

Twilight Mirage 34: This Year of Ours: The Mystic

Transcribed by garbagegerblin#4570 [0:00-2:45] and Cole from [2:45-finish]

Austin (in **Declan's Corrective's** voice): "Thirteenth" by Declan's Corrective, Co-Governor of Seneschal, former Ace Pilot of the New Earth Hegemony.

[Music: "[The Mystic](#)" begins]

Before these clinquant peaks
And Quire-fashioned streets
And shimmering cataract falls
Before this was home
Before Seneschal

There was me

Stiff shoulder muscle
Knotted, bloody, scarred
And chess table politics
And cricket yard brawls
And father's frantic calls
To lessons he'd swore I'd need
To seed a future year
With countless victories

Before we walked together gleaming
Before Drifting, my reprise
Before diarchy and comedy
Before Cadent beaming:
Me

Before Notion
Before violence
Before Vanguard, Apogee

Before Evening

Before promise

Before vision from dark sea

I walked down courtyards, and looked to spheres

And whispered treacherous dreams

To peers who'd disappeared

No schemers left to scheme

Just me and castle

Just me and hope

Just me, naive, and mouth of soap

This is not apology

This is dedication writ in flesh

No more "fighting spirit"

No more streets, bent

No more "what I really meant"

This is tender wound

Me, threshed

On a dusted windowsill

An ant lifts a sugar grain

Plodding under false sunlight

Through spotted windowpane

And on the other side a child

Runs through a sprinkler stream

And screams

And laughs

And worries what's to be

Stiff shoulder muscle

Knotted, bloody, scarred

A dedication to the world-to-be
To victory
To fall

[Music: "The Mystic" ends]

Austin: Alright. Tender Sky, how's your year been?

Ali: Uh... pretty good, I guess? [laughs]

Austin: Yeah, pretty weird, probably?

Ali: Yeah, probably.

Austin: Let's get into your year in a second, but for now let's just talk about, like, numbers and get that out of the way.

Ali: Sure.

Austin: What is the playbook or class that you are... you are playing as?

Ali: The playbook that I am playing as is Mystic.

Austin: Oh boy, Mystic.-

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Sounds like that's a big change from the Architect, previously.

Ali: Mmm, well...

Austin: Or, not a big change, but like, it's interesting to think about like, "Oh, yeah. I used to be 'the Hacker,' and now I'm 'the Mystic,'" right? Like, that's an int- thats... I think that is the right move for where we left Tender Sky in the Veil, and especially with the direction that things have gone inside of the Quire System and the Twilight Mirage.

Ali: Mhm.

Austin: So, your name is obviously Tender Sky. You still look what- Has your look changed over the last year?

Ali: Um... Oh, were we- Should I have had that [laughs] prepared?

Austin: Mm.

Ali: I like- It's a little different. I have like, an outfit change planned. [laughs]

Austin: Oh, do you?

Ali: Yeah!

Austin: We're gonna see you. Let me save it for when we do a little vignette then.

Ali: Yeah, yeah.

Austin: So, Heritage is obviously the By-and-By.

Ali: Right.

Austin: Your background is like, an Architect, obviously.

Ali: Yeah, I was gonna keep that. That kind of- I didn't know if like- There's like, the Cult option in this game.

Austin: Mhm.

Ali: And I didn't know if I wanted to lean that bit.

Austin: Yeah, that- that was also be like- Religious would be totally viable, right?

Ali: Yeah, I had to-

Austin: Depends on which version of that that you want to- you want to represent.

Ali: Uh, yeah... I think- I don't know. I don't want to like, not that- have that be a part of her anymore, but like, I ended up taking... a skill in Hack for Architect cause I think that makes sense with like-

Austin: Totally.

Ali: You know, it's a throughway.

Austin: You don't need that with- Yeah, okay.

Ali: Right.

Austin: So- so, let's talk about stats actually. So, you... By default, the Mystic starts with two in Attune-

Ali: Mhm.

Austin: -and one in Scramble, right?

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Attune is like, doing mystical shit and Scramble- Scramble is... like-

Ali: Running, jumping.

Austin: Running and jumping and stuff, I think.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: So that adds up. So, what else- what are the two ones you took? What are the ones you took from your Heritage and your Background?

Ali: So, the one that I took for Heritage was Consort.

Austin: Okay.

Ali: And then the one for my Background was Hack.

Austin: Okay, and Consort... What's Consort say?

Ali: It is-

Austin: Is there like, a breakdown of that somewhere? I'm sure there is.

Ali: That one is like, 'with connections from your Heritage, Background, Friends, or Rivals, to gain access to resources, information, people, or places.'

Austin: Cool. Cool. So that's like, almost like link or something in a previous or like, um... Like, it's like, being able to be like, 'Hey, here is- I'm gonna meet a new person. I want to like- I want to like- Uh, I've landed on a new port. It's time for me to make a- I need to make a contact' or something. Or it's like, 'I go into a dinner party and just here's my general skill at being liked there' versus like, trying to convince somebody of a thing that they don't want to be convinced of.

Ali: Right. Yeah. I feel like, I mean the By-and-By was kind of a social...

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: -planet in, I guess, a way that we didn't see the other ones. And then also, like- It also, by the end of it, had the biggest population. So, I feel like...

Austin: Totally.

Ali: -she would know. Like, does that make sense?

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Definitely.

Ali: I mean I get that it's just different planets, but, you know, population-wise she'd probably- People are familiar with her.

Austin: Totally. So, that's your- So, you have- The Consort is one, and you also one Hack, you already mentioned.

Ali: Yes.

Austin: And that's for being an Architect. You have two more points. I feel like you should have something in Scrap.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Which is fighting. Like, I've seen you fight. [laughs]

Ali: I would like to have one in Scrap.

Austin: Okay.

Ali: So, just one more left now.

Austin: Yep, and your- You can have up to two in anything at this point in the game.

Ali: Yeah. Mhm. But I think a Study probably makes sense.

Austin: Yeah, so Study is you [reading] 'scrutinize details and interpret evidence. You might gather information from documents, newspapers, or books. You might research an esoteric topic. You might closely analyze a person to detect lies or true feelings. You could try to examine events to understand a pressing situation, but Surveying might be better.' So, like, if your- Survey is probably better than Study at like, 'What is this formation?' or whatever.

Ali: I like Study in terms of like, being able to study objects and stuff.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: I don't know how often I'm gonna- I'm probably gonna use pretty often, but in terms of like, being able to make things or like, being able to manipulate stuff, I feel like that'll come up a lot.

Austin: Yeah, that's a good point. Like, this is definitely a system of like, if you want to build something, doing that work ahead of time to like, 'Hey, what does doing something actually look like here?'

Ali: Right, exactly. Yeah.

Austin: Yeah, alright. Let's do that one in Study then.

Ali: I'm gonna be doing a lot of assemblage. I feel like [laughs] having one in Study is probably gonna be a thing I roll a lot.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah. Totally, totally. Which means that you've an Insight of two, a Prowess of two, and a Resolve of two. Those are all your defensive attributes and uh-

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: And that's- that's pretty well balanced nice.

Ali: Oh, perfect.

Austin: Nice. So, here's a question of, 'What is Tender Sky's vice?'

Ali: [gasps] Ohhh.

Austin: The options are Faith, Gambling, Luxury, Obligation, Pleasure, Stupor, and Weird.

Ali: Man... this is a good one.

Austin: Uh huh. Uh huh. This game was good. I'm excited.

Ali: Man... I feel like the first one that jumps out to me is like, Obligation with the whole thing that we've been talking about with like, The Cadent and stuff.

Austin: That's interesting.

Ali: But I don't know if that's-

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: Man, I don't know if that's the thing, right?

Austin: Yeah. That's my question is like, this is- So... so, I've already talked to **Dre** about this. I don't know if this is coming before or after that, [Ali laughs] but vices are how you de-stress.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Which means that like, that should be... It's not that it's- it's not that you have an obligation to do on your downtime. It's that doing that obligation is how you de-stress from what you do when you're out on mission time. Or just in like, research mode or whatever. You know

what I mean? Like, it is- it is- This is how Tender goes from being like, frustrated and upset to being... chill.

Ali: Right. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: It's how she de-spike's her emotions.

Ali: Mhm.

Austin: To use Veil terminology. In the Veil, it was definitely building that temple, right?

Ali: Right. So, it would either be Faith or Weird in that case.

Austin: Oh, yeah, definitely. Definitely one of those two.

