go ahead-

JACK [overlapping with Austin]: Yeah, let's roll.

AUSTIN: Let's do a risk. I think this is a risk.

JACK: Okay.

AUSTIN: Unless there's something else here, but I think risk is the thing. I think risk is the only thing that- there is not a fishing maneuver, unfortunately. As far as I've seen. No. Well I guess that- no it's, it's. Yeah. It's risk. How do you feel about all this?

JACK: Well, I do seem to be spiked peaceful.

AUSTIN: Oh, well. If you're spiked peaceful, then. Is it peaceful? [Ali chuckles] Or are you trying to break out of peaceful?

JACK: No, I think it's absolutely peaceful.

AUSTIN: Okay.

JACK: And it is absolutely peaceful because I think as I'm doing this- Let's roll and let's see what happens.

AUSTIN: Yeah, two d6 plus one.

JACK: So do I just tick this box next to spiked state?

AUSTIN: Which one? Ya... yeah. Uh huh. The one that's like the little picture with the dice, yup?

JACK: Mhm. Other modifiers? Zero.

AUSTIN: Zero. Yeah.

AUSTIN: That's a seven. So. What's the risk- seven and nine is something- something happens. There will be a cost, complication or choice introduced. I think you have a choice, and the choice is, you can- the problem with you, Fourteen Fifteen, is you don't have many things that I can take from you. [Jack chuckles] You have a gun that you don't even have anymore. You have- maybe the thing that, maybe the thing that- I think this is- I think the complication is just that you get- you get mortally injured doing this. You manage to do it, but something cuts you. Maybe it's one of the fish. Maybe the fish come in, and like as you're- as they're coming in, the Fisherman is like-

AUSTIN (as the Fisherman): Don't touch 'em!

AUSTIN: And like, one of the fins just like, cuts open your suit. And just like.

JACK: Hm.

AUSTIN: Hard gash across your skin. Green blood floats up into the air. He grabs the- he pulls all the levers to bring in the- the gossamer and nets to like, kind of store all the fish, and like runs over to you, and immediately like, hand over your chest, to stop the blood from coming out. And then like grabs you over his shoulder, and you can feel his bones creaking as he does this, and like, kicks the door, like kicks the side of the door to open it up quickly. Like the airlock door. It closes - he runs you in, and like, you're bleeding to death on this, on this table, and he's gonna fix you up. But you're now in this like, one- he has faith on you.

JACK: Mm.

AUSTIN: For sure. But two, you're also just like, you're dying, you're not going to die. He's going to save you. But like, this is a very intimate moment to have with a stranger, right?

JACK: Mm.

AUSTIN: And also you kinda fucked up. You got his fish but you do not expect to be cut across the chest on your way into a very intense mission.

JACK: No.

AUSTIN: I think he spends the last, the like the next, like two hours, stitching you up. And, and like keeping you from bleeding out. And I think it hurts like a lot. I think their fins are really sharp and it goes deep, and like, it maybe cut an important organ, and he has like a robot there to help him do, to do surgery? He's not a surgeon, but he's like, he's clearly had some ex- you know, he's a fisherman. He's had to set some bones and he's had to you know, stitch up some stuff, and he lets the robot do the parts of like, fixing important like, arteries or whatever? But he's able to hand shut the surface wound to do this stitches.

JACK: Mm.

AUSTIN: And you missed dinner because of it. It's very [unintelligible]. Then he's like, finally I think he like finishes, and he's like, you guys are in a, y'all are in like a- not a lounge but like- maybe it's like a lounge, but there's a one part of this ship that's just an observation deck, that's one of those long, wraparound couches?

JACK: Mhm. There's a like a pool table?

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah, exactly. And there is music playing. Very like, like jazz. Not light jazz, but Cool jazz. Capital C. And you're able to breathe but you're laying back on some old pillows, you know?

JACK: Mm.

AUSTIN (as the Fisherman): Shouldn't have taken an amateur. I always forget that they can fish but they can't- it's one thing to fish, it's another thing to fish and live.

JACK (as Fourteen): Well, you know the- same thing happened last time.

AUSTIN (as the Fisherman): Last time you went fishing?

JACK (as Fourteen): Yeah.

AUSTIN (as the Fisherman): What happened?

JACK (as Fourteen): [breathes] Well it was like this but, you know, you weren't there.

AUSTIN (as the Fisherman): So you bled out on the- on the deck?

JACK (as Fourteen): Ha. Well, I it was- it was probably a do-over, that one. You know? It had only been a couple of days. So... that one wasn't too bad.

AUSTIN (as the Fisherman): So you like have, do you have these on deck? Or do you build them?

JACK (as Fourteen): [breathes] They are built.

AUSTIN (as the Fisherman): You design em?

JACK (as Fourteen): No.

AUSTIN (as the Fisherman): Your choices?

JACK (as Fourteen): Mm... you get one. You get one choice, that's the- you know. You pick one.

AUSTIN (as the Fisherman): Uh huh.

JACK (as Fourteen): And you- for a while, I guess I must've thought. And maybe I knew. I guess I thought like, you know, you pick the one, and then you keep being that one. You know? It's like- like picking a character. You know? You pick the cool one and then you're them. But it doesn't work like that. You pick one. Or maybe I screwed up somewhere. Maybe I screwed up somewhere down the line. Maybe at the beginning I wrote a big list, I wrote a big long list of who all the people we're going to be.

AUSTIN (as the Fisherman): You don't remember.

JACK (as Fourteen): No.

AUSTIN (as the Fisherman): I don't know you. That well. I'm a good judge. I think you made two big mistakes. First is, you let somebody else build bodies for you. Never do that. The second is, you didn't leave notes.

JACK (as Fourteen): [chuckles]

AUSTIN (as the Fisherman): I'm serious.

AUSTIN: And he like, he like reaches into his jacket- he owns like a, long jacket. Pulls out this notebook, and he's like-

AUSTIN (as the Fisherman): This is one of seven hundred notebooks I have. I keep notes every day, it's a captain's log, it has everything I did in it. It has the name of everybody I talked to in it. Every favour I've done, every favour done for me. It has the amount of every haul we bring in, it has every piece of information that I need. And that I might ever need, even if I bump my head and forget what happened today. And let me tell you, I started taking this when I was a much younger man and thank god for that. Cause otherwise. I read through these books, and you would be surprised. I'm surprised by the stuff I've written down.

JACK (as Fourteen): I kept notes like, twice? Like a long time ago.

AUSTIN (as the Fisherman): Mm.

JACK (as Fourteen): I had like, I guess I had one, one book? And then when it you know, when the switch happened, I look back through it and like, a different person had written it.

AUSTIN (as the Fisherman): You trust 'em?

JACK (as Fourteen): They're a different person.

AUSTIN (as the Fisherman): That ai- So? You trust 'em? Don't go through life thinking you could only trust yourself. Cause that's not true. Trust me.

JACK (as Fourteen): [chuckles] Maybe I should start keeping 'em. I- I don't know, like,

AUSTIN (as the Fisherman): It's fun-

JACK (as Fourteen): You-

AUSTIN (as the Fisherman) [overlapping with Austin]: That's the reason I do it. Because it's fun. It's fun to sit down with a piece of paper and a pen. Real paper, real pen if you can. And say like, today was sunny out. I met a nice lady at the, at the park. She had two dogs. And her name was Marissa. I gave her a light for her cigarette- like that's. I would not remember Marissa otherwise. But I wrote it down, and now there's Marissa. And you know I don't remember what Marissa looks like, but, I kind of remember the day. I think I went to the gym after that.

JACK (as Fourteen): I guess- I might be speaking out of turn here. And- and if you have some kind of a solution or- or, wisdom here that can help me out I'm willing to hear it. But like, when you wrote those books, your seven hundred- when you wrote book two hundred, you were a younger man, and you were a different person, presumably?

AUSTIN (as the Fisherman): Presumably.

JACK (as Fourteen): [overlapping with Austin]: By the time I'm two hundred books in, I'll be a different person. You know, if I make it to two hundred. I'll be *different*. Not like different.

AUSTIN (as the Fisherman): I can't tell if you're making too much out of this or not enough. If you are that different at book two hundred. Then you're not just changing bodies. And, if you're that different at two hundred books, all the more reason to have 'em. They get more valuable, not less. Every bit of knowledge I have about the world I took from somebody else. Half of 'em didn't even know they were giving it to me. If you have the possibility of stepping into the shoes of other people for a day, for a week, between deaths. That is a resource that no one else has. It's an insult that you don't take notes. You would be so much better at everything you do. What do you think dying is like?

JACK (as Fourteen): [breathes]

AUSTIN (as the Fisherman): Really dying, not this thing you do.

JACK (as Fourteen): Well, whenever it happens, whenever I make the switch, for a long time- for a long time, there was nothing in between bodies. It was like, it wasn't even like I was asleep. It's just you know, it's like, like time is being cut. And the gap is being cut out on the two ends of being put together, you know? It's one and then I wake up, and I really need to- I'm really curious about if you have any suggestions about building bodies because right now I have no idea what to do about that whole thing. But I, I- I would fall asleep and I would wake up, and just last time it- it happened differently? I- I saw it happen. And I guess there's gonna be a time when the thing happens and that's it. The- the other end, the other end does not come. There is just- and that's the end of that. Which I guess is how normal people die, I guess. That's. You know, when I'm ready for that, cause that's something that I've thought about since, I guess since I started this.

AUSTIN (as the Fisherman): You're normal people too. We all are. And it's true. There's no waking back up. But the world does not have an end. Not as far as I can see. It just keeps going. Whatever you touched, whatever direction you shoved it in, it keeps going. Whoever you talk to, whoever's cigarette you lit, they keep moving. And that's why you take. Notes.

JACK (as Fourteen): [breathes] I'm gonna pick up a book on the By-and-By.

AUSTIN (as the Fisherman): You should.

JACK (as Fourteen): Get an actual pen.

AUSTIN (as the Fisherman): That's a luxury. I'm not gonna lie. You wanna know where the fourth credit was gonna go?

JACK (as Fourteen): [chuckles] You see you should just- you should just type, it's- it's- you lose the tactility but it's-

AUSTIN: He grins.

AUSTIN (as the Fisherman): I don't trust machines.

AUSTIN: He stands up. Alright. I- He stands up, the thing goes like 'Sleep time! Sleep time! [Jack chuckles] Sleep time!'

AUSTIN (as the Fisherman): One more jump. We'll be at your place. It's been- it's been good. This is- this has been good.

JACK (as Fourteen): Yeah.

AUSTIN: He reaches out to shake your hand.

JACK: Yeah I'm gonna shake his hand.

AUSTIN: He just like, holds it there for a second. And then lets go.

[Transitional music plays]

AUSTIN: [continued] And then, heads up the hall, and walks down the hall with like a very certain cadence.

[Transitional music ends]

AUSTIN: Okay. Gig and Grand Mag. You are being led by Armstrong through this facility, and he takes you to a big open roof hangar which is where the Doyenne, Undela Apogica is speaking to Alekhine, Even and Echo, from inside of the nearly completed body of Independence, which you made, Grand. And she says.

AUSTIN (as the Doyenne): For my entire life, I pursued the perfection of form.

[MUSIC - "The Doyenne Describes The Canvas" starts]

AUSTIN (as the Doyenne): [continued] I captured light, turned block into figure, bent the shape of noise until it was song. With each new creation, I thought that I was reflecting

some deeper truth. I put those panes of Glass above Sculpture City not only to capture the energy of the sun, not only to showcase the brilliance of our art, but because I thought: 'Here, this is the best monument I can make to color itself.' I thought that what great artists, what great minds, did was to reach past the shadows of the material world and to the light of the real. The eternal. The universal. To symmetry, and composition, and rhythm, and harmony. These things that exist beyond the minds of humans. And these great people, I thought they dragged the universal, the real, back to the material world, to grace us all with beauty and clarity.

AUSTIN (as the Doyenne): [continued] And then, after I deposed the tyrant king, I learned everything he had kept from us. About our history, about these, Divines of yours. They were impressive, truly, they opened my eyes and lifted my ambition. Why stop at a monument to color, or at trying to capture movement, when I could aim higher? Memorious, Anticipation, Grace, Liberty, Composure, Determination, Valor. Independence. There are so many things to aspire to, so many things to create.

AUSTIN (as the Doyenne): [continued] And I was not alone, was I? These so-called Independents, scurrying around Quire, looking for old parts of a long-dead machine. They thought they kidnapped me. They only brought me closer to what I was looking for. Why else would I have you make this beautiful machine? And while the Independents waste their time looking to the past, I look to the future. They were not the only ones on the hunt for this machine. In fact, as these men ineptly search Quire for Independence's mind, the creatures of the fifth moon have found it already.

AUSTIN (as the Doyenne): [continued] Have you heard their names? Have you met them? The Iconoclasts? I have parleyed with them, with their searchers. I have spoken to those who have no interest in words, and they have told me the truth.

AUSTIN: The light catches the cockpit here, and through the glass you can see that she has on this sort of metallic, wire-frame mask covering her face. And she lifts the hand of the mech a little bit and everything in the room begins to shake, in the same way that when she lifted her arm back in Old Church, and lifted all of the glass from the ground into the sky.

AUSTIN (as the Doyenne): The Iconoclasts have shown me my error. Beauty is not a thing that a person can simply retrieve from the realm of the ideal and use for their own ends. Your Divines do not reflect truth. They corrupt it. So long as you build them with you at the center, you hold them back. So long as we design them, so long as we are even considered in their design, we hold them back. For all of their beauty, for all of their impossibility, for all of their power, we could only have ever made them look like us.

