

Twilight Mirage 38: The Good Decision

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JACK: Previously on Friends at the Table.

AUSTIN: [narrating] Very quietly over the last six months, teenagers have been disappearing from Big Garage, Seiche, and the smaller settlements of Gift-3. It has been easy to miss. When you first landed on Gift-3, Alabaster Went got in touch with you and asked for your help. He believes that his niece Winchester has been abducted and brainwashed by the New Earth Hegemony. His evidence— and he presents this to you in a form you're familiar with— a liquid metal .gif that kind of projects upward from this robotic drone on the ground,

[MUSIC - "The Notion" begins]

AUSTIN: that shows Winchester, pale and awkward and freckled being lifted into the air by a massive red Torch Unit.

Grand, you get up from your position, and you like, lean up over the edge of another workstation. And on the back of this Torch Unit— where normally there's just a plain white metal plate— that plate has been filled in with a tattoo. The tattoo is of a big smelly piece of garlic.

AUSTIN (as Orellia): Garlic, I know you've earned it, but you're too important. We have to try it on someone else first.

AUSTIN: And then Garlic says back in hand signal,

AUSTIN (as Garlic): I know I'm important, but I should be the one taking the risk.

AUSTIN: And then the kid says,

AUSTIN (as Orellia): Sorry, but we have to listen to what Vanya says.

AUSTIN: And spells out Vanya, V A N Y A.

JACK (as Fourteen Fifteen): Alright. We can go. We can leave here and let you keep doing what you're doing. And that's, y'know, that's kind of appealing. But when we go back, and the people who are worried about Winchester and about the others? They're gonna send other people, and I cannot promise you that we are gonna be better than the next people who are gonna come, but they're gonna come. And this opportunity is gonna go. You don't have to come back with us, we're not gonna take you back or tell anybody where you are. We just want to try and unpick this situation at least a little.

AUSTIN (as Orellia): The big guy thinks you're telling the truth. I can set up a meet. I'm not bringing you back with me. But. I can—

AUSTIN: And then, as she says, "I can," the alarm starts going.

[MUSIC - "The Notion" ends]

AUSTIN (as Orellia): Shit. We have to— cover us.

AUSTIN: And she turns back to this console, and she starts typing into these keys. And starts to move Yam on top of this work station.

AUSTIN (as Orellia): Ten minutes before they get here, probably. We're up pretty high. But I have to do this, this really complicated procedure. I have to install this—

AUSTIN: and she holds up just a collection of wires and circuits—

AUSTIN (as Orellia): into Yam, and I don't know that we're gonna have time, so just. Cops. You can leave now, and you can meet me by the Eastern Gate in three days.

KEITH (as Gig): Wait, what is that thing? What is that?

AUSTIN (as Orellia): It's gonna let Yam talk. (KEITH: Oh.) We're downloading— we're taking the design, and we're also installing the prototype just to see if it works.

AUSTIN: And she like, slides over on a stool and pops this very— not dramatically, but very nonchalantly actually— just uses a screwdriver to pop the front cover off of Yam? And beings to try to start wiring this thing in. Garlic—

KEITH: Can I help?

AUSTIN: Totally. Do you know how? I guess—

KEITH: I know how to robot.

AUSTIN: How do you say you can help? Yeah, you do.

KEITH (as Gig): I can maybe help? I can maybe help.

AUSTIN (as Orellia): You can help?

KEITH (as Gig): I can definitely help.

AUSTIN (as Orellia): This isn't the same thing as building an ice skating rink, Gig.

KEITH (as Gig): I'm really good with robot stuff. Ice skating rink. Why are you so mad that I helped those kids skate on ice?

AUSTIN (as Orellia): [sighs] Garlic, go watch the door. Gig, pick up a screwdriver.

AUSTIN: I'm starting a new clock. Um. And this clock also— you know what, this is going to be a shorter clock. This is going to be a four-step clock that you do not want to go up because this is going to be "Cops arrive."

[crosstalk]

KEITH: Real cops.

ALI: (unintelligible)

ART: On the other hand, that would definitively prove that we're not cops.

AUSTIN: It would. That's true. That's true. That's a good point, I hadn't thought about it.

Whoops, I didn't mean to move that. So, what do y'all do? What's everybody, I know what Gig is doing at this point.

JACK: Ah, I'm gonna make toward the door and try and head where upstairs stairs are.

AUSTIN: Sure. Good idea.

JACK: I guess stairs in both directions. But the stairs that they will be coming up, or elevators that they will be coming up from.

AUSTIN: Alright. There's an elevator on the far end of the hallway. So you are on floor 28 of this tower. And you came in through scaffolding on the western window, western side right there. And you know that there are huge like— other rooms, other offices. There's probably another office that's this big. You don't know that for sure, but that is the size of things. So the windows are there. And then on the left-hand side of the western side, there's a long hallway. The room you're in is one of the first ones to the north. And then at the far other end of the hallway, there are— an elevator door is there and an emergency stairwell there. You know what? There's probably also an emergency stairwell here. And then you came in through the scaffolding that is repairing the outside of the wall, basically. As far as you can tell, all of those are locked down currently. So where are you going, Fourteen?

JACK: I'm gonna make for the elevator at the far eastern end of the corridor.

AUSTIN: Okay. Um—

ALI: I'm ... [laughs] This is gonna be a bad idea, and I'm gonna talk this through and you're gonna know it's a bad idea. But the alarm was tripped by—

AUSTIN: By Millet, one of those little flying drones.

ALI: But accidentally, because they were also breaking into here, right?

AUSTIN: Well, 'cause they were investigating what y'all were up to. Yeah.

ALI: 'Cause I'm saying this fully realizing that we also snuck into this building. (AUSTIN: Uh huh.) But in a way to like, cover for everyone else escaping, is there a way to go down to the ground floor and be like, "False alarm, everyone. It's okay."

AUSTIN: That's not a bad idea. I don't think that's a terrible idea. (JACK: Yeah.)

[crosstalk]

ALI: "I realize that there was an alarm, but it's fine. We were testing our system."

JACK: "It's just us." (AUSTIN: Mhm.)

ALI: Saying this fully knowing that I am not supposed to be here either. But we could try it.

JACK: Yeah, I'll come provide backup if need be.

AUSTIN: Okay.

ALI: Alright.

ART: Yeah, and I've got some forged documents that say we're (ALI: Mhm) alarm testers.

JACK: So do we just go into one of the lifts?

[laughter]

AUSTIN: Yeah, it sounds like it. [KEITH laughs] How do you— you just leave Gig behind with this person who doesn't like him.

KEITH: I like the idea that the building that we're in is an alarm-testing building. "Hi, we're supposed to be here in this building as alarm-testers."

AUSTIN: You know, I guarantee this alarm was designed in this building somewhere.

So there are a bunch of this buildings, there a bunch of these towers. Again, you're in Big Garage which is this sprawling city. Maybe we get a shot outside of the pink sky, and you can

see there's— it is a huge city that has not that many super tall structures. But the ones that do exist, the bulk of them, are these towers that are used by the Salvage Mandate to run fuel up to the—fuel and supplies and information and stuff to Big Garage itself. The whole area is the Big Garage Municipal District or something, but everyone just calls the city Big Garage. But also Big Garage is this huge hover ship, this huge huge huge air ship in the sky that occasionally comes and lands or docks or hooks up to one of these towers that fuels it and gives it new stuff. So you're in one of those. And also they just rent out all that stuff. Actually, they don't even rent it out. You can just apply for it, and if your application is strong enough, you can get design space on one of these massive towers.

So that's where you are currently. So there is a chance that on one of these floors is someone who designs alarms. So. Yeah.

So how do you explain what you're gonna go do to Gig and Orellia?

ALI: Well, I think she was like, "Hey, cover for us." And we're like, "Got it! Gonna go downstairs, and y'know, take the heat down." (AUSTIN: Yep, okay.) Gig, you keep doing that. I know you're so good at it. [laughs]

KEITH: [singsong] Thank you.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: Okay. So we get the three of you in a long elevator going down. No — the elevators don't work, there's an alarm going off. (ALI: Oh wait.) You take the stairs.

JACK: There's the shot of us all clattering down the stairs.

AUSTIN: You hit the button, like, "going down" and then just BRRR!

AUSTIN (as Elevator): Lift doesn't work during alarm. Please use the illuminated stairwell.

AUSTIN: And then just, lights from above turn and point at that stairwell down.

ALI: [exhales] Well.

JACK: Like, taking stairs three at a time.

AUSTIN: Uh huh. Classic. [ALI laughs] So yeah, you're rushing down. In fact, how quickly are you moving down these stairs? You have 20 some floors to go. 20 ... 28? What did I say?

[crosstalk]

JACK: I think you did say 28.

ALI: You did say 28.

JACK: Five. Five floors.

AUSTIN: [laughs] I did in fact say 29. You are on the 29th floor. (ALI: Nooo.) I did say that.

ART: Are there bannisters?

ALI: So 28— oooo.

JACK: No. [laughs]

AUSTIN: There are bannisters, yes.

ART: I would like to slide down those bannisters!

AUSTIN: You're gonna have to give me a roll for that one. That's dangerous.

[crosstalk]

ART: What!

ALI: Are you sure?

AUSTIN: Yeah! What? Yeah. Whoever's leading this should probably make a Scramble roll to see how quickly you get down there.

ALI: I can do that. I can just down.

AUSTIN: Okay. It's gonna be another leadership roll. I actually imagine, because I described this as being a blocky asymmetrical building— I actually have buildings in mind for this. There's buildings in— I want to say they're in Toronto. [typing] Uh, almost put that in the fan Discord.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: There we go. Something like that. (ALI: Ooo.) I don't know if that's the right one, but it's something similar. Where like, it's like weirdly polygonal.