Ali: Uh-

Austin: So, let's think- Let's drill into that then. Like, was it the physical notion of building that space that- that did it for her or was it the connection with her faith?

Ali: Man, it's tough cause it definitely started as one thing and then kind of flipped into the other, I think.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah.

Ali: You know what? I think that... I'm going to go with Weird.

Austin: Okay.

Ali: But I... Well, actually, maybe it should be Pleasure cause like, I still want the Steady to still exist.

Austin: Mm. Yes.

Ali: And I feel like her vice being like, 'I run this cool bar' is... [laughs]

Austin: I like that a lot. Let's do that. Let's totally do Pleasure. And maybe that's part of this- Part of the confrontation with Open Metal definitely was about... Tender and Open's relationship with faith and with like, why they did the things that they were doing and like, whether or not that was the way forward. And I kind of like the notion that a year later, you're still this person who has faith and who still is like, trying to do things- do good things in the world, but like, that's not how you de-stress anymore. [**Ali** laughs] That is an obligation for you. It is not how you like... [exhales] You take that deep breath, right?

Ali: Right. Yeah, exactly.

Austin: So, yeah. Let's write down Pleasure. Sounds good. So, that is the basics. Oh, no. Moves. Special abilities. That's what we need.

Ali: Okay. So... my-

Austin: Yeah. So, you start with a starting one.

Ali: Mhm.

Austin: Which is...

Ali: The Way. [reading] 'You can spend a gambit instead of paying stress at any cost.'

Austin: That is super good. Gambit is a- is a thing. For people who listened to Blades in the Dark, gambit is completely new. Gambit is one of the things that Scum and Villainy adds that was just full stop not in Blades in the Dark. And a gambit is something that you have from your crew. You basically get... a number of bonus points at the top of the... of a mission that everybody gets. And it's like a pool that you can all pull from. Normally you just like, 'Oh, I'm gonna spend a gambit to get an extra- to get an extra roll on this.' But this is like, 'Oh, I just don't get hurt.' [lightly laughs] Like, 'I am not stressed actually. I'm gonna use this gambit point to not be stressed by dodging this attack or whatever.' So, I'll add that to the list.

Ali: Mhm.

Austin: Where did it go? That's Muscle; that's not you. [quietly] Here you are.

Ali: [laughs] Oh, I just have- Do you want me to just copy and paste it?

Austin: I got it. I got it.

Ali: Okay.

Austin: It's here. I'm here now. So, what else? So, you start with that one, and then you also are getting... two more moves on top of that.

Ali: Yeah, I have- Oh, two more? Wait.

Austin: Yeah. So, everybody- every- By default, all new characters start with a starting ability and a special ability. Because you're not fresh blood, because you're not completely new characters-

Ali: Got it.

Austin: -I'm also giving you a bonus level [Ali gasps] which you could put into a stat instead. If you wanted a higher action instead, you could also do that.

Ali: Yeah, but that's boring.

Austin: But I like the- Yeah, I mean it is, but it isn't, also. Like, having a three in something would be pretty big.

Ali: Oh, yeah.

Austin: But I mean I think that it's actually part of what happened with Marielda is no one ever put points into actions, [Ali laughs] and that showed.

Ali: I like- I don't know. It would be like, interesting to push it to Attune like, right out of the gate. Like, to make that three, but like...

Austin: Yeah. Yeah. Well, you can do that with your first level. You know?

Ali: Yeah. The like... The book also said that like, if you want to be a Xeno, you also just get that move straight up.

Austin: But you get that instead of your starting ability.

Ali: Ohhhh.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Are we- Is that what you're interested in doing for your thing?

Ali: I think so. It would- I feel like it would be weird to make this character the way that we've talked about it.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah.

Ali: And the way that I use it without having that cause that's gonna just be so much of-

Austin: Yeah. Did we ever figure out what that ruleset looks like? [Ali laughs] Because it might not be... It might not be being a Xeno; it might be its own ability the way like, Memish Mystic is in the rulebook. So, the moves here are like- Also, real quick. Scum and Villainy has like, a dope setting. [Ali laughs] Like, I think it undersells itself up top because it's like, 'Oh, it's basically Star Wars.' And like, it has Star Wars shit in here, right? The Mystic is very clearly a love letter to Jedi, but also, Memish Mystic says, [reading] 'When you scar your body with the holy words of the Prophet Ruum, [Ali laughs] embed with the wounds the raw seaweed from the depths of Mem's oceans, play at the Memish holy site, Nur-thulama, and are accepted as a true member of the Mem [meh-m].' Or the Mem. [mee-m] Uh... you-

Ali: [laughs] No.

Austin: Is it Memish [meh-mish] Mystic or Memish [mee-mish] Mystic? Who could say? [reading] 'You open your mind to the Memish secrets of the Way. You gain access to the-'

Ali: It's something with an e?

Austin: Yeah, but... But like, if you put an 'ng' on the end of this, you wouldn't call it- you wouldn't say, 'Meming [meh-ming],' right?

Ali: I think you would.

Austin: Mm. I think you'd need a second-

Ali: Meming [meh-ming]? You would say that.

Austin: No, you'd say Meming. [mee-ming]

Ali: No. Well...

Austin: You would. See? You would need that second 'M.'

Ali: [laughs] Okay.

Austin: Also, all their shit is about like, duplication. So.

Ali: Mm.

Austin: I think it's a Meming [mee-ming]. I think it's a Mem [mee-m]. I think they're Memers [mee-mers]. The Way of Seeming. Also, it rhymes. Seeming, Meming. [reading] 'The Way of Seeming. You can push yourself,' which is the thing that- where you do like- you take two stress to get a bonus.

Ali: Mhm.

Austin: [reading] 'You can push yourself to do one of the following: Turn invisible to eyes and ears, and the Way, create illusions that look, sound, and feel real. When you push yourself to activate this ability, you still get one of the normal benefits of pushing yourself- roll plus one dice, plus one effect et cetera- in addition to the special ability. Perhaps to Sway someone that the illusion is real.' I think it's that, but like, is real, right? Or the- here's the other one. This is the- the second one is maybe even closer. 'You can push yourself to do one of the following: Manipulate shadows as if they were solid matter, create weapons, tools, or terrifying shapes, step into a shadow and emerge from another nearby shadow.' And that is, 'When you push yourself to activate this ability, you still get- blah, blah, blah, blah.' You just get to make stuff. So.

Ali: Yeah. That's probably it. I was looking through the other playbooks to see if there was like- cause this book doesn't have the like- You know, if you talk to someone, you can like, give this information to them or whatever. Like, you can ask these questions?

Austin: No, it- I mean it does. It's just you don't have one roll for that, right?

Ali: Right.

Austin: You can use- Actually, I just posted this in our Twilight Mirage chat a little earlier.

Ali: Oh, word? Okay.

Austin: Yeah. There's like- it's on page... It's on a page. It's the Gather Information page of the new book. **[Ali laughs]** It's six- six- six by nine. So, it's like, okay, **[reading]** 'If you have questions that you want to answer, you could roll Attune.' Which is like, 'You might Attune to see echoes of recent Way activity. How have powerful mystics been here? How can I find the Ur artifact that speaks to me in my dreams? What should I be worried about?' Or you might, 'Command a local guildler to tell you about the secret meetings held the factory at night.'

Ali: Okay.

Austin: Or you could Consort. So, like, the whole way that this whole system works is that you say you're going to do a thing, and I tell you how risky it is and what level of effect you're going to have by doing it.

[0:15:00]

Which means like, you're right. You can tell me how you ask the question, and then you can just ask any question. It's not just like one of these three questions, you know?

Ali: Right, I was-

Austin: It's just like-

Ali: Yeah, I was thinking about the- kind of where we left off with Tender and like, if there was a move that was like, when someone interacts with a thing that you've made, it's like, you can roll Sway or whatever. You know what I mean? Like-

Austin: Oh...

Ali: Like, cause that- They had the um... The Veil had the emotion thing.

Austin: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Totally. **[overlapped]** Like with the Empath and stuff like that.

Ali: And I was wondering if we had a way to carry that over. Yeah.

Austin: Um, I haven't seen anything that's like that direct.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: But I think more- It should be just more important that we set up that you can make stuff.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: This is the big change with Tender Sky that we started to see at the end of- of the Veil is like, you... Between where you were and what was happening to the Mirage, you began to be able to shape stuff in the world as if it were a virtual space, a digital space. Not just projections, not just holograms. Like, you collapsed that binary that- that the world had already started to collapse- like, they had already started to collapse it like, in meaning and in- in kind of social status in that like, they treated virtual spaces as being just as serious and real and meaningful as physical spaces. And they treated physical spaces just as playfully as they treated virtual spaces. You were like, 'Oh, no. That's the same space actually. [Ali laughs] Actually, these are the same spaces.' And so you can still do that. I like the notion of it requiring stress.