AUSTIN (as the Doyenne): [continued] The Iconoclasts, their god Volition, they seek something greater. To rewrite reality itself, to let in true beauty. And once I grant it this

machine, Independence, it will lead us into a beautiful age, more perfect than Glass itself. What would otherwise be an apoplectic flailing will be a focused, passionate and singular work of art.

AUSTIN (as the Doyenne): [continued] I will not run from them as others have. I will run to them. I'm going to help them make something great, even better. And I extend to you this offer: come with me. Step into a new age of beauty. Or stay behind and witness the future be painted new from your small place on the canvas."

[music ends]

ANDREW: Can I like see her through the glass cockpit?

AUSTIN: Grand?

ART: No.

AUSTIN: What's he see? Which face?

ART: I think it's hard to see a specific face.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ART: I think it's, I think it's probably an amalgamation.

AUSTIN: Mm.

ART: I mean I guess if you like, really wanted to see one face- you could- you know like a like a, like a lenticular. Or like you could-

AUSTIN: Right. Yeah yea yea. You held completely still or like matched it as it moved.

ART: Right, yeah.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ART: Yes, especially when it's motion it's probably completely impossible. Unless you're-

AUSTIN: Right, right.

ANDREW: Here's a scene we probably should've had on the boat: Grand, where the hell do I shoot this thing?

AUSTIN: Should've had that scene.

ART: I mean- There's not a- there's not a weak poi- I mean, just try to- just try to hit some shit. Not a limb. Definitely try to get it on the trunk. [Andrew chuckles]

AUSTIN: Not a limb. Good.

ANDREW: I mean I guess when I first saw this thing take off how much has it been modified, from the first time that I saw Alekhine fly away in this thing?

AUSTIN: The difference is that it has the heart of Independence in it now? And like, there is a- you see the- I think like the circulatory stuff that they took from Port Independence is in it now. And so it's like, there is a glow to it now? That runs through its body as it moves. Like there's a second shimmer that ma- that lights the room up? It does that thing where it's like, it's as if there was a flickering pool of water in here. The whole room gets covered as it moves with these like, with this glow of light all around it. Like it's not like bright and glowing, it's like- you know what I mean? The kind of like- this happens in Blade Runner when they go into Tyrell's office? Which is like, for some reason there's flickering water-light on the walls? This does that. So that's- that's like- but it's immaterial. It's not like it has a rocket launcher on it, no. But it- like I think Grand would know that it doesn't move according to programming in the way it used to. It's just moving now. Do you know what I mean?

ANDREW: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Like it's not running algorithms. It's not- it's not working according to some design. It's living at this point. It needs the Doyenne, it needs a pilot to move still. It doesn't have its own mind. But it- it is alive, in a way that it was not before. I think she asks directly, Grand. She says like:

AUSTIN (as the Doyenne): You are one of the greatest artists I've known. I'm going to bring a palate for people like us into being. We will not be held back by tools anymore. Our imaginations will not be limited. The galaxy, the universe, will see the limits of our imagination transcended.

ART (as Grand): It's not the project you told me I was working on.

AUSTIN (as the Doyenne): I hardly knew what it was. I see now. I thought I was making a monument to mankind. In some ways I was. This is the best we can be. You put that into Glass. I see now. The best is not enough. We have to go further.

ART (as Grand): [sighs]

ANDREW: Keith reminded me that I had that message.

AUSTIN: Sure.

ANDREW: To give to the Doyenne.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ANDREW: It's just- is it just like a little holograph?

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally. How do you like turn it on? Or like- what do you- do you just like, slowly pull it out?

ANDREW: I think that I like- I turn it on, and then I just kind of slide it across the floor towards her.

AUSTIN: So what pops up is a picture of Janey and the Doyenne when they were younger. It's like a- it's a light image, as drawn by- oh! No one turned off the thing. Nothing happens.

ANDREW: Oh, man.

AUSTIN: You slide this thing across the ground, and it flickers for a few seconds and we get like- we get an image of Janey and the Doyenne like dancing together. And then it turns off. Cause no one snuck in and turned off the thing. [Andrew chuckles]

KEITH [overlapping with Keith]: I forgot that it was mechanical.

AUSTIN [overlapping with Keith]: And then she just steps on it. Like it doesn't have the time it would need to do the Bloodborne boss fight thing of distracting her.

ANDREW: Yeah, sure, no. Okay. So, I'm either shooting this thing in- where I thought- where I saw the cockpit was?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ANDREW: Or, I guess, trying to figure out where this heart has been implanted. So E- I think Even just says like,

ANDREW (as Even): Grand Magnificent, where do I point this thing.

AUSTIN (as Alekhine): If you move you'll be shot.

AUSTIN: Says Alekhine, gesturing towards the- gesturing just all around. He like raises his hands, like in a shrug. Which is like-

ART (as Grand): The- the center?

[Andrew chuckles]

ART (as Grand): I don't know I've never- I've never destroyed my own work before. It-it's- [Andrew's chuckling continues]

AUSTIN: Armstrong says-

AUSTIN (as Armstrong): This is foolish.

AUSTIN: And just like, walks to the wall and pulls a switch to begin opening the hatch above.

ANDREW: Oh boy. Alright, fine, yeah. I shoot- I shoot for the cockpit.

AUSTIN: Give me a neutralise. How do you feel?

ANDREW: Oh, I'm scared.

AUSTIN: Oh definitely.

ANDREW: Like as I'm holding this gun, probably like, every like suture of wound and stuff is like.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ANDREW: Just screaming.

AUSTIN: Mhm. That's a- take a- so it's plus one, so two d6 plus one.

ANDREW: Yup.

AUSTIN: That's an eight. What are your two things?

ANDREW: God. [Andrew laughs] Sylvia¹ in the chat just types 'SUFFER LITTLE HARM' in all caps.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

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

ANDREW: I mean yeah, I guess suffer little harm. And. Mm... I mean I guess inflict harm?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ANDREW: If- I mean I'm trying to break this thing, so yeah.

AUSTIN: Yep. Yep. So you pull the trigger and like, it- it raises its hand in defense, and it just- shatters its whole left hand. It's like, the glass completely- alright so you raise his gun, first of all, right? And like, you pull back the trigger, and as you're pulling it back the whole gun starts to shake. And then it's like [sucking in sound, followed by a 'pchoooo'] kind of blows up, like shoots out this huge like, this huge puff of smoke, and this round fires forward. And it like, super quickly pulls up its hand in self defense, which then gets just- just broken into a billion pieces. That fly against the back of the- the hangar wall and like, breach the side of the wall. Like literally-

KEITH [overlapping with Austin]: Does it-

AUSTIN: Break the wall.

KEITH: Does it go through the hand or just stops?

AUSTIN: No it stops at the hand. It stops at the hand, it blows up the hand. And then the guns all come online and begins firing and everyone dives for cover. So now everyone is behind cover. The gun has one more shot. It is- it like, the rockets in its- or the- it's not even rockets right, we talked about this like, it has like some weird sort of hover capability, right? Like it does like, magnetically inverted whatever? Begins to lift off of the ground. And at that point like, I think she like adds to the- to the effect of the gun fire? And just like, lays down a blast of, like a beam? From her other hand. That just like, sets a white fire throughout the hangar. And everyone is now like, running for cover, basically. Including- I mean like, Alekhine and Armstrong are. And the middle of the area is just like, the only way you all didn't get shot was cause you got behind desks and like, big tyres and stuff like that. What do you all doing?

ANDREW: I'm reloading this gun. [chuckles]

AUSTIN: Alright. So you spend that- you basically spend this second to reload? If you remember, you have a modified revolver actually, right? You can just take another shot. But this is your last shot.

ANDREW: Ohh. God.

AUSTIN [overlapping with Austin]: And also like, you will take harm if you stand up to shoot.

ANDREW: Would it negate- so I have one armour already from what I wear?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ANDREW: And I haven't had a chance to use this yes, because we haven't really fought much

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ANDREW: But I have my Twilight Mirage shield that I can like, summon.

AUSTIN: Mhm. I think that'll- that will stop armour, totally. Or stop, damage, right? So what's that- how- I mean roll- let's see what your roll is, right? Your nebulous shield or whatever?

ANDREW: I don't know if we- put a roll on it?

KEITH: Does that work here?

ANDREW: It was- the way that we did [unintelligible]-

AUSTIN: Yeah cause it's his biorganic shit, not his-

ANDREW: Yeah.

KEITH [overlapping with others]: Ohhh.

AUSTIN [overlapping with Keith]: This isn't a piece of, yeah.

ANDREW: It's- it's like the stuff that Even like shoots to, you know, jump start the nodes?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ANDREW: It's basically that but it hardens into like a point shield. We didn't do a roll on it. We just did like a charge thing.

AUSTIN: Yeah I think it has- it has charges, basically.

ANDREW: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally.

ANDREW: So, I'll use a charge of that, and I'll be two armour.

AUSTIN: Yep.

ANDREW: Okay. So, are there engines on this thing besides the hover shit?

AUSTIN: No, like it is a pre- it is like- it in my- in my mind it sort of looks like, what's the super Sentinel from Days of Future Past?

ANDREW: Oh, uh.

AUSTIN: How does Art not know this immediately? Art, you're the one- Is it-

ANDREW [overlapping with Austin]: Is it the manga Sentinel?

ART [overlapping with others]: The movie?

AUSTIN: It's the manga- Is it Nimrod?

ART: Nimrod?

AUSTIN: Yeah I think it's Nimrod.

ANDREW: Okay.

AUSTIN: Like the white glass like, I guess like it's not glass, but it's like white metal, very angular in shape. It's sort of like that, in that like it's just this weird, powerful, dense machine. It is not- it doesn't have like, oh and this is where its guns are, Even, you know? Like this is where its booster packs are.

ANDREW: Okay. Yeah. So I- I think that this scene is that like, Even almost like, flies out of cover and is almost like popping in, changing around, cause like weird little point shields. And basically like flies under to get into position to shoot the jets and pulls the trigger on the hover jets.

AUSTIN: Alright. Give me the- give me a- a fire. A gun. A gu-neutralize. [Andrew chuckles] Two d6 plus scared again? One?

SYLVIA: Give me a gun.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ANDREW: I'm debating scared or powerful.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ANDREW: Powerful only the sense that like, I just fucking tore this thing's hand off.

AUSTIN: Right.

ANDREW: And the adrenaline is going now.

AUSTIN: Yup.

ANDREW: Okay. Another eight.

AUSTIN: Another eight. So, what do you do?

ANDREW: Hmm. I- I guess same thing. Deal harm and suffer little harm.

AUSTIN: You're sure.

ANDREW: Oh boy.

KEITH: Does the shield thing not help or you could do something else-

AUSTIN [overlapping with Keith]: The shield thing helps- the shield thing helps, but it is also a mech, and mech damage in this game is fucking ridiculous.

KEITH [overlapping with Austin]: Oh, yeah yea yea yea.

AUSTIN: Okay. This is- this is the dilemma, yeah, right? Like-

KEITH: Yeah.

ANDREW [overlapping with others]: So here-

AUSTIN: I'm, I'm gonna lay it out like pretty cleanly, which is like. I'm gonna make you make the decision.

ANDREW: Yeah. So here's what I'm thinking. It's either take away an advantage. And I would hopefully think that the advantage there would be, like its propulsion system. Or I either inflict harm and suffer little harm, or suffer little harm and force a change of location.

AUSTIN: If- if you don't suffer little harm, even with the added benefit here, you will be- I don't know if you- if you don't suffer little harm you should be okay. Like you'll be fine with that. Because I told you, you would be beforehand, I'll keep true to that. That- but you- you'll burn through all of your shield things here.

ANDREW: Yeah.

AUSTIN: For sure. And then the question ends up being, like, how damaged is this thing after?

KEITH: That's, I think that's a good trade-off.

ANDREW: Yeah.

KEITH: To do something that isn't suffer little harm.

AUSTIN: The- the real dilemma here is that I don't think you have the rounds to kill this thing?

ANDREW: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Which is interesting.

KEITH: The rounds to make, you know, to delay whatever they need to do.

AUSTIN: Okay like, I, I this is the-

KEITH: Especially since they don't- I mean they literally do have Grand Mag here but

AUSTIN: Yes.

KEITH: Like, they don't- they don't have the person that built the thing there willing to fix it for them.

AUSTIN: That's true. They do have the- the second best person on this planet though.

[Andrew chuckles]

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Debatably the best, I mean who knows, right? I don't- I don't know if they had a mech design-off.

ART: I know.

[Austin chuckles]

KEITH: I mean she did-

ART [overlapping with others]: Come on.

KEITH: Ask Grand Mag to build it instead of her.

AUSTIN: She did. She did.

KEITH: She did.

AUSTIN: I will- I guess the thing- the thing that I'm actually concerned about like, chips- cards on the table? Is if this thing stays here, I don't know how it doesn't kill you all.

ANDREW: Right. Yeah.

AUSTIN: That's actually like, GM cards on the table, for me to follow the fiction as written, she just kills- like, I don't know- you can hurt it really bad. And you will definitely- I mean there's [chuckles] you could kill her and just send it into space without her? But that kinda sucks.

ANDREW: And maybe that's even worse? [high pitched]

AUSTIN: Yeah, maybe. Right then it's just like, Iconoclasts, here's this machine, here's this perfect body for this thing you're building. You could blow off the, the boosters. Which would keep it here. I'm trying to- I'm legitimately trying to think of like, cool shit you could do with the amount of damage you have available.

