

Twilight Mirage 52: The Second Miracle

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KEITH: Previously, on Friends at the Table.

AUSTIN: Parhelia, the, the city you're looking at now, instead of having glass as a dome or as these panes, it just has it floating in the air all over the place?

[MUSIC— [The Notion](#) starts]

AUSTIN: *[cont'd]* So that's like, and it's filled with parks and it's filled with lots of like, open space, and it's a big city, it's like a wide, long city. And what you saw when you stepped in was the uh, kind of unfolding of the axiom Ache, which was kind of a long pinkish-purple ribbon. And it was like, folding over itself as it cut through the entire city. Like, it had cut deep into the, the ground itself and had revealed this kind of pinkish-purple wound in the floor, in the ground? Where Quire itself is. There's kind of like a big mass battle happening right now, there's kind of like, this gigantic axiom, then there are the two members of Advent Group, and then you also saw the three other Saints, so it's one of those moments of like, we see you blinking your eyes and then you, you slowly un-blink them, and the situation has changed here, somewhat. The big— I mean, the biggest thing that you see is, you see that... Blooming's old divine is here. Empyrean is here. Making like, passes on the Saints, is like doing strafing runs. And you can't make out any of the faces of the people there? But there are additional people among the advent. And you can't— and you probably can't see it? But somewhere else in this city now, there is another Gig Kephart, yet another Gig Kephart who is just, just way into disaster tourism? So. Ache, Ache is a powerful axiom.

KEITH: I feel like the, the Ache version of Gig was... so much worse than everyone else's.

AUSTIN: I guess, uh, well, so, I'll give you this if you wanna feel better, um. Blooming is not piloting Empyrean. Signet is. So. Like.

JANINE: Ah, shit.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

AUSTIN (as Acre 7): These are false reflections. They will go when Ache does. But... The rest... the other Saints from the Garden, the other Advent members. They came here. They were not made here. *Made* here.

JANINE (as Signet): What do we need to do?

ACRE SEVEN: We need to get closer. We need to protect it.

KEITH (as Gig): Which— what? Which one? Which—

ACRE SEVEN: Quire. It— it has one more miracle. We have to drive Ache away. And... the rest, too. It needs time at peace. Time at peace.

[MUSIC— [The Notion](#) ends]

[2:53]

JANINE: So... The shields sort of get hit and fall away, but sort of in that process the Exuvia like... clamps on and like, scurries into a gap, I think, in Empyrean's form. Like you know there's, there's joints and stuff.

AUSTIN: [cross] Yeah.

JANINE: Where you can get in there and, and the Exuvia's fucking tiny.

AUSTIN: [cross] Yeah.

JANINE: So it just like, gets in there and finds something it can sort of bolt itself onto?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: And basically injects this like... This backed up data of like, here's what this is supposed to be, Empyrean—

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

JANINE: Here's what this arrangement is supposed to be.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: And this is not it.

AUSTIN: Yeah. So I think it just like, stops and hovers in place for a moment. Um, and we'll come back. Or you know, I think it, it hovers in place and then like... its eyes change color from... like, golden to blue. And... Blooming is piloting it now. Like, digital Blooming. And isn't... sure what to do. And so is just like— "Wh— where am I?"

JANINE: Oh god, do I answer that? Um... It's not even... it's so weird 'cause it's like, that's not really... that's just like a... not a hologram, I don't know.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: *[sighs]* I guess I just like tell her like, to fuckin' go at, go at that fuckin' ribbon like, that's the most practical thing is just, it doesn't matter where you are, the thing is... y'know, get on board, like we have to get this done.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Okay, um. Uh, and I think Blooming turns Emphyrean and like... I, actually no, I think that's a roll, that has to be a roll.

JANINE: *[cross]* Yeah.

AUSTIN: Because yeah, a hundred percent that has to be a roll. As much as I want to give you that?

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: That's a roll. You have to convince this digital version of Blooming that, that, they should be fighting this thing.

JANINE: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Wh— but— that sounds like Command to me?

JANINE: I don't want it to be that.

AUSTIN: Yeah...

JANINE: I don't have any Command...

AUSTIN: Then give it to me another way, give me, give it to me in a Consort way, then, 'cause it can't be just—

JANINE: *[cross]* Yeah. Yeah.

AUSTIN: "Fight that thing!"

JANINE: I will say, I got Commanding just because that was the only thing I could think of, and not necessarily 'cause it was the right choice.

AUSTIN: *[cross]* Yeah, yeah.

JANINE: Okay, I think the thing that... Signet probably acts as though it is actually Blooming.

AUSTIN: Right.

JANINE: But also maybe not current Blooming, just like acts as though it is this version of Blooming she wishes was still there.

AUSTIN: *[cross]* Yeah. Yeah. I mean you haven't seen her since... the thing, right? Most of—

JANINE: No, but we did meet the, the ice woman? That she..

AUSTIN: You met the Waking Cadent, yeah, uh huh, totally

JANINE: Hangs out with.

AUSTIN: A hundred percent.

JANINE: And there was like a letter and stuff, but.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

JANINE: So I think Signet says like... y'know... This... *[sighs]* This axiom— I don't know if she'd know what an axiom is but whatever it doesn't matter it's a fuckin' illusion—

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

SIGNET: This axiom is hurting the planet and we have to... we have to deal with it as quickly as possible. It's not, it's not worth fighting the others, we need to focus on the ribbon if we can.

AUSTIN: Okay. So that's Consort. I think that that is... Risky... I'm gonna say risky great because... she's coming from the Exuvia? Like?

JANINE: Yeah, that's true.

AUSTIN: This is not, this is not an unknown quantity.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: This is a particular version of Blooming and Emphyrean. I don't have any way to even offer you extra dice. Oh, five, nice work. Um. So, I think, as you're doing this talk, the ribbon like, you convince, you convince her and she's like, goes to zip away, and then she's like—

BLOOMING: Wait, Signet!

AUSTIN: And Ache like, twists in on itself, folds in on itself, and like, slices through... your angler's... something, let's take a look at your ship. Scanners. Like, catches... I don't know what's it, what do the scanners actually look like, on, on Angler Exuvia. Is there like part of one of those— Is it like those, the floating, the floating shield bits, like some of those are actually scanning devices?

JANINE: Um... I think it's... it might be more like there are sort of vestigial like, shoulder nubs?

AUSTIN: Sure.

JANINE: 'Cause I imagine this Angler as being a lot like, that's why I attach it to Exuvia is a lot of like... shades of Belgard there.

AUSTIN: Right, right. Totally.

JANINE: And Belgard has those big fucking like, shield plate-like wing things.

AUSTIN: Right. Yeah. So yeah, I think it almost hits you and you move out of the way, but it cuts off one of your sensor nubs and like, your camera stuff all flickers out for a second. You could roll to resist this effect, like, we haven't done any resistance rolls today, but that's because I think everyone's... stress is so high?

JANINE: Yeah, my stress is too high for that right now.

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah, fair.

JANINE: Not takin' that chance.

AUSTIN: Alright, cool, so yeah, I think, and then she turns—

JANINE: How do I mark that hit?

AUSTIN: I got it already, it's on your sheet?

JANINE: *[cross]* Okay, okay.

AUSTIN: So if you go onto your sheet your, your um, Angler sheet? Do you see this little red box that's under comms?

JANINE: Oh, yeah, okay. Alright.

AUSTIN: That's, each of those is like a spot. So you still have one comms point left, but. If that goes away you won't be able to talk to people from in here, which is great.

JANINE: Cool.

AUSTIN: Even.

DRE: ... Yeah, I gotta, I gotta put more cheeseburgers on this thing.

AUSTIN: Yeah, go ahead. What's that look like, you're just gonna do another pass, basically?

DRE: Yeah, I mean have we established that I have theirs?

AUSTIN: I, I'm fine with you having, if this was your plan the whole time I think it's fine for you to be like, I'm gonna take your hamburgers.

JANINE: It makes sense for you to have loaded them up.

DRE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: So you have two more.

DRE: Okay.

AUSTIN: So let's just do those two more almost in like, one roll in a sense? Like I don't want you to have to roll three times for the same thing.

DRE: Yeah, sure.

AUSTIN: So give me another Helm. Are you again pushing yourself?

DRE: Um, yeah, sure.

AUSTIN: Alright, risky standard.

DRE: Do I put—

AUSTIN: Oh, no did we move, did we move you to desperate? No, we didn't move you to desperate, right?

DRE: Yeah, I, 'cause I had great 'cause of the potency from Ace Pilot, but—

AUSTIN: *[cross]* Yes. Yeah.

DRE: It got put down, yeah.

AUSTIN: Right.

DRE: So... Risky great, one bonus die. There's a six!

AUSTIN: There's a six! And it's a risky, so you get a gambit back.

DRE: Ay!

AUSTIN: Hell yeah. Alright. So that thing, so you get the next two on, and it's like, it's enough to wrap along one side of the ribbon. Right? So like, one of the two sides basically. And it like, it's, it's hooked on but it's not, and it's starting to concrete up in the middle there, but it's also able to still move the ends and it's not enough to like, wrap all the way around. I have a question. 'Cause you're really close to it now, I need another good Ache question. Um. Do you ever think, does Even... What would Even's like, life be like if... he never got this, this hybrid? Never got this, this alien?

DRE: Um... Well I mean he would be dead.

AUSTIN: No, what if it never hap— what if he was safe?

DRE: *[cross]* Oh, right.

AUSTIN: What if he'd just never taken that mission?

DRE: *[exhales]* Um...

AUSTIN: Like, would he be with Arin Till? Would he have gone along with this?

DRE: Man, no, I almost think he would be... nobody. But like, not in a bad way, like in a way where it's like oh no, you've done your service and so now you're retired and you're just like... a nice person in your neighborhood.

AUSTIN: Yeah... I think you get a really, really sharp image of that. That's just like... Even as like, a nice, you know, retired person you've done your service like you said. You're able to like, take up a hobby. You're not like, fighting a weird ribbon monster in the sky. Everything is safe.

KEITH: What's your hobby?

AUSTIN: Yeah, what is your hobby?

DRE: Oh, fuck, it's um. He makes uh, he makes model kits of all of Grand Magnificent mechs.

AUSTIN: Oh my god, that's really good. *[Keith and Janine laugh]* That's very good. Alright!

DRE: And he just thinks like, ah man, if I could've flown one of these back when, back when I was in the service.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: When you said makes, you mean like— puts together or dev— like, from scratch or from kits?

JANINE: He means gunpla, right, like?

DRE: Yeah, no, he's doing gunpla.

AUSTIN: You mean gunpla, yeah, uh huh.

KEITH: Oh, okay.

AUSTIN: I love it, great.

DRE: Let me make this my self-insert for Even's character.

AUSTIN: Uh huh! Yep!