Ali: Oh, yeah.

Austin: Because it is like- It is stressful to do this.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: But like, you can do it. It's a thing that you can do that other people can't. So, what I'll say is we should just put down for now this- the Memish one, the Memish Mystic whatever.

Ali: The Way of the Depths. Yeah.

Austin: Way of the Depths, but then rewrite it cause it's not about shadows for you, right?

Ali: Right. It's about the Mirage.

Austin: Yeah. But we should still figure out something that's limiting because I like that Way of the Depths is like, 'You need shadows.' Shadows are- shadows our most places, but I do like the notion of like, 'Alright, something could shut this down,' right?

Ali: Oh.

Austin: Like, I can imagine having a Way of the Depths character who is just put into a room that is like, 'There's no shadows in here. This is how we lock you up.'

Ali: Well, like, come on.

Austin: You know what I mean? Listen. [Ali laughs] You gotta have that one little weakness otherwise it's not- It's not perfect, right? So, for now, let's put down Way of the Depths.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: And then we'll figure out- It might be the Mirage. Like, you're totally right. It might mean like, 'Oh, yeah. We just need to have a bit of the Mirage here.' And like, that's almost everywhere.

Ali: Almost.

Austin: But I've certainly- I've certainly already made a faction that is literally about killing Divines, Axioms, and other weird shit in the Mirage. And I bet they have a way of shutting down your shit, too, you know? Like.

Ali: That's rude.

Austin: It's- you know? It is. It is rude.

Ali: [laughing] Yeah.

Austin: It is rude. Okay. Actually, it is Austin from the future who has a cold, as you can hear. I'm sneaking into this recording cause Ali and I figured out this move that for the last little bit you've heard us be like, '[hems and haws] Do we- do we know what it is?' We've figured it out. [Ali laughs] And instead of trying to like, reintroduce it later and try to sneak it in with my bad cold voice, we were just like, Let's just drop it in, and people will understand how time works.' [Ali laughs again] So.

Ali: They might, yeah.

Austin: So, do you wanna tell me how we rewrote this move, which is still called Way of the Depths, to actually reflect how- how Tender does this?

Ali: Yeah. So, I mean it's um... We rewrote it cause like, the thing that we didn't talk about was that like, 'How it worked?'

Austin: Yeah. Like, we- we played with like, anywhere where the Mirage is a lot, and that's like, 'That's not it. That can't be right.'

Ali: Yeah. It was like- I don't know. I don't know that I was like, interested in defining what magic is in this world-

Austin: Mhm.

Ali: -but like, there was the necessity for you to be able to be like, 'Well, it's not as good here,' and not having that feel like a weird shitty answer.

Austin: Right. Right, right. Well, and also, there's the bit where like, you're not interested in defining what magic is, but you are interested in- we both are- in extending what we'd already

put down on paper, so-to-speak. Which is Tender- when Tender first started doing this, it was about emotional resonance, right?

Ali: Yeah. Totally. And a big part of this and like, why we... why I wanted to keep working at it even after the conversation that people just heard us had-

Austin: Right, right.

Ali: -was because- it was because we had only really kind of figured out mechanically the like, 'Oh, she makes things part of it.' It was leaving behind all of the emotional stuff in the Veil that I wanted to keep with it.

Austin: Right. Right. Well, even kind of backwards made me think a lot about what she already did in those terms. Like, mechanically in the Veil, it was you taking some moves from the Empath playbook.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Right? And that, you know- you know, in terms of mechanics, it meant that, 'Oh, okay. Now you can do this thing.' But I really like those sequences thinking about... again, like, it's not her at a computer; it's her using her mind and her emotional strength to reshape a space that had previously just been a digital space and now become an increasingly physical one, too. And so, I really like the notion of how this draws on it. Did we read the move? Did we just completely forget to read the move?

Ali: [laughs] I don't know that we did read the move. I don't think that we have yet.

Austin: Okay.

Ali: Do you want to?

Austin: Sure. We're still calling it Way of the Depths, which was the name of the Memish [meh-mish] move or Memish [mee-mish] move-

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: -depending on how you wanna read it. And the one that we rewrote it to say is, [reading] 'You can push yourself to draw upon the residual emotional energy of an area to manipulate solid matter and create weapons, tools, structures, or shapes. Position and effect are determined by degree of residual emotional energy. Additional stress can gain additional effect.' And then there's a bit about how like, also you get the bonus from pushing yourself that you always get.

Austin (cont.): Like, if you push yourself to do this, you also get that plus one die or that plus one effect like you normally do. So that it's not just like, one or the other. Um, one of the things

worth noting there is like, we talked about like, 'What is an area?' a lot. **[Ali laughs]** And like, I think my favorite one was like- It was basically like, I'm not gonna be a dick about like, what counts as an area and what the emotional resonance of that area is, right? So like, if you're in an apartment, I don't want it to be like, 'Well, the kitchen has a different emotional resonance than the living room.' Like, unless it's like, 'Oh, and there was a murder in the kitchen.' You know? Or something.

Ali: Right, yeah. I was about to say that same exact thing.

Austin: But even then... But even then what should happen is like, 'Oh, you're in the living room,' and like, 'Oh, shit. Right here there's nothing. But over in the kitchen, there's blah, blah, blah.'

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: But- but there is the other thing which is like, I do want the notion of like, if you're at the foot- if you're like, at a football arena- if you're at like, a football field, I think that like, the end zones have a different emotional resonance than like, the fifty yard line. And I don't know- We'll like, play it by ear a little bit. But like, I do want you to be able to like, not do detective work necessarily, but like, have that division between the murder scene and the- and like, the front- the like, front of house in a club or something, you know? Like. It'll be-

Ali: Right. Yeah.

Austin: I think it'll be clear, I hope. We'll see.

Ali: Yeah, for sure. I think that's why- So, I- For full context, we'd recorded this vignette, and then later I was like, 'Hey, I have this idea. Let me know if you hate it.' **[laughs]**

Austin: Right.

Ali: And it was just like, I don't know. I always do like, ghosts in the show, I guess.

Austin: Ghosts are good.

Ali: **[laughs]** But like, the start of this idea for me was that I wanted it to be less like ancient burial grounds-

Austin: Mm.

Ali: -and more like- like tarot cards or like tea readings where like, the things that you touch, you leave a part of you with it. And then it just made more sense to have it focused on locations because Tender is an Architect, and that's kind of how she identifies with people and with emotion and with the world is by examining things in that way.

Austin: Mhm.

Ali: So, it was interesting for her to be able to see like- the like, feelings that people have about a place stick with it. And I think the interesting thing about what we're doing going forward is that there are like- there are places that are completely untouched. Like.

Austin: Right, right, right.

Ali: Eight planets came out of nowhere.

Austin: That's exactly it. To~tally.

Ali: A foot has not been on every single one of them. So, like.

Austin: Totally.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: I'll note that you said, 'Feel free to hate this,' and my response was, 'Oh, I actually like this a lot.' So. [Ali laughs] Um, and the other thing here is- and I think like, cards on the table, one of the notes that you also made when you pitched this to me was like, 'Oh, this is similar to what Jace had in COUNTERWeight.'

Ali: Yeah...

Austin: That like, it's about collective emotion of a group, even if it's not about what is being said openly. Like, it's not-

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: It's not just, 'Hey, that person yelled at that person.' It's about like, 'What's simmering underneath?' But then, the thing that makes it special for Tender is like, 'Oh, no. Tender is an Architect still.' Like, not in- Scum and Villainy doesn't have an Architect playbook, but she is an Architect. And so, for her, it isn't about becoming a great pilot or about, you know- you know, knowing how to move through those spaces. It's about creating things. And- and I don't know. We'll see what that stuff looks like. You know?

Ali: Right. Yeah, yeah. But there's definitely like- a thing of like, knowing if you put blue on the walls, people are going to focus more on that room or whatever.

Austin: Right. Right. Right.

Ali: She has that sort of understanding of what spaces look and can feel like, and then just has access to this all other like, hidden part of it, I guess.

Austin: Right. And like, one of the things I'm excited to explore with this is, 'How much of that is her? How much of that is what's happened with Quire?'