ANDREW: Right, yeah.

KEITH: What would taking away an advantage do? Would that-

AUSTIN: Maybe it lands- like yeah, if you take away the advantage of its boosters it lands. Do you know what I mean? But you're not gonna make it vulnerable to regular arms-fire.

KEITH: No, what I was thinking of, let's give it a- I was saying, let's maybe there's a way where it can't fucking just kill us all.

AUSTIN: Art, like Grand, is that a thing that's possible with your design?

ART: I mean. We could, we could talk about it. I don't know that it's a- I don't know that it's a perfect war machine. It's a- it's an artistic expression more than it's a-

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ART: Battleship, you know?

AUSTIN: Right. Yeah, it is not a centipede of guns. Yeah, I'm- I am doing the thing I do when I play like card games, which is like, what's turn three [Andrew chuckles], what's three turns away from this that's like.

ART: But like, it is a giant robot and we're people, like-

AUSTIN: Yeah. And it still has other weapons.

ANDREW: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Like that weird Glass shit that it shot and fucked up Even last time.

ANDREW: I mean, if I'm thinking of it from player perspective?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ANDREW: Even has never fought a Divine before?

AUSTIN: True.

ANDREW: So his thinking is probably- if I kill the pilot, there's no one to pilot it, and it'll probably just crash.

AUSTIN: Right.

ANDREW: So I think that it's probably the most honest, from Even's perspective action to take.

KEITH: Well, your mech doesn't crash if you're not in it-

AUSTIN [overlapping with others]: It's not a Divine-

ANDREW: But if I was piloting it and I like, suddenly had like a heart attack and died, like, you know.

AUSTIN [overlapping with Andrew]: The Amprunner would stop.

ANDREW: Yeah, it would stop. And I've never shot a gun at a Divine before [chuckles] so.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Especially a Divine that's driven by a person that wants to turn it into the like, the bridge between the Platon- the realm of Platonic ideals and the material world? Like, this isn't even just Gumption, which is like 'oh I'm trying to help people!' and then like, the New Earth Hegemony attacks like, 'oh yeah, I'm just gonna shoot it until it blows up'. This is like, yeah.

ANDREW: So yeah, I think it is- I think I kill her.

ART: I think that's a fine idea, I mean.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: There- if it doesn't have the mind yet I don't know that it has- it sure doesn't have an independent

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: Autopilot strong enough to you know, individually kill people.

AUSTIN: No it definitely doesn't. It's just like. It's- it's on course to- it's on course to the moon. It's on course to the thing that the Iconoclasts are building.

KEITH: So if you kill her and take away the boosters, or is that not what we're doing?

ANDREW: I don't think- that's possible

AUSTIN: You have to do the damage to her, right?

ANDREW: Yeah.

AUSTIN: To take away an advantage takes two.

ANDREW: Yeah it does.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: Oh, okay.

AUSTIN: He needs two hold. You could like take away the boos- you could take- you could do damage, or you could kill her and then like, destroy its arm- its other arm so that it doesn't kill people- or whatever, you know what I mean? Like, cause that might also be taking away an advantage I guess. Because that would actually be making it not have its main weapons. It's like you could do damage twice and if you find it again, it would still have been damaged, if you beat it to the Icono- if you beat the Iconoclasts to it.

ANDREW: Yeah. I guess how does that work in fiction when we have one bullet? Is it that it basically like pierces through and hits something else on the way out or in?

AUSTIN: Yeah, maybe pierces- it piercing is damaging it, and then it- killing her is the other one, right?

ANDREW: Okay. Yeah that works.

AUSTIN: In fact like maybe here's actually the most like thematically appropriate, is the thing it destroys is the cockpit. Is like, the place a person could use it. You know?

ANDREW: Oh yeah.

AUSTIN: Which is like, okay. Alekhine can't find Armstrong, he can't find this thing and then get in it.

ART: Okay but-but hold on. The cockpit was really a good piece of design. [Austin chuckles] Wha- can we find something else? Like. That was the best part [people talk] I'm just saying it's basically not the same thing anymore. It's like, oh it's the Mona Lisa-

AUSTIN: Right.

ART: But what if we took off her face. What if she didn't have a face. What a great painting it is, no, no one says that, it's the faceless Mona Lisa.

AUSTIN Oh you've listened to this podcast, that's was like- that was like- the first vision of the Iconoclasts was, basically, so. Yeah so I think that's the image.

KEITH [overlapping with Austin]: Can you imagine what we could do with even one more bullet.

AUSTIN: Uh huh. Literally one more bullet. [Keith chuckles] Literally.

ANDREW [overlapping with others]: -that was what I was talking about.

AUSTIN: Literally. It's really good you wrote two, is what I'll say, when I look at this sheet. Ugh. Fuck. God.

ANDREW: It's great.

AUSTIN: So-

ANDREW: Everything's great.

AUSTIN: Uh huh. It was, it was- I mean the thing was even one more bullet just probably wouldn't be enough, it basically has 5HP, and if you'd done damage damage damage damage damage, you would've got it. But you- even with two rounds, the most you can do is four damage. Which is great, but like, so yeah, so I think you like, hop over your- what is the cover that you're behind? To start. So we get a clear image of Even.

Uhh, it's- I want it to be the big like, chalkboard or like, whiteboard or whatever where they have all these blueprints on it.

AUSTIN: Yeah, okay, so you- you like push that down and like slide up over it basically?

ANDREW: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Like use your jets to like jump up in the air. She pulls up her one remaining arm to shoot the like piercing like, glass shard at you? And you pop up your- your first Twilight shield, and you block that one, she shoots another one, you block the third one. She tries these eye beams, and then like, you just hold up that- that shield, like, like the Twilight Mirage shield that you- I guess we haven't talked about this but again like, you can literally project a dense version of the Twilight Mirage itself. And it like, pushes back that eyeshield? And you literally land on the- the mech. Like you land on it, and like gun up against it, pull the trigger. And then like, it blasts you back. And get tossed back- yeah it's sort of like hard light- Sylvia, Sylvia in the chat says, 'is it like hard light basically?' It is, but more gaseous? Like it is, it is, if you touched it your fingers would come away wet, basically.

SYLVIA: Okay.

AUSTIN: It's like a mist. And so yeah, you like land on it, pull the trigger, explosion goes off, as it like, begins to take off, just up through the top of this building, and begins to fly away, and you like slide off of it I guess? [Andrew chuckles] You have wings, you can fly-

ANDREW: Yeah, I can fly- yea yea yea-

AUSTIN: You can fly, fuck it. Yeah, I think maybe you like, you're just like on there and looking into the destroyed cockpit, and there's like no way a person could fly this anymore. Which I think is appropriate, given all themes of the Iconoclasts, and what she wanted in a weird way.

ANDREW: Aw man. Okay, here's a really bad idea/question.

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

ANDREW: I mean, you're saying there's nothing left in this cockpit. So there's nothing resembling controls or anything?

AUSTIN: No.

ANDREW: Alright.

AUSTIN: You wanna like climb in and try to fuck around with it?

ANDREW: Yeah, yea yea yea.

AUSTIN: You could climb in, your situation like- do you wanna have a talk real quick about how much you wanna play Even, going forward?

ANDREW: [chuckles] I really wanna play Even going forward.

AUSTIN: Yeah, Even's dope. Even's dope. So.

ANDREW: Then yeah, I think, I think Even leaves it.

AUSTIN: Does it like cross his mind?

ANDREW: Oh, a hundred percent-

AUSTIN: Oh wait, actually. Here's the actual question is. How do you resist?

ANDREW: Yeah yea yea.

AUSTIN: That's my- that's actually the question. That's the question we should be having is- you were eating bullets like they were chips a few minutes ago. [Andrew chuckles] How do you resist interfacing with the most like, technologically advanced thing you've ever been close to?

ANDREW: Uhhh-aaggh. Part of it probably is him eating bullets like chips in like, not getting anything from it?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ANDREW: Being like. This is- this is bad. Like, this is- this isn't like growing wings or doing anything useful. This is just- this is wasteful. So I think part of it is that.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: Maybe he's just full up on bullets. He's not hungry.

ANDREW: [chuckles] He's so full, Austin. [Keith in the background] I just couldn't have another robot.

AUSTIN: I want to know what it means for Even to be like, oh- this is way better. This stuff- this is, next level technology that I could mix myself with. And I wanna figure this out from a storytelling perspective-

ANDREW: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Because, because it's not interesting for it to just be 'some technology is bad' and like, 'not everything in moderation' feels like a corny cop out? When the entire of the character up until now has been like, 'no actually, like blurring the line between human and technological is actually extremely good'.

ANDREW: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So maybe there is a way that you say like, no this isn't- this isn't that. This is- that risks losing myself to technology or something like that. But I wanna know what the thought process is. That helps you- like maybe this is, it's time for a new belief. Because I need to experience the rush of connecting with new technology as soon as possible, is like,

ANDREW [overlapping with Austin]: Yeah.

AUSTIN: A deeply straightforward belief to- and like, extremely like, like central belief? And like, is this a moment where Even has to have this connection of like- oh. That's too far.

ANDREW: Oh, even my ideology is about embracing my gifts. But, what should I-

AUSTIN: What's that move- you have a move that we haven't used like, ever.

ANDREW: Oh, fuck! Yeah! No. Yeah let's do Things Speak right now.

AUSTIN: Things Speak. When you handle or examine an object or particular interest to you, roll. Which is, which is, a lot of things. Who handled this before me? Who made this or what has been done near this? What strong emotions recently have been near this? What words have been said recently near this? What's wrong with this and how might I fix it? Who do you belong to? For what purpose were you created? Are you sentient? What do you wish I'd do? Good questions.

ANDREW: Oh boy.

AUSTIN: So yeah, give me a roll. How do you feel?

ANDREW: Oh, scared.

AUSTIN: Okay. That's an eight. So you get two questions again.

ANDREW: And I actually get a third one cause of my omni-tool.

AUSTIN [overlapping with Austin]: Oh! Yes, totally. So you get three of these questions.

ANDREW: [thinking breath-gun sounds] What do you wish I'd do?

AUSTIN: Oh. Get in. A hundred percent, right? Like, it's like, it's like- there is no- there is no rush as strong as I am. There is nothing like, 'you and I were meant to be' type shit. Like, there is no I, there is we, and the we can grow forever. Like, if you want to blend, blend with me and I'll take you to someone who- take you to a place where, we can blend to everything there ever is, basically. Like, right now, you have wings. What if you mixed your- your selfhood, with the notion of wings. Or the notion of flight. Not just flying. That's where we're going.

ART: Where we're going we won't need the concept of not having roads.

[Austin and Andrew laugh]

ANDREW: Who do you belong to?

AUSTIN: That's a complicated question.

ANDREW: Yup.

AUSTIN: It belongs to itself. It believes everyone belongs to themselves, right? Like, it's Independence. Everything belongs to itself. That is like, a equals a, Aristotelian metaphysics shit. Like, that is it. Like, that is the first and only true thing. You are yourself. Everything is itself. But there's a more complicated story in there. And I think you get it in flashbacks that are left over from the Doyenne. Which is- Grand, what did the Doyenne ask you to do again?

ART: Oh, it was something-

AUSTIN: Like, the perfect- the perfect representation of the human figure basically?

ART: Yeah. That was it. That wasn't the first request, but that was like, the- the parameters of the project.

AUSTIN: Right. Like, you get a memory of the younger her being asked to do that by the former king. Of the Crown of Glass. And, there is something here that feels old. That feels like [breathes] this notion 'let's build and let's rebuild Independence', has been something going on for generations. And so, this moment and this final thing belongs to a lineage of people going back from the survivors of the War on Independence. A ten thousand years. It is the king's project as much it was the Doyenne's. It was probably the predecessor of the king's. It was probably- it goes back for way before the- the Divine Fleet ever found this place. And it influenced the culture of the Crown of Glass. It is part of why they have a thing called the Church of the Self, for instance. It is why their, their understanding of beauty is about a referential beauty. Beauty of form and structure and you know, again, Forms in- in the big capital F sense. The metaphysical sense. The sort of like, beauty is symmetry. Beauty is, you know, contrast. And that beautiful pieces of art don't need to reference the real. In fact, they shouldn't

just reference the real. If all you're doing is making art about the world, you are not making good art. So that's, that's what this belongs to. Is this whole history. But also itself. In the sense that history is the history of itself imposing itself on everything else. And you feel that in its nervous system, right like, it's- it's like muscles spasming, making you feel that way. The way that like, the muscles of a weightlifter if you read them, would have inscribed in them, the sense of lifting weights. The memory of lifting weights.

ANDREW: Third question. Are you sentient?

AUSTIN: Yes and no? Yes, but it- not, sentient, yes. Sapient, no. Right? It has impulses. It is aware of itself in this moment. It knows what it needs to do to become sapient, and to become an actor of its own. And maybe this is the scariest thing- it may be this is why you want to disengage. But like, it doesn't want to be sapient. It wants to be the first Divine to side with this new thing with Volition. With the post-Divine era. The era where Divines don't need to be like, partnered to anything, where they don't need to be thinking beings, where they can just be the thing in this conceptual sense. Instead of being a thing that interacts with people as if they're people. Where it can be the embodiment of independence instead of the being- not even an embodiment, it can be an avatar of independence, it can be a reflection, or a- a kind of a material form of independence instead of just being a reflection of the concept of independence. It can be *independence*.

ANDREW: This all sounds awful.