[Dre laughs]

KEITH: I guess what I mean is like, is this something that you're picking up from a, like a store? Or are you from scratch doing these. I was just curious.

DRE: Uh, no, he's picking it up from the store.

AUSTIN: Right. Gotcha, perfect. Love it. Alright! Gig.

KEITH: Hello.

AUSTIN: Hey. What are you up to?

KEITH: Um...

AUSTIN: Like, this crew is like, trying to like, it's kinda, it's like basically trying to like push the ribbon— I think they've seen that the concrete is happening and they're trying to like, snap it, basically?

KEITH: *[cross]* Yeah.

AUSTIN: By pushing in from one side. Um. From their side so it folds in half, and then hopefully it'll snap in the middle.

KEITH: Are there two concretes on right now?

AUSTIN: No, there's three concretes on, but it's still not—

KEITH: All three concretes are on.

AUSTIN: All three are on, and that's not enough.

KEITH: Hm. I uh, can we get, so they're trying to, they're trying to move it around— I mean, I'm not, I don't have any...

AUSTIN: Like, almost imagine that it's like a, almost imagine that it's like two clock hands, right? And so it's like.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: There, I've like drawn it? Actually, let me undo that second one, it's basically like—

KEITH: *[cross]* So....

AUSTIN: Right now, it's like a straight line, right?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And they are trying to move it like... in on itself this way so that it becomes perpendicular and hopefully snaps at the middle.

KEITH: *[cross]* Yeah. So that's, so this is, okay, so at the very beginning—

AUSTIN: *[cross]* Sorry that I drew like, a fuckin' zodiac cypher here, but.

[laughter]

KEITH: So, okay, so... that's, that's exactly what I thought you meant and so the thing that I want to do is... try to get other people to do this for me, 'cause they have robots and I don't. Is... um. You know at the very beginning you said that it was kind of moving really hectically, almost like the two sides were like—

AUSTIN: Yeah, yeah yeah.

KEITH: Not in sync 'cause it's so huge? Can we get the... a couple people to try and do the same thing on the other end so that if it didn't have concrete it would be tying itself in a loop? But because it does have concrete, it's sort of like, a... magnifying the force of the... of the bend? Because—

AUSTIN: How are you getting people to do this? What are you doing or saying?

KEITH: I'm asking? I'm asking really— I'm, um. Can they fly? Are they flyers?

AUSTIN: They're... um... the one of them is.

DRE: Oh, *fuck*.

KEITH: I think, I think that I wanna... try to ask the flyer to do this.

DRE: Man, okay, here's what we gotta do, 'cause here's the scene that we need.

AUSTIN: Uh huh?

DRE: We need somebody, be it me or somebody else, picking up Saint Wynter, and like, dropping her off on the surface of Ache, and then her doing her fuckin sick rollerblade flip tricks over the surface of Ache.

AUSTIN: [*cross*] Yeah... like, like Jet Grind Radio-ing, yeah.

DRE: Yep! Mhm!

[*Janine laughs*]

KEITH: Sonic Adventure 2 soap shoes-ing.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

SYLVIA: That's what I shoulda done to get down the stairs.

AUSTIN: That's what you should've done, there it is.

[laughter]

DRE: God, there was a point in my life where I wanted *nothing* but soap shoes.

AUSTIN: Yeah, let's— fair, me too.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: My uncle got some, we went to Atlantic City and like, did soap shoe shit in the casino, so it was fun.

DRE: My feet were too big.

KEITH: Yo, they seem so dangerous.

AUSTIN: *[cross]* They're super dangerous.

KEITH: Like, watching— watching just, promotional videos of like, people paid to figure out how to use them by like the company that makes them? Like, all they can do is just barely not die.

AUSTIN: Right. So the, the Saint Faul, who has like, um. Again, they are just the Saint? Like... comes over to you and is like—

AUSTIN (as Faul): I heard you got an idea, kid!

GIG: *[apprehensive]* Uh, oh boy, do I.

DRE: *[jokey old-timey voice]* Myah, see?

[laughter]

AUSTIN: Yeah, he's like, uh, old-timey and like, a little bit of a comedian and a little bit of a gangster. And also a robot.

KEITH: *[cross]* A robot comedian gangster.

AUSTIN: Uh, they, they should be they/them, they're just a synthetic being, they are not gendered.

KEITH: Okay. Um... Is, okay so I, I wanna re-pitch that idea to uhm. What's her name? It's Autumn? It's Faul? It's Faul.

AUSTIN: Their— they are Faul, yeah, f-a-u-l.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: Like Paul, but with an F.

KEITH: Paul, but Faul, got it.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: Um, I want, I want, I'm gonna re-pitch that, and I'm gonna do it... I wanna, I wanna use Rig to convince them of this.

AUSTIN: Ooh, interesting, how are you using Rig to do this?

KEITH: Uh, well I'm using my, they— my chops as a guy who can invent stuff, and with the proof being uh, Wynter, Wynter's mech.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: And... explaining... that, y'know, this is, it's all just math, you gotta multiply—

AUSTIN: Yeah...

KEITH: With one, *two* things moving in opposite directions have more force than one thing moving in that direction.

AUSTIN: I'm gonna say this is the— this has to be a limited effect, like, you're, being good at a thing is not... y'know. There are three gifts.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: The first gift is, is being able to, is having the materials, the second gift is, is having the knowledge, the third gift is actually bringing them together. You, you can't just be like I'm, I know how computers work and that means that you should do what I want you to do?

KEITH: Yeah...

AUSTIN: The I want you to do thing, like I mean you can, but it's gonna be a limited effect because they way you get a limited or great effect, or standard or great effect, is by talking to them. The talking has to be the forefront thing.

KEITH: Um, alright. I mean, what I've done— so here's what I'm trying to do. I'm trying to get two clock things out of this.

AUSTIN: I get you. I know what you're tryin' to do, I'm just saying...

KEITH: You know, cause we, do we have two clock things to fill in? Is that the, there's two, or do we have three?

AUSTIN: There's three on the Quire countdown, but that's just advancing per basically... achievement, per success.

KEITH: Oh, we don't have a, we don't have a uh, an Acre is trapped clock?

AUSTIN: Or a, Quire is trapped clock? That is that, it's the countdown, right? Like, it's, it's...

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: It's advancing—

KEITH: No, no, I mean Acre. I mean like, trapped like, in the concrete.

AUSTIN: No, 'cause Acre is with Echo, with the clones, with the Advent clones.

JANINE: *Ache* is the bad thing.

AUSTIN: *[cross]* Ache— Yeah.

KEITH: *[cross]* Ache, oh, I'm saying Acre, yeah, that's what I'm doing, I'm just being... Ache.

AUSTIN: *[cross]* There's, there are lots of double, there have been lots of double sound-alikes on purpose in this, in this arc, is what I will say. So yes, that is what you would like to, no, there is not— or there is, that is the Ache— there are two left on that, yeah, a hundred percent.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: But y'know, you have— you, remember, you do have potency on speaking from your heart, right?

KEITH: That's true, I do have potency from speaking from my heart.

AUSTIN: Mechanic's Heart. Potency— potency can get you great effect.

KEITH: Yeah. But, I— I'm not as good at speaking from my heart!

AUSTIN: You're not, you're not.

KEITH: Alright, alright! I'll speak, I'm, I'm speaking from my heart.

FAUL: So tell me what you want me to do. Gimme the pitch. High level.

GIG: I want you to— high level, I want you to try to get— I want the two sides of the ribbon to, to... move *past* each other and pull at the ends of the concrete so it will snap at the middle.

FAUL: That's what we're working on. We're pushin' on the side.

GIG: Well, you— You're pushing on one side, we gotta push on both sides, it'll multiply—

FAUL: The other sides' really far away, what, do you want me to go all the way to the other side?

GIG: [*cross*] I know, but you— I want you all the way to the other side, you can fly, it shouldn't be too big of a problem.

FAUL: Lots of the, oh, [*mumbles*] I could run, too! I don't wanna run everywhere. Sometimes I wanna walk.

GIG: [*incredulous*] Do you wanna walk right now? Is now the time that you wanna walk?

AUSTIN: He* like, leans on a nearby building and is like—

FAUL: Listen, it's been a long day.

GIG: [*sighs*] The fa— the faster this thing snaps in half, the faster you can start walking.

AUSTIN: That's a roll. Gimme a... Sway, probably?

KEITH: I— yeah. I can do Sway.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Yeah.

KEITH: Um... I'm gonna push myself?

AUSTIN: Okay. So that's two dice, 2d6.

KEITH: And two stress, or one stress?

AUSTIN: Two stress.

KEITH: *[cross]* Two stress?

AUSTIN: When you push yourself, it's two, when you assist someone else, it's one. And that is—

KEITH: Am I still risky?

AUSTIN: You're still— ah, no, this is controlled. Controlled standard.

KEITH: What does that do again? What does that mechanically do?

AUSTIN: So, if you take a look at the action, resistance rolls chart? Um... Controlled means that like, a, or like a hesitation, a four to five is not as bad and a one to three is not as bad, right?

KEITH: *[cross]* Okay. So it's just—

AUSTIN: Like, a failure in a controlled situation— It basically just means

KEITH: *[cross]* Yeah, it shifts the... danger.

AUSTIN: Right. Controlled— a failure on controlled means you can, you can't do the thing that you're trying to do now— you can either, or, or rather you *can*, if you wanna do it from a riskier position, or you can just try a different approach?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Whereas a one to three on risky is like, you suffer harm, a complication occurs, you are in a desperate position, or you lose this opportunity, right? Like, it's a much more...

KEITH: *[cross]* Okay. Yeah.

AUSTIN: Severe thing, so controlled is, is not bad here.

KEITH: Okay. Controlled great?

AUSTIN: Yep.

KEITH: Okay... bonus dice... oooh.

AUSTIN: Two twos. And he* goes:

FAUL: Listen, kid. *[Keith groans]* I get the big picture, I get it, it's, it sounds great, I could see it on the, on the newsfeeds. "Saint Faul, hero ties ribbon in knots!" Ah, but, eh... We're—

GIG: No, it doesn't tie it in a knot, it snaps! It snaps in two!

FAUL: That's not catchy, that's not catchy, they say you're famous?

GIG: *[cross]* It's— it's cleft in twain!

FAUL: I thought Wynter said you were like, a comedian or somethin'.

GIG: No, I'm just on TV.

FAUL: Hmmm. Yeah. You're just on TV. We've been beat to shit, kid. You want me to fly up there? Or maybe I get knocked down, and we're in this fog, I don't know if I come back.

GIG: Alright, I'll fly up there. Gimme your thing.

FAUL: You don't— I'm— It's me. It's me. I'm the thing.

GIG: Oh, yeah, yeah.