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: 'How much of that is like, whatever being a stratus is? What is a stratus?' [Ali laughs] Who the fuck knows? Always gonna complicate that shit. So, alright. I don't think we should go much longer than this. Go back to whatever your third ability is in just a second.

Ali: Okay.

Austin: Thank you for doing this pick up with me.

Ali: Yeah, same.

Austin: Thank you for listening.

Ali: Back to past Ali.

Austin: Doo-doo-doo-doo-doo-doo. Doo-doo-doo-doo-doo-doo. [Ali laughs] That's- that's going back in time sound. Bye.

Ali: [laughing] Bye.

Austin: Alright. So, that's the second one for now is the Way of the Depths.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: What's your third one?

Ali: Because of the way we have Way of the Depths, I don't think that we have to build a third one. So, I'm just gonna go with the one that I wanted to take.

Austin: Oh, yeah.

Ali: Which is Sundering. [reading] 'You may push yourself to Attune to the Way and twist it causing psychic harm to anyone in the area vulnerable to your assault.'

Austin: Jesus.

Ali: 'You can spend one stress for an additional feature: it damages instead of stuns, the area includes a few targets instead of one, you may choose who is included in the effect.'

Austin: That's brutal.

Ali: Mhm.

Austin: That seems like a little fiercer than we've seen... [Ali laughs hard] from Tender.

Ali: Well, okay. So, that was also literally the first thing that she did.

Austin: Oh! It was!

Ali: When she had like the big- Yeah!

Austin: With Sho.

Ali: Oh, with Sho, and then also with the um... the shock robots that- She took all of those down like, at once.

Austin: Oh... is that what those- is that what those were? Is that- I thought that was um... For my mind- in my mind- Oh, you're right. She stuns them and then hits them with-

Ali: Right, she doesn't even hit them. You were like, 'Don't do that. That's boring.'

Austin: Oh, I did say. [Ali laughs] I'd forgotten that I said that.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Okay. So, yeah. 'You may push yourself to Attune to the Way and twist it to call psychic harm to any who are vulnerable.' Awesome. Cool. I'm gonna- I think we should add something to this, actually.

Ali: Yeah?

Austin: Whis is... one second. Because- So, it's 'damages instead of stuns, the area includes a few targets instead of one, you may choose who is included in the effect.' The thing that isn't here is like- there should be another option here, which is one of the additional effects can be um... you can affect those who are not normally vulnerable to your assault. Because like, those torch units-

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: -should not be affected by psychic harm. But you managed to- to twist the Way enough, you twisted the Mirage enough to even affect these things that do not have minds. So.

Ali: Alright.

Austin: That's an interesting- that's an interesting- I just want to make sure that's in there, too. So, that's a little- that's a little hack we just did.

Ali: Oh, look at that!

Austin: Yeah, we did a hack. We did a hack. Awesome. So, that's you. That's you on this- on this sheet. That's your character.

Ali: That's my character sheet.

Austin: We did a new character.

Ali: Uh huh.

Austin: There's more here that we'll have to work through. Like, everybody has a friend. Everybody has a- like, a rival.

Ali: Oh, yeah. So.

Austin: We can make new ones. There's- there's a cool list. There's a cool list here that we... is neat.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: That is like, 'Horex, a former teacher. Hicks, a mystic good supplier.' **[Ali laughs]** Like, a mystic goods supplier is such a good phrase, but we could totally either pick from old characters or come up with new ones. Like, if you want to be friends with any of the old NPCs, like, that's totally fine by me.

Ali: That's the thing. Like, I was afraid of doing- because like, it seems obvious that I could do like The Cadent and Declan, but I don't know if I would be that...

Austin: Right.

Ali: -cut and dry with it.

Austin: That cut and dry, yeah. I'd rather it be like dirt level- like, people who are just in it.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: You know what I mean? Like, people who are on the streets just gettin' into it.

Ali: Yeah, yeah, yeah. That's the other thing why I don't want- Okay, we'll get into vignette. But I didn't want her to just be like, in an office or whatever dealing with them.

Austin: Okay. Well, let's- let's talk about the vignette a little bit. Like-

Ali: Okay.

Austin: Or like, where- What has your year been like? What have you been doing for the past year?

Ali: I- Yeah. So, we've spoken about this a little bit, and I think that probably the best way to do it is to kind of split it up with like, six months and six months, if you're...

Austin: Sure.

Ali: -okay with that.

Austin: Yeah, totally. So, what were the first six months like?

Ali: Cause I feel like right after whatever happened at the....

Austin: The miracle of the Mirage.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Of course.

Ali: I feel like where that left off was a place that she wouldn't just walk away from. And we've spoken a little bit about her continuing to kind of stay with the Cadent in a way that's like, kind of a role that's both like being her right hand and also like, a little bit of like, uh... like a life coach kind of. [laughs]

Austin: Right. Right. A little bit like um... It was like, you leave the hol- At the end of that holiday special, during the rescue part, like, you were... She made it clear that she was not in a position to make these sorts of judgments, right?

Ali: Right.

Austin: Which like, reflected that she'd been trained to manage Divines. Her role, as the Cadent, had historically been to be the go-between between the people of the Fleet and the Divines who had all this power. And we leave the- We go into the holiday special with one Divine alive. [Ali laughs] And we leave with two because there's a new one. I can imagine there being another new one, at this point. But- but... but probably not. Like, maybe there are people working on trying to resurrect another Divine, at this point. We know that the Mandati are- hope to rebuild Gumption at some point.

Ali: Oh.

Austin: You haven't edited that episode yet, but that's a thing that's happening. [Ali laughs]

[0:30:00]

There are all sorts of groups that are like, trying to find new Divines and trying to build- build new ones and resurrect old ones. But like, the Cadent is not just a politician. She is not- she was not like, trained to be a leader in this bigger picture way. There was a failure of the

Resident Orbit to adjust her position as Divines started dying off. They should have spent time being like, 'the Cadent's role should change or become a human leader.' But there's something like, sort of pessimistic about that. And so, I think they just never did it. So, yeah. Like, she- she basically says, 'You're my right hand.' And like, 'Tell me- You decide for me.' And you did. You decided.

Ali: I did do that. I did make the decision for her.

Austin: And I- Yeah. And then, she and Declan's Corrective go on to become the governors of the biggest like, population center in the sector. Which I think I'm calling Seneschal, which is just a good word.

Ali: Okay.

Austin: Senes- Seneschal is like a- A seneschal is basically a leader- [Ali laughs] is basically like a court appointer- like an appointed like, member of the court. Right? Like, sort of like a steward or something like that. Like, someone who would take care of the household and order people around and stuff like that. So, I think that the overall planet is called Seneschal, and it has a bunch of little- it has- it basically is that the By-and-By, which in my mind has always seemed sort of like a spine with ribs attached...

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Like, attaches itself to this planet, right? And so, there is literally like- imagine a big circle, like the sphere of this planet that has these like, ribbed-like city structures forming all the way around- like, almost all the way around them. And then, there's a huge gap, or like a valley, and then it opens back up to another city, another rib of another city. Like, another arm of the city. And then there's a center, like north-south running massive city in the middle that is like... This is like our Coruscant. You know what I mean?

Ali: Mhm.

Austin: By far. But it still has these natural areas in between the city arms. So, it's like, 'Oh, you can go out onto the edge of this- of this massive city and then like, a little bit further, you'll start to find lakes and- and open fields and stuff like that.' And then on the opposite side, like, the arms don't connect all the way around. So, there is like- there's definitely part of this planet just does not have any city at all. Like, opposite the big north-south like, vertical city line, the kind of longitudinal line of the city on the opposite side of the planet, there was just nothing. It's just wilderness out there. And that's pretty-

Ali: Ooo.

Austin: That's like a neat comparison.

Ali: That's perfect.

Austin: And I'm just being a little corny, which is that like, the Cadent is HQ'ed out there. She's in a place called... I have this written already. She's in a place called... This is- this is a placeholder name. I'm not saying this out loud.

Ali: Okay. [laughs]

Austin: This is not it.

Ali: Wait. She's out in the wilderness, or she's in the city?

Austin: She's like- Her- She is HQ'ed in the wilderness. And- and... um... what's-his-face? Corrective is in the biggest part of the city. The like- the center vertical area of the city, his HQ is. I think that's probably where... most stuff gets done. Or maybe it gets done in one of the side arms. Like, maybe there's the place where they all go to meet. But like, she has basically- Remember the temple you rescued her from?