ART: Oh!

JACK: Wow!

ALI: It's like a building with a Jenga pieces coming out of it.

AUSTIN: Yes! Jenga pieces missing, almost. Yeah yeah yeah. Exactly. Exactly.

So yeah, I imagine there's probably a little bit of running down different hallways and catching different elevators? Do you know what I— or finding different stairwells down. Stuff like that. So.

So. If you're leading, then you should all three make Scramble rolls, and then you would take stress for every failure.

JACK: I have some bad news about my Scramble. (AUSTIN: Yeah?) Don't think I got any.

AUSTIN: No?

JACK: Nope.

AUSTIN: Do you want to maybe spend a gambit to get one? That way you don't have to roll two and take the lowest?

JACK: Yeah, I'm gonna spend a gambit to get one.

AUSTIN: I said gambit, I said gamble, I meant gambit.

JACK: Ahhhh, risky?

AUSTIN: Okay, so you're back down to 2 gambit, right?

ART: I would also like to spend a gambit.

AUSTIN: Alright, wow. Risky standard. It is risky standard.

JACK: One bonus die.

AUSTIN: Ah, yes. That is correct.

JACK: So, that's a five.

AUSTIN: Hey, that's a five. That's not bad. Grand? That's a six.

ALI: Oh wonderful!

ART: And I can get a gambit when I spend a gambit.

AUSTIN: You can! So you go back up to two. Look at that.

ALI: Wonderful.

AUSTIN: And you too now have to roll.

ALI: Scramble. I'm rolling Scramble.

AUSTIN: You got it.

ALI: Oh, I just got rid of my Scramble [laughs] score by pressing on the—

AUSTIN: Uh-oh, wrong—

ALI: It's risky standard?

AUSTIN: Yeah, risky standard. The risk is: cops show up more quickly.

ALI: I swear on my life, if I don't pass this— four.

AUSTIN: You got it. Nice work! Okay, you take the highest, which is a six. Which means you totally are able to— we just get shots of all y'all sprinting down hallways and sliding down bannisters, sliding past people, and jumping over little robots, and stuff like that.

And you slide through the exit door, and you see that people are now milling about the lobby? Because alarms are going off? And they're like, "What are we supposed to do? What's goin' on? What's goin' on here?" And you see there's a receptionist speaking to a number of guards. Really wide-brimmed hats with red and white armor on who have stun batons with them? And she's— you can see her talking and she's saying "29th floor" basically.

So, let's hop back to the 29th floor really quick. Talk to me about what you're doing.

KEITH (as Gig): [takes a breath] Basically, open up this robot and stickin' stuff in there. In layman's terms.

ART: Thanks for not getting too technical. [ALI laughs]

KEITH (as Gig): Yeah. No problem.

AUSTIN: Thank you, yeah. Keeping it basic for us. So yeah. You're able to tell before you even do any rolls here, this is a vocoder device that's built for— one of the things about Gift-3, this planet, is that there's technology from all over the galaxy on it. Even from places that you're not sure anyone here has ever been to. And so what that means is there's lots of ports and lots of stuff that has to plug into other stuff. But the Mandati are really good at technology, and they're devoted to taking advantage of this place. This place is a dream world for them. One of the

earliest things they started working on was a universal port— y'know converters, basically? They needed to create a basic standard for things to plug into other things. So this is an extension of that, that is a device that can be attached to anything that has anything like intelligence to allow it to speak. It's the only prototype in existence. They also have the plans to fabricate more of them. And you're being asked to help put into a New Earth Hegemony Torch robot.

I don't know if Gig— again, everybody knows this. Torch robots don't speak. They are robots, they are not synthetic. They are not people. Torch Units are guns that walk around and shoot the things that they're pointed at. Or they were before guns stopped working. [laughs] I mean, I think these ones don't have guns. But most New Earth Hegemony units probably still have a rifle that's like a single-shot rifle. Maybe they have one extra tube to reattach to get a second shot with or whatever. But they are not— they're toasters. They don't know sign language. So something else is happening with these Torch Units is the other thing you know as you start to work on this.

KEITH: This is not the first modification going into this robot.

AUSTIN: Right— maybe. Maybe.

KEITH: Or something.

AUSTIN: Or something. So yeah. So what do you do? You put the thing in the thing?

KEITH: Yeah. I put the thing in the thing. Again, I don't want to bore you with— I could tell you exactly how this robot works. But basically I just put it in there.

AUSTIN: Alright. You're using Rig, I'm guessing?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: That seems to be the one for makin' junk. (KEITH: Mhm.) Alright, I'm gonna make a second clock now, which is the clock for getting this all installed and working.

KEITH: Okay. How am I rolling?

AUSTIN: I think this is risky standard. [typing] Give ... uh, not Garlic. Give Yam ... voice. Give Yam voice.

[crosstalk]

KEITH: I'm gonna use a gambit.

AUSTIN: It's a four-tick clock.

AUSTIN: Alright. So we are back down to one gambit. So what're your dice?

KEITH: I'm rolling 3 dice right now.

AUSTIN: 3d6 and again, that is risky standard. You're not using any special tools or anything, right?

KEITH: Um. Oh, I had actually repair tools.

AUSTIN: Right, I think that just lets you do it, it's not special or anything. (KEITH: Alright.) Alright, you got a four, which— so I think what I'm gonna do - and you can resist this if you want to, we haven't had many things where I've been like, "Oh you can resist this if you want" - but [reading] there's a complication, you suffer harm, there's reduced effect, you end up in a desperate position. What I think happens is, if you succeed I'll give you the tick here. Actually two ticks here. But while you're doing it, you notice that one of the tools you're using has to be plugged in. And the cops are able to zero in on anything that is using current, using power, that is actively being used and not shut down by the alarm. And so they get a tick closer to you.

Now you could resist that somehow. If you tell me how and then roll to resist, in which case what happens is you take stress and that doesn't happen. That is the give and take of this game. Even when you're not being shot at, you can be getting stressed the fuck out, which is why stress kind of works as this narrative XP in some ways.

I'm actually going to read it to you, even if you're not gonna do it right at this moment. Just so we all are on the same page. [reading] When your PC suffers consequence that you do not like, you can choose to resist it. Just tell the GM, "no, I don't think so. I'm resisting that." Resistance is always automatically effective. The GM says if the consequence is reduced in severity or if you avoid it entirely.

So I could say— okay, let's say I ticked it three times, so you completely failed. And I'm like, "Oh yeah, the cops are gonna get there quick." You could resist it, and I could say, "resist from three checks to two or to one, but it's not going away altogether." Or, it might be like, "Oh if you resist it by doing that then you completely avoid it."

What you do is, you tell me you don't want it to happen, [reading] you make a resistance roll to see how much stress your character suffers. You make the roll using one of your character's attributes: Insight, Prowess, or Resolve. The GM chooses the attribute based on the nature of the consequence. Insight is for consequences from deception or understanding. Prowess is physical strain or injury. And Resolve is mental strain or will power. So to do that, you just pick one and you roll whatever that is.

KEITH: Sorry, which one is Insight?

AUSTIN: Insight is deception or understanding.

KEITH: Okay. So deception/understanding, physical harm, and then it was knowledge or fortitude?

AUSTIN: And then mental strain, will power.

KEITH: Mental strain, got it.

AUSTIN: [reading] Your character suffers six stress when they resist, minus the highest die from that roll. So if you rolled a four, you get two stress. If you rolled a six, you get zero stress.

KEITH: Got it.

AUSTIN: If you get a critical result, which is two sixes, you clear one stress on top of it not hurting you. So yes, that's the basics.

KEITH: I am going to resist this.

AUSTIN: Alright. How are you resisting? Or, I guess, I'm saying I think it's Insight. This is understanding, this is like, "Oh shit, no! We have to be off the grid!" (KEITH: Yeah. Yeah.) So go ahead and roll your Insight. (KEITH: Yeah, okay.) I think you just click Insight.

KEITH: Um. Click Insight. And then there's no bonus dice for that.

AUSTIN: No. Unless wait, do you have an ability around that, that does anything with that? (KEITH: Um.) I don't think you do. No, you don't.

KEITH: No. [pause]

AUSTIN: Oh heyheyheyheyhey, you forgot something. You did forget something, you forgot an ability that's useful.

KEITH: What's that?

AUSTIN: [reading] When you work on a clock with Rig or Hack, fill +1 segment. (KEITH: Oh. Okay.) So you're even further in. Yeah, you only have one more tick to give Yam a voice.

KEITH: Okay, that's great. I do have that, that's my starting ability, I did not check that. (AUSTIN: Nice.) Okay. Um. So how many dice is this gonna roll?

AUSTIN: It's gonna roll two because your Insight is two. Your Insight is—

KEITH: Is the highest of whatever?

AUSTIN: No, it's how many things total you have in that category. (KEITH: Oooh.) So you have two in Rig and one in Study, but you don't have anything in Hack or Doctor.

KEITH: Got it.

AUSTIN: The highest this thing can be is four, but for you it's two because you have two in this category. In fact you have two in everything, which is a nice well-rounded situation? For a minute there during character creation, Echo had four in Prowess and nothing in Insight [KEITH and ALI laugh] and that was a lot.

KEITH: Oh boy, okay.

AUSTIN: Alright, so go ahead and give me your Insight roll.

KEITH: Okay. Okay ... six!

AUSTIN: Ey! That's a six! You take the highest, so that's a zero stress.

KEITH: Oh, it's a new picture!

AUSTIN: Yeah, it's a different picture 'cause you're resisting consequence.

KEITH: I love that.

AUSTIN: So how does this work? Do you—

KEITH: I know exactly how this works. I use my eye drone as a middle man between the power source and the (AUSTIN: Oh, that's clever) the tool.