FAUL: Remember? It's how I—

GIG: I forgot, I forgot, I forgot I forgot I forgot I forgot.

FAUL: It's how I do things.

GIG: Ugh. Listen. It's, right now it's really annoying that you're the one that can fly.

FAUL: You're tellin' me, you want me to— I'm the one who has to fly up there if I do this thing!

[Keith laughs, then groans]

AUSTIN: So I think that you can do this again but it's risky. Um, which is to say...

KEITH: Can I try and get... can I try and... no. That's dumb.

AUSTIN: What?

KEITH: I was gonna, I was gonna say I'm done with Faul, can I try to make one of the other suits be able to fly? Um.

AUSTIN: I mean, you could maybe try to... jury rig something with Saint Wynter's suit. Like, some sort of catapult or like, one use... like, rocket pack or something? You're a mechanic.

DRE: I mean—

KEITH: Yeah, let's do— I like the, I like the idea of a one use rocket pack catapult.

AUSTIN: Even, what were you gonna say?

DRE: I mean is... I guess the thing that's stopping this from like, me just coming to pick her up is just that, it would be like, switching to another scene and potentially moving one of these bad clocks forward, right?

AUSTIN: No. We could do this, we could have you come down and be the person who flies up.

KEITH: I technically have a communicator.

DRE: *[cross]* I also love the idea of jetpack, so.

AUSTIN: Jetpacks are cool. I do think, I do think in terms of like scene-setting, it's more fun if, if it's a separate thing, you know?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: What do you build a jetpack out of?

KEITH: Okay, so, here's the, it's two things. There's, it's a two-part, I'm pitching, this is me pitching to Wynter.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

KEITH: It's a two step, single use device I have, this is a city right, we're in a city?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: There's cars everywhere, I used a motor and some belts to create a sort of launching system—

AUSTIN: Okay.

KEITH: And then I found these compressed air— *[laughs]* I found some, a lot of, I found *really* compressed air.

AUSTIN: So like a diving, a diving... shop or something.

KEITH: Yeah like a, like... yeah. Or um. Maybe like, space diving. Like, they, it's compressed—

AUSTIN: *[cross]* Yeah. Sure.

KEITH: It's not, it's not compressed air that they used to breathe?

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH: Or, they have that too, it's compressed air that they used to like, move single bodysuits.

AUSTIN: Right.

GIG: And I found, I found that, and so you're gonna get catapulted into the air on this launch pad, and then you're gonna use the oxygen tanks as like, a jetpack to shoot yourself forward, try to get— its attention, and then they'll— it'll chase the tail. It'll chase you. Across. And snap.

AUSTIN (as Wynter): And the tail.

GIG: And the tail.

WYNTER: Together.

GIG: I don't know which end is the tail, is the problem.

AUSTIN: Um, she puts like, a big mech hand on your shoulder? It's heavy, but she's like...

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Not doing the best job of— she's like—

KEITH: I'm like— *[strained groan]*

WYNTER: We'll figure it out when we get there.

GIG: Yeah!

AUSTIN: Give me a Rig.

KEITH: Um. Rig. Risky, still? Now?

AUSTIN: This is risky.

KEITH: This sounds risky.

AUSTIN: *[cross]* You're building a jetpack and sending— uh huh!

[Dre laughs]

KEITH: I'm building...Um, standard effect?

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

KEITH: None bonus dice...

AUSTIN: Yeah, this is two dice.

KEITH: Three. *[laughs]* Okay.

AUSTIN: That's a three and a two. Um. you get it to work, but the thing is, you have to stay on the back on the jetpack for it to go up there. And you have to— you have to pilot it. You'll have to do a Helm roll from the back of this thing to make it happen.

KEITH: A *Helm* roll, excellent.

AUSTIN: *[cross]* A desperate Helm roll.

KEITH: Let's go for a ride.

AUSTIN: Alright, so like, you've attached this thing, you have the, the weird catapult situation plus the, the compressed air. But—

KEITH: Having one in something, that—

AUSTIN: Is bad.

KEITH: Is bad. That means that you roll two and take the lower, or just that you roll one, that's if you have a—

AUSTIN: *[cross]* No, no no no, that's if you have— if you have a one you roll one, yeah.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: Y'all have one gambit left. You earned one before.

KEITH: Uh, I mean...

DRE: Wait, shouldn't we have two now? So we have one because I earned one.

AUSTIN: *[cross]* No you have— Gig spent one

KEITH: *[cross]* No, it's because I used one.

JANINE: Mhm.

KEITH: And I do—

DRE: *[cross]* Oh, that's right.

KEITH: Yeah, and I do have a sort of like, eh, maybe I shouldn't use two, but fuck that, of *course* I'm gonna use this, *[Austin laughs]* 'cause I'm piloting a death trap into the sky in my—

AUSTIN: *[cross]* On a desperate roll.

KEITH: In my— I'm flesh Gig, I'm not—

AUSTIN: *Excuse* me?

KEITH: Flesh Gig? It's just me, I'm not in a robot.

DRE: *[cross]* Like, flesh D.va.

AUSTIN: *[cross]* Oh, right, like flesh, like flesh D.va, got you, yeah, uh huh.

JANINE: *[cross]* Ew.

DRE: Shoutout to Ali.

AUSTIN: Shoutouts to Ali. You did bring armor, which is good, 'cause that means you can soak some damage if this goes bad—

KEITH: No, that armor is gone.

AUSTIN: Oh, you used that— oh right, that armor's gone, right, I see now.

KEITH: I brought the armor to use it in that scene.

AUSTIN: Yes.

DRE: Oh, Keith, you should probably use that gambit, huh!

KEITH: Yeah, I'm gonna use the gambit—

AUSTIN: Uh huh. Alright.

KEITH: For sure, like I'm not even second-guessing it.

AUSTIN: Desperate standard!

KEITH: Okay. Helm?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: Where's my buttons, there it is. Helm? Desperate.

AUSTIN: *[cross]* I'm trying to think of a devil's bargain I can give you here. Um.

KEITH: I would love there to be one.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: Hm. I'll— I'll allow you to fly to your death, but, you have to— *[laughter]*

AUSTIN: Um... *[sighs]* I— here's a real risk. Oh, well. Hmm.

KEITH: *[cross]* Okay. I mean, I, hey. I got this.

AUSTIN: What if... uh... If you fail, not if you fail. I'll give you a bonus one die, but other Gig gets to publish one thing in your name.

KEITH: No. Absolutely not.

[laughter]

AUSTIN: Alright!

SYLVIA: Oh my god...

AUSTIN: Alright! That's really good, alright, 2d6.

KEITH: Listen.

JANINE: Shit.

KEITH: I, I— *[laughs]* I gave you a chance to make that happen the first time, I'm not, I'm... Alright. One bonus die.

AUSTIN: From the, from the gambit, yep.

KEITH: From the gambit.

AUSTIN: So that's two, two dice.

KEITH: Five.

AUSTIN: Oh, he got a five, nice. Um... good hustle. Good hustle out there.

KEITH: A five and a one, by the way.

AUSTIN: Yeah, a five and a *one*. You do it but there's consequence, you suffer severe harm, a serious complication occurs— you suffer severe harm. So. You're on the back of this thing?

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And you launch yourself up, I mean, you describe— you describe the good part. Tell me what happens, tell me the good thing that happens.

KEITH: The good— okay, so. The, we get two things for this, right?

AUSTIN: Yeah, this, this fills the Ache clock, Ache is snapping, yes.

KEITH: *[cross]* I can do the whole, big thing right? Okay.

AUSTIN: Yes.

KEITH: Alright, so... Uh... Because the other side... wouldn't coordinate with me. This is down to, in addition to the luck of the machine working, it was also the luck of the timing working just right? Where we fly, it's like, this is the shittiest looking thing, it's like two bike racks, propped up by some barrels with like a bunch of rubber uh, like fan belts tied to each other to make this like,

slingshot that's powered just by a, like a car, just hooked up to a— it's hooked up to a car engine still in a car. And— and the, you hear the *[hiss foley]* of the thing and I press the button, and the conveyor belt shoots us forward, and then I'm like, literally holding, I'm holding the... uh... cannisters like, under my arms, and sort of just using them to sort of steer, and we whiz right past the head or tail of the ribbon— *[Austin laughs]* And it sort of like, snap! Like, that, it's like... when we were talking about what the sound it makes, I was picturing... what if folding a blanket sounded like sheet metal? And it like—

AUSTIN: *[cross]* Hmm. Great. That's a great— Yeah. Mhm!

KEITH: It sort of snaps around and just like— *[crashing foley]* Like a crash.

AUSTIN: Mhm.

KEITH: Like a folding crash sound, and is following us as we jet towards the concrete right as the other side is chasing one of the Saints. And... they just sort of fly past each other in the middle and the center just like snaps. Just like start like it cracks—

AUSTIN: *[cross]* Right.

KEITH: And then it just folds in on itself.

AUSTIN: And it shatters and like, begins to fall and um. Wynter's like—

WYNTER: I can't believe we did it!

AUSTIN: And then like, goes to land on like, does, goes to do like a sliding, like a grind, down the, the side of, or like the, the... the edge of a building, and the, one of her wheelies pushes in too much. And like, bounces off, basically, and slams her back into uh, another building nearby? And one of the tanks—

KEITH: That's where I am, I'm on the back.

AUSTIN: That's where you are, and one of the tanks that still has some of the compressed air in it, like... explodes.

KEITH: Oh, so I didn't get crushed, I got crushed *and* blown up?

AUSTIN: Yeah, you got, you got like I think it's like... *[sighs]* What is this, this is like, worse than punctured this is... this is *definitely* a level two harm? Which gives you a straight minus 1d on all rolls.

KEITH: Forever?

AUSTIN: No, until you get it treated, basically.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: Um, so write punctured down?

JANINE: *[cross]* Good news.

AUSTIN: I think punctured is fine.

KEITH: *[cross]* Punctured?

AUSTIN: Yeah, good news, you have a doctor. Yeah. On one of the two negative 1d spots. You could also roll to resist! But that risks you getting more stressed.

KEITH: No no no no. No no no no no no. I'm... this. I'm the...

AUSTIN: Okay. You're punctured.

KEITH: Punctured.

AUSTIN: Like the gas can, you also are punctured. I think it's like, shrapnel.

[30:00]

KEITH: Is crushed a better...

AUSTIN: No 'cause you're not just crushed, it's, it's... it exploded and there's shrapnel from the metal shit, like.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: Being crushed sucked. I mean, it could be both.

KEITH: Yeah.

AUSTIN: If you're feeling both, like you could be crushed and punctured in one slot.

KEITH: And I just write that in two?

AUSTIN: Yeah, just write that in two. Yep.

KEITH: Okay. Crushed. Oh, it's in red, nice.