Ali: Oh, right, right, right. Okay. Yeah.

Austin: Like, that is out in near these waterfalls. I've written down Anticipation Falls, which is just like... [Ali laughs] good, but also maybe too corny. I don't know. How do you feel about it?

Ali: I kind of like it. I don't know. [overlapped] I'm a little biased.

Austin: Alright. So, okay. Well, yeah.

Ali: I don't know.

Austin: So, she's out in Anticipation Falls, which is like, beyond the ribs of the planet and like, it's a small settlement surrounded by waterfalls and lakes and other water features. It used- It is like, weird because there's a degree of it being a little micro resort. [Ali snorts a laugh] Causae like, it's a nice waterfall place, but also, it is home to like, the Cadent. And so, there is like, always chanting in the air. There are people who walk around with robes. I imagine there's like, the smell of chocolate out here. And there's like, lots of children, actually, who- who come here on like, basically on class trips and... and who have parents who get assigned out here. It's this like, weird mix of like, you can see the city in the distance. You can never not see the city because it's the whole planet, right? But it is still- this is the furthest place away from all the hustle and bustle. But even here, I think there is the culture of hustle and bustle, you know?

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: So, yeah. So, she's out here, for sure.

Ali: Okay. So, that's-

Austin: And then there are-

Ali: Go on.

Austin: Go ahead.

Ali: No, no, no. You go on.

Austin: There are also little communities all throughout all of the kind of arms of the giant city that are like, a little bit under-a little bit less under lock and key. A little bit less, you know, dialed in to good culture. Like, there are- there are the shadows here. There are the kind of like Outlaw Star, Cowboy Bebop communities starting to build on this planet. The sort of like, slightly more criminal, slightly more like- this is where the treasure hunters who come into the Mirage and need an HQ to set up. [Ali laughs quietly] They like, land on Seneschal and like, try to- try to meet up with fences where they can sell the shit that they stole from other planets. Stuff like that. So, those are the kind of like, major communities on this planet, basically.

Ali: Okay. That's coming together really well, actually, cause I- Like, we talked about this a little bit, and I think that I'm just like, eternally... kind of stuck between the like, not wanting to abandon the Cadent and stuff-

Austin: Right.

Ali: -cause I think that relationship is kind of interesting, and I also don't want to like- just be like, 'Oh, well this big thing happened,' and she was like, 'I was glad that I helped you that one time. Bye!'

Austin: Bye. Yeah.

Ali: And then, also not having a part of this year just be like, Tender training in weird temples and like, walking through the desert with like, a big cape, and learning how to be a weird, psychic weirdo.

Austin: Right. Like, being on her Luke Skywalker shit.

Ali: [laughs] Right. Yeah, exactly. And like, I was thinking- cause we were like- we had talked about Skywalker before and like, being alone is kind of uninteresting and like-

Austin: Yeah. Like-

Ali: -kind of probably not what we want to do with this, but.

Austin: Just especially cause we've done that with Tender. Tender had that year.

Ali: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: And it was the first- it was the first six months of this game, and it was like, going into her own head to build a temple-

Ali: Right.

Austin: -and reflect on what faithfulness meant. Like, she did the Jedi like... the- the like, old sage in the woods retreat.

Ali: Right.

Austin: It's just she did it broken up over the course of months.

Ali: Right. And I kind of like- The more I was thinking about it, the more I was thinking like, the... like, the like, Breath of the Wild style like, walking on the beach for an hour.

Austin: Yeah. Yes.

Ali: And then like, finding a little city.

Ali: Yes. Aw, fuck. Dude.

Ali: Not like a city, but like- Yeah. [laughs] But like, four houses, and like-

Austin: Yes.

Ali: -a guide to like, fish, it's like, 'Oh okay. Like, I will go out to the top of this cliff, and like, be a psychic weirdo there.'

Austin: Right.

Ali: 'But then at night, I'm gonna like, come down to talk to these people.'

Austin: Right. 'I'm gonna make this- this lady and her little kid some paella-'

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: '-and it's just gonna make my whole heart warm.'

Ali: Exactly. [begins laughing]

Austin: It's the best. Man... Breath of the Wild is so good! [groans]

Ali: Man. Yeah. So, I was like- I wanted to combine those two things cause I- I like-

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: I think that that makes sense, and I think that those are really cool images.

Austin: Yeah, I like that a lot because I now have this image of her almost... in this sense of like, in the days, she's up in the- up in the hills surrounding Anticipation Falls and like, surrounding the temple. And is like, meditating up there and practicing her abilities and like, you know, communing with nature and just generally being in like, solo-mode. And then like, she can hear- she can see the bonfires at night, and she can look down and hear people chanting and singing and dancing. And she just goes to rejoin them, right? She does run a bar. She lives in a club, right? **[Ali laughs]** Like, there is part of her that is deeply social. Of like, 'Okay. Now it's like- it's dinner time. Everyone's out. I'm gonna come back down from the hills.' And maybe those- sometimes that trip takes three weeks instead of taking three hours. You know?

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Like, sometimes you really do go off into the wilderness, but other times you're like- Or- or it's not just day and night, right? Like, sometimes you're- you stay all day in the... in the halls of the temple where the Cadent is and like, are talking with her about the future of the system and stuff like that. Right?

Ali: Yeah. I really like that the place that the Cadent is in especially gives her the ability to like, just go away for that night or like, for a month or so-

Austin: Yes. Yes.

Ali: -and then come back cause it's like, this weird forest.

Austin: Yeah, totally. Totally.

Ali: Okay. This- this...

Austin: Um, cool. So, that's the first six months. Or is that now the whole... is that the whole year?

Ali: Oh, I think that's the whole thing now that we've like-

Austin: Okay. You've kind of synthesized it, and it's both. **[overlapped]** You get to have a little bit of-

Ali: Yeah, cause I thought it would be split up cause she would be like, in a city or whatever, but like-

Austin: Right.

Ali: -if the Candent is in this weird waterfall, then like-

Austin: Yeah, totally. [overlapped] And then like-

Ali: Yeah. Then that can just be whole year.

Austin: -once a month, you go in and meet up with Declan's Corrective [Ali laughs] and have to deal with his ass, right? Like... And like, very broadly cause I don't want to dig in too deep into that right away... he seems to be making a genuine effort.

Ali: Yeah... [laughs]

Austin: I don't think- I don't think that you're wrong to ever not fully trust him. But I... As someone who has magical powers [Ali laughs] at this point and has spent time with him, he occasionally very much tries to get his. But even getting his tends to be like, 'Here's my vision of this place is.' It's not, 'I'm a maniacal, like sociopath.' And there are a number- there have been a number of times at which you've seen him hold at bay the Hegemony from doing something that would hurt people. Through manipulation, through bargaining, through like, making himself look weaker. Like, there's definitely been a time when he like, redirected New Earth Hegemony military people so that they would- like, to protect him personally instead of go to back up a... like, a border dispute where they would have taken land away from other people or something like that. You know what I mean? Like, he's definitely- he is like a manipulative S.O.B, [Ali laughs again] but like, is that... genuinely for keeping things on an even keel? So, I think-

Ali: Yeah, I like-

Austin: -that's like, been your experience.

Ali: Yeah, yeah, yeah. And like, I should just say up at the top, like, I don't want that to be like a... fully like aggressive relationship.

Austin: Okay.

Ali: Like, I think that there is like- I don't think that the part of her that is like, 'I don't know that you have any... like ownership over this place' is like, still kind of there. Cause there's like a- I don't know that that bitterness goes away. But then there's like, the... There's the flipside of that which is every conversation that she's had with Morning's Observation, at this point.

Austin: Right.

Ali: Which is like, 'I... I was sent to this place, and there's no way I'm going back. So, now I have to make my place here.'

Austin: Right. Right.

Ali: So like, I think she understands that a little bit, but I feel like-

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: -especially with them having... similar abilities... like-

Austin: Yes.

Ali: -especially like, [laughs] Tender's two things right now are Consort and Attune.

Austin: Right.