AUSTIN: Yeah. [Keith laughs] And it's not what your partnership is like, right? Like,

ANDREW: No.

AUSTIN: At the end of the day, you're partnered with the hybrid thing in you, so that the alien that you've mixed with, right, like? You are part of it, it is part of you, you are now a new being, that is not just a human, that is not just this human, it's this different thing, and- but also you are yourself and you don't- you don't want to be the- you don't want to be flight. You don't want to be the concept of hybridisation.

ANDREW: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Right?

ANDREW: And I think that the Ever Forward is a ship that's way based more on interdependence than independence.

AUSTIN: Right, totally.

ANDREW: So there's also that pull. So yeah no. That gives me plenty of information to justify Even pulling away.

AUSTIN: Yep, I think so too. So you like slip away and slide down. Rest of you. What- what do you do?

KEITH: So what are the- what are the- what's going on with the people who like work here?

AUSTIN: It's Armstrong and Alekhine are here. They are like, are like- I think, they are both like moving toward the side of the room, like keep walls to their back? But they're not drawing weapons on you or anything.

KEITH (as Gig): Are we cool?

AUSTIN: They like, Armstrong says,

AUSTIN (as Armstrong): Cool is strong, but, I think we are what we are.

KEITH (as Gig): Damn.

[Andrew chuckles]

KEITH (as Gig): Can we borrow one of your ships? I don't wanna row back [Andrew laughs, followed by Keith].

AUSTIN (as Armstrong): So you're not gonna kill us-

KEITH (as Gig): I- I did-

AUSTIN (as Armstrong): We're not gonna fight, we're not gonna-

KEITH (as Gig): No- nah! Right?

ANDREW: Is this conversation happening while Even is still like up in the air?

AUSTIN [overlapping with Andrew]: Oh yeah, yeah.

ANDREW: Okay.

AUSTIN: Definitely.

ANDREW: Cause he would have some strong input about not killing a certain person here [chuckles].

AUSTIN: Yeah. Is anyone on the ground like mad? Or like, how do you parse this thing that's happening?

ART: I mean it's not great. But I-

KEITH: We're pretty focused on getting back to- like, a place where we can then go and beat up this- this thing some more.

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH: I'm less concerned about, these kinda- the traitor and the sort of, weirdly friendly-

AUSTIN: [chuckles] Assassin?

KEITH: Assassin, yeah.

SYLVIA: Yeah, outside, I'm kind of wanting to just punch Alekhine, like in the face

AUSTIN: Mhm.

SYLVIA: But there's not much like, that comes out of being like

AUSTIN: Yeah.

SYLVIA: Permanently dealing with these guys, you know?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ART: Yeah like, there are bad feelings here, but I don't know if there's violence here.

AUSTIN: Alekhine says,

AUSTIN (as Alekhine): Out of old camaraderie.

AUSTIN: And like, walks over to an old computer and hits a few buttons. And the- the dead zone turns off. Which allows the ships that you have to fly to you.

AUSTIN (as Alekhine): Wait outside-

KEITH (as Gig) [overlapping with Austin]: Cool- th- awesome. Any like, advice, for going forward? We're gonna try to get this thing some-

AUSTIN (as Armstrong): We'll probably meet again.

AUSTIN: Says Armstrong. Like,

AUSTIN (as Armstrong): We- stay out of our way, I guess?

KEITH (as Gig): You stay out of our way I guess?

AUSTIN (as Armstrong): What is this? What are we doing?

KEITH (as Gig): I don't know we're just gonna get out of here.

ART (as Grand): Don't steal my designs. Don't s-

KEITH (as Gig): [finishing Grand's statement] -try to kill us later.

SYLVIA (as Echo): Oh, and go fuck yourselves. Thanks, bye.

SYLVIA: Echo walks out. Not a fan.

AUSTIN: They like, watch you leave? And it's like,

AUSTIN (as Armstrong): Why weren't we able to kill them- I don't know. What a weird group [the group laughs].

AUSTIN: And Alekhine is like:

AUSTIN (as Alekhine): They are very weird. [laughter continues] They have an effect. It's true.

AUSTIN: Gig, you have a story as like- I think it's like the ships are descending as you can broadcast out?

KEITH: Yeah, yeah. Sure.

AUSTIN [overlapping with Keith]: What do you- what do you say?

KEITH: I think that I wanna at first show a montage of getting to where we are?

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

KEITH: Sort of- I have this bit in my head earlier, and I think that probably Gig would've stuck with it where like- you know the song Jessica by the Almond Brothers?

AUSTIN: Uh huh?

KEITH: [humming] *Di-di-di-deee-di-di-* I have- in my head, in my head I always associate that with flyover beat shots.

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

KEITH: And so I kinda had that in my head of like, us in the ship, like, a montage of the landscape, and then, it like, like record scratch turns [chuckles in the background] to much more sinister music when you the giant hollowed out centipede monster.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Right. Uh huh.

KEITH: And then the, the like- that music carries through through the rowing, and then on to the thing, and then getting caught, and the building, and then this- you know, my sort of hazy fuzzy memories of what goes on inside there, with the- the Divine. And-

AUSTIN: It's kind of like a Paul Thomas Anderson film? Like I'm just imagining the wide shots of like, *The Master* or *There Will Be Blood* or whatever? Like that sort of like, dark, jaunty greenwood

KEITH [overlapping with Austin]: [constipated noise] Ohhh- yeah!

AUSTIN: Soundtrack, yeah, exactly!

KEITH: Yeah, like really, really sparse like, like, super bass-y drums.

AUSTIN [overlapping with Keith]: Yup. A hundred percent.

KEITH: Yeah. Yeah yea yea. That's what- that's where I was going with it too. But it definitely starts off with Jessica by the Almond Brothers. [Austin laughs]

ANDREW: That's a hard turn!

KEITH: Yeah, it's a hard turn. Man, I don't even know Gig is in like a state to like, catch people up on what's happened- like it's so- it's like so-

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: Many feelings happening? Like so conflicted on like how to feel about, different things- like obviously it's terrifying?

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH: But it's also like, this weird tension between us and the- what are the jazz- what are the jazz assassins called?

AUSTIN: They don't have like a-

KEITH [overlapping with Austin]: They don't have a name?

AUSTIN: So to be clear, the jazz assassins that went after Grand were- they were all part of the Castlerose organisation? Which is what Fourteen Fifteen is part of. And they're just like, hired hitman. Armstrong is-

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: -had clearly like, infiltrated them,

KEITH: Ohhh, okay. Yea yea yea,

AUSTIN [overlapping with Keith]: -to get access to technology-

KEITH: Gotcha.

AUSTIN: -and mobility. But is secretly part of the Independents. In the same way that Alekhine did with y'all.

KEITH: Right.

AUSTIN: Like, oh-

KEITH [overlapping with Austin]: A jerky thing to do.

AUSTIN: Right. The other part of this thing that- so I think that yes, you like sit down and broadcast out, and it's just- it's just this like sketch of what happened? It's not, so there's no dialogue, it's like a very artsy video for you?

KEITH: Yeah. I think it's an artsy video for me and I think-

ART: But don't worry, his sick unboxing's coming up next week.

[Keith laughs gleefully]

AUSTIN: Can I propose a thing that's like?

KEITH: Yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN [overlapping with Keith]: You need more time for this? What if you sent. What if you're like ready to send that, and then you like hit save, basically? And instead you send the video about Port Indepen- about New Independence, that's just like, the classic- the classic Gig Kephart video.

KEITH: Yeah, yeah. Old school.

AUSTIN [overlapping with Keith]: That's just you're meeting local people. And like, oh hey, I'm down here on Quire and everything is- everything is chill.

KEITH: Yeah, there- there I show the meeting between the- me and the what was his name? Kent?

AUSTIN: Kent-

KEITH [overlapping with Austin]: Kent B-b-b

AUSTIN: Kent Brighton.

KEITH: Kent Brighton.

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH: The exchanging of the pens.

AUSTIN: Right. It's like [Keith laughs]. Like you can't bring yourself to do the other one.

KEITH: Yeah, totally.

AUSTIN: And like, your work-

KEITH [overlapping with Austin]: I like that. Being shown around the hotel, they're like we have- they tell me they have four hotels, but this is their only hotel.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: We have hotel- we have all these hotels-

AUSTIN: The irony of this is-

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: The- the group led by Tender Sky's ex, Open Metal, just sent out the note that they kidnapped the Cadent? So it's like- everyone just watched this like, terrifying thing about the coup that's happening in the Fleet, and then ba-dap-ba! Back with Gig!

KEITH: Yeah [Keith laughs].

AUSTIN [overlapping with Keith]: We're here today with New Independence!

KEITH: Yeah. I do- I- I do still think that the Jessica bit fits into the other video.

AUSTIN [overlapping with Keith]: That's still there. Yeah, that's really good. [Keith chuckles] We get like both of them side by side. We get the Jessica video and then next to the Jessica video is- like we pull back, and that video just gets like saved internally in your mind folder, and the other folder's the one that goes out- you have to roll for this, right? You have to roll for how well this-

KEITH: I do, I have to roll for this.

AUSTIN [overlapping with Keith]: Curiosity of millions?

KEITH: Yeah. I- curiosity of millions, and-

AUSTIN: Two d6 plus-

KEITH: I have um, I- I'm tryna figure out what the feeling- what the feeling of deciding to send out another video is.

AUSTIN: Right. In this moment?

KEITH: Right. Yeah. It might be mad. I think I'm mad.

AUSTIN: Okay. That's good. I like that. So uncheck that peaceful, check a mad.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Two d6 plus one.

KEITH: Yeah, I always just- I was just looking at the feeling to see some of those words, and I agree with my choice of mad.

AUSTIN: Okay. That's a 9.

KEITH: Nice.

AUSTIN: So on a 9 you choose two of your things.

KEITH: Okay, so I can choose- then it doesn't fail? Then it goes viral?

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

KEITH: And that I can manage control of my own body, feelings and memories. And I can pick only two of them.

AUSTIN: Two of those three, yeah.

KEITH: Yeah I guess I'm gonna have to pick- that it doesn't fail? And that I retain control of my own body.

AUSTIN: Yeah, cause otherwise they would get- what I would definitely do if you didn't do that was-

KEITH [overlapping with Austin]: It would bleed, the other thing would bleed-

AUSTIN: Oh yeah, just like random images of this gunfight as you remember it? Like, random images of this- this new Divine that no one knows about yet, really? Or like that they- everyone just heard it exists at all,

KEITH [overlapping with Austin]: Yeah.

AUSTIN: -or ever existed? That would be bad. So yeah, you keep control.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: It doesn't go viral, but how could it, everyone is talking about the Cadent. Everyone is talking about

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: The Cadent.

KEITH: And so I have this other stuff banked, can I send that stuff out like, whenever?

AUSTIN: I think so, like you can basically- you basically can work on it and

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Some time in the future we'll decide when that makes sense.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: I kind of like the notion of like, maybe after this next big thing that's about to happen, we're going into holiday. We're going into capital H Holiday game material right now. And maybe after that there's a- there's a moment where it's like, Gig puts together the big movie of everything, all of the Independence plot, you know? Like,

KEITH: Yeah, yeah, like it's the season finale.

AUSTIN: Right, for Gig Keph- for the Gig Kephart show. God.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Alright, so-

KEITH: It's the Gig Kephart- show! [Sylvia chuckles]

AUSTIN: Between Myriad and the Holiday Gambit, you're able to leave the planet. And go chasing after this thing. And in fact when you get back to shore, when Myriad arrives, she says

AUSTIN (as Myriad): We have to go.

AUSTIN: Because she has heard that the Cadent has been kidnapped. And Empyrean is calling you home. And so we get like an image of y'all leaving Quire. Like falling back behind you and in space, as you arrive like, as you break through the atmosphere, you're there. The- the ship that the Beloved are on, is in orbit. Empyrean is there, in orbit. The- the By-and-By, which is Tender Sky's home ship, is now in orbit up there. The- Seance arrives. Like, through hyperspace or whatever like, it like, just- it just arrives into orbit. And your sensors say that other main ships from the Fleet are on their way at various distances. And then you can also see that like, headed in space towards this huge black moon,

[Transitional music starts]

AUSTIN: [continued] Is, is Independence, or the body of Independence, heading towards, the Iconoclasts.

[Transitional music ends]

AUSTIN: Tender I think you said- you dropped off the monks, right? You're dropping off the monks at the By-and-By

ALI: Yeah, yeah.

AUSTIN: At like in an evacuation dock, basically?

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah so I think- you get you're able to go- when you arrive, there's a blockade. You can see the Beloved ship in orbit around Quire. But you have like, credentials that let you go into the evacuation port, excuse me, credentials that say you can go into the evacuation port and also that you have people that you need to drop off obviously. I think we just get like, a montage from here. Of like, you dropping people off. Signet and Belgard, you head- you head here too presumably, right? And like, meet up with the Beloved ship. The- we also get the World Without End pulling into port here. You also use your credentials to dock. You're all docking at like the bottom of the By-and-By? The Cadent is at the very top. Which has been sealed off, and they're like slowly evacuating levels going down. They're also- the thing that's happening is that like, they're not only evacuating, they're preparing landing vessels? It's like a mix, it's like the people who've already been approved for landing are getting into landing vessels for Quire. And the rest of the people are getting into escape pods, basically. They're just not- they were not ready to get everybody off of Anticipation- or off the By-and-By all at once. And I think we get Tender- you've landed, do you go- what do you do when you land here? I think actually you probably get a message from- you and Fourteen both get messages from Cascara, that are like:

AUSTIN (as Cascara): Just land at the By-and-By. We know- I know we'll need you there.