AUSTIN: Yeah, it's in red. There you go. Um, alright. Let's put that in the same one so that we're not— I don't want it to be two different things? There you go, do that, boom.

KEITH: Oh, okay.

AUSTIN: Alright. So, Acre*¹ falls. And— Echo, you see the kind of like, Advent clones begin to... like, um. I think that they begin to like, get wispy at the edges of their limbs, like their feet and their hands get kind of ghostly? But they're not gone. But when they see Acre* fall— and Acre* falls slowly, do you know what I mean like? Everybody can turn and see it and we get the super wide shot— uh, dark Gig is getting the really dope wide shot angle? Of like the, the, the... the really wide angle lens of this thing falling down and like... *[low rumbling foley]* Crushing into the ground. And uh... When they see that, Echo, they say like... "No, we-- " And then they like turn to bounce, and they're running right towards the purple, the middle where, where Quire is. Like they're running deeper and deeper into the city trying to get to the heart of it to stop whatever Quire is doing.

SYLVIA: The whole point of me doing this was to stop them from getting there, right?

AUSTIN: *[cross]* Oh yeah, totally.

SYLVIA: So I'm— I'm probably gonna have to tackle some people.

AUSTIN: Oh yeah, probably.

SYLVIA: And I think yeah, I think I am just running and trying to like... tackle them.

AUSTIN: Okay.

SYLVIA: Not really thinking about the whole like, I can't hit them thing! It's just like... gotta grab 'em! So I could... uh.... It feels more like Scramble 'cause it's based on just running after someone?

AUSTIN: Yeah, I agree with that. Yep.

SYLVIA: Yeah. Um... risky, or... what.

AUSTIN: Risky. Risky.

SYLVIA: Yeah.

¹ Austin means Ache.

AUSTIN: Risky standard.

SYLVIA: And then I have a lower effect.

AUSTIN: Or did you get pushed— yeah, um, I think it is like a different sequence in a sense. You have a what?

SYLVIA: I have— because I have bruised, I have less effect, so it's limited, right?

AUSTIN: *[cross]* You have less effect, so yeah, risky, risky limited in fact, yeah.

SYLVIA: Yeah...

AUSTIN: Um, you know, you could push yourself to do one of the following, perform a feat of physical force that verges on the superhuman! And that would get you back up.

SYLVIA: I could do that, and I also... only take one stress when I push myself to ignore a wound penalty.

AUSTIN: That's true. So you could do that instead. That would actually be easier.

SYLVIA: Yeah, I'll do that, I'll mark that after I roll?

AUSTIN: Okay.

SYLVIA: 'Cause I can— this is gonna bite me in the ass, but I'm saying it out loud so everyone can roast me for it later, one stress isn't gonna hurt!

AUSTIN: Mhm!

SYLVIA: Alright, and no bonus dice.

AUSTIN: No bonus dice.

SYLVIA: Two threes, sick!

AUSTIN: Those were two failures.

SYLVIA: Love it.

AUSTIN: Boom. So mark that stress, um. So I think that like, you try to do the tackle, and you do like, you pass through it like it's ghostly. Through the other Echo? And then like... the, the Even solidifies and when you hit the ground like, just does like a fucking stomp in the back.

SYLVIA: Oof.

AUSTIN: And you're gonna take another bruise— not another bruise, you're gonna take like um. Uh... not stomped. Um. Let's think of a good, what's a good thing here for, for another less effect. Um. I think you're going to take...

KEITH: Pummeled.

AUSTIN: Yeah, pummeled.

SYLVIA: *[cross]* Pummeled is good.

AUSTIN: Yeah, 'cause it's like multiple, it's multiple stomps. So yeah, pummeled. So you're less effect also. There you go.

SYLVIA: Alright.

AUSTIN: *[cross]* Could resist it.

SYLVIA: Can I— can I use my communicator to let the others know that they're heading that way, at least?

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally.

SYLVIA: So they're aware of it? Okay.

AUSTIN: No, it's a level one one still, it's not a level two.

SYLVIA: Oh, it's also a level one?

AUSTIN: So put that in, to the right. Yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah.

SYLVIA: Oh, okay. I didn't realize I could write there as well. My bad.

AUSTIN: No. So I think at seeing this happen, you see a turn in... in Acre. Like... she's been kind of holding back, you know? And she's like—

ACRE SEVEN: You *have* to stop—

AUSTIN: And like, like, floats in front of them and like, slides her hand and the, the ground in front of them breaks. It, it's like, the ground in front of them basically uh, advances in time until it crumbles and it's broken apart and it looks like— you know, like a weird post-apocalyptic like, she advances time until there would have one day been an earthquake here. And stops it, and like, makes a chasm between them and you can see that she's getting pissed. What do you do? Echo.

SYLVIA: Oh, man.

AUSTIN: You can kind of feel Quire react to that, by the way?

SYLVIA: Yeah... I think I wanna yell out to Acre to be like,

SYLVIA (as Echo): You— don't do anything else, you're gonna make it upset!

SYLVIA: 'Cause that's what I'm assuming is happening, like at least Echo is assuming is happening is there's cracks in the ground and this thing is not reacting properly.

AUSTIN: *[cross]* Yeah yeah yeah yeah. Uh huh. So what is that, is that a command?

SYLVIA: Uh...

AUSTIN: Commanding Acre Seven?

SYLVIA: No, I think... hm. So what I might do here instead, uh... do the really stupid thing of trying to push myself again? And uh...

AUSTIN: That will— that— and do— to do, to ignore the effects?

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Gotcha.

SYLVIA: Can I...

AUSTIN: Yep.

SYLVIA: 'Cause like, I only take one stress for that, still.

AUSTIN: Correct.

SYLVIA: Which'll have me right at the fuckin' edge, but.

AUSTIN: Uh huh!

SYLVIA: I'm desperate right now! And Echo thinks that the world is going to end if this happens, so.

AUSTIN: Uh huh. I mean like she's like— I think that she like, continues to advance it so that like, you're on an island with... them. Like, she like—

SYLVIA: *[cross]* Okay.

AUSTIN: She like, cracks the entire ground around all of you. So yeah, what are you rolling for?

SYLVIA: *[sighs]* Well, they, the me yelling like to stop was not the actual action that was just like—

AUSTIN: *[cross]* Okay.

SYLVIA: I— seeing if they're responding at all and if they're not, I'm like okay I have to— I have to stop them. I have to stop the situation before the situation gets worse.

AUSTIN: *[cross]* We will— the thing is we will determine if they stop based on your roll. That is your roll. Telling them to stop is a roll.

SYLVIA: No, I know, what— sorry, I'm not explaining this properly.

AUSTIN: Okay.

SYLVIA: Echo wants to... take care of the copies so Acre sees that there's not a threat.

AUSTIN: Gotcha, gotcha, gotcha.

SYLVIA: That's what I wanna do.

AUSTIN: Okay.

SYLVIA: And... to do that I am going to just straight up try and attack them at this point, like I'm dropping that—

AUSTIN: Is this— Is this your first bit of violence?

SYLVIA: Um... I can't remember, I'm gonna say probably? Does that—

AUSTIN: That will give you three stress or you'll resist.

SYLVIA: Hm. I will not do that, then.

AUSTIN: There's a chance to resist and there's a chance to resist and only get... one.

SYLVIA: Yeah, no, I'm in a really bad position here.

AUSTIN: There's a chance to resist and get none.

SYLVIA: Yeah, there's a *chance*— I haven't been having a lot of good chances here, Austin.

AUSTIN: Yeah. I know!

SYLVIA: *[laughs]* I'm trying to think of what I can do here... Yeah. Um... I guess, I, yeah, I'll do it. I'll try— how do I resist, again?

AUSTIN: Alright, so, let me figure out the way this fires. Um. Do the, do the attack first, what are you doing?

SYLVIA: Okay. Uhh...

AUSTIN: You're just scrappin'? You're just going for it?

SYLVIA: Yeah, I actually think I'm swinging my sword at—

AUSTIN: *[cross]* Okay.

SYLVIA: Fake Echo?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

SYLVIA: Um so, okay. Risky? Or risky or desperate?

AUSTIN: I think this is desperate.

SYLVIA: Yeah. And then... So... I'm, since I'm using Flesh Wound I only take one stress to ignore...

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

SYLVIA: That. And I'm using my fine vibro-blade does that...

AUSTIN: That makes it great, yeah. If you're—

SYLVIA: *[cross]* That makes it great effect?

AUSTIN: Yeah, if you're getting rid of less effect, yep, a hundred percent.

SYLVIA: Okay.

AUSTIN: Six! Holy shit!

KEITH: Ooh, boy.

AUSTIN: Good hit! And a great! What's this look like?

SYLVIA: It's like— a— I think it's just one of those things where it's like... the camera see, just sees like fake Echo and fake Even standing off against um... against Acre and you can't see Echo?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

SYLVIA: And then fake Echo just like, stops.

AUSTIN: Right. Alright, so. Here's the resist. This is a big one.

SYLVIA: Yeah it is!

AUSTIN: Alright, so mark that one stress from using Flesh Wound.

SYLVIA: Mhm!

AUSTIN: So, to resol— or to, to the way that this rule is written for this place right, so you're in, you're in the Wound and this says the first time you perform a violent action near the Wound, you must Resolve, Resist, or take three stress. We're sure that you did not previously do this, right?

SYLVIA: Uh... I...

AUSTIN: I'm double checking.

SYLVIA: Feel like I haven't.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Even did. I can see where Even did.

SYLVIA: Yeah, I'm pretty sure I didn't attack during the um.

AUSTIN: The previous thing at all, yeah.

SYLVIA: The previous thing, I don't think I attacked the elephant or... the Saint, so.

AUSTIN: No. No.

SYLVIA: Oh cool, I get one dice for this.

AUSTIN: You get one die for this, that's the thing...

SYLVIA: Eh! Y'know. It's gotta happen eventually.

AUSTIN: I— no, did you just roll it?

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Oh, boy. Um. Yeah. Suffer six stress minus the highest— so suffer three stress. We have our first status.

SYLVIA: *[cross]* Uh, fun.

JANINE: Wow.

AUSTIN: So.

KEITH: *[cross]* Oh boy!

AUSTIN: I'm gonna read from the book. Uh... oh, here we go. Nope, that's not it. Um. "When a PC marks their last stress box, they suffer a level of status, when you take status, circle one of the status conditions, like cold, reckless, unstable, et cetera." You tell me which one you're picking here. "When you take status, you're taken out of action. You're left for dead or otherwise dropped out of the current conflict, only to come back later, shaken and drained. When you return, you'll have zero stress, and your vice will have been satisfied for the next downtime. These conditions are permanent. Your character acquires the new personality quirk indicated by the condition. And you can earn XP by using it to cause trouble. When you mark your fourth condition, your character cannot continue as a star-faring scoundrel. You must retire them to a different life. The options are cold, haunted, obsessed, paranoid, reckless, soft, unstable, or vicious."