Ali: So like, they're kind of even on that there-

Austin: Right. Like, you have two Attune and one Consort. He probably has two Consort and one Attune.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Right? Like. And I think there's kind of something interesting there which is like, you got your Attune- We don't know why, how you got your Attune really. We know you had a cyber brain; you don't have a cyber brain anymore. But you still have Attune. [Ali laughs] He got his Attune by being in a box for three hundred years.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: In the digital world. And like- and being in Quire, being in the Mirage. And like, that combination is like, 'Oh, no. He just worked for it.' [Austin and Ali laugh] Like, he just constantly was building and rebuilding and rebuilding, and like, writing poems and like, imagining spaces in the same way that you were just out in the world making digital spaces-

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: -that you could do once you had the cyber brain installed. And so like, I think there's- there- I think that reflects that a little bit. The other thing that's interesting that I hadn't put together until just now when you were comparing him to Morning's Observation is like, he's Robin's Song. He is 'What if Robin's Song got stuck here for three hundred years?'

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: And like, that's why he killed all those Divines cause he was good at it. [Ali laughs] And then- and because he bought in, in the way that Robin's Song did versus the way that Morning's Observation did. And now it's been three hundred years. And like- and also Volition exists.

Ali: Mhm.

Austin: And time is a motherfucker. So, I think that there's definitely- Like I said, I don't- I don't know. He could still become like, the villain of this game. I don't know. Like, I don't have a master plan for him at this point.

Ali: Right.

Austin: I know what his goals are. And I think that his goals could come into conflict with other people's goals, for sure. But I also think that he genuinely- It's important that we're talking about him because he is gonna come up again shortly. **[Ali and Austin laughs]** So... So, yeah. I think that's- that's probably been her experience with him, at least.

Ali: Right. Yeah. I don't think that it's like- I don't want it to be like, antagonistic, but I definitely want her to have the joy of coming back from the forest like-

Austin: Right.

Ali: -being more magical than him, and like, better tanned. Like. **[laughs]**

Austin: Right. Right. Yes, a hundred percent. Yes. A hundred percent. I definitely think there's a degree of him that's like, 'Man, I fucked up. **[Ali laughs hard]** I could have been a cool space wizard and instead I'm a bureaucrat.' Right? Like, 'I could have been- I could have been Jace Rethal, and I am now Orth- Orth Godlove. Fuck.'

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: He's a big fan. He's a COUNTERWeight fan.

Ali: **[laughing]** Oh, of course.

Austin: God.

Ali: There was also a suggestion that Janine had that was like, 'You should just always make him light your cigarettes,' which like-

Austin: Yes.

Ali: -probably happens twenty percent of the time.

Austin: Oh, yeah! Absolutely. Right? **[Ali laughs]** Someone on Twitter it was like, 'How is it supp-' I shouldn't even say this. Someone on Twitter was like, 'It can't be a utopia if there's cigarettes.' Listen. They figured it out. That's why it's utopian.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: They made the cigarettes not kill you. **[overlapped]** Also-

Ali: Everyone in Twilight Mirage vapes. That's the point.

Austin: That's the point. That's the point.

Ali: [laughing] That's the point. [overlapped] I started-

Austin: I just- Maybe they're all just high. Maybe they're just smoking weed.

Ali: Yeahhh.

Austin: Chill.

Ali: I'm sorry that smoking looks so cool. [laughs] But it does.

Austin: [exhales] I mean I get it. I get it.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Like, see my mom quit smoking is like, the fucking hardest thing I've ever seen her do, and she- they put a drill in her head when I was in first grade. **[Ali exhales]** So, like- and her quitting smoking was harder than brain surgery. So, I get it. I get it. I get it.

Ali: Yeah... Yeah.

Austin: Also... Also, let people vape.

Ali: Yeah, yeah. Yeah.

Austin: So, uh... let's zoom in to like, month eleven.

Ali: Okay.

Austin: Month eleven- two weeks into month eleven. It's almost a year since the Miracle. I imagine that Seneschal, the city... you know, the planet, but also- I think I might keep the city name to Drifting. I think maybe that's the compromise I'll make. He doesn't name the planet. The planet gets named Seneschal, but the city is called Drifting because he's an asshole still. **[Ali groans]**

[0:45:00]

And I think Drifting is like... Drifting City is like becoming- It's also the City of Dawn and Dusk because like, it- it is always daytime and nighttime in the city. Cause the city like, is the whole planet. It's always dawn somewhere and dusk somewhere else in the city. And I think it's like, prepping for this massive like, one year anniversary thing. Like, it's going to be a huge celebration all through all of the galactic- er not the galactic arms, the- the planetary city arms and then like, the big like, vertical spine of the city, there's gonna be a huge parade from the

north pole to the south pole, basically, over the course of like, a week or something. It's gonna be like, this massive celebration because like...

Austin (cont.): A thing we didn't talk about is this is the one place in the sector where the cultures of the Earth and of the Fleet are starting to blend. Like, it turns out everybody likes... like, chicken. **[Ali laughs]** It turns out that everybody likes dancing. And there are meaningful differences- is the way that people see the world. Like, there are meaningful differences. One thing is like, I think that the moneyless utopia of the Divine Fleet has been replaced. The second someone is like, 'No, no, no. If you want this, you're gonna have to pay me money,' it all falls apart. You don't get to keep the utopian vision the second you have enough people who are like, 'No. Fuck you. Pay me.' It falls apart.

Austin (cont.): And so like, everybody here collects a paycheck now. I think it's probably still... like a pretty strong welfare state. I still think that people are provided for when it comes to like, their... their basics. Like, I think that both the Cadent and Declan's Corrective position things such that they make sure people are fed and they have basic housing available- there's a lot of space; it's a big planet. But also... it's... it's... You know, somebody else said, 'If you want this nice shirt I made, give me three bucks.' You know? **[Ali laughs]** 'It's a well priced shirt. Three dollars.' You know?

Ali: Yeahhh, I mean-

Austin: I think that's another thing I'll mention briefly is like, the architecture here is like... it's not all high rises. It's not just cyberpunk, like sci-fi Coruscant-y like... There's some of that there, but there aren't that many people on this planet. So, I'm actually imagining it looking a lot like um.... Istanbul. Partially because like, Istanbul has this really great thing of like, it was at the center of the world for so long- of the- of the Western world, like, from the west in the Middle East. Where like, you had North African architecture there, you had Middle Eastern architecture there, you had Western and Eastern European architecture mixed in there. Like, you had all of this mix of stuff. I think there's a bit of that here, for sure. And you also just have that in language. You have people like- You have- you have people who like, um... It might even be the case that he calls himself Declan corrective now. You know what I mean? Like- Or Corrective Declan, right? Like, he doesn't-

Ali: Mm.

Austin: I have to decide which way he goes. I think maybe Corrective Declan. Like, Corrective is his given name as it is, and so, he keeps that. But like, there are definitely Earth people who are like, 'Oh, I'm gonna drop the apostrophe 's' because like, none of my friends have that.' And that's like, a fucked up thing to some degree. But there are also people who have decided to like, join the commercial... consortium that the- from the earth and have like- from the Fleet who are like, 'Oh, I could become- I could be a mark- a marketeer now.' And it's like, 'Ugh. Okay. That also sucks. **[Ali laughs]** Like, I can't believe that like, you used to be able to do whatever you wanted to, and now you want to, you know, own a franchise Starbucks.' You know? **[Ali**

whines quietly] Like, that's the sort of thing that's happening here. And so, I think it's kind of like, really beautiful on one end. Because compared to the rest of the system, where no one is exchanging anything, and everyone is drawing fierce battle lines, there is a degree of cultural exchange happening here that is peaceful. And like, this is Twilight Mirage; it's not COUNTERWeight. Like, this is not COUNTERWeight. This is not everybody- all- This is not like, 'And then this culture is in this dome, and then this culture is in this dome.'

Ali: [laughing] Yes.

Austin: Like, it's not the situation that, 'These ribs of above the city belong to New Earth Hegemony, and these ones belong to the-' No! Like, they- it's a mix. Like, everybody is here. And I think there's probably still some bitterness here or there. And there are still factions that specifically do have beef, but those are not- like, that's not the average person. If you just like, rolled a die or like, 'Oh, yeah. I meet a person,' that person would be like, happy to be here. And I think that's an important thing to note. So, where is Tender? What's Tender doing two weeks before this- this event?

Ali: [exhales] Man. Um... I wonder if there's like- Do you think the Cadent would like, come to the city for the whatever? Like.

Austin: Oh. One hundred percent. Yeah, yeah, yeah. So, maybe like, on your way in for that? [overlapped] Or you're here now?

Ali: Yeah. I'm like, part of her procession so-to-speak, but like, don't have to like-

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: I'm not a servant.

Austin: No. No.

Ali: But I like, travel with her probably, if she's- [inaudible, overlapped]

Austin: Do you even have an official title, or are you just kind of around?