AUSTIN: So Tender, what do you do when you get there?

ALI: I don't know it's tough, cause like, I think that, a lot of the that fear she had from revisiting this place, like we said before, was like from interacting with people?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: And them reacting to her in a different way than they had?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: And whereas like, I feel really- like I, as a player, feel really bad for her cause I feel like this is an even worse thing? Where like, this place- was overly expected to be alien, but now, even more so, cause it's empty?

AUSTIN: Yeah. Like literally walking down streets with no one on it.

ALI: Yeah. And I think that like, if an environment is just cities stacked on top of each other. Like the bustle-

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ALI: -is so much a part of that.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: So it's like, it like was gonna feel bad, and now it just feels worse. Like she thought she would be relieved, not running into anyone, and now it's just like. Oh, this sucks. [Austin chuckles] But I think-

AUSTIN [overlapping with Ali]: Where does she go?

ALI: I- yeah, I- I don't know how to set this up, but just being like, this is a thing we thought would be a cool idea. [laughs]

AUSTIN: That's- how- that's fine, fuck it. [Ali's laughter continues] I'm not here to- I'm here for us, shit.

ALI: But I have- I have this, Tender has this motorcycle that she's had on her character sheet this entire time and just-

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

ALI: We haven't had the opportunity to bring it up. So we're like-

AUSTIN: One of the first things I said was like, where do you keep it? And like, on the ship somewhere? Like what do you even- how would you even get anywhere?

ALI: I thought that we would see some like Seance streets and we never did.

AUSTIN: Of course you thought that, and we just didn't do that, because we're fools. [Ali chuckles]

ALI: But now we've come up with a very convenient that like,

AUSTIN: Uh huh

ALI: She left it behind on the By-and-By,

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Which like also makes more sense, like. Or like, I- no that's really good. Cause she was like this weird priestess who like- [chuckles] went to- who got like, sent to a planet before that, like had a really nice motorcycle when she works at the church. It's great. It's perfect.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ALI: And now she like, you know, I think that there's like this desire to like, have one thing be a control. Like one thing-

AUSTIN: Right.

ALI: To be the thing. So, I think that she- it's tough cause it's like, I don't know where it would be on the planet? I guess it's because like-

AUSTIN: Oh you mean on the shi- on the station? On the-

ALI: Rrr-right. Yeah, on the- the sh- the-

AUSTIN: The By-and-By.

ALI [overlapping with Austin]: I think it's probably like, you know how like Japanese errr... I'm just gonna describe a garage, but like, more personal than that. Like you know how Japanese train stations have lockers attached to it?

AUSTIN: Yes, ye ye ye ye-

ALI: Where it's like it's an expectancy that you're gonna go between two places, and when you come back you're gonna want your thing to be there that you can take with you.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ALI: So I think it's kind of like that but instead of just lockers, or just like a garage for vehicles like, you get your own like, little room, and so like, if you were traveling to- back to the By-and-By like from another, like ship, or whatever, you could still like, have a place-

AUSTIN: Totally.

ALI: That felt like yours? Like a little like studio apartment, or whatever?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ALI: And even if that just has a computer and a bed, like you can choose what it is.

AUSTIN: Yeah. It probably like literally like pulls it down from a shelf.

ALI: Yeah yeah yeah!

AUSTIN: Like here's your apartment. Like it rolls it down the entire arm of that floor of the By-and-By, on the outside-

ALI: Yeah, just like-

AUSTIN: Plugs it in, then you can walk into it.

ALI: Yeah, just shipping crates.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Stacked on top of each other.

AUSTIN: Yes.

ALI: She still has like the, it's like- you can see like the- the poster of like, this is how you do this. So you put your thing-

AUSTIN: Uh huh. Yes.

ALI: In your thing and you put your number in. And she pulls up hers, and it's an older- and it's like a different design from the poster because it's so old. Like she's still has it on her cause it's just a weird digital thing anyway?

AUSTIN: Right.

ALI: And like, this like, machine like comes into life, and like *wrrrreh wrrreh wrrrreh*, like it comes down.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: And I think that she- she opens the door, and there's like, a little motorcycle in there.

AUSTIN: I love it like, [Ali chuckles] it's still a studio apartment in there, right? But like, it's almost as if like, normally where put your umbrellas, or hang your jackets or, take off your shoes. There's a motorcycle in there. [Ali chuckles again] And past that is like a cute little apartment.

ALI: It's like when someone converts a garage and like-

AUSTIN: Right, yes.

ALI [overlapping with Austin]: This is where I keep my car, and this is also where my couch is.

AUSTIN: Yeah. [all laugh] Oh it's so good. Does she like just take the motorcycle out and then like, again, it's just like, dead here. Like all of the streets are empty. I'm imagining it in my head sort of like a Gundam colony? Like a- one of the floating like, where there is still like a fake sky above you, but maybe that's not the case. So what's it- what's it look like.

ALI: I- I've, like, I think there is a little bit? I think that there's-

AUSTIN: Or maybe that's just the Mirage is just still there.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So you would still look at a sunset sky.

ALI: Yeah, by all means. The way that I described the By-and-By originally and like, still think is true is like, a lot of the cities end with railings? And you can see-

AUSTIN: Right.

ALI: -the other side of the city, or you can just see the Mirage, like yeah.

AUSTIN: Right.

ALI: And I think that there's like- I think she lingers a little bit?

AUSTIN: Can you see across from here to the other side and like- would you be able to recognize- would you be able to see a figure on the other side? From the railings.

ALI: Probably.

AUSTIN: I think there's- so there's a figure on the other side. You see like the light of a cigarette on the other side. And then like, then like, there's a- there's a long drag, and then someone like- you just see, it's far a- it's far away, so you can't really make out who it is or anything. They gesture towards like the center, they gesture like towards where the two sides like collide? Not collide, but where they meet. Like right in the middle where like, the big elevator is, basically, right? And then you like- they flick the cigarette, and in the anime we get the like, the slow close up of the cigarette falling off the side and being like, swept like, erased by whatever the plasma

shield around this place is? [Ali giggles in glee] Like *vrreh*, and it's gone. And then like, gets into a car, and then like heads towards the center of this floor. What do you do?

ALI: Yeah I think that she follows- I think that she like stays here for another five minutes,

AUSTIN: Mhm

ALI: Cause there is like,

AUSTIN: Mhm

ALI: Because I think that in the same way that we talk about transitional spaces and like,

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Entering digital environments and stuff? It's like the same kind of thing where it's like okay, this was mine,

AUSTIN: Yes.

ALI: This was a place that was mine?

AUSTIN: Yes.

ALI: And was designed to like make me feel like I was home again like

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ALI: I'm gonna like take a minute-

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: And there's like-

AUSTIN: Check your mail.

ALI: Yeah, right. I think there's a, a- yeah.

AUSTIN [overlapping with Austin]: See the milk is still good, it's not.

ALI [overlapping with Austin]: [giggling] It's not. I think there's even trinkets or something there like, like a keychain

AUSTIN: Yeah

ALI: Or whatever she considers like taking it with her then puts it back down, it's like why even bother. And then she gets onto this like cool motorcycle, that's like, [chuckles], the way I've always pictured it is that it's kind of like really- how do I describe it? I haven't even looked at my character sheet all night [Austin chuckles]

AUSTIN: Good question [Ali laughs].

ALI: I- I think that I- so it's like- oh that's right. So it's like, it's like big enough to carry the entire team if it had to?

AUSTIN: Oh, Jesus. It's like a big motorcycle.

ALI: Yaaaah! Right. Like [giggles] I- yeah, I, it was accommodating and clumsy,

AUSTIN: Right.

ALI: Because I thought of it as kind of being like,

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Kind of weirdly, the middle of it being kind of wide. But the- but like the make of it being kind of like, really tucked in? You know those like-

AUSTIN: Right.

ALI: There's like Dragonball Z motorcycles,

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

ALI: Where like the wheels are really like, you know, in, and they're not like, spread out?

AUSTIN: Yeah, [Ali chuckles] Listen, I basically described a capsule car-

ALI: Right.

AUSTIN: -four episodes ago.

ALI: Exactly.

AUSTIN: So I know what you mean.

ALI: And it has the like windshield, but the windshield is a full circle-

AUSTIN: Yes.

ALI: It's not just like a thing? I was hoping- I think that it like, can fit. It can probably sit all three of us.

AUSTIN: Janine in the chat says, [laughter from everyone starts] I have this motorcycle in Second Life and it's killing it.

JANINE: Like I just want to pull up a picture of it, but it's like, eight years old, and I don't even remember what it's called, and I don't play Second Life anymore so-

AUSTIN [overlapping with Janine]: Oh, so good. So good.

JANINE: I can't help you and I'm sorry.

AUSTIN: Yeah, it's okay.

JANINE: We'll see it later if you find it.

JANINE: It's really cool, that's all I remember, it was really cool.

AUSTIN: Good.

ALI: But yeah, it's like, the inside of it is probably like those like those rollercoaster seats?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ALI: Where like two people to sit, kind of, like it's not a great fit, but two big people-

AUSTIN [overlapping with Austin]: Yeah.

ALI: -could sit there. And then ya, I think that she, she you know, spends the time that she needs to in the place that she's in and then goes to follow whatever that like, goes to that center space to be like.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Who was that? [chuckles]

AUSTIN: So that car is like, you see the car it's like all squared off black, all black everything, like. Very big like, like, again like, squared off is the word I'm looking for- it's not just squared off,

it's also angular? So the very front of it pulls upwards. It has like a- a very like bright chrome hood ornament, that has like a, it's like a- I'm imagining like a Lincoln Town car or something, but from the 70s? Very like- a little rise in the middle of the hood, so it'd been modified in some way. It's probably a sort of hover car, I think [Ali giggles], probably also has like hover wheels. And, a man gets out in a long overcoat, long brown overcoat, has a grey suit on. Big beard. Well kept beard but big. Styled hair. His skin is like a tan, it takes you a few minutes I think to recognize him. But it's- it's Declan's Corrective.

[heavy breaths around]

AUSTIN: [continued] And he like, scratches the side of his face, and then like pulls another cig- he pulls out a cigarette case, that is like very carefully, that has a very simple actually, engraving on it? That just has like, 'DC' on it? He opens it up and flicks out another cigarette that's self- it lights itself as he puts it in his mouth.

AUSTIN (as Declan's): I didn't expect you here.

ALI (as Tender): I see that you've finally decided to leave.

AUSTIN (as Declan's): Mm. Big things coming.

ALI (as Tender): Mhm.

AUSTIN (as Declan's): Bad place to be.

JACK: Kill him! [Ali giggles]

JANINE: I lit- I was about to type 'spit on him' in the chat.

[laughter from all around]

ALI (as Tender): What could be safer than a prison?

AUSTIN: He like, looks out the window and nods to Quire.

AUSTIN (as Declan's): You know me. I-

ALI (as Tender): I don't know you.

AUSTIN (as Declan's): Fair.

ALI (as Tender): This isn't- this isn't a place you belong.

AUSTIN (as Declan's): Not yet.

ALI (as Tender): Not ever.

AUSTIN (as Declan's): Mm. Time's long.

ALI (as Tender): I am a person who can understand a lot of things can change, but I can also change things.

AUSTIN (as Declan's): You and me both. Something big is coming. That's why I left. There is something strange happening in the Mirage. Something with that planet. Something with the last Divine. Something with those things that were in the prison.

ALI (as Tender): And how have you decided to fuck it up?

AUSTIN (as Declan's): Mmm. The thing that's coming is not good. [Ali chuckles] Not by a- any means. I'm not trying to get- I'm not trying to make anything good bad here. I'm trying to make something bad more liveable.

ALI (as Tender): I do not like your standard of good and bad.

AUSTIN (as Declan's): We are all going to need to get used to living with other people's standards soon. [Ali chuckles] Me included. There will not be-

ALI (as Tender): Right.

AUSTIN (as Declan's): Room for ideological purity.

ALI (as Tender): Right. And this is coming from someone who killed twenty seven of our Divines. And is so proud of it. Who only just made the choice to care about the people here.

AUSTIN (as Declan's): I did. I can't- there's no answer to that that isn't - I did. That is the thing that I did. And now something worse is coming. Worse than me. And I'm going to live through it. And so are other people. Don't waste what you got. I spent hundreds of years in there. Learning how to do what you've picked up in a few months.

AUSTIN: And he concentrates for a moment. And you're in your temple with him.

AUSTIN (as Declan's): Don't waste it. I don't care that your vision for the future is different than mine. I just want you to have one.

ALI: God this is. It's hard like, knowing how she would react. Truthfully, cause this is pretty jarring.

AUSTIN: Right.

ALI: But she- this is not a person that she wants to be jarred in front of.

AUSTIN: No.

ALI: And I think that she's probably pretty good at suppressing that a little bit.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Also like the- this is- she is [chuckles] this is really, this wouldn't make someone really angry. [giggles]

AUSTIN: Janine has some suggestions in chat.

ALI: Jesus!

AUSTIN: She says 'get Morning's to spit on him - I hate this dad', could you like remake the prison cell around him or just as a 'hey bud'.

ALI: Mmm. I don't know if like, getting a rise out of him is the thing that-

AUSTIN: Right.

ALI: I'm trying to think of what the best thing to like hand to him would be. I guess also the implications of like, that he'd been here before too. Like he was the-

AUSTIN: Mmm. I think the implication he was trying to make just there was like, you owe me too.