SYLVIA: I've been... I think that the... extension of this that I want is just because, throughout this whole fight I've also, I've been in, Echo's been in spots where they should've died but didn't?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

SYLVIA: And then, also, they just keep pushing themselves, so I think I'm gonna go with reckless here?

AUSTIN: Mm. "You have little regard for your own safety, best interests, or wellbeing."

SYLVIA: Mhm.

AUSTIN: That's interesting, yeah. Um. I can propose a— I can counter-propose something.

SYLVIA: Sure!

AUSTIN: Which is like, the image that I have here is that like... At seeing, so. There's something about this that is like, you're very close to— so we talked before about how Quire doesn't like guns right, and the quick and easy fix was guns blow up when you fire them throughout the system. But we're really close to Quire. We're *really* really close, and you've been buying them time. They can see how hard you tried not to swing that fucking sword. They can see that like... you didn't want to come to blows but then you did give in and the stress of it all and the way that, that the Veil works, the way that the Wound works... hurts you. I kind of like the notion of being haunted by Quire.

SYLVIA: Ohh!

AUSTIN: And getting the voice of— remember the voice that when you were exploring the fogs? On old Quire?

SYLVIA: Yeah! Oh, I love that.

AUSTIN: That was like, hey, do you like hurting people? That voice comes back. The old snake voice? The old like—

SYLVIA: [*cross*] Yeah!

AUSTIN: This is Quire talking to you directly and trying to work out what's up with you?

SYLVIA: That works really well with my vice, too, so I'm super into that!

AUSTIN: Totally.

SYLVIA: I think— Yeah, I like that idea a lot more.

AUSTIN: Um, and so I think what happens is like, you cut down fake Echo. Fake Even turns to get you and I think um, Acre 7 just like... like, closes her hands slowly and you can see the wispy-ness at his edge, at like the, the edge of his hands and stuff kind of goes inward and he kind of like, becomes even more wispy? And then like, you and Acre 7 just kind of lock eyes and like, she sees that something changes in you, and then turns and begins to walk closer to Quire and then you hear like... *[deep groaning]* And you turn and you lock eyes with the glass elephant. Which like, comes through the fog. And then we like, cut from that. I think that's everything that was threatening, right? Everything is taken care of. So I think we get, I mean I guess, we see— we get the Blooming, Emphyrean who is now also kind of wispy at the edges, land at the edge of a, at the edge of a building near you, Signet. What's that— do you talk to this digital Blooming?

JANINE: Um...

AUSTIN: Like, it's going to vanish, eventually. They are, the two of them, the Emphyrean, and the Blooming.

JANINE: I feel like the really easy storybook thing is, is for Signet to say something to Blooming here to, to like... try and work through that feeling but at the same time like, Signet knows about talking to people, and she knows that talking to this person doesn't matter? Like, this doesn't— Gig is on the ground all exploded and stuff?

AUSTIN: Mhm.

JANINE: Is it, is it worth her time to talk to a Blooming who's never going to... whatever she says is never gonna come to anything, and it's probably not even gonna make her feel better?

AUSTIN: Blooming sees you not doing it and does feel bad, so.

JANINE: What do you mean?

AUSTIN: Digital Blooming sees you not do— there is... there is a, there is a being who is alive right now, who sees you not come to talk to her. And I just want there to be— this, there's no long acting effect to this. But this person who exists in this brief moment is like... oh, I guess she's not gonna come say hey. Which is fine, because like you said, Signet understands that this is like, a weird digital apparition.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: But that apparition... that apparition feels in as far as... a brain can feel.

JANINE: Yeah...

AUSTIN: So. You go to, you're going to go attend to Gig?

JANINE: Yeah. The, the thing you said made me sad as a person?

AUSTIN: Yeah, that was the intent.

JANINE: Um, I don't, I don't— great.

[laughter]

AUSTIN: Yeah, I mean, like?

JANINE: At least you're honest! That's good.

AUSTIN: It's a sad— it's a sad thing, it's a sad thing, and we'll— I think it's core to the notion of a lot of what is at stake in this series, which is like.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: *[sighs]* Which is... It's not just like are robots people too, right? It's not— I don't want alibis. I don't ever want there to be this notion of like, well it's just a digital person.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Like, a digital person felt sad. Right? Like.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: That happened. That event happened, and the universe doesn't give a fuck, you're right, Signet's right, the universe doesn't care, that person's *going* to stop existing, and there is a utilitarian way at which it makes perfect sense to go attend to the person who will be here in a minute, who will be here ten, ten days from now. But there should, but we should also pause and see that person be sad. Y'know? That's the...

JANINE: And also I like, two years ago, Signet probably would've noticed.

AUSTIN: Right. Right.

JANINE: I don't, I just don't think that she notices right now.

AUSTIN: Fair.

JANINE: I think she goes to, to heal Gig.

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH: *[jokingly in character]* Ooow! *Please* help me!

JANINE: *[jokingly in character]* God. Shhh!

[Keith, as Gig, wails comically]

[laughter]

JANINE: Signet doesn't— Signet doesn't shush him! I think— *[more laughter]* Signet doesn't shush him, I think she just like... moralizes at him a little bit?

AUSTIN: Uh huh.

JANINE: Not moralize, I don't know the word I want, I think she's just like...

KEITH: *[cross]* "I told you to be careful!"

JANINE: This is her first time like actually working with Gig, I think she probably just says some shit like, "You're really effective when you wanna be, you just need to wanna be more often."

AUSTIN: *[laughs]* Oh my fucking...

GIG: *[cross]* *[outraged]* Is that— I feel like I was effective! Is there even a medicine for this?? Is there a medicine to fix crushed and blown up?

SIGNET: How about I just like—

JANINE: I'm gonna give him some of my cards to fuck with while I do shit.

AUSTIN: Oh my *god*.

KEITH: *[cross]* Like a, like a, like a Pazaak Deck?

JANINE: *[cross]* They're cool cards! Like, look! Ooh, shiny.

AUSTIN: Fuck!

GIG: I— I'm, my face is bleeding!!

SIGNET: I'll get to it!

[Keith cackles]

AUSTIN: Extremely good!

KEITH: What is on the, what is on the cards? What are the cards?

JANINE: They're like metal and stuff spins on them? They like move, they're like, they're cool.

KEITH: These are cool...

JANINE: They're all, they're like all those really expensive expensive like, greeting cards, but they're like playing cards. So there's like raised elements, and they're fun.

KEITH: Okay, tactile cards?

JANINE: They're also kind of Jesus-y, but like, it's fine.

KEITH: Okay. Like those candles at Walgreens?

AUSTIN: Yeah, like the candles at Walgreens.

JANINE: We don't have those, but yes.

KEITH: Don't have Walgreens, or don't have like, the Jesus candles at Walgreens?

JANINE: Probably both. I don't...

AUSTIN: Oh my god. Uh, you do have a medkit and stuff, right?

JANINE: Yeah, I got a fine medkit. I got the good stuff.

KEITH: Yeah, it's okay. Oh it's like, fine like fancy, not fine like...

AUSTIN: *[cross]* Not like, fine like bad.

JANINE: *[cross]* I also have syringes and applicators for whatever reason.

AUSTIN: Jesus.

KEITH: Oh my god, *please*—

JANINE: They're free, so I just carry them. They're— they don't weigh anything so I just make sure that Signet always has a pocket full of syringes, that's the character build I've done.

AUSTIN: Oh!

GIG: Please tell me that you have something in the medkit that you can put in the syringe and then put in me that will make this stop *hurting so bad!*

SIGNET: Probably, yeah. I'll just try stuff until something works. I'm not a real doctor?

GIG: Oh my— are you a— you're a bad doctor!! *[laughter]* Oh my god I don't wanna be treated by you anymore!

SIGNET: You don't have a lot of alternatives, here. Anyway.

GIG: Bring me to... gently, to a real doctor *please*.

AUSTIN: I'm trying to figure, oh here we go. Here, here we go. Um...

KEITH: Can you imagine anything more terrifying than being like, almost dead and then someone says 'don't worry I'm a doctor', and then right before they inject you with something say 'well, not a real doctor!'

[Janine laughs]

AUSTIN: God.

JANINE: I'm a spiritual doctor, it's...

AUSTIN: I'm gonna figure out how to heal— because I know how to heal in downtime, I don't know how to heal like now, so let's just figure this out during downtime. It might be the case that you just, you can do it but it, yeah. I'm not sure. But you're attending to Gig, gotcha. Uh... Even. From your perspective, you can see... what, okay so like, Gig's hurt, uh, Signet's attending to Gig, uh, Echo is haunted and has vanished into the mists. And Even, I think from your, from your perspective, you can, you see people coming onto the, y'know, I think you get some bullets shot at you from the remaining Advent people? From the two actual remaining Advent people? And then you see like, figures like, smash through the, the... um. The door to the roof that they're on? And like, tackle them to the ground. And you don't know who they are. And then you see that like, the fog begins to lift, and there are other people around?

[MUSIC — [Parhelia](#) begins]

[49:07]

AUSTIN: *[cont'd]* And you know how I've been describing like, the kaleidoscopes of colors and like the, the kind of like, branches that are overlapping with other branches, and like multiple realities kind of imposed on each other and like, weird like kind of mutated uh, buildings, like all sorts of weird shit like that? It all clicks into place. And kind of solves itself, and decides which one it wants to be. And it wants to be this place. Parhelia. The cars that were once overgrown, they blink into activity, and you can see them more clearly now, and you realize that they are these aerodynamic crystalline things which begin to sort of skate around the city streets and even up into the air. And you follow them up with your eyes as they glide on rails of light and you take in the breadth of this place. A city of glass, and crystal, and light, where the clouds of amethyst, and the pristine clarity of citrine both find their place in the skyline. You hear the distant trumpeting of elephants outside the city and the running water of a riverway down its center, and the laughter of children as they depart from a schoolbus and begin a tour of the nearby museum. And you realize, upon seeing them, that they are Qui Err, though slightly different than those you've met before. They share with the Qui Err of the Assembly the cool greys and blues and lavender skin shades and the headspines, too. But where other Qui Err have vestigial spurs, those of Parhelia still have all four of their arms. In the coming weeks, you'll learn so much more about these people and their commanding leader, Solemn Scale, you'll learn about their civilization, technologically peerless to any other in the system yet, devoted earnestly to ecological cohabitation, economic and cultural diversity, and restorative justice. And you'll learn most of all that this city is only just the beginning. Because where there was once just a gash in the side of the planet Skein, there is now the civilization that Quire has been dreaming of.