AUSTIN: So it's only coming in through— well, what's that power? And it gets lost in the grid so you don't know where it is because it's floating eye drone that could be on any floor.

KEITH: The way I think it works is the drone has to have an internal power source just because it's a drone that flies around and it's not attached to my eye? (AUSTIN: Yes.) It's not attached to my head or brain. So I think that what happens, it's sorta like if you're watching Youtube but you're charging your phone from a laptop, and Youtube takes up more power than the phone can charge. So the eye is slowly draining of its battery because it's not taking much from the wall, and that's how it keeps it from getting noticed.

AUSTIN: Gotcha. Gotcha, gotcha. So eventually your eye drone could just like flop over, but for now it's powering the thing you're using. Alright, cool, love it.

Awesome. So back down on the ground floor, those cops are beginning to do preliminary lock-down stuff. But they have not unlocked the elevator to go up to the 29th floor yet. They're looking at scans and stuff some like that.

KEITH: Can I tell you this? We are spending so much time tricking these cops, we are for real criminals!

[ALI and ART laugh]

AUSTIN: So what do y'all do, down in the bottom floor, the lobby floor?

ALI: So we came into a room and it was like, a bunch of people in the lobby who presumably work here?

AUSTIN: Are all like people who work here, they're all, "Oh the alarm went off, I have to go downstairs like a fire drill again." You know what I mean?

ALI: Okay. But we come out— they're not like, "What are you doing here?"

AUSTIN: No, 'cause they are also— you probably passed some of them on the way down. You know what I mean? Everybody was trying to get down here quick. Maybe you all faster than other people, because you did get down here. The cops have just arrived. They're talking to the receptionist here.

ALI: Ooo, ooo. Could I perhaps talk to the cop before he talks to anyone else. Because that was kinda the whole point of this plan.

AUSTIN: Oh, you want to talk directly to the cops.

ALI: Yeah, just be like, "Hello, officer."

AUSTIN: Yeah, you succeeded at that roll, sure. (ALI: Okay.) My bad. I thought you wanted to get down here and talk to the receptionist and be, "Oh everything's cool." I didn't realize that the goal was literally talk to the cop first.

ALI: Oh no, 'cause I wouldn't want the receptionist to be, "Yeah, there was this alarm" and then have them go chase those kids, right?

AUSTIN: Yes. I gotcha.

ALI: So we are covering for this other team. (AUSTIN: Mhm.) So yeah, I would love to— all three of us? by myself? Probably all three of us approach this cop and be like,

ALI (as Tender): Hey, officer. Sorry. Sorry to make you come all the way down here. The alarm did go off, I know that you have to come all the way down here. It is a bit of a drill, so you don't need to be here. I apologize for that. We should have called it in beforehand—

AUSTIN (as Cop): Gotta come in for a drill too.

ALI (as Tender): I understand. Yeah, that's the drill, we have to figure out how soon you'll come here. And I think it was approximately ... 5 minutes, 43 seconds. So that's a great time.

AUSTIN (as Cop): Yeah, I'm gonna have to call this. I'm gonna have to call this one in and make sure everything's on the up and up. We get an alarm like this, we gotta make sure. There's all the unions involved, obviously. So.

ART (as Grand Magnificent): Alright, but that means we have to call it in.

AUSTIN (as Cop): What?

ALI (as Tender): Well yeah, actually—

AUSTIN (as Cop): Didn't you already call it in? The alarm?

ART (as Grand Magnificent): No, we have to call in what you do.

ALI (as Tender): Yeah, so if you could just give us the number—

AUSTIN: She squints at you.

[ALI laughs]

KEITH: I love it! You're going like, "Actually cops, you're the ones in trouble!"

[JACK and ALI laugh]

ART (as Grand Magnificent): I'm just saying we have to file a report, so we need your call in the report, so I need to call someone about—

AUSTIN (as Cop): Waitwaitwait. What's happening with your coat?

[JACK laughs]

ART (as Grand Magnificent): What? What are you talking about?

AUSTIN (as Cop): Why is it— your coat.

ART (as Grand Magnificent): It's very nice.

[KEITH laughs]

[crosstalk]

KEITH (as Gig): That's the only thing about it, it's very nice.

AUSTIN (as Cop): What's your job?

ART (as Grand Magnificent): I'm an alarm tester.

AUSTIN (as Cop): You?

ART (as Grand Magnificent): [defensive] I make good money testing alarms. I buy nice things with it. Some people go out for restaurant meals, and I bought a fine coat!

ALI (as Tender): It's not against dress code.

AUSTIN (as Cop): [grumbling] Okay. You write your report, I'll do my call-in. It's fine, we both get called in, it's fine.

ART (as Grand Magnificent): Alright, I'm just sayin', we're gonna call.

[AUSTIN groans]

ALI (as Tender): Can you give us the name of the person you speak to? 'Cause I have to put that on my form.

AUSTIN (as Cop): Who I speak to?

ALI (as Tender): Yeah. You're calling it in.

AUSTIN (as Cop): Yeah, I'm calling it in. I'm gonna call it in. I'm gonna call it in to—

ALI (as Tender): Who are you calling?

AUSTIN: to, I don't know their name, when they pick up they'll give me their, I can call them right now and find out their name. It's a different person every time.

ALI (as Tender): Okay, tell me their name when you call in.

[group laughter]

AUSTIN (as Cop): Okay. I'm gonna. Hmm.

[KEITH laughs]

ALI (as Tender): You seem tense. Are you, do you not, is this your first time?

AUSTIN (as Cop): Normally we go up— we have to check the alarm, I have to go upstairs. What floor is it on? (ALI as Tender: Wuhwuhwuh.) Then I can call it in.

KEITH: Are you guys even real cops?

[ALI laughs]

ALI (as Tender): This seems— no one's ever had— we do these drills often.

AUSTIN (as Cop): You do? I've never seen you here before! I've done these drills before. We go up—

[crosstalk]

JACK (as Fourteen Fifteen): It's a different person each time. It's someone else each time.

ALI (as Tender): Yeah, what do you—

[KEITH laughs]

ART (as Grand Magnificent): Yeah, that's how you know the check on the up and up. Because it's different people each time. The same person checks the alarm each time, you wouldn't learn anything about the alarm.

ALI (as Tender): Exactly.

AUSTIN: I think this is a group Sway.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: I think this is a group Sway. If that sounds right to y'all?

ART: You don't think this person is just blinded by our ... continual— ?

AUSTIN: I am. I am blinded. (KEITH: I'm loving it.)

JACK: Don't you have those fake documents?

ART: I do, I have forged documents. (AUSTIN: That's true.) I'm gonna check that on my load.
If—

AUSTIN: So what are they? What do they say? Are they— here's a thing we haven't done at all, which is we've done no flashbacks yet. But at any point, you can just do flashbacks because that's the game this is. So like, give me the flashback of you setting up whatever it is that these documents are, that are perfect for this moment.

ART: Well I mean, they're alarm inspector credentials.

[ALI laughs]

KEITH: If I can be so— this is a very Mako/Larry moment where you guys are just trying to convince this cop that he's somehow—

AUSTIN: He's the one who's wrong.

KEITH: He's somehow in trouble and is the bad guy.

[ALI laughs]

KEITH: "I showed up because I thought there was a burglar, but I guess I'm the burglar?"

[JACK laughs]

AUSTIN: So yeah what are the, how did you make them? What did you have to— how did you get them? Just tell me, it doesn't cost stress 'cause this is just a thing on your character sheet. But I am curious how you got these forged papers, how they came about.

ART: I think it's like, Grand sitting around like with everyone beforehand, being like, "So what do you think they got in there?" And it's like, "I don't know, probably they got ducts, they got— what could we be doing there?" And just brainstorming, right? We could be doing the ductwork, we could be elevator inspectors, and then settling on alarm. "Alarm! we should be alarm inspectors!"

AUSTIN: That way, if an alarm goes off—

ART (as Grand Magnificent): That way, if an alarm goes off, everyone else is the problem.

AUSTIN: God.

[ALI laughs]

ART (as Grand Magnificent): Everyone else is just not doing the alarm drill properly.

AUSTIN: Alright. So.

ALI: Can I— ‘cause Art said that we are alarm inspectors or whatever. I would love for the pages to also have sorta like what the plan was, which is we are specifically setting off an alarm on the 28th floor, ‘cause we know we are going to the 28th floor. And then just being like— when you call it in just read off of this paper: “You don’t have to go upstairs, this doesn’t have to be a whole thing.”

AUSTIN: I’m gonna read from the book here, which is very good. It says [reading]: Forged documents— reasonably well-made facsimiles of documents that would never actually be given to someone like you.

[laughter]

ART: You could just add into that rule “or anyone.”

[laughter]

AUSTIN: Perfect. So what I’m gonna do is— because they’re fine quality or because you have the item, you’re gonna get a higher effect level on this basically. So instead of being risky standard, it’s gonna be risky great. Or whatever. Risky ... risky grand? Risky grand.

ART: Risky Magnificent.

AUSTIN: [laughs] Risky Magnificent, your cousin.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: I know it’s a mononym, you don’t have to correct me. Oh wuhwuhwuh wait.

ART: I do have a younger cousin who was so impressed that he named himself after me.

AUSTIN: Right, of course. Good. So I do think that based on what you were all doing though, it’s either that you were doing a setup move, Tender, for Grand to present these things. So you should roll, and then he can get an even higher one. Or I think it’s another group activity where you all roll and we take the highest roll, but someone takes all the stress for failures. And this is 100% Sway. I don’t know, I can’t make that decision for y’all, but.

JACK: No, this is Sway. This is not Consort, is it?

[crosstalk]

ALI: I think it is Consort?