ALI: No, I mean like, he was the one that put those petals down, or was that?

AUSTIN [overlapping with Ali]: Yeah, definitely. That was definitely him, yeah.

ALI: And then like, I think that she's starting to put two and two together.

AUSTIN: Oh yeah.

ALI: Yeah I'm trying to think- or like oh it doesn't have to be an object and that's a whole thing.

AUSTIN: Oh right. Right, inside

ALI: She's just-

AUSTIN [overlapping with Ali]: her digital space you mean?

ALI: Right, she can just make an object.

AUSTIN: Yup. Yeah, you're looking at charge object here, basically?

ALI: Yeah, basically.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Is he still smoking?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: Janine- [giggles] Janine [unintelligible] a suggestion it's like- A flex that I'm coming around on actually

AUSTIN: Uh huh

ALI: Was that I should change his cigarette into a lighter?

AUSTIN: Oh that's, that's pretty funny.

ALI: He has to light my cigarette, which is like a weirdly-

AUSTIN: That is extremely good though. [Ali laughs] Cause you could just- it doesn't have to be in his mouth. Or I think like we- he could take a puff like, pull the cigarette out, and look down at it, and it's a lighter, is pretty good.

ALI: Right. And then I pull out a cigarette very slowly and don't make eye contact him and like-

AUSTIN [overlapping with Ali]: Yeah. Exactly.

ALI: The expected thing is like-

AUSTIN: Uh huh. No I love it, it's so good.

ALI [overlapping with Austin]: Very. Okay.

AUSTIN: Yes, absolutely. Roll and add plus one for each flow you expect. Remember.

ALI: Okay. I have one. I have one.

AUSTIN: Alright so roll plus one.

ALI: Two d6 plus one. Oh, I'm feeling- this is probably a powerful.

AUSTIN: Oh this is absolutely a powerful, are you fucking kidding me? [Ali chuckles] Boom!

ALI: I did it!

JANINE: Nice.

AUSTIN: Ten!

JANINE: It's a ten.

AUSTIN: Ay! Alright, so. On a hit when an NPC touches your object, you can choose one thing from the following list that happen. They suffer humanity harm. You may ask them how blank relates to blank. You learn what emotion they're feeling right now and any thoughts and memories that are tied to those feelings. On a- I think that's- I think that that's everything? Or- I think that also, they get an impression you leave behind on the object. The MC will let you know what kind and to what expect the impression you left behind is.

ALI: Oh, that's only a-

AUSTIN: No, no no that's a bad thing. Okay, I see. I see.

ALI: That's like the-

AUSTIN: Yes.

ALI: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Gotcha. I thought that was like a bonus.

ALI: I mean it can happen, but that's like a-

AUSTIN: Yeah.

ALI: I don't know. Oh, these options.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ALI: [Ali laughs] I only get one!

AUSTIN: You get one. You only get one.

ALI: I'm like curious what emotion he's feeling but I also wanna hurt him. Cause that's really funny.

AUSTIN: Mhm. You've- you've- to be clear you've hurt him [Ali laughs] in the sense you've one upped him for sure.

ALI: Yeah, exactly.

AUSTIN: Just to be- just for that to be clear.

ALI: Yeah. Yeah, I think that that's like, I think that she- that's the thing. Cause like she's questioning how genuine is.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Okay. So the thing is what he's feeling.

ALI: Right, yes. So I'm choosing-

AUSTIN: What emotion he's feeling right now, and any thoughts or memories. Okay. He is very scared. He is like, spiked out on scared. He has been running projections in his prison, for years. And like, gaining data from every detachment that comes in? Bit by bit, putting together different predictions, different models, different- more- more information about the various things in the Twilight Mirage. And what you see is a vision of the future. It like, we- we slip in this moment into like, complete like, psychic space. I don't know what this looks like, you tell me what this looks like. What does- what does the- a vision of like, the potent- not just the potential future, but like, pushed to eleven, full on like, we've left behind material reality, this is a realm of like, astro-projections and, you know. Metaphorical materiality. Like, is it just bright colours? Is it, is it like silhouettes on- on bright white light? Is it like, music as much as it's like visual?

ALI: I think it's a little bit of that. The first thing that comes to mind when you say that, is there was like, a exhibit of jellyfish in the-

AUSTIN: Oooh.

ALI: Toronto aquarium?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ALI: Where it would be- it was like this huge wall full of them, and then the lights would like switch every so often? They would switch gradually, of like these different colours, and these different figures that were floating. And like, the way that the light like, reflected into their bodies and then also like, littered throughout the water?

AUSTIN: Right.

ALI: And I think that it's like, that kind of thing?

AUSTIN: Yeah. So, I think it's, instead of a jellyfish, it is the Mirage. It is the Mirage from spa-like from, above. Looking into it. And it's filled with lights. There are three hundred lights that are brighter than the others, but there are just a billion lights in there. And, bit by bit the big bright lights go out, right? And you know what that is.

[Ali chuckles]

AUSTIN: [continued] And then in the middle, or towards the middle of the Mirage, there is another light that is like, begins to spin around a dark version of itself. And like it's like, it's like spinning faster and faster and then, lights on the edge of the Mirage begin to go out. And the Mirage begins to collapse inward. And then one by one by one the lights on the edges of the Mirage go out, and I think there's like a heavy drum beat or something as this is happening. And then like it gets closer and closer and the- the things in the center get bigger and bigger. And it is a single, it is this big bright light, and then this dark like, orb. And the bright light explodes. And then, where there was once one light, there are now eight. Organised around that solid orb. And they are all flickering? And the orb is shaking. And it begins to grow. And it like, as it grows, you see it split open, and you see it just has this like, row after row after row of teeth, glistening. Like, wet, liquid running running down its mouth. And it opens and swallows each of the lights. And he lights your cigarette.

AUSTIN (as Declan's): The future is coming. Whether we want it to or not.

ALI: I think that there's like, again, I don't want to say that she's unfazed, but like,

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah.

ALI: I think that she like slowly drags on the cigarette and then says,

AUSTIN: Mhm.

ALI (as Tender): Is this so much different from the future you imagined for us when you came here?

AUSTIN (as Declan's): I've had hundreds of years, I have imagined a number of futures. This is worse than many of those.

ALI (as Tender): You're never gonna get it. You're never gonna get it- it's not worth arguing.

AUSTIN (as Declan's): No. It's not. I'm gonna get back in my car. I'm gonna leave. Good luck with them. They're fools.

AUSTIN: And he like looks up towards the top of the station and shakes his head.

ALI (as Tender): Just know that you're never going to get better at this than I am.

AUSTIN (as Declan's): Don't need to be better, just need to be good.

[people chuckle]

ALI (as Tender): Yeah, until-

AUSTIN (as Declan's): Hm?

ALI (as Tender): [chuckles] Until you need to be better.

AUSTIN (as Declan's): No. This doesn't need to become a thing. I can live a really good life. I can help a lot of people. I can die happy. This doesn't need to become a thing. That's not how thing works.

ALI (as Tender): I don't know that you get to decide that.

AUSTIN (as Declan's): Mm. Being see you.

ALI (as Tender): Yeah, I suppose so.

AUSTIN: And he steps back, out of this- this place and into his car.

JACK: This piece of shit- [Ali shrieks in laughter]

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

JACK: Fucking hate Declan's Corrective.

AUSTIN: I like it. [shrieking continues] He's good.

JANINE: Yeah, I kind of like him. I'm coming around.

ALI: Janine-

AUSTIN: I don't know he's like- I don't know, you put- you put a shithead in a prison for four hundred years.

JANINE: I can like a character I also want to spit on.

ALI: This is true.

JANINE: That's 90% of Dragon Age.

[laughter all around]

AUSTIN: Yup!

JANINE: Yeah I'm not gonna lie.

AUSTIN: Alright. So. I think we get- we get a few things in a row now. We get-

[MUSIC - "Just Give It Some Thought" starts]

AUSTIN: A shot of Cascara calling Signet first. Appearing I guess, on- on screens throughout Belgard. Her face shows up and, she lets you know- she says:

AUSTIN (as Cascara): I wanna give you a heads up. I'm going to need you to choose where to go. You can't be everywhere at once. The Iconoclasts. The Cadent. The evacuation. They each need attention. Give it some thought, okay? Just- just give it some thought.

AUSTIN: And then we get a wide shot of Tender in the empty streets of the By-and-By, and we get Cascara's face appearing again in the Mesh. But we don't hear her. It's just this beautiful, wide pastel shot of the interior of the- the lowest floor of the By-and-By and, you know, instead of- instead of hearing her and the conversation, the camera moves off to a ship in the distance. The World Without End, where Fourteen Fifteen, you receive a different call. One from Miss's Castlerose. And this one is audio only, and it kind of bounces around the wooden- the wooden fixtures of the room that you're in. She says,

AUSTIN (as Castlerose): I'm calling out of courtesy, Fourteen. There have been other Castlerose agents sent inbound to the By-and-By. Running an intersecting operation. Do be careful. I would hate to see more company property broken.

AUSTIN: And then, we just see the dock come into view through a window behind you. And when you come out onto the deck, you see the Fisherman mopping your blood off the deck. And when he sees you coming out, he tosses the mop into a little port, sucks it into a hole in the ship and he brushes his hands off, and he begins to leave, walking off the deck to the By-and-By.

JACK (as Fourteen): Hey. Hey!

AUSTIN (as the Fisherman): Fourteen.

[music ends]

JACK (as Fourteen): Hey er- thanks for saving me from the fish. And thanks for, you know, it was good advice. I'm gonna try and keep it in mind.

AUSTIN (as the Fisherman): I've a quick way for you to be able to remember that.

JACK (as Fourteen): Yeah?

AUSTIN (as the Fisherman): Take notes!

JACK (as Fourteen): [chuckling] Thank you. Thank you. What are you going to do?

AUSTIN (as the Fisherman): Kick around a little bit. Place like this, lots of ships going in, lots of ships going out. There'll be people to meet. I've always-

JACK (as Fourteen): Stay safe.

AUSTIN (as the Fisherman): You-

AUSTIN: He says.

AUSTIN (as the Fisherman): You, too.

AUSTIN: He doesn't continue the thought he had before. About what he's always done. And he leaves. The camera holds a profile shot of him. His dark brown skin, his ratty beard, his wool cap. And then just sort of follows him out of this dock. And he turns and walks out to a different dock, and we hear the doors close and soon the sound of a ship leaving. It takes a moment before you realise it. He's left The World Without End to you. And then we see a scene of the Beloved ship.

[MUSIC - "Everything Is Where It Needs To Be" starts]

AUSTIN: [continued] Where Massalia docks the Melodica, their mech, and the camera goes the docking bay and into the kitchen, where Chiron and Waltz Tango Cache are debating dinner preparation, while Acre Seven sits quietly at the table contemplating time. And then we move into Sho's room. Where she's cleaning her blade carefully. And then kneels in front of the shrine that is just dense, overflowing, with little statues of the three hundred Divines. And you can see her mouthing words to a prayer.

AUSTIN: [continued] And then we see Morning's Observation putting down a book and bringing up the sound editing augmented reality overlay that he used to crack the weird signal from Privign. And you see him start to tinker, to play around, to make music. A drum beat. A synthesized line. He pulls up a sample from a long, long time ago.

AUSTIN: [continued] And then we move elsewhere. We see Echo Reverie piloting the Holiday Gambit, eyepatch on, with their mech, the Overture, sort of strapped to the top of the ship. And they are effortlessly using the data from the eyepatch to help them pilot it into space for the first time. And you can see it all over their face. They were a prisoner once, and now they have the freedom to go anywhere they want. And they head towards the By-and-By. Towards the rendezvous point set by Myriad. They are committed to helping, to fighting, to doing whatever is necessary to make the lives of other people better.

AUSTIN: [continued] And we see Myriad and her crew breaking atmosphere and coming into orbit around Quire. Between the planet and the By-and-By, which even now has begun to launch preliminary evacuation vessels. We see Even Gardner, a couple of Cascabel rounds bouncing around in his hands, his wings folded up behind him, but moving here and there on their own. We see Gig Kephart finalizing his broadcast about the resort destination of New Independence, searching for just the right picture of a sunset to show the world. And we see Grand Magnificent, drawing with light in the air, drawing and redrawing, drawing and redrawing his creation. The body of Independence. The perfect machine. His responsibility.

AUSTIN: [continued] And the camera crossfades from his sketch to the real thing. Independence, its cockpit destroyed and bloody, hurtling through the air towards Volition, moving out of obligation or necessity or programming, it's hard to know. And we get a shot from behind it, gleaming with blinding diamond light, refracting all of the colours of the Mirage, and in front of it, too perfect a sphere. The bubbling, boiling mass - Volition.

AUSTIN: [continued] And then we get another crossfade to a figurine of Independence that Cascara has placed on the Beloved's tactile, 3D map. We see her from a chair, looking over the entire field, figuring out how to fight a war on three fronts. And the camera pans just so and, we see that there's another figure in the room with her, a woman out of focus. And that hand reaches down and slides a new piece into place. And we see Cascara nod slowly. Everything is where it needs to be.

[music ends]

AUSTIN: [continued] And that is where we all are now. The- Fourteen Fifteen and Tender are in the By-and-By. Signet is in Belgard. Echo is in the Holiday Gambit. Even, Grand and Gig are all in Myriad. And- you're there when you see the communication or are in the presence of- I think on the Beloved ship, Blooming is- is on the ship. Directly. Blooming, the Excerpt of Empyrean. The final Divine as of a week ago, though now I guess Belgard makes that a little more complicated?