[MUSIC — [Parhelia](#) ends]

[51:27]

AUSTIN: *[cont'd]* And it's a little ironic because if Ache hadn't made Quire focus on this, and it didn't mean to, Ache didn't want Quire to, to build this place, to build uh, Parhelia. But Parhelia is here now. And all like, again there's like, halos in the sky around you. If you look up sundogs, do you know what sundogs are?

KEITH: Are they the opposite of water bears?

AUSTIN: They're the opposite of water bears. They're a visual effect. That just like, makes it look like there are, a halo around the sun?

KEITH: Oh, yeah, I know about these.

AUSTIN: Right? Like, it's, it's a bunch, it's like, a bunch of those that are like, tiny, throughout the entire like all around the sky here. Like, there aren't suns, but there are just like, little glowy bits of kind of like, they're like big chunks of glass that are just floating all through this place,

producing light like that, and they all have that effect. And so it's just like, a glimmering city. Filled with... the Qui Err. But not the Qui Err Assembly, like not the people who were in the sky without— the Sky Reflected in Mirrors, the ones who were stored there, these are like... You know, again, I keep making these Wakanda references right like, Quire didn't make Wakanda the way that Wakanda made Wakanda in Marvel. Quire made Wakanda the way the crew of the movie Black Panther made Wakanda. Like, the way that like, Afro— , you know, Afrofuturism kind of emerges from a real history of violence and trauma. This is Quire remembering the trauma of the history that the Quire people had. And in like, this shout, is enacting a world in which something else happens. Something different happened. A world in which it grew up fast enough, or was in the right phase of its life that it could recognize them as people instead of seeing them as just things walking around. As just like, whatever animals that it didn't give a fuck about. Like, that it understood that it was a being, you know, that it was something that cared. And in this moment, it does the second miracle, and here on Skein, under the jurisdiction of the NEH, theoretically, but also under their own jurisdiction, because this is a functioning city. This is a, this is like, you know. Maybe not New York appearing overnight, but maybe, y'know. Chicago. Or maybe it is New York, right, maybe it's not, it's not the, the biggest city in the world, but it's still a very big city. And filled with technology that didn't exist before. And... there are just people here now.

KEITH: Where, um. Did they come from?

AUSTIN: Where do they come from to begin with? Where did the first Quire people come from? I don't know, right?

KEITH: I dunno.

AUSTIN: Quire's a weird magic planet that makes things. It made planets. It made a world where technology could exist.

KEITH: Do they go— do they go oh, I'm here now, or do they go... I remember... being.

AUSTIN: *[cross]* I don't know, I think they remember— They don't remember an alternate history. I think they know they came here from an alternate history. I think that that's, and again, I don't want any alibis. I don't want them being, I don't want them not understanding what happened here. But I think that they understand this as a gift of life from themselves? And... but that they were brought here by this thing, do you know?

KEITH: Mhm.

AUSTIN: Like, the way that many people believe god made them, y'know? Like, but, oh yeah, Quire made us.

KEITH: But they're like, thirty.

AUSTIN: There's a mix. There's also seven, right?

KEITH: No, I know, but like, if you're thirty...

AUSTIN: Right.

KEITH: It's different being like, oh god made me when I was born, it was like— I was born and also I'm thirty.

AUSTIN: I think that they probably all remember being seven. And they all remember being twelve. And they all remember being, if they're ninety, they remember being seventy. It's like, that world existed in Quire's mind.

KEITH: Okay.

AUSTIN: Quire conceived of it and it shifted it into reality.

KEITH: Got it. Now I understand.

AUSTIN: You know what I mean?

KEITH: Yeah, yeah yeah.

AUSTIN: In the same way that it shifted Gift-3 into reality, in the same way that it shifted Brighton into reality. Except that, everywhere else, those, that was, all of those other planets reflected the will of something else powerful. Either a mass of people, or a divine, or an axiom, or Volition, or whatever it was, here it's Quire lets itself have a thing. Which is, other people to care for and people who will hopefully care for it and it's a selfish desire. Like, I don't know that a planet, I don't know that a planet can be selfish or what, but apparently it can be. And I think we get... a couple things happen here. Deep in the city, you know like, on a city street or at one of the parks I mentioned before, maybe at the museum which is now back in place, we get Acre... like. Sitting down on a bench and Cascara rolling up. And they exchange a few words. You know... Acre... Acre thought there might be something here that would give her what she needed to bring back the Potent? And if it was... whatever that was, Quire used it instead. And so, there's a sadness in Acre here. There's, there's an ache in Acre, you know, it's real. And then... there's also just like. What do you do when a new society pops up? I guess we'll figure it out during downtime, we'll talk about that, obviously.

AUSTIN: *[cont'd]* So, what I wanna know before we wrap is... where do y'all go? What do you do in this new city? Like, what's the, the city has kind of appeared and you know, Acre is here somewhere. I don't think anybody knows off the top of their head where Echo has gone to yet. I think we should wrap back around to you in a second, Echo. Ache has kind of crashed into the,

into the ground and like it, its massive strange body is still there? Like in the middle of the city? But it kind of snapped in two, right? And so kind of just this wall that separates one half of the city from the other, but like with a, a built-in gateway and it's like not a, it's a wall that kind of broke into the ground at odd angles, so it's not like a very um. It's not a very efficient wall, or a very symmetrical wall? It actually kind of has this really great effect of breaking the city up visually? But I'm curious if there are people you wanna have conversations with? Cascara is around, Acre is around. Who else. You know, Arin Till and the rest of the Knights are still here. Gigas is still here.

KEITH: I'm cr— I'm crushed and exploded. Um.

AUSTIN: True. You are.

JANINE: Didn't— didn't I medkit him anyway?

KEITH: You did something, you fake doctor. *[laughs]*

AUSTIN: Let's say that for the, for the sake of this because I have not found rules, I looked and I couldn't find rules on healing, um. Let's just like, healing in mid-combat, I'll say that you've like stabilized him for now? But you're probably gonna need to get him back to the ship and actually do more extensive healing. So you can like move around for now, at least?

KEITH: Okay yeah, so I, I'm, I'm well enough to go and talk to someone.

AUSTIN: Yeah. And to each other, and to like, people here who, who. Y'know. Quire has brought this, brought them— Quire has brought them in and they know how to speak the same language as you, or you have communication devices, we've never talked about how you could understand Kitcha Kanna, y'know? We're very much in—

KEITH: *[cross]* Yeah.

AUSTIN: Star Wars world where there is some... shared uh, basic language? Y'know.

KEITH: All the mirror versions of us are gone, right? Those disappeared when...

AUSTIN: Yeah, and I'm actually curious, what was the final transmission from the like, the regret-filled, or the Ache-filled version of Gig, the Ache-made version of Gig? What was the, what was that big final transmission that like— It didn't go out to the world, but I think it did go out to everyone who was still in like, here before the city showed up? Or as the city was showing up? He was kind of like, becoming like, disintegrated and erased, so I'm curious what like, what was his sign-off like, Gig?

[1:00:22]

KEITH: Um. I think—

JANINE: What's your favorite vine?

KEITH: I think it— *[laughs]* I think it was um... it, maybe it was like, oh I bet like the tail of uh, or, maybe the head, part of Ache I think crushed like, something important or like, like a library or like an archive building?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

KEITH: And now he goes like "Hah, fuckin' killer!" and then— *[laughter]*

AUSTIN: God! Oh my *God!* Oh, brutal!

KEITH: And then it just sort of, he just sort of uh, pops away.

AUSTIN: Nice, good. Fuckin' killer, honestly.

KEITH: Fuckin' killer.

AUSTIN: Oh, okay, good, I'm glad we got that, that image. Um. Signet and Even, what are y'all up to here.

DRE: Um... I guess... I guess so, personally I'm interested in seeing like, what happens with Wynter? Like, like—

AUSTIN: Sure.

DRE: Are, are the, are the other Saints like, 'cause we kinda got the image from her that the other Saints are kind of not great to her.

AUSTIN: Yeah.

DRE: So I wonder if that's changed, and I think also for Even... in character, I think there is a desire to like, circle around and make sure that... oh I don't have my notebook with me. Um, our friends who brought us here like, aren't gonna get any further retaliation from like, the other folk shere.

AUSTIN: Right. Uh, Forrester and Page, Plane Page and, and... uh... not Foster Forest.

DRE: Plane Page and uh. Facet Forrester.

AUSTIN: Facet! Facet Forrester. Right, of course. So I think what, we maybe get a scene with you and the Saints and Arin? Arin Till. Um. Where should this be, should this be at a park? Should be like an over, overlook? Like... Kind of back up away 'cause they're not— where do you think they would be? Where are you at? I guess maybe more importantly, where do you want this scene to be.

DRE: Um, and I also, Keith, do you think Gig would want to be here, I mean, you and like, Gig and Wynter were kind of like the dynamic duo there.

KEITH: Yeah, I'll go. I'll do that.

AUSTIN: Okay. Yeah.

DRE: You always like yelling at like, snooty authority people, so, y'know. I don't know, I think it would be cool to have like a, almost like a park where it's like, everybody's mechs are just kind of like... like oddly parked in like this very idyllic like, nice park where people are like running around and doing stuff, but there's just like these like, fucked up battle-scarred mechs just like kinda also chilling in the background.

AUSTIN: *[cross]* Right. Totally. Um, yeah, so maybe y'all are there and, and you're... you can, we get this kind of nice wide shot of that, of all the broken down mechs. Or not even broken down, but y'know, they've been beaten up a little bit, battered.

DRE: *[cross]* Yeah.

AUSTIN: With all the the kind of glimmering in the sky. And, and then yeah, the, the group of you. So I guess it's you two, Gig and, and Even, plus the four Saints, plus Arin Till. So that's what, seven people. Oh and, and Gigas is probably there, too.

DRE: Oh yeah, that makes sense.

AUSTIN: And so I think we probably should start with like, Till who kind of was, vaguely antagonistic towards you before, Even? And they are like...

AUSTIN (as Arin Till): Well this changes... pretty much everything, Gardener.

DRE (as Even): I mean, yeah, cities appearing out of nowhere tend to do that, I would imagine.

GIG: Yeah, all those cities. Every time. They changed it.

ARIN TILL: Well, I mean, funny you say that. Now that the Veil has been turned into whatever this is, we have communication back, and um. There are more. This isn't the

only one. It's the biggest one. But all through the Wound... little settlements. Townships. And other small cities orbiting this one all up and down this entire... this entire continent. There's a lot of people here now.

EVEN: So what, does this mean you're pulling out?

ARIN TILL: It's not my decision. I'm uh... ah. Y'know, I'm, I'm... loyal to the company. And to science. Hopefully we'll be able to stick around and work out an agreement. Like Templeton's Faire did with, with [[Calaphon, 1:04:50]]. And we'll be able to stay and study just like we arrived and started studying Quire and the Skein and, and everything else.