KEITH: I think Jack should take the stress 'cause I don't think Fourteen is stressed enough.

ALI: [laughs] Is there— can we just know the rules really quick? 'Cause I have the ability that says “You can spend a gambit instead of taking any stress cost.”

AUSTIN: Yeah, it says “any.”

ALI: And I think in the rules it specifically said like, even things you're leading.

AUSTIN: If it says “any” then I'm gonna say any. But I'll double check for you, one second. I have the book open so I may as well go find it. [reading] You can spend a gambit instead of paying any stress cost. Any time you need to spend stress, you may spend a gambit instead. This includes resistances and push costs. For powers which have a variable cost, such as Sundering, those additional costs are part of the same activation, so push and all additional features only cost one gambit.

So yeah. Yeah, you can spend a gambit to suck up any stress costs. So yeah, if you lead this, you would totally be able to do that.

ALI: Okay.

AUSTIN: You have one gambit left, as a reminder.

[ALI laughs nervously]

AUSTIN: Uh huh. You get more when you roll six on a risky, though.

KEITH: Do I get one for the resist roll?

AUSTIN: No. Nonononono. It's a six on a risky, it's a six on risky roll.

KEITH: Oh, is there not risk in resists?

AUSTIN: No, there's not any risk 'cause you're just resisting.

KEITH: Good point.

AUSTIN: I you get a six on a risky or a double six on a risky. Alright. So Grand, you got a five. Fourteen and, and Tender also roll. Risky great.

ALI: Oh my god, I don't know if I should take this gambit to have anything in Sway for this.

AUSTIN: Oh, I see what you're saying. Well, make that decision now before anybody else rolls. But if you fail, as long as someone else succeeds you'll just be taking stress, d'you know what I mean?

ALI: Right. Fourteen, what's your Sway?

JACK: It's one.

ALI: Okay, okay. We're all just gonna roll.

JACK: Okay.

ALI: Risky standard ... risky great.

AUSTIN: Risky great, yeah.

ALI: Not risky extreme. [laughs]

JACK: Risky ...

ART: Boom!

ALI: Yesss!

AUSTIN: Wow, what a good roll. Tender rolled two— so when you don't have a skill, which Tender doesn't. Wow! So. Incredible rolls all around. So Tender has to roll two dice and takes the lowest one - but she rolled two fives - because she doesn't have one in Sway. Fourteen rolled a six.

ART: So we get another gambit!

AUSTIN: So you get another gambit, you get another gambit.

KEITH: So now we have two gambits.

AUSTIN: Look at that. Two gambits, back up to two. I'll got back over to this other sheet and update it.

So this poor cop, whose name is Every Avery [ART laughs] takes the fuckin' documents from you and is like,

AUSTIN (as Every Avery): Yeah, this all—

AUSTIN: And then like, touches a communicator on her shoulder and says like,

AUSTIN (as Every Avery): [haltingly] Everything's— good— Command, the alarm test all worked out— normal. What's your name? They need your name. Yeah, I know. I know. Carlene?

ALI (as Tender): Oh, that's lovely.

ALI: And I write it on the—

AUSTIN (as Every Avery): Her name is Carlene Thrush. I'm sorry this caused a whole thing, but um thank you for having everything in order here.

[ALI laughs]

00:34:41

AUSTIN: And I think this is just, they're gonna leave, the threat is gone. Gig, you're able to just finish this. There's no more threat, do you know what I mean? So I'm not gonna make you roll again here. You're already at three out of four ticks, and so. I could gin up some risk, like, "oh, you might electrocute yourself or some bullshit," [KEITH: Nah.] but no. They got a great effect on keeping the cops away. So I'm gonna delete this "cops arrive" thing. And you finish like plugging it in, and Yam's big front light turns on all the way like, high beam. And it's like,

[AUSTIN's booting up noises]

AUSTIN: And it's just like, making noises.

[continued foley]

KEITH: Duck?

[AUSTIN still making noises]

AUSTIN: And it does not know how to make words yet. Mrrrooww yam.

ALI: Aww.

[KEITH laughs]

AUSTIN (as Yam): Mrrrooww yam. Keeeyahyam. Kyahyam. Brrwww.

AUSTIN: And is trying to make noises, and it can't— it also doesn't know how to stop making noises! So mmmwwah, just making that noise super loud? And then the alarms finally go off, and it's still way loud? And Orellia is like,

AUSTIN (as Orellia): [sigh] Alright. You did good job. I think your show sucks. But. Thank you. You might be a real one.

KEITH (as Gig): God, you're so rude. You're so rude! What?

AUSTIN (as Orellia): You're so rude.

KEITH (as Gig): Fuck you!

AUSTIN (as Orellia): Fuck you! I'm sixteen! I'm a little kid!

[ALI laughs]

KEITH (as Gig): I don't care! I don't care if you're sixteen! I just made your robot talk for you, and you're like "Your show sucks, thanks." Fuck off!

AUSTIN (as Yam): Nyyyaamm.

KEITH: I take the voice out.

[crosstalk]

ALI: NO!

ART: Don't ta—

AUSTIN: NO! You do not! That is not in character!

JACK: No no no no no.

KEITH: No, I don't.

ALI: God.

AUSTIN: Yam stands up. And Garlic makes some hand signals. And Orellia nods and says,

AUSTIN (as Orellia): Alright. Get your friends back up here, we're going home. Only 'cause you fixed Yam. [sigh] I'm gonna take you to her.

AUSTIN: So everyone comes upstairs?

ALI: Yeah. Can we—

JACK: We take the lift this time, yeah.

AUSTIN: Yeah, the lift's good now. And so Orellia leads you to the scaffolds that y'all came in on. And then she says like,

AUSTIN (as Orellia): Alright. Just— everyone be cool for a second.

AUSTIN: And she pulls a gun out from the inside of her jacket, and aims it in the air and fires. And the gun itself? The barrel of the gun blossoms into flowers. And then the petals break and fall away. And into the sky, a flare goes up against the pink of the Twilight Mirage. And then she says

AUSTIN (as Orellia): She'll only be a few se—

AUSTIN: And then before she can even say “seconds,” a huge balloon with a basket underneath it like a hot-air balloon flies around the corner of another one of these tall structures and heads towards y'all. It's literally a hot-air balloon with netting and stuff all around the balloon. And then the basket is this big metal box that has jets attached to the side of it? Clearly just welded on. And they flip and turn from being forward-facing— I guess backward-facing and producing thrust to go forward, to being reversed to slow down, and then vertical to aid the balloon in just kinda floating in place outside of the scaffolding.

And you can see, the driver looks over and nods at Orellia like, “who the hell are they?” And Orellia says,

AUSTIN (as Orellia): We have to take them to see Vanya.

AUSTIN: And the pilot shakes their head and let you all in. And inside is very cramped. They did not expect to have to transport an additional four people. I think this is probably the moment when you realize that this person, the person piloting, whose name is Piper Clay, also has on one of these arm bands. And now in the light you finally are able to see the arm band.

The other side of the group right now has been dealing with a group called the Volunteers of Seiche. The Volunteers of Seiche— this is kind of public knowledge— are an anti-New Earth Hegemony group. They're kind of a militia. Kind of a citizen-run militia that believes that the Quire system is the holy and sacrosanct home for the Divine Fleet, and that the New Earth Hegemony had no right to bring millions of people to the system to colonize it. And also blames New Earth Hegemony for being in this position to begin with. They are not official, but the Divine Free States has not interceded to prevent them from doing things like rallying up this very

anti-Earth sentiment. They've not come to blows yet with anything from Earth because they're focused here on Gift-3, which is primarily a Divine Free State World. But they are very much anti-Earth. And their armbands are black with white text that says SOA-- er, sorry VOS, which is Volunteers of Seiche.

These are those same armbands, but turned upside down and with a kinda prismatic line drawn through the upside-down V to turn it into an A. So instead of it— here, let's do this on the thing. Instead it being like [drawing] S ... O ... - I did it backwards again - SOV or VOS rather. Letters are hard, friends!

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: Instead of it being V ... O ... S it is S ... O ... and then like that. I don't have a rainbow color as an option here. But imagine that there's like a rainbow connection here turning that upside-down V into an A. And that is what these kids are all wearing. And they let you onto their-- do you all just hop on board?

JACK: Yeah.

KEITH: [hesitates] Yeah.

ALI: Mhm.

AUSTIN: It sounded like there was some trepidation there from you, Gig.

[JACK laughs]

AUSTIN: Which is fair. Which is fair. And then they leave. They leave Gift-3, and they fly across the Crash Yards, which are. Er, they don't leave Gift-3, sorry! Hoo. They don't go to space in this balloon.

[ALI laughs]

They leave Big Garage and pass over the Crash Yards, which are— I'll just read from my description. [reading] They're built from the collective will of those on the planet. The Crash Yards are a collection of technological refuse, real and imagined. If you need a part your middleman doesn't have, you can come there. It is ship cemeteries and towers of destroyed cars and hills of discarded electronics from all across the Milky Way. There are the sounds of livestock crooning and of mechanical predators stomping across plastic and metal.

And you're above it all. You kind of look down on it. And off in the distance, again still silhouetted against this pink and blue twilight sky, there is the strangest thing you have ever seen in your life probably. Well, maybe not ever, y'all have seen some weird shit for sure. There is a massive

treaded structure like the size of a small town on top of big tank treads, rolling across the flats of Gift-3. Gift-3 as far as its climate goes is sort of — what's the phrase I'm looking for. They're like the Eastern European steppes. Semi-arid, I guess? When there isn't just like weird technological refuse everywhere, it's just like cracked, hard, dusty ground or rocks with some brush here and there. But off in the distance there's this huge structure on top of these tank treads. It takes you awhile to notice this at first, but it is a massive theme park on massive tank treads. With a huge rainbow. Not just one. There's like a huge main rainbow going across the entirety of the theme park? But also other ones all around it. At first you think they're just holographic projections, but then you hear the sound of thunder. And you can see that there's just a sunshower over top of this slowly moving around theme park up on tank treads. And then you get a little closer, and you can actually see the tank treads. The actual wheels inside are just merry-go-rounds or Ferris wheels? And it's the strangest thing. You get closer and closer, and you can hear music playing. You can hear music of— the music it sounds most like is — actually I think it sounds like— Bo En did the soundtrack to a game called Lovely Planet?