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And- I think Blooming- what's- what's like battle dress look like? I'm gonna ask Janine as the- the other remaining Excerpt here like. What does- is there like, what does a General wear? Like, what does an Excerpt wear when it's time to be a General, versus them to be a religious figure?

JANINE: So I think, we've talked a lot about robes in the past, and we've also talked a lot about jumpsuits in the past. And I think it's probably between the two? Like I imagine- I've talked a lot about Signet's own like jumpsuit and I sort of picture- the little sort of ports in the shoulders that sucks vestments in? When she like,

AUSTIN: Mhm

JANINE: Quote unquote transforms but not really. I imagine like there's a kind of vestment or something that flows sort of out of that? So it kind of,

AUSTIN: Right

JANINE: There's, there's like a very, probably very strong awareness that there's a practical purpose to what they're wearing. But there is still like, some kind of-

AUSTIN: Ceremony?

JANINE: Train?

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: Like a combination of train pauldron kind of thing going on?

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: If that makes sense?

AUSTIN: Cool. Yeah, totally. So, she is the first one to address everyone. And what she says is:

AUSTIN (as Blooming): Beloved's Ivy, Dust, Lost. Myriad and your crew. Our guest, Ms Demani Dusk, agent of the Rapid Evening. In a moment, commander Cascara will provide details about what is about to unfold. But first, I must speak frankly. What is at stake today is not simply the legacy of the Divine Fleet. Not only the lives of the faithful. The galaxy itself is in a moment of terminal crisis. And those of us here are perhaps the only ones with the knowledge or ability to address it. Find strength in the fact that as members of the Resonant Orbit, you have all lived under existential threat for your entire lives. Each breath is resistance. And know that I have faith in all of you. And that I will be on the battlefield beside you. Now. Commander, the details.

AUSTIN: And so for those who are on the Beloved ship, Cascara rolls up to the kind of, top of the, the kind of two- two layered, two floors that we've kind of talked about at the kind of reception area? The lounge area, and the kitchen? Which is sort of like the makeshift, kind of place where everyone just kind of talks? This is not happening in the war room, this is happening in the kind of more laid back, more relaxed environment of that lounge. I think she wants everyone to be comfortable. And she says:

AUSTIN (as Cascara): Thank you Excerpt. As Blooming says, it is bad. But bad is not actionable, and we are in the business of acting. So. I'm going to get to details.

AUSTIN (as Cascara): [continued] First. The Cadent Under Mirage has been kidnapped by a separatist movement from the By-and-By that is calling itself Sui Juris. It is led by Open Metal, a former colonist and associate of Tender Sky. She is a skilled tactician, a charismatic leader, and has also been infiltrated, the group, by members of a recently arrived kill-team sent by the New Earth Hegemony. The group seeks to establish the By-and-By as the new capital of the Fleet, and barring that, is threatening to secede from the Fleet entirely and begin a new independent and sovereign society on Quire. The fact they hold the Cadent makes that threat a little more credible. People will go where the Cadent is, especially with the current status of the Divines among the Fleet.

AUSTIN (as Cascara): [continued] Speaking of Quire, there is the second threat. Something is happening to the Mirage. We didn't notice it until our new friend, Dusk here, brought us her scans which we have verified. The Mirage is collapsing. Excerpt Blooming and the Divine Emphyrean have been unable to figure out why. It started very very slowly, it's why we didn't notice it at first. We thought it was, regular fluctuation on the edges. But it is now gaining speed rapidly. Exponentially. And oddly, the constriction is centered here, around Quire. What that means is that the protection offered by the Mirage is going to go away. And what that means is that we're expediting our efforts to send refugees to the planet, below. We are moving very quickly here, people. We believe that we can send the bulk of the Fleet to land in about one week's time. There are two subproblems here, beyond what any refugee attempt would already bring. Any

emigration is immediately difficult and has its own logistical problems, of which I am not fond of. But on top of that, the scans reveal something else.

AUSTIN (as Cascara): [continued] First, an incoming fleet from the New Earth Hegemony. Something like twenty to thirty ships. Probably around three hundred, four hundred people. There is something strange about this fleet besides its size. Which is remarkable, this is the largest fleet that they've sent. The second problem is that the ship design don't match the ones that arrived six months ago. Or the ones that arrived thirty years before that. They have new engines, new weapons, and the IFF tags say that they aren't due to arrive for another three to five hundred years. They'll be here tonight. We don't know why.

AUSTIN (as Cascara): [continued] The second problem of the evacuation is Volition. Which is probably the most existential threat of all. I am going to have Miss Dusk explain Volition because she has context information that is new to me.

AUSTIN: And Demani Dusk stands before you. She is a black woman with dark lipstick. She has a kind of like, a braided mohawk that goes like down her back, kind of long and dark eye makeup. She is wearing like, high pauldrons, no sleeves, kind of like- a purple undershirt underneath this like, tight black like, hard case vest? And then like, slick black slacks. And she is able to seemingly pull up information in front of everybody that is not part of your normal like, like interfaces? Like, for you, Echo, even though you are not wired into the Mesh, even without your new cool eyepatch, you're able to see this as if it's just physically projected in front of you. As if there was just like, I don't like- it's weird Rapid Evening technology, you don't know how she's able to do this. But like, there is just like a map of the galaxy in front of you immediately. And so she says:

AUSTIN (as Demani): Hello everyone.

AUSTIN: That's not her voice, where's her voice? Her voice is down here. Yeah there she is. Okay.

[Ali chuckles]

AUSTIN (as Demani): Hello everyone. My name is Demani Dusk. I am a member of the Rapid Evening. Which is a group not too dissimilar from yours. We represent a civilisation called the Principality of Kesh, and if you're wondering why you haven't heard of us, that is because we are very good not being heard of. And we prefer it that way, for the safety of our citizens. My role is as Primary Observer of the Divine Fleet, Quire, and the Divine Independence. A task that I will hold until my death, or until HQ replaces me. Normally it's until death. My organisation has been tracking Independence for fifty thousand years. Somewhere around the thirty thousand year mark, it was part of a schism that goes back to your own culture's birth. For reasons that we do not know, it

attempted to prevent the unification of the Resonant Orbit and the creation of the Divine Fleet.

AUSTIN (as Demani): [continued] Soon after that, it found its way to Earth. At that point, Earth was still where many believe it to be now. In the Orion arm of the Milky Way galaxy. For those of you who don't know, Earth is at the center of the galaxy now. I know that that sounds strange, hopefully none of you are history buffs, and that means this isn't so much of a shock to you, because you barely know what Earth is. In any case, Independence is a large part of why Earth made that move. It was part of a great deal of chaos there. While the Divine Fleet flourished, Earth was wrought for tens of thousands of years. Filled with strife and civil conflict and all of that climaxed in the Divine led transport of that planet to its current location. And then, that culminated in the apparent destruction of Independence. Which was sent hurtling through space into the dark. Our calculations, and our calculations tend to be very good, had it en route to the Benthos system, which is at the edge of the Mirage. And there it was supposed to be swallowed whole by a star. Destroyed.

AUSTIN (as Demani): [continued] That is not what happened. A solar flare we think, sent it off course and it landed on Quire. Now. At the time, Quire was living in its own Golden Age, it was flourishing itself. The thing that we call the planet Quire is in fact a being, Quire, it's a living thing with an intelligence and a consciousness much different than ours, but a living being nonetheless. A combination of that being's innate properties had previously mixed called the Gnosis virus, a sort of biotechnological being that impacts the language center of whatever it infects. In this case, it stabilized Quire in a series of events that, would again, be pretty hard to predict. That infection, that stabilisation, allowed Quire to live harmoniously with the residents side of the planet, and they stayed that way until Independence arrived.

AUSTIN (as Demani): [continued] When Independence arrived, [sighs] war followed. All out war. On a scale that the planet had never dealt with. In the end, the civilisation on Quire was largely destroyed. Thankfully, the Divine Independence was also defeated. It was cut down, and its component parts: mind, heart, circulatory system, body, were broken up, destroyed, separated. In some cases, lost. Unfortunately, Independence had descendents. First, the group that some of you have already run in to. The one that charmingly calls themselves the Independents. That group, despite knowing the failings of the Divine, chose to point to earlier periods in the being's life, where it was not such a devastating presence and, seeing the Divine Fleet under the threat that it was, decided to put an effort to resurrect their god.

AUSTIN (as Demani): [continued] The second group, the group you know as the Iconoclasts, who- god I'm not even sure if who is the right word- who- no it's who. They're people, somehow- who were scarred by the death of their god, were consumed by guilt. They believe that Independence failing was caused by its tie to people, like

them. And they decided that maybe, Independence should turn into something else. Or be replaced by something else. Something not like people. Something not like people the way Quire was not like people.

AUSTIN (as Demani): [continued] And so first, they went to work on themselves. Using the raw material of Quire to turn into something other than human. And then they started their dream of something beyond a Divine. By their count, Divines are built to be used by people. To protect and help people. Even when things go disastrously wrong, people are at the center. And so, they see that Divines are marked by the biases and the perceptions of people. And that's why they wanted a Divine, or something like them, that wasn't touched by a human or a synthetic hand. Something with a will of its own, something that is will. And something that would make other things like it. And so they built Volition. A machine god unlike any other. Even to say that they built it is wrong, they pushed a snowball down a hill, it built itself from there. No bias, they think. And now it is vast and powerful. Worse, headed towards it as we speak, are the body, heart and circulatory system of the Divine Independence. And already on that orb, Volition, is Independence's mind. Its core.

AUSTIN (as Demani): [continued] Volition by itself is already a massive threat. It wants to rewrite the world in a more perfect image. But if Independence can be completed and joined with Volition, it will not only be a source of chaos. It will be malicious. It will be a force of its own. And if that happens, I fear what may come. The Rapid Evening, they didn't send us here just to watch the Divine Fleet die. They sent us here to intercede if an Annihilation-Class event threatened the galaxy again. An intercession does not look good for anyone in this fleet. I am breaking orders being here today. I should be sitting in a canister in orbit, waiting to press a button. [sighs] That's really grim. I've watched you all work for months now. And I think you're supremely capable and. I am probably very bad at my job for saying this but, I think there is a chance that you could stop this. Even though many people have been unable to stop similar incidents in the past. [sighs] Anyway. That's my information.

AUSTIN: And Cascara nods. And says:

AUSTIN (as Cascara): Alright. People, we will be split up into three teams. You'll be the last best hope for the Fleet. I will leave deliberation to you all. I have some thoughts about where you'll all end up, but. Largely they'll be up to you. Any questions for any of us? Now is the time.

JACK (as Fourteen): I have a question.

AUSTIN (as Cascara): Fourteen.

AUSTIN: Oh by the way, everyone, Fourteen appears- Fourteen is a person from Quire, Fourteen is a lawyer who has head spines [Ali and Jack chuckle] and vestigial arm nubbins. Little wireframe glasses in my mind?

JACK (as Fourteen): Hi. I just- how much of the By-and-By has been taken by Open Metal and her band?

AUSTIN: Ali, how big- how many floors does the By-and-By have again?

ALI: It was, seven or eight? How many did you draw, Janine?

[Austin, Ali, others laugh]

JANINE: How many stamps are on the card, that's actually a good question.

ALI: Fuck I think- actually it was like something like eight-

JACK [overlapping with others]: It's like- eight? Eight.

AUSTIN [overlapping with others]: Critical worldbuilding. I feel like it's eight, right?

JANINE: I have- the Patreon, number 2-

AUSTIN: Yeah. You got it?

JANINE: [finding noises]. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven!

AUSTIN: Seven. I'd say that they have the top four floors, at this point.

JACK (as Fourteen): And how easy is movement within the ship?

AUSTIN: Tender?

ALI (as Tender): Easy enough if we have access.

AUSTIN: Just an elevator, right?

ALI: Yeah, yeah. That has been shut down, right?

JACK: Yeah we don't know- maybe it might've been-

AUSTIN: Right now it's running people from the bottom four floors to the bottom floor where they are boarding evacuation vessels. So we know at the very least that from the fourth floor down it's active.

JACK: We have control over the others.

AUSTIN: Yeah, for now. So yeah, maybe we send someone straight up to the top.

JACK (as Fourteen): Yeah. How many people are- does her band number?

AUSTIN (as Cascara): The number of people is small. It's, all said it's ten? But they have been reinforced with synthetic units. Synthetic is even the wrong word- robotic units. By- from the New Earth Hegemony. Which count in the dozens.

JACK (as Fourteen): Oh these things again.

AUSTIN: She nods. Morning's Observation says like.

AUSTIN (as Morning's): Torch units. They're- they're big and scary and weird. I'm not a fan.

JACK (as Fourteen): Yeah. It's- we've met them- it was.

AUSTIN (as Morning's): Did you meet the big ones? Or just the little ones.

JACK (as Fourteen): Tender?

ALI (as Tender): Wait. How big are the big ones?

JACK (as Fourteen): How big do they get?

AUSTIN: They- I mean. Morning's Observation like leans back on the couch and like [Ali giggles], moves his hands big and then bigger? [chuckles] Like:

AUSTIN (as Morning's): Bigger than this. They got-

JACK (as Fourteen): Yeah, the little ones.

AUSTIN (as Morning's): Okay.

ALI (as Tender): We saw the little ones. Yeah. They were like man sized?

AUSTIN (as Morning's): Okay, they get way bigger.

ALI (as Tender): Uff.