EVEN: And if they say no and want you to leave their home?

ARIN TILL: *[sighs]* Not my call, but.

AUSTIN: They like look around. And they like look around and... they say like.

ARIN TILL: *[sighs]* There's a lot of people here. Uh... You know me I'm more of a natural environment, quiet spaces type of person.

GIG: You like forest bathing.

ARIN TILL: I love forest bathing. So to speak.

AUSTIN: And I think at that point like, one of the saints steps forward, probably um, Saint Sommer who is the, the lion man. Who says like,

AUSTIN (as Sommer): We'll do our best to establish relations with this group, but. *[sighs]* You can't force your way in.

GIG: I again, that's a good thing to hear, I guess.

EVEN: Yeah, that's a good answer.

AUSTIN: Saint Wynter um. Is just like, she's like very much doing the tennis like, the tennis eyes back and forth between the two groups and kind of standing in the middle. And she's like...

WYNTER: Is any— is anyone going to say how great I was?

GIG: You were great! Yeah, I mean—

WYNTER: I was *great!* I did that backflip!

GIG: I know! You didn't even get crushed and exploded.

AUSTIN: And the, Saint Spryng, who is like the, the, kind of like. Springtime goth look is like...

AUSTIN (as Spryng): You did... fine.

KEITH: Ugh!

AUSTIN: And, but like, she's goth. Y'know? *[Dre laughs]* It's...

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: Wynter smiles a lot. It's clear that, it's clear that she has like, made her way into the group. You know, we can go even further than that, right, I think that... Faul, Saint Faul, who is the synthetic one is like—

FAUL: Your mother'd be very proud!

AUSTIN: And Wynter like, holds it together, but you can tell she's holding it together. Also Wynter— uh, uh, Faul is the synthetic who's just inside of the Saint mech? So this, this thing that has just been background like, scenery for this entire scene just starts to light up and talk! When he speaks up, so. It's great. Um... any other questions with this group?

DRE: Yeah, I guess, what is, what's Gigas going to do?

AUSTIN: I think they're like...

AUSTIN (as Gigas): I think I'm gonna stay here... And uh. Maybe um. *[deep breath]* Maybe try to help other people be on the right path. So that they don't wind up where I was. Lot of new people for Advent to try to recruit from, you know?

EVEN: Yeah.

GIG: So you're gonna be like a subtract-vent?

EVEN: Nailed it.

GIGAS: Yeah, great.

JANINE: Guys, I think the good Gig was the one that got destroyed.

[laughter]

DRE: Yep.

KEITH: That joke was fucking killer.

AUSTIN: Uh huh. I got it. I got it!

DRE: *[snorts]* Listen...

EVEN: Gigas, if you need anything, you call us, okay?

GIGAS: Yeah, do you have like a phone number? Like, what's the—

GIG: No.

EVEN: *[sighs]* I mean—

GIG: Yeah, we do.

DRE: Yeah, let me ask you Austin, do like, we have like personal phone numbers, does the ship have a phone number?

AUSTIN: I don't think so, you could only, you could only do direct communication easily with anything else on the planet, but I think like, if you give the ship's— there's like a ship, like, name and number that you have to register with, like whenever you land at a dock, and like, messages can get delivered, you know?

KEITH: It's our home phone.

AUSTIN: It's— uh huh. Um, oh. So I think there is one more thing here. Which is that like, Till says um.

ARIN TILL: You know, there's something strange about the way Ache... Not the way it was acting. But I want your opinion on it.

AUSTIN: I think, kind of pulls the two of you aside. As Wynter and the other Saints start talking about like, kind of doing their like, debrief over what all just happened. And, and kind of talking with Gigas, and you kind of feel Gigas is kind of in with them at this point. And Till kind of pulls, Gig, you and, and Even aside. And then... pulls up a, a... kind of like, a holo-projector from their, their like, they have a little shoulder mounted projector? That, that you can kind of see the dew in the air, the kind of humidity in the air kind of coheres in front of the group of you and becomes kind of like, a water-based screen? And the light gets projected into it and kind of

dispersed through it, and it's like aerial drone footage of Ache and then like, it changes to footage of Ache in um, like, coming out of Volition for the first time? And Till says...

ARIN TILL: Between the data we got here, and numbers that we were running back at the lab while we were here in the Field... something weird. Ache didn't want to be here. I mean, it doesn't want anything, it's an axiom, right? But, but it wasn't—

GIG: *[cross]* I literally don't know.

ARIN TILL: Okay, well, axioms don't want things, that's not— they, they want things like, the way an apple wants to fall when you let go of it.

GIG: Mhm.

ARIN TILL: But not like, or like, the way an apple wants to be red. They have quali— or green, or, whatever type of apple you have.

GIG: Uh huh.

ARIN TILL: You know. Presumably... like a red or a green.

GIG: Or like a yellow, a yellow.

ARIN TILL: Or yellow, depending on what— right.

GIG: Yeah. Half green, half red, then it sort of fades.

ARIN TILL: *[cross]* Right, the kind that does that fade in the middle.

GIG: Uh huh.

ARIN TILL: But that's not a willful thing it just, it does that, because that's what it *does*, it's like a... the way we think of it, it's like a natural law, it's just like— or it's the, the extension of a bunch of those things. Ache shouldn't have wound up here, is maybe the way I should say it. There's nothing that should have brought it from Volition to Skein. It... it's almost as if—

GIG: *[cross]* Why not?

ARIN TILL: Because of the trajectory it was going in, because of the way it was moving when it first emerged? Versus when... it suddenly peeled off and started to head this way.

GIG: So it's like if you threw an apple straight and it went left?

ARIN TILL: Yeah. That's... why didn't I just say that?

GIG: I dunno.

EVEN: So did something—

GIG: *[cross]* We were doing the apple thing.

ARIN TILL: *[cross]* No, no no no no, no, it's not like you threw an apple and it went— that's actually wrong.

GIG: Oh, okay.

ARIN TILL: It's as if you let go of an apple and instead of falling, it went left.

EVEN: Or is it you dropped an apple, and somebody... okay, I don't like this analogy. Basically—

ARIN TILL: No, it's a bad one, let's go back to the start

GIG: Okay.

EVEN: Did somebody... draw it here?

GIG: *[cross]* What color is—

EVEN: Or did somebody push it here? Or something or, whatever.

ARIN TILL: Volition—

GIG: Or did somebody *draw* it here.

ARIN TILL: We thought it might be that, and so we checked, actually. We have...

AUSTIN: And their eyes kind of like, look away for a second. They're like—

ARIN TILL: We have ways of testing if something is drawing an axiom closer. And that isn't what happened.

GIG: How can you tell that?

ARIN TILL: Classified experiments.

GIG: *[cross]* Oh my god.

ARIN TILL: I shouldn't even be saying that much.

GIG: Buh buh buh buh, just, come on.

ARIN TILL: I'm not in that department, I just know 'cause the file came across my desk.

GIG: Fine.

ARIN TILL: Something threw it here. Or directed it here, or—

GIG: I thought you said it wasn't the throwing thing! Instead of throwing it, you said I was wrong.

ARIN TILL: I said it wasn't, right, because it wasn't— *mm*. Volition dropped it by making it. Into our world.

GIG: Okay, Volition—

ARIN TILL: And then, on its way down, Volition reached out and grabbed it and threw it this way.

GIG: Okay.

ARIN TILL: So it was both.

GIG: Okay.

EVEN: And you're sure Volition altered it?

ARIN TILL: Or something on Volition. But from the center of the system. And as far as I know, the only thing out there is... a few observation stations that are underfunded. No one goes to Volition, it's too dangerous.

EVEN: *[sighs]* Are you saying somebody has to go to Volition?

ARIN TILL: No! I— not yet, I don't... what I'm saying is that for the last year we thought that Volition was... passive. Or dormant or... not thinking the way that we... the way that we think about divines.

GIG: You thought it was falling from a tree and that it wasn't doing anything but just fall—being there.

ARIN TILL: No, I thought it was, it was like, just like, a factory at this point. Just making these things. Not... The whole *thing* with Volition is it doesn't give a fuck about us, right? I've read the reports. But, if it doesn't give a fuck about us, then why is it... sending weapons to kill us.

GIG: Hm, good question.

ARIN TILL: I thought so. It was like a rhetorical one, you know?

GIG: Right, yeah. But. If it didn't care about us... why is it sending weapons to kill us?

ARIN TILL: That's what I *said*, oh...

EVEN: That's a great question, Gig.

ARIN TILL: Oh my *god*.

GIG: Thank you.

ARIN TILL: I hate you both. In any case! It'll probably be people like *you* who go out to deal with it, not me, I'm gonna be safe and secure in my forest bath. Have a good one. Fellas.

AUSTIN: And then like— and is like—

ARIN TILL: I'm gonna go take in the sights.

AUSTIN: And then just like, heads back over to say good bye to the Saints and Gigas and then goes on their own way. Um... Signet. What are you up to?

JANINE: Um... Can I... find Acre and Cascara?

AUSTIN: Yeah, totally, so. I bet I think that they are actually together, and they are um... at the, they're on top of Ache. They're like um... Acre is like, seated? On the edge of Ache. Like, legs dangling. And Cascara has a mech that we described during um, Even's This Year of Ours episode? And that is parked uh, on top of the wall and, and, she is there in her, in her— on her wheelchair next to, kind of behind Acre. Do you fly Exuvia over to them?

JANINE: Uh, yeah, that probably, that's probably the fastest way to go. Especially if they're up on a weird ribbon corpse.

AUSTIN: Yeah. Mhm! They're up there and um... You get— this is the first time you're super super super close to Ache, and like, yeah it's just made of ribbon. It's weird, it's like dense ribbon. It's a weird thing to stand on, but it, it holds. And it is like, it's not sharp 'cause you're standing on it, but it is also metallic when you land on it and like, walk across its surface, you can kind of hear the like, sound of boot on metal, basically. And... when you walk over they're already talking, they're in the middle of a conversation and... *[sighs]* Cascara is like—

AUSTIN (as Cascara): Acre, you know I wouldn't have even sent you here if I thought that... you could take something from Quire. I know how much you miss the potent, but come on. You know me.

AUSTIN: And... Acre 7 says...

ACRE SEVEN: That's the thing. For once, I couldn't see what was coming. What was coming. And I thought, perhaps, it was because I would wind up so overjoyed that... I could think of nothing but my beloved.

AUSTIN: And you kind of walk up, and Cascara like, turns in her chair and is like—

CASCARA: Oh, Signet. Fantastic work.

SIGNET: Uh, thanks. Is, is this our desired outcome here?

CASCARA: It is Quire's desired outcome, at least.

SIGNET: Well yeah, that's worth quite a lot in itself. I guess I just mean is... this... Is this okay to leave as it is?