JACK: Ohhh.

AUSTIN: I don't know if— are you familiar with that, Jack?

JACK: Yeah. Yeahyeahyeah. Great soundtrack.

AUSTIN: It's super good. It's just bubbly and poppy, really hard not to bob your head to, basically? And it's playing all through this park as you get closer and closer. And down below you can see the 300 missing kids. They are in the fields of the Jungle Land section of the park where now they are tending to crops. Or some of them are racing around Speed Town in these loosened freed bumper cars, going from place to place, going on gravity rides. Standing in line to get food from concession stands that they're running. And you see more Torch Units too. Not 300, but maybe a dozen or so.

And then you see in the center area, Rainbow Heaven, a landing pad for you and everyone else here. And walking up to meet you is the leader of this place, the leader of the Sailors of the Ark. You see a sign above her head "Leave Your Worries on the Other Side of the Rainbow" and above that it says the name of the park, which is the Ark and Ciel Amovement Park.

And she is wearing— she is like, half Indian half Dominican in my mind? She has sharp, curved, almost knife-like hair that is prismatic. It looks like it could be made of metal. It literally looks like it could be made of sharp rainbow metal around her face. With a dark lip stain and dark eyes, and she has glasses with big black plastic frames. And she is wearing— imagine a ringmaster outfit, imagine a blue ringmaster outfit, but also a high fashion version of that with a huge popped collar and black lapels with gold flourish and black pants. And she has a white dress shirt with another chromatic tie. The balloon lands and you all get off, and she says,

AUSTIN (as Vanya): I've heard about you. Are you cops, or are you people?

AUSTIN: And she smiles. This is not aggressive. But if someone is in charge here, it is her. It is Vanya de la Vega.

ART (as Grand Magnificent): I don't know. Neither?

ALI (as Tender): That's a Venn diagram with some overlap. [laughs]

ART (as Grand Magnificent) : I don't like this.

AUSTIN: She shakes her head. She says,

AUSTIN (as Vanya): Not from where I'm standing.

KEITH (as Gig): I'm sorry, what was the Venn diagram?

ALI (as Tender): Cops and people.

KEITH (as Gig): Oh, okay, got it.

AUSTIN: I'd say she's like 19. 18, 19. Older than most of the kids here, who are like 13 to 17.

ART (as Grand Magnificent): Yeah, I'm not sure we're either.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN: She smiles, and she says,

AUSTIN (as Vanya): Ahh, that's the right answer. Come with me.

KEITH (as Gig): Of course Grand Mag fits in with these dipshit kids.

ALI (as Tender): [laughs] Of course!

AUSTIN: She begins to lead you through this amusement park. I think like, it becomes pretty clear quickly— and she'll talk to you about it, she says,

AUSTIN (as Vanya): So what do you want? I hear you did us a favor.

AUSTIN: And behind her, you can just hear

AUSTIN (as Yam): Nnyaaaamm. Nnnyaaaaummm. ME! Yammeee!

[KEITH and ALI laugh]

KEITH (as Gig): Yeah, we did that.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): And you held off the Salvage Mandate.

KEITH (as Gig): Right. And the cops.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): That's who I meant.

KEITH (as Gig): Okay.

ALI (as Tender): Uh, we're here because people are concerned that the kids who are here are here against their will.

00:48:38

AUSTIN (as Vanya): They're concerned about the wrong thing. They should be concerned that kids here are here completely of their own will because they did such a shitty job as parents and guardians. Maybe if they'd been concerned about that a little sooner, we wouldn't be building our colony.

KEITH (as Gig): That mostly checks out.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): Yeah.

AUSTIN: She's walking you through all the— you're in the center zone basically. I want to bring you over to this map page. I wanted to sketch this out properly and did not have the time. But there's a big lbop thing, tank base, right? And then there is the center area where y'all are now. There are three other areas total. So I've drawn a rectangle and a little circle in the middle. And then there's a western, eastern, and southern area? And each one is a different sub-park. Like Tomorrowland or whatever. Um. And those three areas are, or the four areas I said are Jungle Land, which is a zoo/safari area that they've converted into a big farm. It is Speed Town. Obviously. And then there's Musicalia in the south. And you are in Rainbow Heaven right now, in the middle.

KEITH: I need to figure out how to get a licensing deal with these kids so we can add a fourth segment called Kepcot.

[laughter]

AUSTIN: You're actually in the Epcot version area. You know how Epcot has the "places from around the world" area? It's that, but alien cultures you've never fucking heard of. "Oh, these are like green people who have seven eyes." And they're waving and singing their - it's robots that are doing this basically - and singing some song from whatever planet that's from, you don't fuckin' know where they're from. But she's taking you in fact to a specific restaurant called The Grolian Plates. Which you assume— there is a floating planet above it that you assume is Grole G R O L E that instead of having rings, it has giant plates. Like discus plates stuck in the planet? But also it's a restaurant, so it's called Plates, like a plate that you would eat food on. And she leads you in there to get some food.

The whole park is very sparsely populated because there's only 300 kids here. And a dozen robots, a dozen of these Torch Units. So it's not like anything's packed. There's lots of shut down rides and empty storefronts and stuff like that. And in general, the fashion is very much a punked out version of stuff that they found in this place. Y'know? So yeah. She leads you to the Grolian Plates.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): So what do you need?

AUSTIN: She sits down in a booth. You're all seated and getting food brought to you and stuff like that.

KEITH (as Gig): Um. That's a good question. What do we need?

AUSTIN: As a reminder, out of character. Grand, your contact, whose name was Alabaster Went, needed you to look for his niece Winchester Went. That is who you're looking for. Your mission was not to come save all these kids or something. He specifically asked you to do this. But. You know.

ALI: But we know it's like, a growing concern among the community, right?

AUSTIN: Yes. Totally, totally. 100%

JACK (as Fourteen): Yeah. We uh. We're looking for someone called Winchester. Her uncle was concerned about where *she'd gotten to.

AUSTIN: "So what do you all want to eat?" says a waitress who comes over. She is 16 probably? No, she's not a waitress. She's a resident who is running this today. To be clear, she's probably going to go cook whatever food you order. And she hands you—or on the tables are modified versions of the menus that were already here, with literally Sharpie crossed-off some of the things or new stuff has been added in. There's— textbook cover, what is that stuff called? Contact paper on top of the menu where like new menu stuff has been written on that so they didn't destroy the original menus?

ART (as Grand Magnificent): Do you guys have any pomegranates?

AUSTIN (as Waitress): No, but we have grolianates, which are similar.

[KEITH laughs]

ART (as Grand Magnificent): Alright, can I have one of those, and the smallest spoon you have?

[JACK laughs]

AUSTIN (as Waitress): Of course.

ART (as Grand Magnificent): Thank you.

AUSTIN (as Waitress): No problem, on the house.

ART (as Grand Magnificent): Do y'all want anything?

KEITH (as Gig): [hesitantly] Do you ... guy ... have ... gr-ground juice?

AUSTIN (as Waitress): Ground juice, ground juice.

KEITH (as Gig): It's like a jelly juice.

AUSTIN (as Waitress): You mean jelly juice. Like a jelly juice?

KEITH (as Gig): Yeah, like a jelly juice from the ground.

AUSTIN (as Waitress): Y'know, what we have is a jam juice.

KEITH (as Gig): I like jam juice.

AUSTIN (as Waitress): Is that okay? You'll try a jam juice?

KEITH (as Gig): Yeah. I'll have jam juice, yeah.

AUSTIN (as Waitress): Alright, we'll get you a jam juice.

KEITH (as Gig): Can I have the largest spoon that you have?

AUSTIN (as Waitress): And the jam juice.

KEITH (as Gig): And the jam juice, yeah.

AUSTIN (as Waitress): Of course.

JACK (as Fourteen): I'll just take a—

KEITH (as Gig): Regular-sized spoon?

ALI (as Tender): Water would be great.

JACK (as Fourteen): Yeah, just water. Just water

ALI (as Tender): Water would be fantastic.

JACK (as Fourteen): Cool at this point. I've never been to Grole.

AUSTIN (as Waitress): Neither have we.

AUSTIN: And she laughs. It's a good laugh. She fires back "neither have we" with the sort of speed you would call precocious. Do you know what I mean? And she laughs and says,

AUSTIN (as Waitress): Oh, I'll be right back with your drinks.

AUSTIN: And before she steps out all the way, she goes, "Vanya— the usual?" and Vanya nods. And then Vanya says,

AUSTIN (as Vanya): So. What's the ask? How do we repay ah— do you have a name?

JACK (as Fourteen): Yeah. Ahhh—

ALI (as Tender): We're with the Notion.

00: 55:04

KEITH (as Gig): I thought it was the Ocean.

ART (as Grand Magnificent): Why would it be the Ocean?

[crosstalk]

KEITH (as Gig): I just thought that's what you said.

ALI (as Tender): That was where you were before this, Gig. You were with the—

KEITH (as Gig): Ohhh, so I went from the Notion to the Ocean?

ALI (as Tender): You went from the Ocean to the Notion.

KEITH (as Gig): So which one's which?