Ali: I don't know. Do you think I need one?

Austin: No, I think it's-

Ali: It would probably be cool to have one, but...

Austin: It's up to you. I mean I think definitely people talk... Uh, that's the question it ends up being, right? Do newspapers write about you?

Ali: [pauses] That's tough. I don't- I don't know. It's tough cause like, I think that... a lot of Tender's... relationship with her is like, 'You have to be an authority now.' [laughs]

Austin: Mhm.

Ali: Like, 'I will be here if you need me to like, do a thing.' But like, 'The decisions that are to be made are yours now.'

Austin: Right.

Ali: Like that's...

Austin: Cool.

Ali: 'You should keep the image that you had before this, but like, have it become this new thing cause this whole world is this new thing now.'

Austin: Right. Yeah, then maybe not. Like, maybe there are people who talk about you as the right hand, or as like, 'Her right hand is here.' You know? **[Ali laughs]** But like, those are like, senators, you know? Not...

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: -everybody. So like, people in power, you might walk into the room and be like, 'Ah, the Cadent's right hand,' you know? But like, not-

Ali: Right, right, right.

Austin: But not like Jim on the street- wouldn't be like, [in a voice] 'Oh, hey. You won't believe-' Like, 'Mary, you won't believe who I saw today.'

Ali: [laughs] I don't know. But if like, people go there on trips, they might see..?

Austin: Yeah, definitely. But I mean they see a lot of people.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Right?

Ali: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: I think maybe you're like, in the photos. You know what I mean? Like, you're in images of the Cadent, near her at her side. So, yeah. People probably know... People who pay attention know who you are. Do you know what I mean?

Ali: Okay. Yeah.

Austin: Like, a lot of people... know who like, David- David Axelrod was in the Obama administration, but most people did not. You know who I mean? Like.

Ali: Right.

Austin: Like, 'Oh, yeah. He was a strategist at some point? [Ali laughs] Or an adviser, right?' And like, you would- most people would... Most people in America would not know him to see him. They'd recognize his name in a newspaper. But there's a handful of people who totally would. Like, there's a- Millions of people still would. It's just that like, it turns out there's hundreds of millions of people in America, and billions in the world. So.

Ali: Mhm.

Austin: So, yeah. I'd say there's a- there's a sizable amount of people who just recognize you from being around the Cadent, for sure.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: So... I'm trying to think of like, what a cool vignette would be when this all happens.

Ali: Yeah, um-

Austin: Maybe she's already there. I'm also just like looking at your character sheet and what your skills are. Like, what's a cool skill to test here. [Ali laughs] I think it's Attune, right?

Ali: Yeah, probably. I don't know if there's like- I don't know if I would have like, a specific task to do it with.

Austin: Maybe it isn't- Can we- Let's rewrite it. What if it's before you leave Anticipation Falls?

Ali: Okay.

Austin: What if it's you out on your last trip into the wilderness-

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: -before you know you have to go in? And something happens. What happens? What's the thing that like, is a threat? Let's think.

Ali: [laughs] Okay.

Austin: Or maybe not even a threat. Like, what's the thing you're trying to achieve by going on- on this walk? Or this like, whatever it is.

Ali: Well, I- I feel like she goes out there for training, right?

Austin: Mm.

Ali: Like, it began as this like, 'I need to be alone to figure out if I could still make weird walls, and all of this.

Austin: Yeah. Yeah.

Ali: And now it's just like, going out to go do sit-ups.

Austin: Yeah. So, is it like a situation where you're out here just like, 'Alright, I'm gonna like, basically sharpen my blade, my- my blade being my magical powers before we go do this. That way I'm at my like- at my very best'?

Ali: Yeah, I guess so.

Austin: Are you like- How do you practice this stuff?

Ali: I think that it's like- It's tough cause the Mystic has like, a bunch of other things happening that kind of informs-

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: -like, what I want that to look like. But like-

Austin: Mhm.

Ali: I don't know. It's... In terms of just being able to make things, I don't know if it's like, her going out to like, an empty field or whatever and like, trying to reassemble places again. Right?

Austin: Yeah. What's the place that you would assemble? Let's do that.

Ali: [laughs] Okay.

Austin: Let's have her build a place.

Ali: Okay. Alright. It's weird cause it's so easy, especially with the anniversary right away to just be like, 'Oh, it's this place that we saw already.'

Austin: Right, right. I mean there's nothing wrong with that.

Ali: No. Yeah, I mean I guess it makes sense, but I'm just trying to think of a place that would feel significant. The first thing that comes to mind is like, the weird like, moving... building or whatever that the Cadent has.

Austin: Oh. Right, right, right.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah. I think that that's fine. Like, from the outside, looking up at it?

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Yeah, I think that's a really cool visual. Right? Like, now you're in this different- you're in a real forest on a planet. Whereas that was on this like- this- this forest level of the By-and-By. And you look up, and you're building this thing. Let's- let's do it. Like, I guess that that's- That sound like Attune to me, right?

Ali: Yeah. Oh my gosh. Should I be in Roll20?

Austin: Oh, yeah you should.

Ali: [laughing] I was not there this whole time.

Austin: We're just doing regular- We're just still in this old thing.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: I haven't finished setting up the new post Mirage.

Ali: Yeah, I can imagine. [**Austin** sighs] But yeah. I feel like that's kind of... I don't mind this being like- It makes sense that this is more reflective than it is like-

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: -setting up the next chapter or whatever. Like.

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: Uh, so-

Austin: So, you- so, here's how rules work in this game. Like, we are truly back in it. [laughs]

Ali: Mhm.

Austin: There are a couple of steps to any given roll. The first thing is that you tell me what you want to do, which it sounds like we got there.

Ali: Mhm.

Austin: You are building this thing. Two, you to choose what action you want to roll.

Ali: Okay. That would be Attune

Austin: Which is Attune, right? I determine the position of the roll. And then the... the consequences... er not the consequences, the position and then the effect. I think this is controlled. I think there's a little bit of risk, which is why it's not just what we call a Fortune Roll, which is like, there's no risk at all. Because it's always risky when you use your abilities.

Ali: Mhm.

Austin: There's always- or maybe not always, but- but because I want there to feel like there's a little bit of risk here. I can think of a few things that could go wrong, if you fail those rolls is really what I'm thinking of.

Ali: [laughing] Okay.

Austin: I think that the level effect is standard. Like, you're- you're building a thing in the wood- Eh, you know what? Maybe it's great. Like, maybe if you do it right, it's fuckin rad. You've built a tower in the woods, right? Like, so yeah. It's standard. It's standard great... Er not standard-controlled great. Then you get to add bonus dice. You can add from a teammate. If someone was here to help you; can't do that. You could push yourself and take two stress. In this case, you're doing that, right? Because you're not just Attuning; you are using your ability. Right?

Ali: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Austin: So, make sure you add- You're gonna roll 3d6 here. Cause you're gonna add one from taking that- that push.

Ali: Okay.

Austin: Or you could use a gambit. And a gambit is like a bonus die from the crew. But you're not in a crew yet, so you don't get any gambit dice.

Ali: I need so many of these. My friends are gonna hate me.

Austin: Well, that's the whole thing. Don't worry cause like, other classes have other- other rules with them that are really cool.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: **Art**, who is playing as a- You know, I'm not gonna say.

Ali: Don't.

Austin: I'm not gonna say, but there's another class that has a cool ability with gambits that might keep- keep you running gambits. Okay. So, yeah. So, your Attune is two, but then you're pushing yourself to take two stress, which whatever. Don't mark it down. And you're- So, you're

gonna roll- You can either increase the effect, or you can increase the... the dice you're rolling. Which you want to do?

Ali: I guess increase the effect.

Austin: Okay. So, that means you go from a great effect up to an extraordinary effect, which is like, off the charts.

Ali: Yeah. Hell yeah..

Austin: Which is interesting. So, that's 2d6. Go ahead and roll those.

Ali: Okay. Roll 2d6. No pluses; no nothin'.

Austin: No pluses; no nothin'. Just try to get a four, five, or a six.

Ali: Alright. [overlapping] That was ten.

Austin: That's a five.

Ali: Okay. That's a five.

Austin: Well, so you're just getting it- Yeah. You pick highest is the way Blades works.

Ali: Right. Then way this dice system works.

Ali: It's just nice to see a bigger number. [laughs]

Austin: I know. It's a ten. A ten is good. It's a good number. So, on a five on a controlled roll, [reading] 'You hesitate. Withdraw and try a different approach, or else do it with minor consequence, a minor complication occurs, you have reduced effect, you suffer lesser harm, you end up in a risky position.' So, either let me give you a little complication to this-

Ali: Sure.