CASCARA: What is—

SIGNET: I mean I'm— I'm not saying there's anything we could do but I'm just saying... *[sighs]*

CASCARA: It is Quire's decided outcome.

AUSTIN: Cascara repeats. And Acre says... I think Acre kind of— Acre's like, breaking kayfabe here in a sense? She's like...

ACRE SEVEN: Cascara only cares about what Quire wants, these days, Signet. Signet.

AUSTIN: And then kind of like—

SIGNET: Well... That's a, that's a valuable position, honestly.

CASCARA: It is.

AUSTIN: Says Cascara. And, and like, she turns her chair to kind of face you and the mech behind you. Her mech behind you, not your mech. I mean they're both behind you so whatever. Um... and she says...

CASCARA: Signet, I'm worried. We... Talked about slow death. When I recruited you for this. And I see now the spread of... Advent and I feel on the edges...

AUSTIN: And something like, changes in her voice for a second and she says:

CASCARA: At my periphery. Where the Mirage... is thin. Something coming. And... I don't know that this new miracle is enough.

AUSTIN: And I— you know, we're in the world of anime? Which means that we can be really unsubtle here? And try to communicate something visually. Which... and there's kind of a corny way to do this, and I wanna do it, which is when she looks up at you, her eyes have like, a strange green glow. It's very similar to the green that was projecting from the Wound. Like all through the Wound, not just in the Veil. And Acre kind of like, backflips up— not backflips but hand— like reverse handstands from her seated position to a standing one, and just begins to kind of like, foot over foot walk down the, a very thin portion of... the, the wall of Ache? And like, kind of uh tightrope walk her way away?

SIGNET: If something's coming... I guess... let it come, I mean. What are you gonna do, you can't, can't stop these things, there's... an inevitability to it, it just, whatever happens comes and... we face it, and...

CASCARA: That's the thing.

SIGNET: We succeed or we don't.

CASCARA: Signet, I worry that the we that we've been counting on and building... will fracture. By working with Seneschal's Brace, I hoped... to find stability. For Quire. For me. For us. I thought we could turn the system quickly into one that on the basis of commonality—

SIGNET: Things done quickly... even when you think you're doing them for the right reasons, even when you think that people will understand? And that people will... will

see what's in their interests and will come together in the way you predict... *[sighs]*
Those kinds of bonds don't form quickly if they're going to form well.

CASCARA: We waited so long. Quire. And myself. There is only quick motion. There are only miracles now. That is how it feels, we are dying. *[sighs]* Signet. I... died during the last miracle. And Quire... found use for me. And I hope I have been useful. It is not that... I fear that it will take too long for all of us to... unite so much as it is... that I... I fear I'm counting the days until we turn on each other. Us. You and me and the Notion. There are splinters already. And with every new arrival... with every new tragedy, and even with successes like this one.

AUSTIN: And she kind of gestures over the, the. Vista of Parhelia.

CASCARA: New fissures emerge. Try to figure out what you all want this place to be. Because we have been shouting and thrashing and trying to draw for everyone, what we want it to be. A place of peace, a place of... collaboration. A place where old wounds can heal, but that is not what your people want.

AUSTIN: And Cascara like, breaks down into tears and I don't think... You've, you've seen her close to this before. Um, you've seen her doubtful? But this is very much her plus Quire, which she is somehow linked to at this point. Like, the kind of aftershock of Ache and of... you know, you work really hard to bring something into existence and then it exists and it's like, okay, now what. Like? Cool, there's, now there's more people who can suffer. Sick. Killer. Um. And I think that she and Quire are like... cool, I made some people. Rad. There's no way— and I think she says it straight out, she says like—

CASCARA: I Can see so easily, you or Tender, going to walk beside the Waking Cadent, I can see so clearly... Echo, going to war against the Hegemony. I can see... Grand vanishing. Or supporting whichever side would... help him ease his pain. And when those forces ask you to come to blows against each other, I don't know that history alone will protect you. Travel safe. You have my love and my admiration.

SIGNET: And you have mine.

AUSTIN: And I think she like, rolls over to you and like, reaches out for your hands for a moment. And just like, if you, if you will, like holds your hands for a moment.

JANINE: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And like, locks eyes with you. This kind of like... you are old friends. You have worked together for a long time. And she like, goes to say something else... and then smiles and like, shakes it away and then rolls past you towards her mech, which kind of like, picks up the entire wheelchair and like, puts it into the cockpit. Which again, we saw during the, the Even This Year

of Ours thing. And it kind of locks firmly into place, and she like, gives you a, a salute, the same salute that she gave you whenever you went off on a mission for, for the Beloved. And then it like, jets up and away. So. I think... that might be just about everything that happens. Before... the thing that Cascara warned about arrives. Oh, actually wait, one second, we have to go— let me go back before we go forward. Echo, where do you show up?

SYLVIA: Oh man. Um... I'm assuming you mean like, in the new city or...

AUSTIN: Mhm.

SYLVIA: Yeah. Um...

AUSTIN: Do a bunch of kids wake you up? Are you like... in a hospital somewhere being taken care of by the, by the Qui Err?

SYLVIA: Yeah, I kinda like that, and I kinda like the idea of maybe Echo waking up and then sneaking out of there?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

SYLVIA: Before someone notices to see what's going on.

AUSTIN: What is the— how, how does your, your new haunted status kind of feel or show itself as you do this?

SYLVIA: It's...I think a lot of it is that sort of like, anybody with anxiety knows the shitty voice in the back of your head that says things that you don't really wanna hear?

AUSTIN: Yeah.

SYLVIA: And I think it's like a pretty extreme version of that, where it's like if you stay in this hospital, more people are going to get hurt. Because that's what happens when you're around, people get hurt.

AUSTIN: I actually— I actually, can I push back on that a little bit?

SYLVIA: Yeah, for sure.

AUSTIN: Which is, that, when we talked about it, the thing you're haunted by is Quire, right?

SYLVIA: Yeah, true.

AUSTIN: Which is like, I— I almost want you haunted— I, I, there's a second sort of anxiety, right?

SYLVIA: Mhm.

AUSTIN: For me, in my experience, that is definitely a type of anxiety I've had is like, the like, I'm going to fuck this project up, like, I am a waste of time, why is anyone here counting on me.

SYLVIA: Mhm.

AUSTIN: The other is... the other sort of haunted anxiety is like, I need to stay here. And I am not good enough for it. How am I supposed to help this fucking project, um, not, I need to get out of here but like, ah, I should stay a couple hours later. I should, y'know, I'm not, I'm not actually cut out for this, but I'm gonna help in any way that I can, and hope that no one notices that I'm a fraud.

SYLVIA: Yeah.

AUSTIN: And I— we can go the other way. We totally can—

SYLVIA: No, I like that too. I think it's... um. I think that that is more in relation to Echo's feelings towards the rest of the group—

AUSTIN: *[cross]* Right.

SYLVIA: As opposed to like, this specific instance.

AUSTIN: Gotcha.

SYLVIA: I think that their gut reaction here is very much like, oh a big fight just happened—

AUSTIN: *[cross]* Yeah.

SYLVIA: And I couldn't, I couldn't protect anybody during it.

AUSTIN: *[cross]* Totally.

SYLVIA: So, I should probably get out of the place where there's vulnerable people.

AUSTIN: Fair. Yeah, so then like we just get Echo sneaking out in like, a hospital gown, basically?

SYLVIA: Yeah, like, maybe like—

AUSTIN: *[cross]* Like, finding...

SYLVIA: Hanging out on the roof of the hospital just like, sulking?

AUSTIN: Yeah, that's good, that's good. Like, you—

KEITH: Get a rock in your bare feet. *[Austin laughs]* "Ugh, shit!"

AUSTIN: You found your sword but you did not find your clothes, probably 'cause they were torn to fuckin' shreds?

SYLVIA: Yeah, I got fucked up.

AUSTIN: You got fucked up pretty bad. Cool. Do you just like, find your own way back to the World Without End at some point? Or do you make an effort to kind of meet back up with the main group here.

SYLVIA: *[sighs]* I think that— communication works again right, you said?

AUSTIN: *[cross]* Yeah.

SYLVIA: I— so, I think I also found my communicator and I think—

AUSTIN: *[cross]* Okay, fair.

SYLVIA: Just to make this easier, 'cause I like the idea of Echo just staying on their own for a few hours and like, having that off? And then just like, eventually being like, okay, I should let them know I'm alive, and calling for help.

AUSTIN: Right. So yeah, you just call out and you're like, uh-hh.

ECHO: Can someone pick me up, I'm on the roof of this hospital?

[Austin laughs]

SIGNET: Yeah, I got you.

ECHO: Thank you.

AUSTIN: God. Definitely—

SIGNET: You can ride my— one of my shields, it'll look real cool. Gig'll be very jealous, he'll be sooo jealous.

AUSTIN: *[laughing]* Gig, who's still kind of hurt!

KEITH: I'm crushed and exploded! I was crushed under the weight of— *[Dre giggles]* Of a flying metal contraption and it exploded against a wall—

JANINE: *[cross]* I healed you up a bit, so you're, you're more like, stitched and burst or whatever.

KEITH: *[cross]* Saving everyone!

SYLVIA: Do we wanna bring Gig to the hospital?

JANINE: ... He's fine.

AUSTIN: Wow!

[Sylvia cackles]

KEITH: I'm hurt, I'm in so much pain— I can only walk around, because someone said nah, you can probably walk!

[laughter]

AUSTIN: Oh man, alright, um. So I think uh, you know what, maybe it is, maybe it's while you are in the sky, while y'all are, are flying back to the World Without End, or maybe just back to the base and you're gonna get your regular transport back to the World Without End, um, that the uh... That it happens. You know, you're— the Twilight Mirage is here, the fog has lifted... and then you know how like, the Mirage is the Mirage? And there isn't the sun, there is just like, Volition but like Volition isn't like, the sun, it's not the size of the sun, you can't see it necessarily— I mean you can see all the planets, the planets are all big because it's cool fuckin' No Man's Sky old, old style book covers or whatever, right? But they're not like, oh, there's the sun, Volition. It's at the center of the system but it's not— people don't think of it that way. And it's not a bright light.

[MUSIC — [The Notion](#) begins]

AUSTIN: *[cont'd]* Suddenly, off in the distance, the Mirage burns away. And a *brutally* bright light bursts through.

KEITH: Like too— like, bad bright?

AUSTIN: Like bad bright. I'm not gonna be— like, bad bright. Like something is arriving. From outside the Mirage. Like, it turns on? And... it's, it's blinding to look at, it's the sun, right? It's the sun, except it doesn't— you're not rotating around it, it's like a flashlight at the edge of the system. Bright and vicious. And we'll find out what that is at some future time.

[MUSIC — [*The Notion*](#) ends]