AUSTIN (as Vanya): It's a good name.

JACK (as Fourteen): Thanks.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): So, how can we repay the Notion?

KEITH (as Gig): Uhh, I'm good.

ALI (as Tender): If this is becoming an exchange, what we want to do is work with you to make this place sustainable. If that's what you're planning. 'Cause—

ART (as Grand Magnificent): And we need Winchester.

ALI (as Tender): [laughing] No.

JACK (as Fourteen): No. No no no. I don't think we need to do an actual person exchange. Right? Grand?

ART (as Grand Magnificent): No. But we should probably lay eyes on her.

ALI (as Tender): What I would like to insist here is that if you keep running things the way they are, we are not going to be the only people who come here.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): We know that. That's why we're taking precautions. We're already pretty sustainable, And the weather-control main—

AUSTIN: and she points out the front window to where there's the big rainbow? And now that you're close enough, you see there's like a big metallic tube that runs over the entire place making this fake rainbow - that one's fake, the rest are real - because it is making it permanently sunshower here. Right now it's stuck in sunshower. She says,

AUSTIN (as Vanya): We can always have a sunny day or enough water to water the crops. It isn't perfect, but—

ALI (as Tender): That's not what I mean by sustainable. [laughs]

AUSTIN (as Vanya): No, you mean people are gonna come and try to take what's ours.

ALI (as Tender): Or they're gonna try to take their kids home.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): And we'll fight them off. You're not the first people to show up here.

JACK (as Fourteen): That's not sustainable.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): What do you think you can do to make people let us have sovereignty? No offense. You're four people. We're gonna have to earn that ourselves, you don't get to come in here and win that fight for us.

ALI (as Tender): No, but you start a conversation.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): We tried starting conversations with our parents a long time ago.

JACK (as Fourteen): You're in a better position to negotiate now. You have this place, you—

AUSTIN (as Vanya): You think that me and 300 16-year olds are gonna get on the phone and call our parents back and say, "Sorry we moved out" and they're gonna listen?

ART (as Grand Magnificent): No.

JACK (as Fourteen): That's what we're for.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): You're out of your mind!

KEITH (as Gig): Yeah. I think you guys are out of your mind.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): This doesn't end with a meeting where they say, "Oh"

AUSTIN: And then she like, makes the sign of the cross. [ALI laughs]

AUSTIN (as Vanya): "now you're adults." It doesn't work like that.

ALI (as Tender): No, but it keeps people from being scared and thinking that you're missing.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): [short sigh] You can let them know that we're fine. I'm not having a sit-down.

JACK as Fourteen: We're not—

AUSTIN (as Vanya): You know what? Fine. Here's what we'll do. It's not my decision to make, it's the group's decision to make. We'll have a vote, we'll see what people think. And if the group wants to have a sit-down, we'll have a sit-down. And if this is taken from us because of that, they'll know who to blame.

JACK (as Fourteen): Hang on, no, wait a second. Tender, I don't— correct me if I'm wrong, I'm not pitching a sit-down. I—

ALI (as Tender): Yeah, I— can we have an aside? Can the adults have an aside?

ALI: Can Tender pull out her sidekick?

AUSTIN: Her eyes go big at that?

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN (as Vanya): Fine.

ALI: Typing rapidly on my sidekick.

ALI (as Tender): There's like, a respectfulness that we should have here. But there's also like, they're 13.

JACK (as Fourteen): Yeah. Yeah, for sure. I mean, if these people were adults and they'd they'd broken off and were, were trying to gain some— I don't know. I feel that like, we were asked to do something by Casc— I don't know what Cascara asked you to do.

AUSTIN: So Cascara's job is the one the other side of the team is doing. This was not a Cascara job. This is as "Grand knows a guy here" thing.

JACK (as Fourteen): Ah no, sorry. Right, rightrighttrightright. We were assembled by Cascara to do a job, and that job is broad. Which is to make some kind of— I don't know. Tender, when you said "sustainable," our job is to make sense of this new place and then try and keep it going in ways we can. Right? And a way of doing that would be like, "Okay cool, let's get all these people together and sit down. You can talk to your parents about that stuff."

ALI (as Tender): I mean, that could be part of it, but it doesn't have to the thing. The thing that— I would like for people not to come here with guns?

[crosstalk]

JACK (as Fourteen): I don't want these teenagers to murder them when they get here.

ALI (as Tender): And I would like for a bunch of parents to not— yeah. [laughs]

ALI (as Tender): That's a big one! Also, all of those parents at home should not be looking out the window every day because they think their kids are dead and blaming the New Earth Hegemony. There are multiple vectors in which we should fix the situation.

ART (as Grand Magnificent): Sure. Just as an aside, we could super easily be murdered by these people. They're being very nice right now? But like, an army of 13-year olds can kill you.

AUSTIN: Again, they're not all 13. I want to be clear. She is 19, they range from 13 to 17. They're probably—

[crosstalk]

ALI: I just--

AUSTIN: They range—

ART: But mostly post-pubescent, right?

AUSTIN: Yes. Yeah, I get it.

ART: So that's a—

KEITH (as Gig): I mean, even an army of 5-year olds could kill you.

[ALI laughs]

ART (as Grand Magnificentj): Well. An army of 5-year olds is gonna be harder to wrangle.

JACK (as Fourteen): Yeah, I just want to find the space between "Off you go, 13-year olds" because that's not gonna work, and on the other side, like "Alright let's all put 300 chairs in a big circle."

ALI (as Tender): Oh no no no. Go on.

JACK (as Fourteen): Because I'm worried that if Vanya goes off and presents this as - I can understand why she'd do that, 'cause we're just four adults - like, "Right, well time to think about your parents!" And if she goes out and she presents is as like, "Well look, these four weirdos wanna sit down and it's gonna go badly" and she manages to get them all thinking people are gonna be coming for them, we might end up with a situation way worse than we intended here.

ALI (as Tender): I mean, I don't doubt our ability to state our case—

JACK as Fourteen: I do!

ALI (as Tender): — right? [laughs] If it comes to that. But I—

AUSTIN: There's an added thing that y'all should be thinking about on top of this. And I think that the way I introduce it is that Yam comes in. Yam and Garlic come in with Orellia. And Orellia rushes over and says,

AUSTIN (as Orellia): I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry. I don't mean to interrupt, I really don't mean to interrupt, but Yam really wanted to come over and say—

AUSTIN (as Yam): [robot voice] Thank you! Thank youuuuyam.

[JACK laughs]

KEITH (as Gig): You're welcome. Yam.

AUSTIN (as Yam): Thank you.

AUSTIN: And then signs much more clearly because understands how to use— can speak, but cannot vocalize quite yet, still getting a handle on this new device. And Orellia translates for you - or I guess, again, Tender you have the eye that can do it - and says,

AUSTIN (as Orellia translating for Yam): You don't know how frustrating it has been to be around people who I want to, with my voice, tell them how grateful I am? But because you helped me, you are the first people I'm telling thank you to.

AUSTIN (as Yam): Thankyou!

AUSTIN: And she's like,

AUSTIN (as Orellia): Alright, you can go. C'mon, let's get outta here.

1:03:01

AUSTIN: And Garlic kneels next to— it's a big knee, you can hear the pistons deploying in their leg dwhoow as it depresses and kneels. And quickly signs with Vanya, who signs back. And then she puts a hand on Garlic's shoulder, and Garlic stands up and begins to leave.

And then she looks back over at y'all, and she's like,

AUSTIN (as Vanya): Do the adults need more time?

KEITH (as Gig): Yes.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): Okay.

AUSTIN: And then the, the server comes back over and hands uh everyone their drinks. She ordered the same thing Gig did, which is a jam juice and the biggest spoon possible.

[KEITH laughs]

ALI: Whose spoon's bigger?

AUSTIN: It's the same spoon. They're both the same spoons. Equal spoons! Equal spoons.

[ALI laughs]

KEITH (as Gig): Eeurrragh ... Wow! This is thick!

AUSTIN (as Vanya): It's thick.

KEITH (as Gig): This is like a pudding!

AUSTIN (as Vanya): It's nearly a pudding.

KEITH (as Gig): This is. This is nigh on a pudding!

[group laughter]

AUSTIN: I think she goes back and forth with Gig on various ways to say "nearly"?

[KEITH and JACK laugh]

KEITH (as Gig): This is approximately pudding.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): This is practically pudding.

KEITH (as Gig): This is extremely close to pudding.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): This is juuust about a pudding.

KEITH (as Gig): Hmm. This is orbiting pudding.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): This is like. It's not quite pudding, but it's in the neighborhood.

KEITH (as Gig): Hmm. This is in the ballpark of pudding?

AUSTIN (as Vanya): This is close to pudding. No cigar.

[ALI and KEITH laugh]

AUSTIN: What do the adults say during this back and forth?

ART (as Grand Magnificent): We should do the job. And I'm not saying we shouldn't try to help, but this isn't our responsibility.

KEITH (as Gig): I'm not comfortable—

ART (as Grand Magnificent): They don't even really want us to help!

KEITH (as Gig): No, they don't. My impression is that they don't want us to help. My instinct is that there is way more ways that we could mess it up than we could help. And I'm satisfied with the permission we were given to let these people know their kids are okay.

ART (as Grand Magnificent): We need to lay eyes on Winchester

KEITH as Gig): I agree.

ART (as Grand Magnificent): That's an objective we need to complete.

KEITH (as Gig): I think the best — here's the thing. I don't want to be blamed for not saying where these kids are? I think we should maybe say that the kids should somehow let them know that they're okay? But I don't want to push it. And maybe push slightly harder in the case of Winchester. But. I still don't want to push it.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): Roughly a pudding.

[ALI laughs]

AUSTIN (as Vanya): Alright. What do you want?