Austin: -or you have reduced effect or- let me give you- Complication's good?

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Alright. So, this is more than perfect is what I'm gonna say it looks like. You don't just recreate cause you have this like, extra-ordinary level of effect, right?

Ali: Mhm.

Austin: So, you don't just have... like, the thing in the star chamber, or whatever we ended up calling it- the room where like, she meets with other people. You build a replica of her whole temple here. Like, everything is here. And... the... It's not just here. It's like... I think it might be

like- it might feel like it's bustling with activity of the sort it hasn't bustled within tens of thousands of years. Like, since the height of the Fleet. Like, since before any Divine started dying. I don't know that there are people moving around, but there are sounds that you've added. There are shadows of people walking around. There are- like, you can hear footsteps. You've not just built a place; it feels inhabited. So, here's my complication. Here's my question: how's your subconscious work these days?

Ali: [laughs hard] Um, the same, hopefully. I don't know. I don't want to get rid of that, right?

Austin: Yeah, me either.

Ali: It's a really cool system and just a really easy way to like, be like, 'Here's how this fucked up.'

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: Man, I don't know if I should rewrite what her subconscious stuff is.

Austin: Yeah. Like, I don't think Open is in there. Like, I think that's resolved. I think Open Metal is resolved.

Ali: Yeah. Yeah.

Austin: I think Signet is still in there. **[Ali laughs]** What were the other subconscious things that you had? It was scale?

Ali: So, it was like- It was scale, and then it was like, feeling unworthy because I shouldn't have the ability anymore.

Austin: Mm.

Ali: And I think that she's probably like, a little bit passed that.

Austin: Past that, too?

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: Was scale part of that, or was scale a separate thing?

Ali: No, scale was just like, from... like, the shift in... just from like, her hometown basically.

[1:00:00]

Austin: Ohhh. Right right, right.

Ali: Cause the By-and-By is so weirdly-

Austin: Yes. Yes.

Ali: -stretched out, but also really condensed.

Austin: Alright. What do you think her... her new hangups are?

Ali: [laughs] Okay. Alright. Well, I don't know. There's like- If people are just allowed to be in there, that's probably a big way to figure out the Declan thing. [laughs]

Austin: Yeah.

Ali: Cause, you know, might as well.

Austin: Yeah. I like that. I think that that's a good idea.

Ali: Right? Like- Yeah.

Austin: Well like, especially cause like, it could just be him, also. **[Ali laughs]** You don't know, right? Like-

Ali: That's true. It just can be the guy showing up.

Austin: It could be the guy; it could not be the guy. It could be a mix of the guy and also your own projection.

Ali: Yeah.

Austin: I like that. I like- Here's what I like the combination of is like, it's him. He comes out the door. Uh, like, he comes out the bottom door in his like, suit.

Ali: God.

Austin: His fuckin' beard. **[Ali laughs]** And the door keeps getting bigger. Like, behind him, the temple just gets bigger and bigger and bigger as he's walking towards you through this field. Like, it's both the scale thing and also the... him. He like, shows up and like, has a cigarette case, and he offers you a cigarette.

Ali: She takes it, of course, but.

Austin: And he lights it. **[Ali laughs]** Turns and looks back over his head and like, raises his eyebrows as the temple gets bigger and bigger.

Austin (as Declan's Corrective): I can't tell if you're worried or... excited. You see big things for the Cadent in the future, hm?

Ali (as Tender): [sighs] It's not that direct. This is just a side effect.

Austin (as Declan's Corrective): Hm. Side effects have causes. Causes come from somewhere. For the first year of me trying to do this thing, I couldn't do it without the Earth showing up. Got that under control.

Ali (as Tender): Yeah?

Austin (as Declan's Corrective): Yeah.

Ali (as Tender): Like fully?

Austin (as Declan's Corrective): [unsure] Mm.

Ali (as Tender): Yeah, exactly.

Austin: He laughs. He's like- he has like a- So, if I were- I think his laugh is just under his sternum. [Ali laughs] [Austin laughs low] 'Ha.' Like, [laughs low] 'Ha.' He has one of those.

Austin (as Declan's Corrective): Are you ready for the parade?

Ali (as Tender): Of course.

Austin (as Declan's Corrective): You gonna be in it?

Ali (as Tender): Probably? I might as well.

Austin (as Declan's Corrective): [exhales] You know there are people who don't... who don't think we should be doing this. Who think a celebration isn't called for. Things used to be better.

Ali (as Tender): Yeah, but we're not getting that back anytime soon.

Austin: He like uh... turns and like, puts his hands on his hips and just looks up at this giant temple again. [Ali laughs] And like, shakes his head a little bit.

Austin (as Declan's Corrective): How's the Cadent?

Austin: He doesn't like, turn back to look at you. He's just kind of admiring the work.

Ali (as Tender): She's well. She's- she's... I think that she's also feeling weird about this, but mostly positive.

Austin (as Declan's Corrective): Mm. You think she's ready to go without training wheels?

Ali (as Tender): [laughs] Is that what they're calling me these days?

Austin: [laughs] He shakes his head and takes out a second cigarette for himself. **[Ali laughs]**

Austin (as Declan's Corrective): I walked into that one. [sighs] We uh- There's an opportunity for someone like you... to... have an effect that isn't just with how the Cadent goes about her day. I think it might be worth... coming in and talking before the festivities. You, the Cadent, your old friend, Cascara.

Ali (as Tender): Cascara?

Austin: He like- He nods a little bit behind you. And like, do you turn around? Do you just keep eyes on him?

Ali: Yeah, I think so. I was trying to think like- I was tryin' to be like, 'Oh, I'm a Jedi. I know that she walked up,' but that's not how this works. [laughs]

Austin: Right. Yeah. Yeah, no. That's not-

Ali: I'm not that much of a Jedi yet.

Austin: You're not. You're not. Alright. So, you turn around. Cascara is here. She wheels up to you. And like, her- I think her like- her wheelchair like, sets down. Like, I think it- she had put it into some sort of hover mode to get up the inclines and stuff, but then like, she just sets it down and wheels over to you through the grass and is like,

Austin (as Cascara): Agent Sky. It's good to see you.

Ali (as Tender): It's good to see you, as well.

Austin (as Cascara): It's quite a beautiful work you've made. I think the dimensions are a little off, though.

Ali (as Tender): Yes, it's a work in progress.

Austin (as Cascara): I'm glad I found you. We have an opportunity... to work together again.

Ali (as Tender): I'm definitely interested.

Austin (as Cascara): You don't think you'd miss the Candent?

Ali (as Tender): [sighs] Well... I think she has my number.

Austin (as **Cascara**): [lightly laughs] That's fair. But the Mirage isn't what it used to be. There's a chance that we could be off somewhere, and she could call your number, and you might not be able to come home.

Ali (as **Tender**): I think that is a risk that she is willing to take. Or is gonna have to be.

Austin: And... and she looks around a little bit, and then she says like,

Austin (as **Cascara**): What about... that man? Corrective. Do you think... she'll be able to withstand... any of his maneuvers?

Ali (as **Tender**): I think she's had enough time to get used to them.

Austin: She nods.

Ali (as **Tender**): She has a few of her own now.

Austin (as **Cascara**): Oh. How things change. Then let me tell you what we're gonna do. Are you ready to leave? I can explain on the way.

Ali (as **Tender**): We were gonna have dinner. A final night before heading to the city.

Austin: She nods.

Austin (as **Cascara**): Have dinner. We can go in the morning.

Ali (as **Tender**): You should join us.

Austin (as **Cascara**): I think I'm going to stay up here.

Ali (as **Tender**): [quietly laughs] It's- There's quite the view.

Austin (as **Cascara**): It's beautiful. No one- no one told me that places like this existed on this planet. I thought it was all smokestacks. To hear the Divine Fleet say it, Seneschal is a world of compromises. And they mean that as an insult.

Ali (as **Tender**): Mm. It is a world of compromises. We need more these days now though.

[Jack de Quidt's "[The Mystic](#)" begins playing]

Austin: She nods.

Austin (as **Cascara**): What we need are people who can help. People like you. I'll see you in the morning.

Ali (as Tender): Yeah. Yeah, I'll see you then.

Austin: And she like, rolls past you towards the building you've made that is still there. And like, goes into start to explore it, I think.

[music plays out to end]