AUSTIN (as Morning's): Like, a small man, or a big man?

ALI (as Tender): Just like you.

AUSTIN (as Morning's): So small man. [Ali shrieks in laughter] They get bigger.

AUSTIN: Any other questions? [people start chuckling]

JACK: Hey, who beeped? Who pressed the beep button that signals questions?

KEITH (as Gig?): Sorry, no I'm sorry.

[Ali giggles]

SYLVIA (as Echo?): Was that Gig's eye again?

JACK: Hey, Austin I have a question? Beep

AUSTIN: Beep, beep.

ART [overlapping with others]: Um-

AUSTIN: Janine was just typing, who's that Torch Unit? That's good.

ALI: [conspiratorially] Who's that big torch unit? [giggles]

AUSTIN: There it is.

ART: I feel like I should have questions but also that this is both really out of my league and very far beneath me.

ALI: [Jack and Ali cackle] Wo-o-ow!

AUSTIN: No- Grand Magnificent is here, y'all. For people who never met Grand Magnificent- what are you wearing right now, Grand?

ART: Oh this is- this is like, is this continuously from when we ended?

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah.

ART: Okay, so I'm just wearing those clothes.

AUSTIN: You could've changed, I mean you were on your spaceship.

ART: Sure. No I think- I think I should keep- I mean I'm probably wearing long pants? And these are like, not the jeans of someone who should've like, gone to a planet, these are like,

AUSTIN: Good.

ART: Very fashionable, they're like, a little distressed, I've got like that wash on 'em.

AUSTIN: I'm a little distressed.

JANINE [overlapping with others]: Are they the kind-

KEITH [overlapping with others]: -not distressed from being on the planet.

AUSTIN: No.

KEITH: Cause you bought them distressed.

JANINE: Are they- sorry- are they the kind when you put in the freezer to clean them instead of washing them?

ART: Absolutely- none of Grand Magnificent's clothing have ever been washed in a traditional manner. It either has some sort of [Ali laughing in disbelief] weird thing that has to happen.

AUSTIN: God.

ART: Or it just gets thrown out. I mean what am I gonna do? I'm not a laundromat. [Janine groans]

ART: [continued, clarifying] I don't *build* laundromats.

ALI: You could.

AUSTIN: You could.

JACK: You could build a great laundromat.

JANINE: And then use it once.

AUSTIN: Okay, guys.

ART: No, you've all got good points. Maybe when this is over, that's- that's my- that's my endgame.

AUSTIN: That's your calling.

ART: That's my- maybe that's my ca- but I don't know. Right now I don't know about laundromats.

AUSTIN: God.

ART: Keith in the chat says this- that rhymes with how one of the Rooster Teeth guys said he never wears a pair of socks twice. Grand definitely wears his socks more than once.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ART: Wears them until they're not like, fun anymore. [Austin snorts] When the whimsy [Jack starts laughing] is out of his socks, [someone spits, Ali cackles]

AUSTIN [overlapping with Art]: This motherfucker.

ART: Then it's time to discard them.

AUSTIN: Okay. Good.

ART: Anyway, back to my original point.

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

ART: Huh? [people try to stop laughing]

AUSTIN (as Cascara): Grand.

ART (as Grand): Yes.

AUSTIN (as Cascara): Grand Magnificent. As the person who built the body of Independence.

ART (as Grand): Mm. We're still on that, huh.

AUSTIN (as Cascara): Uh huh. Do you know if it has any apparent weaknesses?

ART (as Grand): I mean, short answer? No.

[people just burst out laughing]

ART (as Grand): [continued] It's- it's the best design I've ever built. [people still chuckling] It's a sublime reflection of form. And function.

JACK (as Fourteen): Okay. I have some extra questions now. But I think we can- they are not necessary for the moment.

ART (as Grand): Its knees are so strong. [everyone just shrieking with laughter]

AUSTIN: In the chat Ali had said-

ART (as Grand) [overlapping with Austin]: You wouldn't- you wouldn't believe it.

AUSTIN: Ali says, could be anything you say, Art. Like as in, the weakness could be anything you say. Let's, and then, well. And then Janine said: extremely weak knees. Anything. [Ali and Keith just laughing]

ART: I realised that the last bit as a little more Donald Trump than I wanted it to be. So let's,

AUSTIN: Let's walk it back.

ART [overlapping with Austin]: I'm gonna, i'm gonna walk that back.

SYLVIA (as Echo): It didn't really like that gun that Even had.

ART (as Grand): Oh yeah. I built some bullets with some friends, and they were fantastic. We've shot both of the bullets, it took us two weeks to make two bullets. And they're both gone.

JANINE: Oh my god.

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

KEITH: And now we have more resources to make more bullets right?

ART: Yeah I don't- I don't know- I don't think there's an economies of scale problem, like I still think it would take a long time. If you-

JANINE [overlapping with others]: Actually-

AUSTIN: -resources are on Quire, is the other thing. Go ahead, what were you going to say, Signet?

JANINE (as Signet): I was going to say if we had those materials that actually, maybe, wouldn't be that bad. If you recall, Belgard was the Divine of perfect material efficiency?

AUSTIN: That's true. If you still had those bullets that would be good- maybe the bullets are still in it, and you could pull it out and turn it into more bullets.

KEITH: God, if only someone here had taken a handful of those bullets and still had them.

ALI: What are the bullets made out of?

AUSTIN: The very specially charged Glass from the planet that has been like, been injected with lightning over the course of thousands of years.

JANINE: What the fuck!

AUSTIN: Q-Glass, it's charged Q-Glass. Yeah.

ALI: Well, I also love Destiny 2.

AUSTIN: Yeah, it's dope.

[Andrew laughs]

AUSTIN: Yup. Yeah. Any other- any other questions. Totally fair to ask questions at like, anything you don't understand here. Like I have all the cards on the table. I don't have prep for after- oh that's not true, I have a little bit of prep for what comes next. But I don't have prep for like, there's no secrets at this point, I'm not holding anything back. If anyone has a question about the world or the history here I don't think there's anything I know definitely that I would be hiding at this point.

ART: Someone's gonna have to pretend to care, cause Grand Magnificent is not gonna do it.
[other's laughter]

AUSTIN: Pretend, or care?

ART: Both.

KEITH (as Gig): Someone has to care because Grand Magnificent is not gonna pretend to for them. [Ali giggles]

ART (as Grand): I'm not gonna care for you, I'm gonna pretend to care for you. Someone' just gotta get this shit figured out.

ALI (as Tender): Not even pretend?

KEITH(?): No.

ART (as Grand): I'm not gonna pretend to care.

SYLVIA(?): No.

JANINE (as Signet): Okay, I have-

ART (as Grand): That's not a skill I have.

JANINE (as Signet): I have a question.

AUSTIN (as Cascara): Mhm?

JANINE (as Signet): How did they destroy Independence the first time?

AUSTIN (as Cascara): Independence the first time was destroyed through immense hard work. Through the loss of lots of lives, and traditional means, it is why it was such a costly kill. The first body of Independence, which appears on your screen now, was not made of this weird glass. That new body was designed by Grand Magnificent as a reminder. And who wanted to go to Quire and build a Divine a new body, specifically, just again as a reminder. And the old one was just made of like, metal. [chuckling] It was just a big-

KEITH (as Gig): Are we?

AUSTIN (as Cascara): Hmm?

KEITH (as Gig): Are we sure he's on our side? [cackling and shrieking all around]

AUSTIN (as Cascara): I think he-

KEITH (as Gig): I seems he accomplished his exact objective which is now the problem that we're facing.

AUSTIN: It's close.

ART: I mean that's all- if you believe that I knew the objective was going to be the problem, which of course-

KEITH [overlapping with Art]: Well your objective was to do- your objective was to build the thing you built.

AUSTIN: To be fair, he didn't know that the Divine was going to be Independence, and that it was going to be terrible.

SYLVIA: To be fair he also did build like an unkillable murder machine.

AUSTIN: Well a very, a very powerful person asked him to do that.

KEITH: Yeah, he-

ANDREW [overlapping with Keith]: Yeah, he was building it for the Doyenne.

KEITH: Yeah he thought that he was building an unkillable murder machine for like, a shitty ruler, not- that also was not expressly on our side.

ART: I was just giving Robespierre the best gui- guillotine in town.

[Janine groans]

ART: And now I'm feeling so attacked right now.

AUSTIN [overlapping with Art]: Oh god.

KEITH: Jesus Christ.

AUSTIN: Good lord. God.

ALI: In his defense she was going to give it to him.

AUSTIN: Was she? [people chuckling]

ALI: She thought of that. She said she was.

AUSTIN: She thought about it. [almost mockingly] She thought about it [Ali chuckling]. She was secretly like, the worst person.

ANDREW: Not that secretly.

AUSTIN: No, well, I think there was a degree of secrecy.

ANDREW: I think the depths weren't readily apparent.

AUSTIN: To put that on the table I'm just going to like, have this abstract conversation like. She was someone who had good intentions originally, for sure, like when she took over the- the-

KEITH: The Doyennecy?

AUSTIN: Well she- she's the first Doyenne. So before that there was a king, right? She was the first one who was "what if we had like, not a traditional king instead, and instead it was whoever was the best of art was in charge?" Which was her. And then from there, kind of gained access to knowledge she should not have had, which was about Independence, and her particular philosophies of life, made her like, an Independent who was aligned with the Iconoclasts? That didn't go well. That didn't go well for her, that didn't go well for anybody, but especially not her.

JACK: Was the fact that she turned the old king into the- a tour guide, maybe a clue-

AUSTIN: That was a clue.

JACK: that she- [unintelligible]

AUSTIN [overlapping with Keith]: Listen. That's clue. That's a good clue, although a thing that I realised recently if you read the episode descriptions, a recent one includes the fact that Kamala Cadent- Kamala Cadence, also left a blank space for Independence in Memorius' library. Which is literally the same thing that Undela Apogica did with the previous king. So I don't know. You know, sometimes it turns out okay.

JACK: Oh yeah. Yeah.

AUSTIN: So yeah, the previous- to answer your question, Signet. Previous, previous body of Independence was basically a massive battleship? Like a millipede but with guns? And so they killed it by killing it.

JANINE [overlapping with Austin]: How expensive is a millipede? Fifteen dollars?

AUSTIN: The the- [chuckles]

JANINE: Seventy two.

AUSTIN: At least seventy two dollars, yes.

ANDREW: God damn it. So mad at this conversation [chuckles].

[Austin sighs, Jack sighs]

AUSTIN: So yeah.

JACK: I have a- a kind of a less in character and more just sort of plot question?

AUSTIN: Yes.

JACK: The- the- the either the Primary or Satellite that we encountered in Privign-

AUSTIN: Yes.

JACK: In the body of the old Excerpt?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JACK: My- my reading on that right, is that that was the- was that a Primary or a Satellite?

AUSTIN: That was- Satellite.

JACK: A Satellite.

AUSTIN: Yep.

JACK: My reading on that right, that was the Satellite that was contemporary with Independence-

AUSTIN [overlapping with Jack]: Correct.

JACK: First crashing with them realising that it wasn't going to hit Benthos?

AUSTIN [overlapping with Jack] Yes. Pass through. Yeah, totally. Hundred percent right. Their job was to make sure it crashed into Benthos, and if it somehow got caught up in Ben- sorry, crashed into the sun at Benthos, the star at Benthos, and if it had instead passed through the system but missed the star, was to, ignite an explosive device that would have swallowed the whole system. And probably-

JACK: Which they didn't do? And-

AUSTIN: Cause it didn't pass through. Because it- it like had a different course. I guess they could've still pulled the trigger on that, and killed all those people? And maybe saved it?

JACK [overlapping with Austin]: I kind of like this because like that's exactly, that's exactly what this-

AUSTIN: Yes!

JACK: Satellite is also not doing. Just going like, I also won't pull the trigger.

AUSTIN: Right, right. The way it works is like, the Primaries pull the trigger, the Satellites are the bombs. Satellites are where the bomb is.

JACK: Ohhh.

AUSTIN: So, yeah. Which is great, that's a fantastic place to be.

JACK: No it's not.

AUSTIN: No, it's bad. [others chuckle] I mean listen, anywhere near it, you're toast, right?

JACK: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Other questions?

ANDREW: So is the planet of Quire still- I mean I guess sick is the way that they described it?

AUSTIN: What do you mean by sick, like? Is Gnosis still there?

ANDREW: Well they- Yeah.

AUSTIN: Yes, Gnosis is still there. And it is, it was devastated by the War on Independence, but like, it lives as it- as shown when it got up and started chasing Gig and Armstrong.

ANDREW: Yeah. So is that going to continue causing problems for the people that live there?

AUSTIN: I mean it- might stop causing problems? It might- maybe we enter a new Golden Age and it starts working with people again the way it used to. You know. It offered up the Divine heart to- or it allowed the Divine heart to be taken by Gig, Lily, and Cart-horn. So,

[MUSIC - "Twilight Mirage" starts]

AUSTIN: [continued] People who are not- Ship Side who are not caught up on Ground Game. There's a character named Cart-horn, named Leaf Cart-horn, just, just to be clear [Jack chuckles]. And it was fine with them taking the heart from their like, weird pit, so, who knows? But it was not fine with the Independents getting that heart. It is a thinking being.

ART: And it likes us best, so we're at a distinct advantage. [Ali giggles]

AUSTIN: Yeah. Okay. It sounds like there aren't any more questions, which is again, fair, either way. It's a lot. So next week, Miracle of the Mirage, Part 1.

[music ends]

[episode ends]