KEITH (as Gig): I kinda want a pudding now.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): [softly] Oy.

JACK (as Fourteen): We'd like to meet Winchester.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): I can't make that decision. Winchester has to make that decision. That's her decision to make.

JACK (as Fourteen): That's okay.

ART (as Grand Magnificent): Well, can you ask for us?

AUSTIN (as Vanya): [sighs]

AUSTIN: And the server comes back to take the empty pudding cup and says like,

AUSTIN (as Winchester): I'm right here.

JACK (as Fourteen): Hi.

AUSTIN (as Winchester): Hey.

JACK (as Fourteen): Well. You seem to be safe.

AUSTIN (as Winchester): Safe and sound. Safe as houses. Safe for now.

ART (as Grand Magnificent): Great.

AUSTIN (as Winchester): Alabaster isn't a bad guy. He's just a bad fake dad. Y'know? I went missing a month ago. The first time he tried to call me was last week.

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

AUSTIN (as Winchester): There are 300 of us? There are 2 million kids on this planet. We're not trying to build an army. I just want to live a decent life. And help other people like me. I'm sorry, Vanya. I didn't mean to—

AUSTIN: and she's like, "no, it's fine, it's fine, you should tell your story."

AUSTIN (as Winchester): We can show you around, we can— it's a planet. It's a planet. It's a planet! We can get far enough away. We can just live until we're older, and then ...

AUSTIN: And it's clear she hasn't thought this stuff through that much. But also there's a little bit of a grain of truth that she really believes? Which is, there are two big cities on this planet and they don't need to be near them. That is what she hopes, anyway.

JACK (as Fourteen): I dunno, I— Grand?

ART (as Grand Magnificent): I'm satisfied.

JACK (as Fourteen): Yeah? When?

KEITH (as Gig): I'm satisfied.

JACK (as Fourteen): When is this done? When do we consider this done?

JACK: And I think— I dunno. Tender?

ART (as Grand Magnificent): I'm—

AUSTIN (as Winchester): You can't let them know where we are, though.

ART (as Grand Magnificent): Okay. Can I tell him you're safe?

AUSTIN (as Winchester): Yeah. But that's it.

ART (as Grand Magnificent): Alright. I mean. Sure. I don't—

AUSTIN: Vanya raises her eyebrows.

ART (as Grand Magnificent): I don't want to be in this war, y'know?

AUSTIN (as Vanya): You got yourself involved already.

ART (as Grand Magnificent): I'm reeally good at getting myself uninvolved.

[crosstalk]

ALI: Jesus christ.

AUSTIN: Fuck.

[KEITH laughs — JACK sighs]

1:08:28

AUSTIN (as Vanya): [sighing heavily] You call her uncle and you say, "I found her, she's safe, she doesn't want to come home." What do you think the next step is?

ART (as Grand Magnificent): Nnnnone of our immediate concern?

JACK (as Fourteen): Wait.

ALI (as Tender): A little bit of our immediate concern, Grand.

JACK (as Fourteen): This is not something we can wash our hands of, and I don't think it's something that I would want to. 'Cause you're right. And I was right earlier when I talked to your friend. They'll send someone else.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): [sigh] Don't tell them we're anything. [another sigh] Couldn't find us. Such a shame. You thought you had a lead.

JACK (as Fourteen): My worry there is— you know people are pinning this on the NEH, right?

AUSTIN (as Vanya): Yeah. And you know what? Fuck the NEH too.

ART (as Grand Magnificent): You know they're just gonna hire someone meaner than us. The next person's gonna find you, and they're just gonna draw guns.

JACK (as Fourteen): What if we—

AUSTIN (as Vanya): Alright. You wanna help us? We can actually keep this place safe. Not right now. And I don't mean safe by making sure we each have our own guns. Wherever this place came from, the atmosphere there was not great. It was acid storms all the time. But people still wanted to celebrate, I guess, and so this place used to have an energy shield? But we can't power it. We have enough energy from the solar panels and the rest of the engine and the fuel we can scrape up from out here in the Crash Yards to keep it going indefinitely. But we can't raise this shield. You get us power for that, nothing can get in if we don't want it to get in. I mean, nothing. Especially not the way Quire works these days. They'd have to bring down a dreadnaught.

JACK (as Fourteen): So wait. If we do that, it wouldn't matter if they send meaner, meaner detectives, because they'd just stand on the outside—

AUSTIN (as Vanya): And throw rocks at us.

JACK (as Fourteen): — and shout.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): Yeah. Now that's maybe more involved than you want to be. That's fine. And I don't have any plans in the near future to send my own people to do it. It's too dangerous, I'm not sending a 15-year old into Big Garage to steal a perpetual motion machine.

KEITH (as Gig): I don't want to speak for anyone else, but that sounds like exactly my shit though.

[AUSTIN laughs]

ALI (as Tender): [long sigh]

AUSTIN (as Vanya): But I know you have reservations, and if you want us to do the vote, I'll do the vote.

ART (as Grand Magnificent): W-what are we? Ahh ...

AUSTIN (as Vanya): Maybe you need some time. Put you up on the finest suite. Lotta empty rooms these days. Give you a tour of the place. Come to your own conclusions.

KEITH (as Gig): Is there a bungalow suite?

ART (as Grand Magnificent): Why do you need a bungalow?

KEITH (as Gig): I like a bungalow.

[JACK laughs]

ART (as Grand Magnificent): What do you like about a bungalow?

KEITH (as Gig): I don't know, I just think it's a nice vibe.

ART (as Grand Magnificent): You need a freestanding building?

KEITH (as Gig): I don't need one, I just asked if there was one.

ART (as Grand Magnificent): No, I get it. You can't share a building with the rest of us.

[AUSTIN and ALI laugh]

AUSTIN (as Vanya): This is why we don't like Gig. This is it.

ART (as Grand Magnificent): Apparently he needs his own four walls.

KEITH (as Gig): Listen!

AUSTIN (as Vanya): Very private person. Except when he's looking at other people with his camera eye.

ART (as Grand Magnificent): I know!

KEITH (as Gig): I didn't say that you guys couldn't come in the bungalow. We could all split a bungalow!

ALI (as Tender): But it is your bungalow.

KEITH (as Gig): I didn't say that! I just said do you have a bungalow! Listen! All I'm sayin', all I'm sayin' is— there could be a lot of cool stuff here if you watch some of my how-to videos. They're very good.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): We've watched them all, don't you worry.

KEITH (as Gig): [under his breath] You piece of shit.

[AUSTIN laughs]

ART (as Grand Magnificent): Remember when we went around and Gig called a bunch of kids pieces of shit?

[ALI and JACK laugh]

[crosstalk]

KEITH (as Gig): They like it.

ALI (as Tender): A good time.

KEITH (as Gig): It's fun, it's fun.

ALI (as Tender): Eh, it's honest.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): Yeah.

ART (as Grand Magnificent): I don't know. Y'all wanna do this?

KEITH (as Gig): Anyway. I'll— do you guys have a bungalow suite that we can all share?

AUSTIN (as Vanya): We do have a bungalow suite, I think it's vacant currently. I'll look into it.

KEITH (as Gig): I just want proximity to the water is all. C'mon you guys.

ALI (as Tender): Don't go kicking anyone out of a bungalow.

[crosstalk]

KEITH (as Gig): [yelling off mic] Don't— I didn't ask anyone to be kicked out!!

AUSTIN (as Vanya): I'm not gonna kick anyone— hey!

KEITH (as Gig): What is going on?!

[AUSTIN cackles]

KEITH (as Gig): Oh man. I didn't ask for that! If I ask for a sandwich, I'm not asking, "Can you take a sandwich away from someone else and give it to me."

ALI (as Tender): She said someone might be using it!

KEITH (as Gig): I didn't say, "Well kick them out." I just said "Okay."

ART (as Grand Magnificent): Did ... did you take that jelly juice from someone?

KEITH (as Gig): Did I steal someone's jelly juice? Jam juice? Did I rip this spoon from someone else's hands? I was offered this!

AUSTIN (as Vanya): We'll get you set up. And take all the time you want. We're not goin' anywhere. Sort of. Kinda goin' lots of places. But. You know.

KEITH (as Gig): Yeah. On second thought, I'll sleep curled up in the smallest closet that you can find. Jesus christ.

AUSTIN (as Vanya): We have pretty small closets, if that's a thing you need.

KEITH (as Gig): Deal. I'm into it. I will be inside of this.

ALI (as Tender): Oh no, we have a spaceship that doesn't have any beds in it, I would love to sleep in my own bedroom, please. Thank you.

KEITH (as Gig): Oh wow, real diva needs a bed all of a sudden. Oh, you're not gonna share your bed with somebody? You're gonna have one bed all to yourself?

ALI (as Tender): Would like one. Would like one. Yeah.

KEITH (as Gig): Gonna kick someone out of your bed? Someone was using that bed, maybe.

JACK (as Fourteen): Tender—

KEITH (as Gig): [under his breath, very softly] Jesus christ. Fucking idiots.

[prolonged laughter from ART]

AUSTIN: Gig Kephart, everybody.

[ART and ALI laugh]

KEITH (as Gig): I don't like pushback.

ALI (as Tender): Can we all just have a pow-wow here, while we're alone? And—

[cross talk]

AUSTIN: We're in the bungalow, is that—

KEITH: You gonna kick someone out of the pow-wow?

[ALI laughs]

ALI (as Tender): Can we all just take a minute to think of the best idea we had when we were 19 years old?

ART (as Grand Magnificent): Yeah! I was gonna become a renown mech designer and be rad for the rest of my life. And it worked for a pretty long time!

KEITH (as Gig): Yeah, I was gonna be an internet celebrity.

JACK (as Fourteen): I don't remember.

AUSTIN: Awww. Yeah, you don't.

JACK (as Fourteen): Tender, I get that. If you asked me this morning if I thought that a fairground on caterpillar tracks run by teenagers was a good idea, I'd be like, "Yes, it's great." But I'd also be like, "I don't think that's gonna work." But I don't know— what's the best-case scenario of this look like? 'Cause it sure isn't putting these people be in contact with all the people they've run away from and all the things they've run away from.

ALI (as Tender): Sometimes that helps. It's not gonna help for every one of them, but—

JACK (as Fourteen): I don't know if I can... I mean, how many people is it gonna suck for?

ALI (as Tender): I'm not saying that that's the— we don't force all of them to do that. But there's a middle ground here that isn't "Walk away from a bunch of kids trying to make it on their own in an abandoned amusement park with a big dome that nobody can get into that we helped them build!"

KEITH (as Gig): You know, hearing it said out loud like that, I I really like it. I'm still into it.

[ART and ALI laugh]

AUSTIN: Oh, fuck!

ALI (as Tender): Yeeaaah?

KEITH (as Gig): Yes. Yeah.

ALI (as Tender): [sighs] Well. Signet's half a galaxy away. So we might as well. [laughs]

AUSTIN: She's on this planet. She has the ship, she's there with the ship.

ART: Yeah, didn't we see Signet like this morning?

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah yeah. Like two days or something. You did some legwork.

ALI: I thought they went elsewhere to deal with something else.

AUSTIN: They're dealing with the Volunteers of Seiche. They're doing— oh my god, I don't know the order these are coming out, so I'm not gonna say what they're doing.

JACK (as Fourteen): Alright. Okay. 'Cause it would be absurd, right? To go up to Cascara and say, "Cascara, you know your big list there? I've got a new governing body I'd like you to recognize. It's the children in the theme park that rides around." What's Cascara gonna say to that? She's gonna be like, "No!"

ALI (as Tender): I think this is something we hand off to her, though?

JACK (as Fourteen): I don't think it's something we hand off to Cascara. But in the version of this that works, is Cascara the one who knows about it?

ALI (as Tender): I'd say so. I mean, she's the one who's putting weird secret agents together all the time, she knows how to keep a secret. But. I don't know.

KEITH (as Gig): Yeah, I don't know about that part, either. But— okay. Okay. Hold on. I have two things, two points. One, we can't just go and be like, "So have you kids all — have you thought about goin' back?" Of course they've thought about it. They don't need to be introduced to the idea of going back home, that's not a new idea for them. And the other thing is, I'm just more comfortable with the worst-case scenario of this place running like this than the worst-case scenario of telling someone about it and not doing the shields. If 299 kids are safe and we put one person in incredible danger, that is not worth it. I would rather do nothing. I would rather do nothing than do that.

ART (as Grand Magnificent): We get a lot more credibility for helping them.

ALI (as Tender): We also don't know what danger looks like. Even if we stay here and talk to them for a week about how much they've thought this through, right? We don't know what they would do if a hundred of them decide that they want to make a different rule, or like, if they get sick. It's great that they have worked out a system where one of them gets to be a waitress today. But who gets to be a doctor if there's an outbreak? Or anything? And how is that help— if they're in a dome that no one can get into.

JACK (as Fourteen): Yeah, I—

ART (as Grand Magnificent): Well I assume they can presumably get out of the dome.

ALI (as Tender): And then go where? If they don't want anyone to know what's here? Like you've never hidden something in your bed from your parents? That's not—

ART (as Grand Magnificent): Yeah, but it didn't stop me from goin' to the doctor.

[ALI laughs]

KEITH (as Gig): I feel like this is what I was talking about when I said that I was more comfortable with the worst-case scenario of us not doing anything than us interfering in a negative way.

JACK (as Fourteen): What if— okay, remember earlier when I suggested introducing this organization to Cascara as an object of ridicule? I'm comin' around on it. What if that's what the mid-ground looks like? Not introducing these people to their parents and their carers or to the kind of systems that put them here but to the fixers above us?

ALI (as Tender): I'm fine with that. But I don't want to do the thing of just washing our hands and walking away that you all want to do.

JACK (as Fourteen): Hey, I don't—

ALI (as Tender): Okay. The other two, the other two. I'm sorry. We both—

ART (as Grand Magnificent): That's not what I want to do either. I want to go get 'em that power.

KEITH (as Gig): Yeah, I wanna go get them that power, that perpetual motion engine?

ALI (as Tender): Right, and then leave? And then just leave?

ART (as Grand Magnificent): Yeah, there're serious— I mean, I'm not gonna be these kids' parents.

KEITH (as Gig): Yeah, they clearly don't want that.

JACK (as Fourteen): No—

ALI (as Tender): Yeah, but I don't want to read in a newspaper in three months about a bunch of kids that got sick and came home.

JACK (as Fourteen): Turned out the air could only go into the dome or out of it. They all died.

ART (as Grand Magnificent): That's almost certainly not what's gonna happen.

KEITH (as Gig): Yeah. And if that happened, we were at least there for that.

ALI (as Tender): Oh my god, a million things could happen. How have you guys been living your lives not knowing that anything could happen? Especially like the last year and a half. God.

[JACK laughs]

ART (as Grand Magnificent): I mean, I've lived the last year and half on my reputation. My reputation as someone who gets things done, not like "Oh yeah, he just like left." That's not how I've conducted myself. We need to take a stand, and if you're gonna say, "Let's help these kids" then you have to say, "Let's fucking wreck this shit!"

JACK (as Fourteen): That's not—

ART (as Grand Magnificent): But you have to tell me that's your solution.

KEITH (as Gig): When you—

ALI (as Tender): The problem is, we all have a different answer of what helping with these kids looks like. And turning them—

ART (as Grand Magnificent): Yeah, and you're a fucking narc!

[general laughter]

KEITH (as Gig): Here's the thing. When you live in a world where anything can happen, a lot of those things are good things. Just because anything—

ART (as Grand Magnificent): Let them make this mistake!

KEITH (as Gig): Anything being able to happen doesn't mean that bad things only happen.

ALI (as Tender): But they do.

1:21:22

JACK (as Fourteen): Yeaah.

KEITH (as Gig): These people are gonna have bad lives whether they're out or whether they're at home. And they chose to have the potential of a bad life out here.

JACK (as Fourteen): Gig, I can't remember what I was like when I was 19, but I know that I did something. And the thing that I did was join up and start working with Castlerose. And I don't know why I did that, but I don't think was— it wasn't a decision that led to the best things. But it's where I am, it's what I did, and I want to make sure that we can put these people in a place where they can make decisions like that, but there'll be something that this capable of supporting them if the oxygen only leaves the thing. Y'know? Or if there's an outbreak.

KEITH (as Gig): Hold on, that first thing is a made-up problem.

ART (as Grand Magnificent): Don't you think they would just take the dome down before they died of suffocation? Like, that seems to be a really easy—

KEITH (as Gig): Just snap it on and off.

ALI (as Tender): It's a joke bad thing. There are other bad things.

JACK (as Fourteen): Okay, here's a—

ART (as Grand Magnificent): What's a bad thing that they couldn't just stop? They could just go, "Oh okay, this didn't work" and walk away.

JACK (as Fourteen): Okay, fine. Massive internal conflict. [ALI (as Tender): Yeah.] Epidemic. Raider groups.

ART (as Grand Magnificent): Nothing stops them from going to a hospital. It's an impenetrable dome.

JACK (as Fourteen): No. A lot of stuff stops them from going to hospital, which is that they all wanted to run away from that shit.

ALI (as Tender): Yeah. And that they don't want to be found and they don't want— if they leave here and give someone their name, they're afraid someone'll come back here.

JACK (as Fourteen): That's it, that's it. Then their aunt comes and picks them up from the hospital.

ART (as Grand Magnificent): They're kids! When it gets shitty, they'll just go home!

JACK (as Fourteen): No. They won't. They're kids, and when it gets shitty, they won't make the good decision.

ART (as Grand Magnificent): Oh my god.

JACK (as Fourteen): Okay, here's what I propose. I think it's probably adjacent to you, Tender, but I'm not sure.

ALI as Tender: Go ahead.

JACK (as Fourteen): I think we should get them the fucking thing, the—

KEITH (as Gig): Perpetual motion engine.

JACK (as Fourteen): — the perpetual motion engine, and then once we've got that in place, then we introduce them to Cascara and to Cascara's people. And we try and establish this place as some sort of entity that is more than a theme park that a bunch of children have run away to. I don't know if we need the perpetual motion machine to do so, but my worry is that they need something like that to back them up.

ALI (as Tender): Yeah, I'm fine with that. And they're not gonna trust us unless we give them something like last time.

JACK (as Fourteen): And I think we should be open about this, right? I don't think we should be like, "Well, we're gonna go get you the thing" and then put it up, and then just sell you out to Cascara. I think we should propose that as a condition.

[MUSIC - "The Notion" begins]

ALI (as Tender): Yeah. I mean, I think that we can sell Cascara. Right? We can explain who she is and the sort of things that she does, and she's not a cop.

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

KEITH (as Gig): Yeah. What is she?

ALI (as Tender): She's a secret agent? Organizer?

KEITH (as Gig): Isn't she kind of a cop, though?

ALI (as Tender): No. No.

JACK (as Fourteen): I mean, she terrifies me. [AUSTIN laughs] But also ...

ALI (as Tender): Like, Declan was a cop. The Cadent was a cop. Cascara's a different thing.

AUSTIN: She's a super cop.

[JACK laughs]

ALI (as Tender): She's like a secret police.

[AUSTIN laughs]

KEITH (as Gig): That's worse!

[MUSIC - "The Notion" ends]